

The Grain Offering (Leviticus 2, 6:14-23)

I. Introduction

A. This morning we are continuing our study of Leviticus together

1. As we start another morning in Leviticus, I want to remember what the main point of Leviticus is - how can Israel dwell with a holy God? And, as we apply it to ourselves, how can we dwell with a holy God?
2. And, if we put our outline up on the board, we're in the first half of the book, what we've titled "Judicial Holiness," which is answering the question, "How do we become holy?"
3. And we're continuing in the first subsection, what we've titled "Provision for holiness" in Leviticus 1-7 which describes the sacrificial system

1 B. And we see five types of sacrifice as we read these first chapters of Leviticus

1. Last week we started with the Burnt Offering and talked about propitiation and satisfying God's wrath
 - a. So, if we go back to our table that we started last week, the burnt offering taught us that sin has made God very angry with us, sin has provoked God's wrath
 - b. So we need a sacrifice that will absorb and turn away God's wrath, a sacrifice that will make us acceptable before God again
2. This week, we're moving on to the next offering, the Grain Offering
3. And, in future weeks, we'll see the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and finally the Guilt Offering

1 C. Proposition: The grain offering shows us that we owe ourselves in worship to God.

1. What did it teach the ancient Israelites about God?
2. How should this point us to Christ?
3. How should this be applied to the New Testament believer?

1 II. What did this teach the ancient Israelites about God?

1 A. First, we owe ourselves to God in worship

1. The grain offering is the odd man out here in the offerings described at the beginning of Leviticus
 - a. Unlike the burnt offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, the grain offering did not involve the shedding of blood nor was it an atoning offering
 - 1 b. In fact, this offering doesn't seem to have any reference to sin at all - the grain offering was not a sacrifice that dealt with sin, in fact a different word is used in the Hebrew
 - 2✕ c. The grain offering was a *minchah*, a donation, a tribute or a gift - it's the word used for when Jacob brought a gift to Esau or the gift that Jacob's sons brought back to Pharaoh; it's the word used when Ehud brought a tribute to Eglon, king of Moab or when the Moabites were defeated by David and forced to bring tribute
2. The English word 'tribute' fits fairly well - it's a gift brought when an inferior approaches a superior as a recognition of his superiority, a recognition that he rightly rules over us
 - a. And this is what the grain offering was, a recognition of God's Lordship, a tribute brought as an act of worship to God
 - b. This is what mankind owed to God apart from sin - even before sin, we owed God our worship and our loyalty - and this is what mankind through sin had failed to do
3. So, once a right relationship had been restored between God and the worshiper (and we'll come back to that in a moment), the worshiper was to bring an offering, to come with tribute, with worship before God
 - 1 a. So the grain offering consisted of three primary ingredients, Leviticus 2:1 - *When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it*
 - 1 b. The first was fine flour - this was the best wheat available ground as finely as possible, it would have been affordable for everyone, but was considered a luxury item associated with royalty
 - i. The wheat represented the work of man's hand, in fact, it represented all that man was - man was a worker of the soil in Genesis 2 and 3 - so the fine flour represented the best result of man's effort
 - ii. The worshiper was to bring the work of his hands to God in tribute, a recognition that he belonged to God and owed service and worship to God
 - 2 c. And the fine flour was offered with oil and frankincense
 - i. Oil was similar in some ways to the flour, also a result of cultivation and associated with royalty and priesthood
 - ii. And the frankincense was an expensive fragrance that emphasized that this was an act of worship
4. So the grain offering is different than the other offerings - it was not a sacrifice that dealt with sin, but a tribute of worship for those whose sins had been covered
 - 2 a. So, the grain offering won't fit neatly into our table we started last week - so we'll set it off at the bottom
 - 2 b. The grain offering shows us that we belong to God and we owe ourselves in worship to God
5. Kid's: here's your kid's question for this morning:
 - 1 a. What does the grain offering teach us?
 - 1 b. We owe ourselves in worship to God

