***The Feast of Firstfruits - PH90-02
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

We're still dealing with the subject of financing the Lord's work. This is the seventh increment in that series. We are at this point examining the background of Paul's phrase that Christian giving, done on grace principles, is before God a fragrant aroma type of sacrifice. We have already looked at one of the offerings, which was the burnt offering, which portrayed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world.

**The Meal Offering**

The second offering, which we are currently looking at it was called the meal offering. It's a memorial to the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. Very often, as would be natural, the burnt offering and the meal offering were brought by a worshiper together because it pictured both sides of the matter of eternal personal salvation. On the one hand was what Christ did; and, on the other hand, was the kind of person that Christ was that qualified Him to die for the sins of the world.

We observed the fact that the meal offering could be brought as a mixture of fine flour, oil, and frankincense, and that it could be brought to the priest who would burn a handful of that particular mixture. We read of that in Leviticus 2, which says, "And when any will offer a meal offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. The fine flour represented the perfect humanity of Christ; the oil represented the presence of God the Holy Spirit in that humanity; and, frankincense represented the pleasure of God in this perfect Son of His.

"And He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests. And he, the priest, shall take there out his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof with all the frankincense thereof. And the priest will burn the memorial of it upon the altar to be an offering made by fire of a sweet savior unto the Lord. The remnant of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire."

So, first of all, a handful of the meal offerings would be simply burned upon the brazen altar. This would be done as a sweet savor before God. It was an acceptable thing because it presented His Son in His perfections. The rest of that meal mixture was then given for the priest himself to feast on, symbolizing communion between God and man at that point.

But there was another way that you could bring the meal offering, which again told us something, in type – in picture-style of what God had in mind for His Son. That is that this offering could be brought as something which was baked after the mixture was made. Then water was added to it, and it could be handled as something that was baked. But there were three ways of baking it.

First of all was the oven type. This was used to portray the fact that there were certain things that were closed to human view relative to the sinlessness of Jesus Christ, specifically when He was under the darkness of bearing the sin of the world on the cross. We had this in verse four: "And if you bring an oblation (that is a sacrifice of a meal offering) baked in the oven, it should be unleavened cakes of a fine flour mixed with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil." So the oven-baked offering could be of two kinds. It could be a cake which was then broken, or it could be in the form of wafers. If it was in the form of a cake baked in the oven, it would be mixed with oil. This spoke of the deity and the humanity of Christ coming together via the virgin birth. If it was brought as a wafer, then the oil was poured on after the cake was baked, signifying oil now in terms of the anointing of the Holy Spirit to the destiny of this sinless, perfect, God-man person, Jesus Christ, to the mission of the cross.

A second type of baked offering of the meal offering type was the griddle offering. This was just a flat pan. That's what it was. It was a griddle, and it was open to human view. So verses 5-6 speak about the sufferings on the cross without a sinful response from Jesus Christ, which all the people around that cross were able to observe: "If your oblation shall be a meal offering baked in a pan (that is, on a griddle), it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. You shall part it in pieces and pour oil thereon. It is a meal offering." This time, this which was open to public view, also saw the bruising of the person, the sinless innocent person. Therefore, there is now added the breaking.

The previous way (what was baked in the oven out of sight) was not broken. That which was baked in sight was broken, thus portraying what happened on the cross where they actually saw the terrible condition of the body of Christ suffering as the result of the things that had been done to Him. Yet, the thing that was important was that there was no leaven. Noticed that every time it was unleavened. There was no symbol of evil in any of these things, because even when He was suffering in this way on the cross, Jesus Christ did not revile back at them.

Just think what would have happened as they taunted Him: "You claim You're the messiah." After all, the Jew still thinks like this today. The Jew says, "You think you're the Messiah. Well, if you are the Messiah, then you have supernatural powers. Just come down off that cross and prove it." Just think what Jesus Christ could have done, in a moment of indignation over these animals standing around; taunting him; destroying him; and, taking his life. What if he had said, "I'll show you who I am?" And suppose that He came down off that cross. In that, all humanity would have been destined for the lake of fire forever, for there then could have been no savior. Christ, in that moment, would Himself have sinned.

