

# A Reconsideration on the Sacrifices of the Old Testament: Focusing on the Burnt Offering

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## Abstract

The sacrifice was the focal point of ancient Israel as a worshipping community. However, in the Old Testament, sacrifices revealed two meanings. Moses founded the sacrificial system of Israel, and the Torah he preached to the Israelites tells us about the sacrifices in the tabernacle and the life outside. Nevertheless, the prophets of the Bible said that God hated sacrifices. They even viewed the sacrifice as a sin against God. It tells us that even in the time of the Old Testament, there is no appropriate conduct of sacrifice.

The purpose of this study is to find the essence of worship and the appropriate form of service in our time by examining the burnt offering, the most representative of the various sacrifices presented in the Old Testament. The rules and meanings of the burnt offerings and how these were applied in the biblical history from the canonical-critical perspective will be analyzed.

**Keywords:** Burnt Offering, Worship Community, Leviticus, the tent of Meeting, Pigeon, Cattle, Sheep, Goat

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## 1. Introduction

Israel, according to the Old Testament, was a community of worship. Exodus, the most important event in the Old Testament, was not just a political event where Israel was liberated from slavery but also a return to a God-worshipping community [1]. In Israeli history after the Exodus, worship was a symbol of their relationship with God. However, the prophets often proclaimed not to worship God, which, in contrast, meant that they should offer the right sacrifices that God is pleased with.

Judaism and Christianity both are the religions of worship. Today's Christianity needs to be examined whether true worship is being conducted. It is now impossible to carry out burnt offerings as prescribed in the Old Testament, but it is necessary to keep the fundamental spirit of burnt offering.

Just as it is difficult to see historically how major feasts such as the Sabbath and Jubilee were practiced, it is also difficult to examine how the burnt offering were performed during the Israel's history. However, we can study the meaning of burnt offering and the worship community through the events that appear in the canon. Finding and applying the true meaning of burnt offering is equally important then and today.

## 2. Leviticus and the Sanctuary

Leviticus is a book for ancestral rites in the Old Testament. The book best illustrates the religious characteristics of Israel as a community of worship. Leviticus recorded the way people of Israel should live as a community of worship, their various sacrifices, and the daily rules that people need to maintain a good relationship with God. It contains religious ordinances and regulations for feasts and sacrifices of the Old Testament including burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, compensation offering, and feasts and festivals such as the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Booths, the Sabbath, and the Jubilee.

There is a common misconception that Leviticus is a ritual provision for the Levites, who were mainly priests. In fact Leviticus deals in detail with the specific religious life of the entire people of Israel, not the words recorded for a particular group of priests. Therefore, the regulations for the people (Leviticus 1:1-6:7) came before the regulations for the priests (Leviticus 6:8-7:38). According to Leviticus, God called Moses at the Tabernacle (=Tent of Meeting) and delivered the laws for worship to the people of Israel through him. The people of Israel met together in the Tabernacle, a place of worship and revelation, to pray to God [2]. The construction of the temple was under the non-Israeli leadership and various groups were mobilized for forced labor (1 Kings 5-6, especially 5:13; 9:15-23, etc.) whereas the tabernacle started from a construction plan under God's initiative and participated in by the Israelites who were filled with the Holy Spirit (Exodus 31:1-11).

Above all, the fact that the temple is a fixed place, the tabernacle is a transportable sanctuary which suggests that the God of Israel cannot be fixed in a certain time and space. The tabernacle as a free-moving sanctuary tells us that God dwells among the Israelites and He is with them in whatever time and space [3]. The tabernacle appeared as an extremely important element in the rituals of Israelites because it was the center of worship, the place where the ark was enshrined, and above all, the place where God was with the people. Unfortunately, the tabernacle, which played a decisive role in the formation of Israel's faith in the Old Testament, no longer exists.

Upon entering the monarchy, the temple took over the role of the tabernacle. During the monarchy, Solomon built and dedicated the first temple. However, in 587 B.C.E., the temple built by Solomon was completely destroyed by the Babylonian Empire. About half of a century later, Zerubbabel, who returned from Babylon in 515 B.C.E., built and dedicated the second temple, but it disappeared during the Roman invasion in the 70 C.E. The most important place for Israel as a worshipping community has completely disappeared twice from history.