2 B. Second, our worship must be brought with God's covenant

1. As we keep going this morning, we're going to consider some of the prescriptions and restrictions given about the grain offering and consider what this teaches us about worship
- 1 2. And the main prescription I want to consider is in Leviticus 2:13 - *You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.*
- 1 3. Salt wasn't listed as one of the main components of the offering, but it is required to be part of every offering, and I think that this is because the salt represented something different
- 1 4. The flour, oil and frankincense represented worship, what we brought back to God, but salt represents something else - and actually the text is very clear, it represents God's covenant
5. So, to go back to something I said a moment ago, worship was what man offered to God even before sin, but after sin came, worship was impossible - God would not accept tribute from those in rebellion against Him
6. So, the Israelites could not just bring worship, they must bring worship within the covenant that God made, the covenant that reunited them to God - the only reason they could bring their gift was because God had graciously chosen them and brought them back to Him
7. Worship is impossible outside of God's covenant and must explicitly be brought under the shadow of His covenant

2 C. Third, and closely related, our worship must be brought with the atoning sacrifice

1. In this point, I want to consider the order of the sacrifices in Leviticus
 - 2 a. As I've already mentioned, the grain offering is significantly different from the other offerings in Leviticus, each which are blood offerings and have some reference to sin and its effects
 - 1 b. So, why is the grain offering mentioned second? Why isn't it set apart at the end of this section as the different sacrifice?
2. And I think the answer to this question can be answered as we go through the rest of the Old Testament
 - a. Throughout the Old Testament the grain offering was associated very closely with the burnt offering, a few times with the peace offering, but in the vast majority of cases the grain offering was offered with the burnt offering - they are very closely related
 - 1 3 b. For example, Numbers 28:11-13 - *"At the beginnings of your months, you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish; also three tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull, and two tenths of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; and a tenth of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for every lamb; for a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.*
3. The burnt offering was brought so that the grain offering could be brought and the grain offering could not be brought unless the burnt offering had been brought
 - a. A tribute can't be brought to the king unless peace has been made, so the Israelites worship in the grain offering could not be brought apart from the propitiation offered in the burnt offering
 - b. God doesn't accept the worship of those who haven't made peace with Him and peace cannot come without the propitiation - so the grain offering was paired with the burnt offering and couldn't be offered on its own

2 D. Fourth, our worship must be brought with an obedient heart

1. The main restriction we see as we read through the Grain Offering is in Leviticus 2:11 - *"No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as a food offering to the LORD.*
 - 2 a. There were two things that were never to be offered with the grain offering: leaven and honey
2. Throughout the Old Testament, leaven represents something small that spreads and is often (although not always) related with sin in contrast to holiness
 - a. And that seems to be the import of the leaven in the Grain Offering - the grain offering couldn't be offered while sin was regarded, while sin was treasured - a rebellious heart couldn't bring worship to God
 - b. The Burnt Offering could make peace with God, but that didn't mean that the worshiper could continue in rebellion and presume to bring his offering
 - c. For the worshiper to bring his worship, he must renounce the things of sin and come with an obedient heart, desiring to separate himself to God
3. Why honey is excluded is a little harder to identify, because there isn't a rich tradition in Scripture associating honey with something specific
 - a. But honey does seem to be related to the good things of this world, the pleasures of the world
 - b. So, the promised land was described as a land flowing with milk and honey, or in Ezekiel, when describing in a story how good He had been to Israel (and yet they rebelled), God describes Himself as providing her with fine flour and honey, gold and rich clothes - the good things of this world
 - c. So, my best understand of what honey represents is the pleasures of this world - the worshiper cannot come and bring his offering to God if his heart is captured, in love with the pleasures of this world - things that are not necessarily sinful, there wasn't anything wrong with honey, but things by which our hearts shouldn't be captured
4. The restrictions on the grain offering seem to reflect the heart attitude of the worshiper
 - a. When coming to bring worship to God, the worshiper needs to come with his heart in love with God and rejoicing in what God has given him
 - b. So he can't regard sin in his heart nor can his heart be captured by worldly pleasures - his portion and pleasure is in God and sin and the pleasures of this world can't capture him
 - c. An offering made while sin and pleasure are rejoiced in is an unacceptable offering, worship in this attitude is no worship at all