Now that is the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. Yet what those people around that cross were saying was the most logical and reasonable thing in the world to say. What would you say for somebody who claimed to be the Son of God; for somebody who claimed to be the God-man; and, for somebody who claimed to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of a coming Messiah? That would be the most logical thing in the world for you to say: "Here is the Messiah. He's being crucified by the Roman government. If you are really the Messiah, just come off the cross and we'll believe you."

So take care, dear Christian, how many times you think you are so right that you have such an absolute logical conclusion that you've arrived at; that you have thought this thing through; that you have all the facts; and, that you just know that this is what is right. So you bludgeon your way along to follow a line of action that you think is right. Most of those people who stood around that cross that night, confident of the logic of their position are this night suffering in the torments of Hades. That's where their logic led them.

So, again, we caution you that the thing that they should have done was to observe the significance of these very offerings that they were giving. These men were so blinded, mind you, that on the day that Christ died, the veil was separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (the very presence of God), and when that veil was torn from top to bottom, do you know what they did the next day? They proceeded to do the same sacrifices. They proceeded to burn the incense in front of it.

Now, mind you, this veil (the Jewish writings of the Talmud tell us) was 60 feet in height, and it was 32 feet in width. We're told by the Jewish historians that it was four inches thick, and it was magnificent. It had all the colors relative to the deity; the death, the purity; and, the humanity of Christ. They were all in there. It was a much more magnificent veil than had been in the original tabernacle in the wilderness. This is the thing that suddenly, before their very eyes, as Christ died and finally said, "Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit," and the price of salvation was paid, that veil was ripped from top to bottom – that magnificent veil of that structure. And it was as if God was saying, "I'm opening for your direct entrance into My presence this room, which has been exclusively reserved once a year for the high priest on the great day of atonement."

You would have said that when they saw that happening, they would have said, "No matter what our logic told us about that Man on the cross, He was, as the centurion said, indeed, the Son of God." You would have thought at that point they would have said, "How can we go on doing the sacrifices? How can we go on burning the incense here in front of this veil that has been ripped to shreds like this right before our eyes?"

Yet, they ignored all the simple facts that these offerings conveyed. And when you ignore what the Word of God says in its plain, simple statements, you will miss the truth of God while your logic tells you that you've arrived at it. And you will follow a wrong course of action – a course of action that will not only hurt you, but it will create a ripple of circles that will hurt people all around you, because your logic will not be informed. You will not be instructed. Nothing is so terrible as arrogance in the Christian life. The people at the cross will pay for all eternity for that arrogance.

So the griddle type of meal offering very aptly portrayed the fact that people saw everything that was taking place with this Man on the cross, and that He did not lose His temper; He did not revile them; He did not speak back against them; and, there was no old sin nature response. Instead, He prayed for forgiveness for them.

The last type we have in verse 7, which says, "And if your oblation be a meal offering baked in the frying pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil." The point here is that this is partly closed and partly opened. This is not as open to view, but neither is it completely closed. So here we have God seeing something that man did not see. God saw propitiation – His Holiness being satisfied. Man, on the other hand, saw a sinless person who should not be on that cross. Even the Roman governor said, "He has done no wrong; He shouldn't be here; and, there is no cause of death in him."

The frying pan type of meal offering presented the sinless perfect Christ from those two viewpoints: people saw him as an innocent man – they couldn't accuse Him of anything; and, God saw Him as the innocent One who thereby (through His death under the fire of that pan; that is, the judgment of God) was providing the propitiation for the sins of the world. All three types of the baked meal offering had to be free of leaven – the symbol of evil, for there was no evil in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

**A Memorial**

Beginning at verse 11 is briefly the procedure for the handling of this offering. We're told that, first of all, the offerer brought one of these three cake type of offerings (whichever one he had selected) to the priest who would then take a portion of what was brought of this baked offering and burn it on the altar. We are told that the portion burned is a memorial. Verse 8: "And you shall bring the meal offering that is made of these things unto the Lord. And when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar (that is, the altar of burning), and the priest shall take from the meal offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar. It is an offering made by fire (divine judgment) of a sweet savor unto the Lord."