In the New Testament era, the essence of the sanctuary changed from building to man. Either the tabernacle or the temple was considered a sanctuary because they believed that God resides in there. However, because God dwells in Jesus, Jesus Christ is the holy place (John 1:14; 2:21). When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the Most Holy Place was torn which meant that the era of the new sanctuary had begun (Matthew 27:51; Heb. 10:20).

### **3. Five Sacrifices**

#### **3.1. The Burnt Offering**

The burnt offering mentioned in Leviticus is the most representative of the various ancestral rites of the Old Testament; "Yahweh called to Moses, and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, When anyone of you offers an offering to Yahweh, you shall offer your offering of the cattle, from the herd and from the flock. If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it at the door of the Tent of Meeting, that he may be accepted before Yahweh. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him'" (Leviticus 1:1-4).

The Hebrew word *olah*, which is a burnt offering, is derived from the verb *alah*, which means 'ascend', and expresses the image of fire, smoke, and fragrance rising high to God [4]. In the case of offering various sacrifices together, the burnt offering was performed first, while the other sacrifices followed. The burnt offering burned everything that was dedicated to God except the dirty parts (e.g., the skin), which were dumped instead.

The people including the priests could not eat at all. This kind of ritual was already widespread in the ancient Near East. There were two kinds of burnt offerings. One was performed by the priests, where during Exodus the people of Israel were to offer a lamb through the priest every morning and evening at the tabernacle of the desert (Exodus 29:38-41). The other was performed by the people, where they offered burnt offerings when an individual made atonement for his wrongs and wished for God's grace (Leviticus 1:2).

At the center of the ritual event was the burnt altar. This burnt altar must be "holy" after it was installed so that the daily sacrifice could be offered [5]. The burnt offering was carried out in cooperation with the priest and the people. When the man who brought the offering laid the hands on the head of the animal, grabbed the offering, and skinned it, the priest placed the offering on the altar and burned it to God. He who offers sacrifices expressed his intention to share his body with the beast by touching its head, and offer himself to God (Leviticus 1:4). By doing so, the giver was equated with the beast. That is, the death of a sacrifice is the death of a man, and the sacrifice to God meant giving himself to God [6]. The priest would take the blood and sprinkle it around the altar. The sprinkling of blood had a symbolic meaning of returning to God the life of the beast as a sacrifice. It was understood that God had received the offering, which smelled fragrant when burned (Leviticus 1:9). The sin of men evokes the wrath of God and the wrath of God leads to judgment. But the people of Israel were able to soften the wrath of God and avoid His judgment through burnt offerings [7]. As such, the theory of "anthropomorphism," in which God is portrayed as a man with a nose like a human being, is often found in the regulations of the rite.

The priest had to keep an eye on the fire of the burnt altar: 'This is the law of the burnt offering: the burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning; and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it' (Leviticus 6:9). The fire on altar inside suggested that God was always there. For this purpose, even the oil from the peace offerings was used for the burnt offering. In the New Testament, it is no longer required to offer burnt offerings every day because Jesus' crucifixion is understood as a full-fledged sacrifice for human sin.

The offerings used in the burnt offering were mainly male cows, sheep, and goats without blemish. Female offering means integrity, and male means the best. This is because in ancient society, males were given superior values than females. We can also think about the practical reasons that females need to feed and breed [8]. However, it was not easy to give a ram or a goat, which was equipped with seed livestock. Those who offered cattle, sheep, and goats as males were comparatively economically affordable. The offerings made by the poor were birds, including pigeons. The ancient Israelis raised pigeons at home (2 kings 6:25). Unlike a cattle, sheep or goat, when a bird is offered, it was done by the priest without the participation of the people. It was probably because the bird was so small, and it was impossible to distinguish between male and female [9]. After Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem to perform the mother's purification ceremony (Leviticus 12:1-8) and to give their firstborn son to God (Exodus 13:1-2,14-15). Their sacrifice as pigeons indicates that the family was poor: 'When the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons' (Luke 2:22-24).