2 E. Fifth, our worship must be brought with thankfulness

1. As we look at the passages that describe the grain offering, we actually see another offering described in the midst of the grain offering, an offering that is very closely related but had some slight differences (for example, honey and leaven could be offered)
 - 1 a. Leviticus 2:14-15 - *"If you offer a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits fresh ears, roasted with fire, crushed new grain. And you shall put oil on it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering.*
 - 1 b. The offering of firstfruits was a special subset of the grain offering, and it tells us one more thing about our worship of God - when we bring God worship, we can't think we are bringing Him something He needs, as though we are adding something to Him
2. The offering of firstfruits reminded the worshiper of that every harvest season
 - a. Each time the harvest came in, they would come and offer the firstfruits, acknowledging that what they brought to God was His in the first place
 - b. So when the worshiper came to worship, he was reminded that he really wasn't bringing God something, that he was bringing back what God had given to Him
3. So the attitude of worship could not be pride - look how much I can give to God - but rather thankfulness - look how much God has given to me
 - a. Worship can never be brought with a proud heart - our worship, made acceptable by God's sacrifice and made within God's covenant, should reflect a heart full of thanksgiving

2 F. Sixth, our worship should include provision for God's servants

1. One of the things repeated over and over again is that a portion of the grain offering belongs to the priests
 - 1 a. For example, Leviticus 2:3 - *But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's food offerings.*
 - 1 b. Or again, Leviticus 2:10 - *But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's food offerings.*
 - 1 c. And then, in the instructions to the priests, Leviticus 6:16-18 - *And the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place. In the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of my food offerings. It is a thing most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. Every male among the children of Aaron may eat of it, as decreed forever throughout your generations, from the LORD's food offerings. Whatever touches them shall become holy."*
 - 1 d. Or again, Leviticus 7:9-10 - *And every grain offering baked in the oven and all that is prepared on a pan or a griddle shall belong to the priest who offers it. And every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall be shared equally among all the sons of Aaron.*
2. God took care to provide for His servants, and so He appointed that a portion of the worship of God's people should be in making provision for His servants
 - a. The worshiper would bring grain offerings and firstfruit offerings as worship to God, and a large portion of those offerings provided food for the priests, those who served in the tabernacle and later the temple
3. And because of this, a large portion of the instructions to the priests was what to do with their grain offerings
 - a. If the grain offerings belonged to the priest, then a priest bringing a grain offering would be somewhat pointless, he gave the grain and got it right back again
 - 1 b. So Leviticus 6:23 said - *Every grain offering of a priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten."*
 - c. The priests, as men, owed God worship as well, and their worship was given wholly to God
4. So, part of worship was providing for God's servants, but this didn't exempt God's servants from worship, and specifically did not exempt them from participating in worship financially, with the work of their hands

① III. How should this point us to Christ?

A. As we turn to our second point this morning, we want to think through how the grain offering should be leading us to Christ? How can the grain offering only find its full potential in the person and work of Christ?

1. And because the grain offering is so different than the burnt offering, the way that Christ fulfills this offering is going to be somewhat different
2. So, whereas the burnt offering points us toward something that Jesus did for us on our behalf, a sacrifice that He offered for us, the grain offering points us toward something that we are called to do, but we can only do through Jesus
3. If the grain offering is about bringing acceptable worship before God, we can only bring acceptable worship through Jesus Christ
4. And I want so see three reasons that we can only bring acceptable worship to God through Jesus Christ, we can only live out the fulfillment of the grain offering through Him, because: (three reasons)

① B. First, Jesus has provided the sacrifice and sealed the covenant through which we can worship God