You'll notice that the portion which was burned was a memorial. A memorial to what? It was a memorial to the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. That was true every time this thing was burned. Mind you, that these sacrifices were more important to God than they were to the sinners who brought them. So even if you might question how much they understood of what all these procedures and elements meant, that's irrelevant. The thing was important to God because it was glorifying and honoring His Son. The faithful Jew, though he might not have understood all the significance of this, as we can understand it from this side of the cross, nevertheless, would have faithfully brought these offerings. Remember that the meal offering, like the burnt offering, was voluntary. It was just an act of love and of worship toward God.

So the portion that was burned was a memorial to what pleased God – the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ bearing the fire of God's divine wrath against the sin of the world. A memorial of what? Well, a memorial means a remembrance. This was a remembrance through doctrine of the kind of person Jesus Christ was. A memorial means remembering the suffering of Jesus Christ in our place – taking what we deserved. A memorial means remembrance of the divine good of Jesus Christ, which He provided to satisfy the holiness of God. Never forget that what takes you and me to heaven is the fact that we are going to abandon our human good, and we're going to stand on the divine good of the sinless Son of God.

So this is what this is a memorial of: His sinless person; His suffering in our place; and, the divine good that His death provided because of His substitute for us. The Bible says that the result of this is that this part of the baked offering, which was burned in the sense of a memorial, was a fragrant odor in the nostrils of God.

**Leaven**

What happened to the rest of the cakes? The rest of the cakes were eaten by the priests, and it was again the priest demonstrating man in fellowship with God. But there's something else that is added when it comes to the baked form of the meal offering. There is a very significant prohibition: "No meal offering which you shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in the offering of the Lord made by fire."

What would the honey have meant? What would the honey have signified to the Jew? Well, the Jew, pretty well, could have maybe discerned what the leaven meant. He knew that he could make alcohol out of leaven. He knew that the wine that was alcoholic was the result of fermentation, as the result of the action of leaven – the action of yeast. For this reason, when the Passover time came and they observed the Passover feast, they were forbidden to have any leaven in connection with that feast. For that reason, we know that they drank new wine. They did not drink fermented wine. They drank exactly what we drink here when we have the Lord's Supper – just plain grape juice. For them to have drunk real wine would have been to have insulted the Son of God in the very act of that which represented His blood. To have had fermentation would have been to involve leaven. We have seen repeatedly in these passages in Leviticus that there was no leaven.

The Jew knew, therefore, what leaven did. He could probably have very well put together why this offering should not have leaven in it, because leaven represents decomposition. Leaven really represents putrefaction. That's what's happening. Alcohol is the result of a putrefying process. It's a process of things breaking down. It's a process of things going to corruption. So leaven was perhaps significant to him, more easily than honey.

**Honey**

But obviously, everybody would know one thing right away about honey. The primary quality of honey is that it's sweet. There's something sweet about honey. For some reason, they were told in these meal offerings that they must never include honey which would represent sweetness. Sweetness of what? Believe it or not, folks, you've heard us use the expression sweetness-and-light Christians. What does that mean? It means Christians who are operating out of the human good of their old sin nature, and presenting a human good sweetness that in the sight of God is evil. That's exactly what this connoted here in this offering. The honey pictured the natural old sin nature sweetness in the form of human good. Honey represents the old sin nature directing the emotions into human good rather than a mind spiritually oriented to the Word of God directing the emotions into divine good production.

The sinlessness of the person of Jesus Christ ensures an unchanging divine good as the basis of our salvation. There is no place for human good with God. Therefore, there could be no suggestion that out of the humanity of Christ there poured anything in the form of human good sweetness. Human good sweetness is not acceptable to God, either from unbelievers, as Isaiah 64:6 tells us; nor, is it acceptable from believers, as Romans 8:8 tells us. You see, human good sweetness cannot propitiate the wrath of God against sin, and therefore cannot secure salvation. The New Testament certainly makes that very clear.