What is interesting is that when a bird is sacrificed as a burnt offering, it should be burned on the altar in a state of "tearing its body from its wings, but not being torn" to make it look like a bigger offering. The worshiper's heart to offer God something even bigger and better, even though he was poor, appeared in

the act of tearing the bird's body. The dove, which was offered in the spirit of offering the best to God, could never be said to be a small offering compared to cows, sheep, and goats. Jesus set a woman as an example to his disciples. Jesus praised the poor widow for giving two mites, probably because he read the heart of a woman who wanted to dedicate the best to God: 'Most assuredly I tell you, this poor widow gave more than all those who are giving into the treasury, for they all gave out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on' (Mark 12:41-44). Jesus directed the disciples' eyes to the widow from the rich [10].

### 3.2. The Peace Offerings

The peace offering (*chebach shelamim*) is for shalom between God and men. All the children of Israel had to build an altar of ground or unfinished stone and offer burnt offering or peace offerings with sheep and cattle on it (Exodus 20:24-25). The characteristic of the peace offering is in the communal meals. That is, the fellowship between God and men was achieved or restored through meals in which God and men were each assigned their share. In the case of burnt offering, nothing is left behind because they are all burned. In cereal offering and sin offering, only part of them is burned, and the rest are eaten by the priest or the descendants of Aaron. However, in the case of peace offering, the fat of the sacrifice is burned and given to God, while the chest and hind legs are given to the priest (Leviticus 7:30-33) and the rest of the meat are eaten by the people. They were not allowed to eat anywhere but must eat in a fixed place (see Deuteronomy 12:6-7,11-12,15-19,26; 1 Samuel 1:3-4). In terms of communal meals, it is presumed that the peace offering was the most popular among the Old Testament sacrifices. This is because, unlike burnt offerings, it was a kind of feast for people who participated in the rites after worshiping by offering sacrifices to God. The early church's shared meals and shared ownership were the positive aspects of the peace offerings.

Hannah is the main character of the most representative peace offerings in the Old Testament. The anecdote of Hannah, a woman from the tribe of Ephraim, who struggled with her childbirth at the end of the period of Judges, told her heartbreaking story surrounding the peace offerings. Her husband, Elkanah, made a yearly pilgrimage to an Israeli sanctuary called Siloh, where he offered the peace offering to God. Hannah was crying while Elkanah's whole family was eating and drinking. Elkanah asked Hannah, "Why did you cry and why not eat...?" (1 Samuel 1:8). Hannah's non-response revealed her own sad feelings for not participating in the peace offering. She stood up alone and prayed, pouring her distressed heart before God after they ate and drank. Hannah's prayer was so enthusiastic that Eli, the priest of Shiloh at that time, misunderstood her as a drunken woman and urged her to quit drinking the wine (1 Samuel 1:13-14). Even the priest was unaware of her pain, and she had no other way than to enthusiastically communicate her pain to God. Eli, the priest, understood Hannah's sorrow and earnest prayers, and blessed her. She was grateful for the priest's blessing and left where she was praying and began to eat. At the words of the priest's blessing, Hannah never again grieve (1 Sam. 1:17-18). She ate the meat of the peace offering. In other words, she participated in the peace offering. Only then could the offering come as a feast of true joy to Hannah. Even today, the peace offerings remain the basis of an important Christian doctrine. In Christianity, Christ is regarded as a peace offering to God (1 John 2:2). This is because God sent his Son as a peace offering to forgive the sins of mankind (1 John 4:10).

### 3.3. The Cereal Offering

The Cereal offering (Minha) is without blood. It is the only ritual to offer grain, regardless of animal sacrifice. This does not mean that any grain could be used. The grain used for this offering was limited. It is a rite in which olive oil was poured over the fine powder and frankincense was placed on it. Here, fine powder refers to flour. Wheat was an indispensable and important grain in ancient Israel. Since the growth rate is slower than that of barley, wheat could be harvested only after waiting two months longer after the barley (Exodus 9:31-32). Thus, wheat was classified as a precious among grains (Ezekiel 16:13). These grain offerings made of fine powder were offered as independent sacrifices (Leviticus 5:11; 6:13-16; Numbers 5:15), or were associated with other types of sacrifices (Numbers 28-29).

