

## INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS CHAPTER 7

Here is,

I. The law of the trespass-offering (#Le 7:1-7), with some further directions concerning the burnt offering and the meat offering, #Le 7:8-10.

II. The law of the peace offering. The eating of it (#Le 7:11-21), on which occasion the prohibition of eating fat or blood is repeated (#Le 7:22-27), and the priests' share of it, #Le 7:28-34.

III. The conclusion of those institutions, #Le 7:35.

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 10.

Observe here,

1. Concerning the trespass-offering, that, being much of the same nature with the sin offering, it was to be governed by the same rules, #Le 7:6. When the blood and fat were offered to God to make atonement, the priests were to eat the flesh, as that of the sin-offering, in the holy place. The Jews have a tradition (as we have it from the learned bishop Patrick) concerning the sprinkling of the blood of the trespass-offering *round about upon the altar*,

"That there was a scarlet line which went round about the altar exactly in the middle, and the blood of the burnt-offerings was sprinkled round about above the line, but that of the trespass-offerings and peace-offerings round about below the line."

As to the flesh of the trespass-offering, the right to it belonged to the priest that offered it, #Le 7:7. He that did the work must have the wages. This was an encouragement to the priests to give diligent attendance on the altar; the more ready and busy they were the more they got. Note, The more diligent we are in the services of religion the more we shall reap of the advantages of it. But any of the priests, and the males of their families, might be invited by him to whom it belonged to partake with him: *Every male among the priests shall eat thereof*, that is, may eat thereof, *in the holy place*, #Le 7:6. And, no doubt, it was the usage to treat one another with those perquisites of their office, by which friendship and fellowship were kept up among the priests. Freely they had received, and must freely give. It seems the offerer was not himself to have any share of his trespass-offering, as he was to have of his peace-offering; but it was all divided between the altar and the priest. They offered peace-offerings in thankfulness for mercy, and then it was proper to feast; but they offered trespass-offerings in sorrow for sin, and then fasting was more proper, in token of holy mourning, and a resolution to abstain from sin.

2. Concerning the burnt-offering it is here appointed that the priest that offered it should have the skin (#Le 7:8), which no doubt he might make money of.

"This" (the Jews say) "is meant only for the burnt-offerings which were offered by particular persons; for the profit of the skins of the daily burnt offerings for the congregation went to the repair of the sanctuary."

Some suggest that this appointment will help us to understand God's clothing our first parents with *coats of skins*, #Ge 3:21. It is probable that the beasts whose skins they were

were offered in sacrifice as whole burnt-offerings, and that Adam was the priest that offered them; and then God gave him the skins, as his fee, to make clothes of for himself and his wife, in remembrance of which the skins ever after pertained to the priest; and see [#Ge 27:16](#).

3. Concerning the meat-offering, if it was dressed, it was fit to be eaten immediately; and therefore the priest that offered it was to have it, [#Le 7:9](#). If it was dry, there was not so much occasion for being in haste to use it; and therefore an equal dividend of it must be made among all the priests that were then in waiting, [#Le 7:10](#).

Ver. 11. thru Ver. 34.

All this relates to the peace-offerings: it is the repetition and explication of what we had before, with various additions.

I. The nature and intention of the peace-offerings are here more distinctly opened. They were offered either,

1. In thankfulness for some special mercy received, such as recovery from sickness, preservation in a journey, deliverance at sea, redemption out of captivity, all which are specified in Psalm 107, and for them men are called upon to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, [#Le 7:22](#). Or,
2. In performance of some vow which a man made when he was in distress ([#Le 7:16](#)), and this was less honourable than the former, though the omission of it would have been more culpable. Or,
3. In supplication for some special mercy which a man was in the pursuit and expectation of, here called a *voluntary offering*. This accompanied a man's prayers, as the former did his praises. We do not find that men were bound by the law, unless they had bound themselves by vow, to offer these peace-offerings upon such occasions, as they were to bring their sacrifices of atonement in case of sin committed. Not but that prayer and praise are as much our duty as repentance is; but here, in the expressions of their sense of mercy, God left them more to their liberty than in the expressions of their sense of sin--to try the generosity of their devotion, and that their sacrifices, being free-will offerings, might be the more laudable and acceptable; and, by obliging them to bring the sacrifices of atonement, God would show the necessity of the great propitiation.