For example, Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves." It is not by any of your human good, old sin nature sweetness. "It is the gift of God, not of works," which pour out of your old sin nature human sweetness, "lest any man should boast."

Then, even more specifically, we can go over to Titus 3:5, and we have the condemnation of old sin nature human good sweetness again: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

**The Social Gospel**

So human good sweetness, represented by this honey, was completely useless. Do you see what the problem is with the social gospel? The social gospel is not a term that is generally used today, but it is still the gospel which is preached by liberalism. The social gospel means a gospel that has to do with human good production. The liberal says, "The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ coming to work in society." You might say, "Well, what does he want us to do? How do you get saved with the social gospel?" The liberal says, "The way you get saved with the social gospel is that you get poor people the money they need. So you cause government to establish a minimum national wage for everybody – a basic income. And you get government to provide houses for people who don't have adequate houses. And people who provide money to give people the houses they need are experiencing salvation. You help the people who are sick. You help the children with mental problems."

All of these things are the kinds of things that one would say, "Yes, those need to be done. These people need help." This is a legitimate expression of an area of mercy. But the liberal mentality is operating out of human good sweetness (sometimes the phrase is "the do-gooders"). And what they are equating this with is eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible knows nothing of a social gospel. The Bible knows nothing about a person going to heaven because he's been a good man who has helped other people out of his old sin nature sweetness.

So the honey represented something that God could do nothing but condemn. Jesus Christ had no old sin nature, so He was incapable of producing the evil of the old sin nature, which is either human good sweetness or sins themselves. The oil and the fine flour ensured divine good only. There was no human good sweetness in the Son of God.

That basically is the meal offering. That's the whole thing. I hope you have a clear picture of that, and why God says, "This is a beautiful, fragrant aroma to Me when you offer this up. There is another connection that I want to point out to you for the meal offering. There was one time when the meal offering was prescribed, and that was on the feast of firstfruits. This was one of the seven feasts that God appointed for the Jews. You may read about this in Leviticus 2:12-16. The feast of firstfruits was one of the feasts that portrayed the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is described in more detail in Leviticus 23:9-11.

**The Feast of Firstfruits**

Here is the order of events. First came Passover. Passover began on sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. The day after Passover (we would say Saturday) began a week of feasts and memorial – the feast of unleavened bread. But the first day of that week of memorial was called the feast of firstfruits. In other words, this was on Sunday. The Jews did this for centuries. How much do they understand? It makes no difference.

The thing that was important was that God understood it. It was a joy to Him every time they observe the feast of firstfruits, because the feast of firstfruits pictured, ahead of time, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's why it always fell on a Sunday. For centuries, the Jews would observe this feast, and it would always fall on the day after the Sabbath. Why? I'm not sure that they really knew, but it was always on a Sunday. But certainly, the disciples, who followed Jesus and found that He rose from the dead on that first Easter Sunday morning, immediately said, "Oh, so that's what the feast of firstfruits meant in all of its significance. We see it now that it has been fulfilled in history."

**The Wave Offering**

It came on Sunday, following the Passover day. On this day, the feast of firstfruits was the day when a man brought from his harvest a sheaf of grain. He brought it to the priest, and the priest stood in front of this brazen altar where all the animals were burned. He took this sheaf of grain, and he waved it back and forth before that altar. It was called a wave offering. This sheaf of grain represented Jesus Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection of believers.

1 Corinthians 15:23, therefore, says, "But every man in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, afterward, they that are Christ's at His coming." Every man in his own order for what? In his order for resurrection. And the firstfruits of resurrection was Jesus Christ. I've often referred to this passage at funerals, because it has a beautiful portrayal of what has actually happened to this one who has died. This one who has died is fulfilling the symbolism of the feast of the firstfruits picture.