It is difficult to grasp the meaning of the grain offerings because they were not offered. But with other sacrifices in most cases (see Numbers 15:1-16; Chronicles 29:14), but the 'memorial (Leviticus 2:2)' is an important clue in grasping the meaning of the subject. The cereal offering was a memorial that meant God will remember people. The grain left after burning became the priest's food, and the priest must respect the food as the most holy, thinking about the heart of the person who offered the cereal offering as a memorial. The word 'memorial' in the titles of Psalms 38 and 70 is a change in the offering as a memorial. It is presumed that the petitioners sang the songs of these psalms while worshiping with cereal offerings.

The cereal offering is clearly different from other sacrifices in its material. It means that it does not bleed and that it was given as a harvest from the ground. The ancient Canaanites had the idea of guaranteeing the fertility and future harvest of the earth through sacrifices made as the harvest of the earth, but the cereal offering of the Israelites goes far beyond that meaning. In the Bible, God is the owner of the Earth. The Old Testament emphasizes that the earth and everything in it is God's creation, and that the true owner of the earth is God (Psalms 24:1; Deuteronomy 10:14; Exodus 19:5; Leviticus 25:23). This means that the earth in the Old Testament is not a simple natural world, but a creation of God (Genesis 1:1), and the domain of God's reign (Imperial Domain, Psalm 96:10) obeying God's rule. Although all the land belongs to God, the Old Testament interest is particularly concentrated in the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan is not a land that the Israelites conquered by their own strength, but a land given to them by God (Joshua 21:43).

The word God-given land is completely different from the word that humans conquered. The earth is something that God gave to man for a while, and man can never be the owner of the earth. The Israelites came to Canaan not because of a military conquest but as accepting the gift of grace from God. They were in charge of the land management, but the landowner was God. It was a royal grant God, the Creator and Master, bestowed upon his people. The word jubilee in the Old Testament is an important reminder that the owner of the earth is God, not humans. Offering to God the harvest from His land is to thank God for giving them the great gift of the earth (1 Chronicles 29:14).

The bowls were needed to mix the fine powder, oil, and frankincense. The Old Testament does not record the vessel, but vessels used for the cereal offerings are often found throughout Israel. All of them are engraved with the Hebrew word *kodesh*, which means 'to be holy'. The vessels used for the sacrifices were distinct from those used in daily life. Obviously, the cereal offering must have been a small ritual compared to other rites. Perhaps it was a sacrifice that the poor could do. So, the cereal offering was a worship service that anyone could give away from the rich (Leviticus 2:1), but it was a sacrifice that was performed to God with a holy and distinct heart from the preparation process.

### 3.4. The Sin Offering

The sin offering is the most central ritual related to the atonement. Fundamentally, it is a sacrifice that serves to purify sin in Israel by treating sin itself. While the peace offering plays a role in restoring the relationship that was divided by sin, the sin offering aimed at solving the sin itself. The Hebrew *hataat* for the sin offering means “to purify,” which is why some argue that it is more appropriate to call sin offering as purification offering. The sin offering is classified according to who has committed the sin. First, when the priest atoned for the sins committed, a bull will be offered to make the atonement (Leviticus 4:3-4).

The sin of the priest who mediated the relationship between Israel and God was the heaviest. If the high priest made a mistake, the life of worship and the well-being of the people as a whole are threatened. Therefore, he had to offer the largest and most valuable bull of the offering. The beast that has given blood to the sanctuary should never be used for any other purpose, so neither the priest should eat the meat. A bull was also offered for the atonement of the whole people, and since not all congregations can participate in the sacrifice, the elders represented the congregation and participated in the sacrifice (Leviticus 4:13-21). In the case of the patriarch, goats were offered (Leviticus 4:22-26), while among the common people, they offered a female goat or ram (Leviticus 4:27-35). The ritual of the sin offering for the patriarchal or common people's fault is relatively simple. The difference in the sacrifices according to the offenses revealed that the whole people, the priests, or the patriarchs' faults were considered heavier than those of the commoners.