1. As we went through the grain offering, we saw that the grain offering must be offered with the salt of God's covenant and it had to be presented with the burnt offering
 - a. The grain offering never stood on its own, it could only be brought in a certain context
 - b. And this was because, as we saw last week, the worshiper was unacceptable and therefore could not bring worship that would be accepted
 - c. For the worshiper to bring God the worship He deserved and demanded, he needed to be made acceptable first - otherwise that worship would be nothing more than hypocrisy, a slap in God's face
2. So, if we are called to offer ourselves in worship to God, then we must be made acceptable, we must be joined in covenant to God, and that is exactly what Jesus has done for us
 - a. So the New Testament rejoices that now, through Jesus, we can offer acceptable worship to God
 - ① i. For example, Peter says, in I Peter 2:4-5 - *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
 - ① ii. And Paul closes Romans with Romans 15:15-16 - *But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*
 - ① iii. Romans 12:1 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
 - b. And throughout the New Testament, the blood of Jesus is held up as the New Covenant, the Covenant that allows us to bring our worship
 - ① i. Perhaps one of the most poignant places the New Testament displays this to us is at the last supper, Luke 22:20 - *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*
 - ① ii. So the last verses of Hebrews conclude with, Hebrews 13:20-21 - *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*
3. The only way we could possibly bring God worship that pleases Him is through the covenant and the sacrifice that Jesus has offered for us
 - a. The grain offering, in many ways like the burnt offering, continually reminds us that on our own we are not acceptable, we cannot approach, we cannot bring God the worship He demands - and so the grain offering should be causing us to long for and look for a way to be made acceptable
 - b. In other words, the grain offering should continually remind us of the burnt offering - we can only come in worship because God's wrath has been set aside, we have been made acceptable and we can now approach
 - c. So the grain offering keeps pointing us to Christ - we owe God worship but I can't worship God unless Jesus brings me to God

2 C. Second, Jesus has washed us from sin so that we can say no to ungodliness and worldly passions

1. We saw that the grain offering must be offered with the salt of the covenant, but also without leaven or honey
 - a. The grain offering needed to be brought within the covenant of God and it needed to be brought with an obedient heart, a heart in love with God
 - b. And again, this should point us to Jesus, because this is a completely impossible requirement for those stained and corrupted by sin
 - c. We need someone to come and to cleanse us, to cleanse us from the leaven of sin and to clean our hearts from the passions of this world if we are to come and bring our worship to God
2. And this exactly what Jesus has done for us - His sacrifice has washed us so that we are clean, we are blameless, we can bring our offering without hypocrisy
 - 1 a. As Paul says in Colossians 1:21-22 - *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*
 - b. If we have been covered by the sacrifice of Christ, then we are blameless and able to bring our offering
3. But Jesus has not only washed us from sin so that legally we are blameless - He has made it so that we can truly walk in obedience, our hearts can be in love with God
 - 1 a. Romans 6:17-18 - *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*
 - b. Before Christ, there was no way for us to possibly bring an obedient sacrifice - we were slaves of sin! - but in Christ, we have been set free from sin and have, instead, become slaves of righteousness
4. In fact, this was a chief purpose of Christ's sacrifice, to call us to renounce that which would corrupt the grain offering, that which would stain our worship, to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions
 - 1 a. Titus 2:11-14 - *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*
5. Our worship must be brought with a right heart, a heart that can only exist because Jesus has made us blameless and has called us to blamelessness
 - a. There is no way we can bring our worship with the right heart, except that Jesus has changed our hearts
 - b. Through Jesus we can bring an offering that is not stained by sin

2 D. Third, Jesus is our ultimate provision from God through whom we give thanks

1. Along with the instructions for the grain offering were some instructions for the offering of firstfruits, a subset of or closely related offering to the grain offering
 - a. And firstfruits reminds us that what we bring in worship didn't originate with us but merely represents a tithe, a token of what God has provided for us - we bring to God what He has first given to us
 - b. And again, this should call us to rejoice in Christ, because what has God given to us except Christ, what more could He give us
2. So Jesus is celebrated throughout the New Testament as God's provision for us
 - 1 a. Philippians 4:19-20 - *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
 - 1 b. Romans 8:32- *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
 - c. God has provided everything we will ever need for eternity in Jesus
3. And so it is through Jesus that we come to give thanks to God for His provision for us
 - 1 a. As Paul says in Ephesians 5:20 - *[we are to be] giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*
 - 1 b. Or again in Colossians 3:17 - *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
4. We have so much to rejoice in, to give thanks for, so much reason to bring our worship because of Jesus
 - a. Jesus is the foundation of our worship, the provision for which we give thanks

1 IV. How should we apply this to ourselves?

1 A. If the Grain Offering calls us to offer ourselves in worship to God, then our first and main application is simple - We must devote our lives to the worship of God