When that sheaf of grain was waved, it was telling two things. It was saying that this is a sample. Out there in the field from which this first sheaf came, there was much more fruit. Secondly, it said that what is out there yet to come is going to be exactly like this piece I'm waving before Almighty God now.

Now apply that to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the sheaf wave offering in the form of the firstfruits. First, Jesus Christ symbolized, as the firstfruits, that there was a vast field of human beings just like Himself, absolutely sinless and perfect in the sight of God, fully justified, who were going to follow Him into the family of God. Secondly, it declared that they would be exactly as He was in His resurrection: sinless; free of time and space; incapable of sinning; absolutely perfect in the sight of God; and, with absolute maximum fellowship.

Now, that's tremendous. At a funeral, that's significant, because if that person has died as a Christian, you know that he is part of the field who is following after Jesus Christ, the firstfruits. You know that someday that person is going to come back. If you're a believer, you're going to see him absolutely in the perfections of Jesus Christ.

So the feast of the firstfruits was one of the great remembrances of the Old Testament system. The priest signified in this way the whole picture of human resurrection.

God ordered that when this feast of firstfruits was commemorated on this Sunday following the Passover, that along with it, the meal offering was to be brought. This time, however, notice a very important difference. I won't read it through. You can read through the chapter yourself. But here in this chapter, we find an important difference. This time, the meal sacrifice (the meal offering) was not to be burned. Why not? Because this time the meal offering was associated not with the death of Christ, but with the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, it was not under the judgment of sin. Anytime there is fire or burning, it's because this thing represents judgment of God. There was no judgment of God upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, the resurrection of Christ declared to us that all was well between us and God.

**Salt**

However, there was another thing that was to be added, interestingly enough, to the meal offering on the occasion of the firstfruits, and that was salt. Salt was to be added. As you research Scripture, you'll discover some things very significant about salt. Salt, first of all, is a preserver of food, as you know. Therefore it is used to symbolize eternal life through Jesus Christ. In other words, a person saves his life through the acceptance of Christ as Savior. Salt is a symbol. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world but lose his own soul?" Well, the way you preserve your soul is with the salt of the gospel.

Salt also is a seasoner, and it symbolizes, therefore, the Word of God, which makes life more flavorful. The believer who is in the Word of God is a believer who finds life has a lot of taste; a lot of quality; a lot of color; and, a lot of variety.

Salt is also a preserver in the opposite way that leaven was a corrupter. So salt signified just the very opposite of what the leaven signified. Eating salt also symbolized the acceptance of eternal life. It also symbolized the acceptance of Bible doctrine as God's divine viewpoint. So just a little salt was added to indicate this acceptance. The Bible says that believers who are oriented to doctrine are the salt of the earth, exercising or preserving influence in society (Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:50). The United States today will be preserved in the providence of God to the extent that there are believers who are oriented to divine viewpoint. They are the salt of our society. When the salt becomes minimal, or the salt among Christians loses its saltiness and becomes carnality, then the nation comes under the final judgment of God. And that may not be far off.

Colossians 4:8 tells us that Christians are to speak in such a manner as to preserve their hearers from evil. This is compared to the Christian's conversation being salty. In our day, when we say that this fellow has a very salty conversation, you know what that means. That means he's very foul-mouthed, and he's very obscene. He has a salty way of speaking. That's a euphemism for dirty talk. But the Word of God says that your language should be salty, but salty in the fact that it preserves people from evil. So if you have a mouth that pours out evil, the Word of God condemns you.

I had a seminary professor one time who was telling us that every time he got into the barber's chair, he had a barber in this little town that was in the habit of telling all kinds of foul and dirty stories. He would just do it to everybody who was in the chair. One of the things in hell that the people in hell are going to suffer from are barbers who talk all the time. So there'll be some people who will be strapped in a barber's chair, and the barber will talk to them all the time. There is nothing so nerve racking as a barber who talks.