The main part of the sacrificed beast is similar to the peace offering where it was placed on the altar with oil, but the peculiar thing about the sin offering is that the blood of the sacrifice was applied and sprinkled on the sanctuary to resolve unintentional sins of individuals, including the patriarch (Leviticus 4:30). And when the priest or the people collectively commit unintentional sins, they go inside the tabernacle, sprinkle blood on the sanctuary, and put blood on the incense altar (Leviticus 4:6-7, 17-18). And when attempting to settle unrepentant sins, on the day of the atonement, the high priest enters the Most Holy and sprinkles blood on the ark (Leviticus 16:13-15). This difference shows that the heavier the weight of sin, the more the blood is sprinkled in the center of the tabernacle.

These sin offerings have been kept since the days of Aaron. The sin offering in Exodus differs slightly from the sin offering in Leviticus. While the sin offering in Leviticus was offered to atone for the sins or special offenses already committed, the sin offering in Exodus appeared to be offered in advance of the crimes that may be committed by the priest in office.

### 3.5. The Guilt Offering

It is difficult to distinguish between the sin offering and the guilt/compensation offering. The guilt offering, similar to the sin offering, is meant to compensate for the damage caused by the sin/wrong, in addition to the meaning of a sacrifice to God. This means that the sacrifice to God is not merely aimed at removing the guilt of the worshiper, but that the true sacrifice is made only when it goes to the actual compensation. The guilt offering is a ritual to compensate for the interception of the tithing, and other things offered to the sanctuary or the priest (Leviticus 5:15-16).

So, it can be said that the guilt offering is a special meaning of sin offering. It is a sacrifice that is made by adding a fifth (20%) to the sacrifice. All these extras, made in order to compensate for the wrongdoings of the holy things, were turned to the priest. Therefore King Joash of the southern kingdom of Judah, did not offer the silver for the fast offering and the silver for the sin offering to the temple of the Lord, but gave it to the priest (2 Kings 12:16).

The guilt offering clearly acknowledged the ownership of God and the neighbors. Those who believe in God must distinguish God's things as holy, and they must live a life that will not harm their neighbors. It does not focus on the punishment for solving the problem of sin, but focuses on how the guilty person can return to a normal life. The words of Jesus telling us to worship after reconciling with our brothers also remind us of this guilt offering (Matthew 5:23-24).

Jesus' words to worship a brother after he is reconciled can also be interpreted in terms of compensation (Matthew 5:23-24). In the guilt offering, punishment for solving the problem of wrongdoing is not important. It focuses on how a guilty person can return to a normal life. We tend to think of God's forgiveness and love as a cheap grace that is unconditionally given without the penalty of sin, but we need to remember that Jesus himself died for our sins. Christ's self-sacrifice to God is a compensation for human sin. It may be said that it was the sacrifice that made the greatest reparation for the damage done by humans against God.

#### **4. Cases in the Old Testament**

##### **4.1. Abel's Firstborn**

Cain and Abel were the first to offer sacrifices to the Lord. God received Abel's offering, but he refused Cain's offering. Although Cain was older and Abel was younger, Genesis introduces Abel first. This reversed order reappears in the event of sacrifice: 'Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his flock and of the fat of it. Yahweh respected Abel and his offering, but he didn't respect Cain and his offering. Cain was very angry, and the expression on his face fell' (Genesis 4:4-5). The important thing here is that God took only Abel's sacrifice. God was pleased with Abel. He respected 'Abel and his offering'. The first sacrifice-story of the Old Testament shows that people were prioritized over offerings. It is clear that God did not accept Cain and his offering because the life of Cain did not make him happy, rather than that the offering itself was flawed (1 John 3:12; Hebrews 11:4). For Abel had lived a righteous life, so God received Abel himself as a sacrifice. And Abel's firstborn lamb and its oil developed into the best offering the Israelites could offer to God in the future (Exodus 13:2; Deuteronomy 15:19).

##### **4.2. Noah & David's Relief from God's wrath**

The word burnt offering in the Old Testament first appeared immediately after the flood of Noah's time. The first thing Noah did when he came out of the Ark was to take sacrifices among all the clean beasts and birds. He did a burnt offering to God with them (Genesis 8:20). Noah's burnt offering has two meanings. One was a gratitude for the grace of God saving from the flood judgment, and the other was asking God for grace for the future of his new life. After the burnt offering, God gave new grace to the world of creation. God did not curse the earth because of men (Genesis 8:21). In response to the burnt offering of Noah, God promised to be faithful to the whole world forever. Generally, sacrifices in the ancient Near East were done for two purposes. It was first, to provide food to God, and second to appease God [11]. The burnt offering in the Old Testament also meant to be relieved from God's wrath. David's burnt offering also had the same meaning. 'David built there an altar to Yahweh, and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings. So Yahweh was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel' (2 Samuel 24:25).