1. We're really starting our application this morning with the last application from last week - if we have been made acceptable, then we need to approach God in worship
 - a. We have been redeemed, ransomed by the blood of Christ so that we can approach God and bring Him the worship He deserves
2. The Grain Offering calls us to devote ourselves to worship - so we ought to rejoice in times of worship
 - a. Times of personal worship in reading and meditating on God's word, in prayer, in song
 - b. Times of family worship - reading and meditating on God's word, prayer, song
 - c. Times of corporate worship, like this morning - reading and meditating on God's word, prayer, song
3. But that's not the end of what the Grain Offering calls us to - we should rejoice in these times set aside for worship, but the grain offering reminded us that all of our lives belong to God in worship
 - a. The portion of grain was to represent the worshiper and the work of his hands - he brought a token because all of his life belonged to God
 - 1 b. So our whole lives should be devoted to worship, we should be living out Romans 12:1-2 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
- 2 4. So, the question we can ask ourselves is, "how is what I'm doing right now worship?"
 - 2 a. Is it worship? Is this thing helping me to rejoice in God, to devote myself to God, to love God more? If not, is this what Christ redeemed me for?

2 B. We must base our worship on what Christ has done for us

1. The Grain Offering always had to be mixed with the salt of the covenant - and I don't think this is merely ontological, a state of being, but practical as well
 - a. It is true and glorious that we must be part of God's covenant before we can bring worship
 - b. But I think this also calls us to a specific type of worship, worship that is full of what Christ has done for us, worship that reflects and rejoices in the covenant of God
2. So, when we come times of worship, our worship should focus on Christ - His person and His work
 - a. We should rejoice in and praise God for all that Jesus is for us
 - b. We should rejoice in and praise God for all that Jesus has done for us
 - c. We should celebrate the truths of redemption and reconciliation, propitiation and peace - the gospel needs to be first and foremost in our worship of God
 - d. Any worship that isn't rooted, salted, filled with the glories of the gospel isn't real worship because that's what worship is - it is salted with the covenant of God
3. So when we sing together, we sing songs of Christ; when we read together, we read the Word of Christ; when we meditate together, we meditate on Christ; when we pray together, we pray in the name of Christ
 - 1 a. So we can ask this question: is my worship reflecting the glories of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

2 C. We must bring our worship with obedient, thankful hearts

1. Many of the requirements of the grain offering focused on the heart attitude of worship
 - a. The offering was to be without leaven, without the stain of sin and rebellion - a heart of obedience
 - b. The offering was to be without honey, unstained by worldly pleasures - a heart in love with God
 - c. The offering was closely related to firstfruits, giving back to God what He has given to us - a heart of thankfulness
2. And these attitudes are still what should mark our worship
 - a. We can't be worshiping God if we are harboring sin and rebellion in our hearts
 - b. We can't be worshiping God if we are in love with the things of this world
 - c. We can't be worshiping God if we aren't thankful for what He has given us
3. And since all of life should be worship, we can ask these questions about every activity in our life
 - 1 a. Is this thing helping me to turn away from sin and embrace obedience to my Lord?
 - 1 b. Is this thing causing me to love this world more or to love God more?
 - 1 c. Is this thing spurring me to thanksgiving or to forgetfulness or pride?
4. We ought to order our lives to foster obedient, thankful hearts so all of our life can be brought as worship to God

2D. We should bring offerings to support God's servants as part of our worship

1. A significant portion of the instructions about the grain offering is focused on providing for the priests
 - a. Although I would not say this was the main point of the grain offering, it was a significant and important outcome of the grain offering
 - b. Part of worshiping God was providing for those who devoted their lives to serving God
2. And once again this is still perfectly applicable to us
 - a. God still wants His people to participate financially with the work that He is doing in the world, to support those who devote their lives to preaching the gospel
 - 1b. In fact, Paul makes this point very clear in I Corinthians 9:13-14 - *Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.*
 - c. So as part of our worship of God - not all of our worship of God, not even the largest part of our worship of God - but as a necessary part of our worship of God, we should participate financially with the people of God
 - d. So we bring our offerings to the church and then as a church we use those offerings to support the preaching of the gospel both here, nearby and throughout the world
13. So we can end with two more questions
 - 1a. Am I bringing offerings to God as part of my worship?
 - 1b. When I bring my offerings, am I bringing them as worship?
4. Our worship should include making provision for God's servants, participating in His work