This particular barber was even worse because of the way he talked. So finally, this professor got in the chair, and sure enough, he started off with his dirty stories and the latest stuff he picked up. The professor took hold of his own ear, and he said, "Mr. Brown, does this look like a sewer to you?" The barber looked back in surprise and said, "No, I don't understand." He said, "Well, then, don't pour your filth into it." Now that's using salty speech to stop salty speech.

The Word of God says that the Christian's speech should have a preserving and an ennobling quality. That was pictured here in this offering by putting the salt here. Salt without flavor pictures, as we've indicated, carnal Christians, or people who are negative toward doctrine. We have that in Matthew 5:13. Those are believers who have lost their saltiness.

Here we have also in this passage the phrase "the salt of the covenant." You have to understand that to fully understand what he is referring to here when he talks about the salt here in the meal offering associated with the feast of firstfruits. The phrase "the salt of the covenant" refers to an ancient custom where people ratified an agreement by simply (each of them) putting their finger on the tip of their tongue; dipping their finger in a common bowl of salt; and, then putting the salt back on the tongue. Each of them put a little bit of salt on their tongue from this common bowl, and that was a way of signing their signature and coming into an agreement. This was done in the presence of witnesses and it was absolutely binding. It was the establishing of a covenant.

Now, God had made a covenant with the nation of Israel under the Mosaic system. In Exodus 20:5-8, you will read where God dipped his finger in the salt of the common bowl and said, "If you will do this, then I will do this." Then the Jews, through their representative, dipped their finger in the bowl and put it on their tongue. And these verses here in Exodus 20:5-8 tell you how they said, "Everything You said we will do." That's why we tell you that the Mosaic Covenant is an "iffy" covenant. Of the Jewish covenants, it's the only conditional one. It has the "if" in it. God says, "I'll do these good things for you, providing you do your part and behave yourself." In other words, this was a conditional covenant. The other covenants (the Davidic, the Palestinian, and the New Covenants) had no "ifs" in them. Those were not covenants of salt. They were only done by God himself.

So here we have, referring to the Mosaic Law system, this covenant of salt which God has made with them. It's a covenant also that God makes with sinners for eternal life. We can apply the same thing. John 3:16 tells us that God ate salt in promising eternal life for those who would believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31 tells us that the sinner eats salt when he receives Christ as his personal Savior.

This firstfruits meal offering was a little different than the others. This one was to consist of green or fresh ears of grain roasted in fire, and the kernels beaten out. It was to be brought like we would bring an ear of corn. It was to be roasted. Then the kernels were to be beaten out (off the cob), and the roasted kernels were then brought for the meal offering. Now, what do we have here? Obviously, we have several things.

First of all, we have, again, Jesus Christ under fire, for the ear of grain had to be roasted. Now we have the fire of God's wrath against the sinless One. Isaiah 53:5 tells us about His dying in this way. Also, being beaten out of the ear describes His suffering – the beatings that He took in behalf of our sin. The roasted grains were then anointed with oil and frankincense to signify the resurrection of Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember that this is a meal offering to be presented in connection with the feast of firstfruits commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ was raised not only from the grave by the Father, but also by the Holy Spirit. So here oil is put on this, signifying His resurrection, and the frankincense signified God's pleasure in raising His Son from the dead.

The only way we know that there is no record of sin to be held against us, and that Jesus Christ died on the cross was different from what any other man could do is because He came back from the dead. If He were, as the liberals say, still in some Syrian grave where His bones will perhaps one day be found, we would have no way of knowing that what He promised to do on behalf of our sins was acceptable to God the Father. It was because He was raised again that we know that sin had no control over Him. He had broken the sin that he bore and that He had paid for it. And because He lives, the Scriptures say, we shall live. So there was the pleasure of the frankincense. There was the power of the Holy Spirit upon the resurrected Christ.