##### **4.3. Abraham's Obeying**

As soon as Abraham arrived in Canaan, the first thing he did was to build an altar 'for Yahweh' who led him to Canaan, and 'call on the name of Yahweh' (Genesis 12:7-8). Expressions like this appeared twice in Genesis 13 (verses 3-4, 18). Here we need to remember that the final part of primeval history ended with

the story of people building the tower. At the center of the urban civilization achieved on the plain of Sinar, there was a high tower made by human technology and science. Humans gathered around this tower without scattering. However, the civilization of the Tower of Babel ended in a tragic failure. In the very place of failure, God called Abraham and began a new work of salvation through him. And the new history began with a God-centered 'altar-building' rather than a human-centered 'tower-building'.

In Genesis 22, Abraham attempted to offer his son Isaac as burnt offering, which was the most dramatic worshipping scene in the Old Testament. Here Abraham took just the trees, the fire, and the sword to be used in the burnt offering (Genesis 22:6). Isaac said to Abraham, 'Where is the Lamb for burnt offerings?' (Genesis 22:7). At the end of the story, Abraham took the ram and offered burnt offering on behalf of his son (Genesis 22:13). The story illustrates the typical burnt offering. God said to Abraham, 'Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah. Offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you of' (Genesis 22:2). Isaac, who appeared in the story, appears to be a young man over the age of twenty because it was long enough for Isaac to appear on the mountain carrying a tree for the burnt offering. If so, Abraham was about 120 years old. Abraham, an old man, took the trees for the burnt offering and gave it to his son Isaac, and took the fire and the sword and went to the place God had told him. There he bound his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:9-10).

In this process, if the father and the son competed, Abraham, who was an old man, would have lost to his young son Isaac. Abraham's burnt offering would be possible because Isaac was voluntarily bound for Abraham. Therefore, the earliest targum, The Fragmentary Targum, suggested that Isaac was willing to sacrifice himself: "Abraham stretched out his hand and picked up a sword to kill his son Isaac. Isaac answered to his father Abraham, 'Tie my hands firmly so that I will not resist when I am in pain, and I will not interfere with you, nor will you defile your sacrifices, so that you will not fall into the depths of destruction in the coming world.' Abraham turned his eyes to Isaac's eyes, but Isaac's eyes turned to an angel of heaven. Isaac saw the angels, but Abraham did not see them. Then the angels of heaven came out and said to one another, 'Let us go and see the two faithful men of the world. One is a slaughter and the other is slaughtered. The one who kills does not hesitate, and the one who is slain puts forth his neck'" [12][13].

#### 4.4. Saul's Deterioration

The kingdom of Israel began with Saul. He was a modest man: 'Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the last of all the families of the families of the Benjamin?' But his humility did not last long. Not long after he ascended the throne, Saul lost his beautiful character and made some mistakes. One of them was the voluntary execution of the burnt offering without waiting for Samuel the priest while preparing for the war against the Philistines: 'He stayed seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. Saul said, Bring here the burnt offering to me, and the peace-offerings. He offered the burnt offering' (1 Samuel 13:8-9). He offered sacrifices he should not have dared to offer to get the attention of the people.

Another mistake made by Saul arose after winning the battle with Amalek. Saul did not demolish the Amalekites and their possessions according to the command of God, but he left behind some valuable loot. Before the battle, God said, "Beat the Amalekites, and do not leave all their possessions, but destroy them"(1 Sam 15:3). Saul succumbed to the battle. But Saul and his army spared Agag, the best of the sheep and cattle, and the fat calves and lambs - everything that was good. They only destroyed those that were despised and weak (1 Sam 15:9). The following narrative is full of chaos between Saul and Samuel