II. The rites and ceremonies about the peace-offerings are enlarged upon.

1. If the peace-offering was offered for a thanksgiving, a meat-offering must be offered with it, cakes of several sorts, and wafers ([#Le 7:12](#)), and (which was peculiar to the peace-offerings) leavened bread must be offered, not to be burnt upon the altar, that was forbidden ([#Le 2:11](#)), but to be eaten with the flesh of the sacrifice, that nothing might be wanting to make it a complete and pleasant feast; for unleavened bread was less grateful to the taste, and therefore, though enjoined in the passover for a particular reason, yet in other festivals leavened bread, which was lighter and more pleasant, was appointed, that men might feast at God's table as well as at their own. And some think that a meat-offering is required to be brought with every peace-offering, as well as with that of thanksgiving, by that law ([#Le 7:29](#)) which requires an oblation with it, that the table might be as well furnished as the altar.
2. The flesh of the peace-offerings, both that which was the priest's share and that

which was the offerer's must be eaten quickly, and not kept long, either raw, or dressed, cold. If it was a peace-offering for thanksgiving, it must be all eaten the same day (#Le 7:15); if a vow, or voluntary offering, it must be eaten either the same day or the day after, #Le 7:16. If any was left beyond the time limited, it was to be burnt (#Le 7:17); and, if any person ate of what was so left their conduct should be animadverted upon as a very high misdemeanour, #Le 7:18. Though they were not obliged to eat it in the holy place, as those offerings that are called most holy, but might take it to their own tents and feast upon it there, yet God would by this law make them to know a difference between that and other meat, and religiously to observe it, that whereas they might keep other meat cold in the house as long as they thought fit, and warm it again if they pleased, and eat it three or four days after, they might not do so with the flesh of their peace-offerings, but it must be eaten immediately.

(1.) Because God would not have that holy flesh to be in danger of putrefying, or being fly blown, to prevent which it must be salted with *fire* (as the expression is, #Mr 9:49) if it were kept; as, if it was used, it must be salted with salt.

(2.) Because God would not have his people to be niggardly and sparing, and distrustful of providence, but cheerfully to enjoy what God gives them (#Ec 8:15), and to do good with it, and not to be anxiously solicitous for the morrow.

(3.) The flesh of the peace-offerings was God's treat, and therefore God would have the disposal of it; and he orders it to be used generously for the entertainment of their friends, and charitably for the relief of the poor, to show that he is a bountiful benefactor, *giving us all things richly to enjoy*, the bread of the day in its day. If the sacrifice was thanksgiving, they were especially obliged thus to testify their holy joy in God's goodness by their holy feasting. This law is made very strict (#Le 7:18), that if the offerer did not take care to have all his offering eaten by himself or his family, his friends or the poor, within the time limited by the law, or, in the event of any part being left, to burn it (which was the most decent way of disposing of it, the sacrifices upon the altar being *consumed by fire*), then his offering should not be accepted, nor imputed to him. Note, All the benefit of our religious services is lost if we do not improve them, and conduct ourselves aright afterwards. They are not acceptable to God if they have not a due influence upon ourselves. If a man seemed generous in bringing a peace-offering, and yet afterwards proved sneaking and paltry in the using of it, it was as if he had never brought it; nay, *it shall be an abomination*. Note, There is no mean between God's acceptance and his abhorrence. If our persons and performances are sincere and upright, they are accepted; if not, they are an abomination, #Pr 15:8. He that eats it after the time appointed shall *bear his iniquity*, that is, he shall be *cut off from his people*, as it is explained (#Le 19:8), where this law is repeated. This law of eating the peace offerings before the third day, that they might not putrefy, is applicable to the resurrection of Christ after two days, that, being God's *holy one*, he might not see corruption, #Ps 16:10. And some think that it instructs us speedily, and without delay, to partake of Christ and his grace, feeding and feasting thereon by faith today, *while it is called to-day* (#Heb 3:13-14), for it will be too late shortly.

3. But the flesh, and those that eat it, must be pure.

(1.) The flesh must *touch no unclean thing*; if it did, it must not be eaten, but burnt, #Le 7:19. If, in carrying it from the altar to the place where it was eaten, a dog touched it, or it touched a dead body or any other unclean thing, it was then unfit to be used in a religious feast. Every thing we honour the holy God with must be pure and carefully kept from all pollution. It is a case adjudged (#Hag 2:12) that the holy flesh could not by its touch communicate holiness to what was common; but by this law it is determined that by the

touch of that which was unclean it received pollution from it, which intimates that the infection of sin is more easily and more frequently communicated than the savour of grace.

(2.) It must not be eaten by any unclean person. When a person was upon any account ceremonially unclean it was at his peril if he presumed to eat of the flesh of the peace-offerings, [#Le 7:20-21](#). Holy things are only for holy persons; the holiness of the food being ceremonial, those were incapacitated to partake of it who lay under any ceremonial uncleanness; but we are hereby taught to preserve ourselves pure from all the pollutions of sin, that we may have the benefit and comfort of Christ's sacrifice, [#1Pe 2:1-2](#). Our consciences must be purged from dead works, that we may be fit to *serve the living God*, [#Heb 9:14](#). But if any dare to partake of the table of the Lord under the pollution of unrepented sin, and so profane sacred things, they eat and drink *judgment to themselves*, as those did that ate of the peace-offerings in their uncleanness, [#1Co 11.29](#). A good reason for the strictness of this law is intimated in the description given of the peace-offerings ([#Le 7:20](#)) and again ([#Le 7:21](#)), that they *pertain unto the Lord*: whatever pertains to the Lord is sacred, and must be used with great reverence and not with unhallowed hands.