The priest burned part of this new offering in the form of these kernels of grain. Again, it says this was a memorial to Christ's acceptance as the perfect Lamb of God for the sins of the world. Today, you and I, by faith, feed upon who and what Jesus Christ is, just as the Old Testament priest in these symbols did. We feed through the Word of God upon His perfect humanity. We enjoy fellowship with Him. By what? By meditating on these truths. That's what you should do with the Word of God. That's what the Jew did with these offerings. He watched these performed. He thought about the details, and he meditated upon them. I have no doubt that God gave him a great deal of understanding as he meditated upon these. So the Word of God is our basis of enjoying fellowship with Him. It is also our bases of nourishment, because, again, the priests had their part to eat, and it was nourishing to them, as we feed upon the Word of God which these symbols portrayed.

So there is the meal offering in all of its beauty. It was a voluntary offering, but one that was very precious in the eyes of God. It was one that signified the perfect humanity of His Son.

**The Peace Offering**

The next offering is found in Leviticus 3, and it is called the Peace Offering. We have it in Leviticus 3 and we have it in Leviticus 7:11-34. This again was a voluntary offering. This one portrayed the fact of reconciliation. The burnt offering portrayed the fact of redemption from the point of view of what Jesus Christ did. The meal offering portrayed redemption from the point of view of who Jesus Christ was and what He was in sinless humanity.

However, the peace offering represents the fact that the wall separating God from man has been removed. That's what reconciliation means. How does God do that? There is no change in God that is necessary. Remember that God's side of salvation is always propitiation – God's justice and righteousness being satisfied. However, man's side of salvation is reconciliation. It is we who had to be reconciled, and reconciled means adjusted.

Last week we went off of daylight saving time. All of our clocks had to be reconciled back to the sun. We've been off from it. But now we have reconciled ourselves back to the sun. What did you do? You adjusted your clocks so that it now told you sun time again. That's what God did for man. He reconciled man by removing what separated man from God. So man, who had his back facing God, was now turned around so that now God and man face each other. Now what can happen? There is no more barrier and no more separation. All man has to do is step across the line into eternal life to the hand that God is extending to him.

People are born sinners, as you know, so they are unfit for fellowship with God. Man is inclined to evil, so there is no peace between him and God. The peace offering stresses the finished work of Christ on the cross for sins so that peace was made for all the world. Have you ever been tempted to say to somebody who is an unsaved person, "You should make your peace with God?" This phrase is used sometimes with people who are on the verge of death. Somebody is facing a firing squad, and he is told, "Make your peace with God."

The meaning and the intent are right, but it's saying something that nobody can do. You and I cannot make our peace with God. This peace offering tried to demonstrate to the Jews, in this symbolic form, how here again God was doing something they simply could not under any condition do for themselves. No one makes his own peace with God. It is God who makes peace for us. It is God who reconciles us.

It is true we have to be willing to accept that reconciliation. We have to be willing to accept that peace. But that's the horror of hell – to recognize that the God who sends you to the lake of fire is no longer an angry God because of your sins. His wrath is no longer directed to you. This God now sends you to the lake of fire in pity, because He has reconciled you to Himself. He has established peace, but you have rejected the acceptance of that.

So this offering is God demonstrating that he had to reach out for us in our sins to reconcile us to bring us to Himself, and to bring us to peace. We have this expressed in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 5:19: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world (of unbelievers) unto Himself, not imputing the trespasses onto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." God has reconciled men to Himself. Our business, as believers, is going and saying, "Hey, do you know that you've been reconciled to God? You're at peace with God. God has made the peace for you. You don't have to make your peace. All you have to do is accept it." That's the message of reconciliation. When you say, "Be reconciled to God," that means that this barrier of all these various elements (spiritual death, the old sin nature, being in Adam, and all this that constitutes that wall) is gone.

The peace offering thus declares that God has been propitiated relative to sin; the sinner has been reconciled relative to God; and, the barrier has been removed. What the peace offering was asking was that the sinner should be reconciled to God by trusting in the coming Messiah. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we beg you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God." This is your message to unbelievers. "For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." What that verse is saying is that we have been reconciled through the Son of God. Therefore, peace has been established.

The procedure for this is rather fascinating, and we will look upon that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)