concerning this event (1 Samuel 15: 13,15,20-21). When Samuel reproved him, Saul said he had left it to offer to God. And he hastened to turn that responsibility on his own people. Samuel was furious at the naive excuse that a king of a nation was taking: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offering and sacrifices as much as in obeying(shama) the voice of the LORD? To obey(shama) is better than sacrifice, and to heed(shama) is better than the fat of rams." There is an important word emerging from Saul's excuse and Samuel's rebuke which is shama, the Hebrew word for 'obey', 'heed'. The basic meaning of shama is 'hearing (the word of God)', but it goes a step further and means to live "obeying". The role of Saul is in hearing (1 Samuel 15: 1). There is no anointing without listening [14]. The fact that we hear the sermon as the Word of God is not merely a listener who has heard and is touched by the heart. Shama in the true sense means that when we go to the world, we live in obedience remembering the Words given. Saul was abandoned by God because he could not shama to God's Word. When the function of the peace offerings is the restoration of the relationship with God, the restoration does not end with giving sacrifices. If we remember our words and obey them, we will say that true peace offerings are possible.

#### **4.5. David's Peace offerings and the Ark**

David, who set Jerusalem as the capital, succeeded in winning the first battle with the Philistines after he became king and brought the ark of God's covenant to the capital. This work was of great significance. The ark of the covenant was made in the days when the Israelites wandered the wilderness for forty years after their exodus. It was a holy article containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments given through Moses (Exodus 25: 16,21) and a symbol of presence that God is with the people of Israel.

The Ark of the Covenant, the most holy sacred gift, could only be carried carefully by the separated people. In 1 Samuel 6, we see this Ark of the Covenant carried by animals. Israel, which was defeated in the battle against the Philistines, was stripped of the ark. The Philistines carried the Ark of the Covenant up to Beth-Shemes with a new cart dragged by two sucking cows to confirm that the plague on them was caused by God (1 Sam. 6). In 2 Samuel 6, we find the Ark of the Covenant carried back by the Israelites into the cart.

After the death of Uzzah, David, fearing YHWH, hesitated to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Instead, he moved it to the house of Obed-Edom, a Philistine. Obed-Edom said, "How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?" David, who stayed in Jerusalem for three months, wondered about the Ark of the Covenant and heard that the house of Obed-Edom was blessed by the ark. David again began to move the ark. The former joy was restored, and the way of moving the ark of the covenant changed. The ark God was no longer in the cart, and people carried it away. While the Ark of the Covenant was being transported, they praised and danced. David succeeded in laying down the Ark of the Covenant in the place he had prepared beforehand, and soon he gave the delightful burnt offering and peace offerings before the LORD (2 Samuel 6:17). Just as the transfer of the ark began with a sacrifice, it also concluded with an unspecified number of offerings. The ark narrative ended with the distribution of food which was not the usual daily fare [15]. When the Levites could not bear their responsibilities and roles, the symbol of God's presence had to call out Uzzah's death, but God's presence became the greatest joy to Israel when the king and the priests united and honored the Word. And the true peace offerings with which the relationship with the broken relation with God was restored could be offered.

#### **4.6. Solomon's A Thousand Sacrifices**

In 1 Kings 3, one of the most impressive and beautiful stories of Solomon's record comes up. Solomon visited the great high place in Gibeon to execute the burnt offering to the LORD. Deuteronomistic Historians were very negative about the high place because it was the place of mixed religions. But

Solomon did 'a thousand burnt offerings' at the high place in Gibeon. There, Solomon obtained it by begging for a 'listening heart(lev-shomea)' so that he could judge his people well.

But Solomon lost his heart because of his 'thousand wives' and idols they had brought with them. When he lost the heart that God had given him, the heart of God and the hearts of the people had left him [16].

The most important of Solomon's achievements was the building of the temple. The construction of the temple, which was once a longing desire in David's heart, came to pass in the days of Solomon. Built after seven years of construction, the Jerusalem Temple was a tremendous structure - 35m long, 10m wide, and 15m high. However, he said that a man-built building is not a place to worship the holy Creator God (1 Kings 8:27). In essence, man is a being who lives bound by time and space, but God cannot dare to become his dwelling place on earth. It is significant that this confession took place at the dedication of the temple. The God Solomon confessed to was still in heaven. He sacrificed using grain, the product of the earth. Solomon's cereal offering was a passage connecting heaven and earth.