*"Be you holy, for God is holy, and you pertain to him."*

4. The eating of blood and the fat of the inwards is here again prohibited; and the prohibition is annexed as before to the law of the peace-offerings, [#Le 3:17](#).

(1.) The prohibition of the fat seems to be confined to those beasts which were used for sacrifice, the bullocks, sheep, and goats: but of the roe-buck, the hart, and other clean beasts, they might eat the fat; for those only of which offerings were brought are mentioned here, [#Le 7:23-25](#). This was to preserve in their minds a reverence for God's altar, on which the fat of the inwards was burnt. The Jews say,

*"If a man eat so much as an olive of forbidden fat--if he do it presumptuously, he is in danger of being cut off by the hand of God--if ignorantly, he is to bring a sin offering, and so to pay dearly for his carelessness."*

To eat of the flesh of that which died of itself, or was torn of beasts, was unlawful; but to eat of the fat of such was doubly unlawful, [#Le 7:24](#).

(2.) The prohibition of blood is more general ([#Le 7:26-27](#)), because the fat was offered to God only by way of acknowledgment, but the blood *made atonement for the soul*, and so typified Christ's sacrifice much more than the burning of the fat did; to this therefore a greater reverence must be paid, till these types had their accomplishment in the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. The Jews rightly expound this law as forbidding only the *blood of the life*, as they express it, not that which we call the *gravy*, for of that they supposed it was lawful to eat.

5. The priest's share of the peace-offerings is here prescribed. Out of every beast that was offered for a peace-offering the priest that offered it was to have to himself the breast and the right shoulder, [#Le 7:30-34](#). Observe here,

(1.) That when the sacrifice was killed the offerer himself must, with his own hands, present God's part of it, that he might signify thereby his cheerfully giving it up to God, and his desire that it might be accepted. He was with his own hands to *lift it up*, in token of

his regard to God as the God of heaven, and then to *wave it to and fro*, in token of his regard to God as the Lord of the whole earth, to whom thus, as far as he could reach, he offered it, showing his readiness and wish to do him honour. Now that which was thus heaved and waved was the fat, and the breast, and the right shoulder, it was all offered to God; and then he ordered the fat to his altar, and the breast and shoulder to his priest, both being his receivers.

(2.) That when the fat was burnt the priest took his part, on which he and his family were to feast, as well as the offerer and his family. In holy joy and thanksgiving, it is good to have our ministers to go before us, and to be our mouth to God. The melody is sweet when he that sows and those that reap rejoice together. Some observe a significance in the parts assigned to the priests: the breast and the shoulder intimate the affections and the actions, which must be devoted to the honour of God by all his people and to the service also of the church by all his priests. Christ, our great peace offering, feasts all his spiritual priests with the breast and shoulder, with the dearest love and the sweetest and strongest supports; for his is the wisdom of God and the power of God. When Saul was designed for a king Samuel ordered the shoulder of the peace offering to be set before him (**#1Sa 9:24**), which gave him a hint of something great and sacred intended for him. Jesus Christ is our great peace-offering; for he made himself a sacrifice, not only to atone for sin, and so to save us from the curse, but to purchase a blessing for us, and all good. By our joyfully partaking of the benefits of redemption we *feast upon the sacrifice*, to signify which the Lord's supper was instituted.

Ver. 35. thru Ver. 38.

Here is the conclusion of these laws concerning the sacrifices, though some of them are afterwards repeated and explained. The are to be considered,

1. As a grant to the priests, **#Le 7:35-36**. In the day they were ordained to that work and office this provision was made for their comfortable maintenance. Note, God will take care that those who are employed for him be well paid and well provided for. Those that receive the anointing of the Spirit to minister unto the Lord shall have their portion, and it shall be a worthy portion, out of the offerings of the Lord; for God's work is its own wages, and there is a present reward of obedience in obedience.
2. As a statute for ever to the people, that they should bring these offerings according to the rules prescribed, and cheerfully give the priests their share out of them. God *commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations*, **#Le 7:38**. Note, The solemn acts religious worship are commanded. They are not things that we are left to our liberty in, and which we may do or not do at our pleasure; but we are under indispensable obligations to perform them in their season, and it is at our peril if we omit them. The observance of the laws of Christ cannot be less necessary than the observance of the laws of Moses was.