#### **4.7. Hezekiah's Passover and Peace offerings**

Hezekiah, the thirteenth king of Judah (c. 715-687 B.C.), was regarded as a good King with Josiah (2 Kings 18:5). By 710 BCE Hezekiah had broken off relations with the Assyrian Empire and was preparing for a major reformation. He prayed that God, who saved Israel from Egypt, would save the kingdom of Judah from Assyria, and sacrificed the Passover and offered peace offerings. In Hezekiah's reformation, the feast of the Passover and the sacrifice of peace offerings are important (2 Chr. 30:22; 33:16). Christians will think of another pleasant feast meal in the sanctified God's house [17]. If the Passover is a season to remember God who saved the Israelites under the Egyptian leadership, peace offerings have the meaning of sacrifice for the restoration of relationship with God. He expected God to save him from Assyria this time.

The Chroniclers have drawn Hezekiah as a restorer of broken worship and a model of absolute faith. In the first month of his reign, Hezekiah, who was at the age of twenty-five years, opened and sanctified YHWH's temple and set all the worship and life according to the word of God. For this, the temple of YHWH was restored and sanctified, and the priests and the Levites were brought together to offer offerings and to repatriate the temple officially (Chr. 29). The Passover festival, which had been severed for a long time, was also restored. Originally the Passover Festival began with grazing sheep and ended with a seven-day unleavened bread festival, but the Passover renewal of Hezekiah was so successful that the entire congregation of Judah extended the Passover festival a week with joy.

Chroniclers said that there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem (Chr. 30:26). The "great joy" found in Hezekiah's time was the joy of the true peace offerings that the blessing of the priest for the people and the prayer sound to the heavens that the relationship with God was restored.

### **5. Conclusions**

In the New Testament, the meaning of various offerings frequently appeared in relation to the ministry of Jesus Christ. We were given the redemption by the precious blood of Christ, the spotless lamb (1 Peter 1:18-19). Christ gave himself to God as a fragrant offering and sacrificed for us (Ephesians 5:2) and, on behalf of the burnt offering, He performed an eternal sacrifice and sat at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:11-12). Thus, the authors of the New Testament interpreted the burnt offering of the Old Testament Christologically. According to them, repeated sacrifices, like the burnt offering of the Old Testament, are no

longer necessary because the son of God, a more noble offering in place of animal offerings, gave his body to atone for it [18].

The burnt offering is the most important and representative sacrifice in the Old Testament and conveys some important ideas to modern Christianity and the church. First, the worshiper is more important than the offering. The rich devotes a cattle, the middle class devotes a sheep or goat, while the poor devotes birds. The value of birds is never lighter than a cattle, sheep, or goat. The important thing is the heart of the giver. Rather than offering with a stingy heart, it is more important to give with a volunteering heart and gratitude. Second, the burnt offering must be intact and complete. Burning does not mean that only part of it is dedicated, but all of it is devoted. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac means that he has completely dedicated his future to God. Third, all services shall be joined together by the priest and the congregation. The burnt offering was not for the priest alone. It is significant that the person who brought the offering and the priest shared the work. The service to God should not be all the burdens of one person, but the worship of "together." Rather than today's services centered on pastors, the participation of laymen in many areas needs to be more actively accepted.

In addition to the Leviticus, the Old Testament tells in detail what sacrifices Israel, as a community of worship, should offer before God and not all sacrifices are received by God. The prophets of the Old Testament said in unison: 'Do not offer sacrifices' (Amos 5:20-25; Hosea 8:11-13; 10:5-8; Isaiah 1:10-15; 66:3 etc.) [19].

The burnt offering of the Old Testament corresponds to the daily services today. Now we must expand the category of worship we offer to God. Worship does not end in the chapel. To worship is to continue the spirit of sacrifice in the world. Every place in our lives is a place of burnt offering. The Old Testament emphasizes the nature of the sacrifice that God is really pleased with in many places. A sincere offering is important even if it is less than other offerings, and it is more important to live a straight and upright life than a ritual biased toward formality (Malachi 1:8-10; Isaiah 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 51:16-19, etc.). Man is God's holy temple. Therefore, one should be wary of and stay away from flaws and pollution in life. Paul's affirmation will be that the life of the holy Christian is a ritual that God rejoices in.

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