

The First Thanksgiving

LEVITICUS 7: 11-15; 22: 29

PHILIPPIANS 4: 6-7

The first Thanksgiving (American History)

- (Puritan) Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock on Dec. 11, 1620
- devastating winter; by spring, 46 / 102 who sailed the Mayflower had died
- Squanto, English-speaking member of Wampanaog nation helped them learn skills to survive
- Harvest of 1621 was bountiful; Pilgrims celebrated with a feast between Sept. 21 & Nov. 11
- invited Squanto and his leader to join them with their immediate family – 90 relatives! 3-day feast

1st occurrence of “Thanksgiving” in Scripture

- Leviticus 7: 12 – more than 3,500 yrs. ago
- If you present your peace offering as an expression of **thanksgiving**, the usual animal sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast ... (Lev. 7: 12; NLT)

The peace or fellowship offering

¹¹ “These are the instructions regarding the different kinds of peace offerings ... ¹² If you present your peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, the usual animal sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast ... ¹³ This peace offering of thanksgiving must also be accompanied by loaves of bread made with yeast. ¹⁴ One of each kind of bread must be presented as a gift to the LORD. It will then belong to the priest who splatters the blood of the peace offering against the altar. ¹⁵ The meat of the peace offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the same day it is offered. None of it may be saved for the next morning. (Lev. 7: 11-15; NLT)

The peace or fellowship offering

“If you present an animal from the herd as a peace offering to the LORD, it may be a male or a female, but it must have no defects. ² Lay your hand on the animal’s head, and slaughter it at the entrance of the Tabernacle. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splatter its blood against all sides of the altar. ³ The priest must present part of this peace offering as a special gift to the LORD. This includes all the fat around the internal organs, ⁴ the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. ... ⁵ and Aaron’s sons will burn them on top of the burnt offering on the wood burning on the altar. It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ...

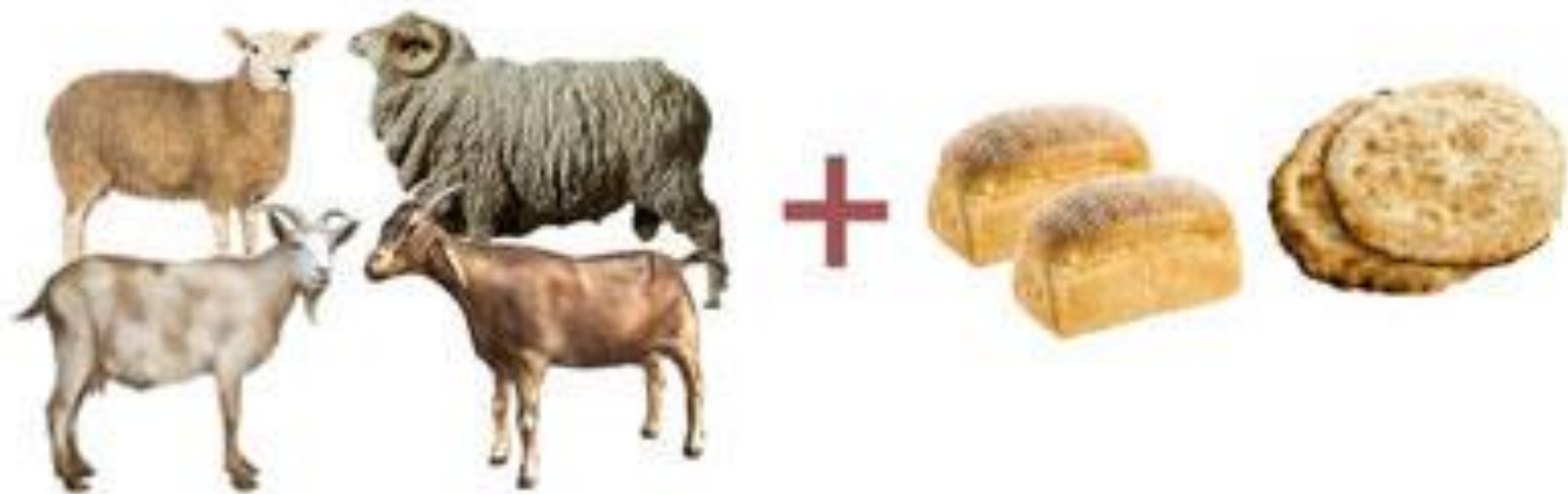
(Lev. 3: 1-5; NLT)

PEACE/FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

WHY: Express thanks to God, give God a gift, or make a special promise to God.

WHERE: Bronze Altar

WHAT: 1 herd animal (male or female) plus bread made with and without yeast.



5 main types of Sacrifices

Burnt Offering

Grain Offering

**Peace / Fellowship
Offering**

Sin Offering

Guilt Offering

OT sacrifices dealt with an impossible situation

- How can sinful man approach a Holy God and be accepted by God ?
- ... through a sacrifice
- substitute offered in place of the sinner
- substitute receives the punishment for the sin
- blood of substitute covers the sin
- sinner can now approach God and be accepted

OT sacrifices pointed forward to perfect & final sacrifice

- they were “... a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Colossians 2: 17)
- Jesus Christ’s death on the cross is the only needed sacrifice for sin, offered once for all (cf. Heb. 10: 1-10)
- We can now freely approach a holy God and offer our “sacrifice of praise” (Heb. 13: 15)

5 main types of Sacrifices

Burnt Offering :

worship God

VOLUNTARY

Grain Offering:

thank the Provider

**Peace / Fellowship
Offering**

Sin Offering:

Ask for forgiveness

REQUIRED

Guilt Offering:

make things right

Zebakh Shelomim

Peace or Fellowship Offering

- *shelomim* (related to *shalom*)
- root word *shalem*: to be complete, sound, whole, or healthy
- plural : well-being; completeness
- peace = “all is well” between God and the offerer
- Fellowship with “who”?

Peace or Fellowship Offerings

**Vow
Offering**

**Thank
Offering**

**Freewill (voluntary)
Offering**

Peace or Fellowship Offerings



A large brown oval frame contains three smaller brown oval shapes. The top-left oval contains the text 'Vow Offering', the top-right oval contains 'Thank Offering', and the bottom-center oval contains 'Freewill (voluntary) Offering'. A horizontal grey line is positioned above the 'Thank Offering' oval. A brown arrow points from the top right towards the 'Thank Offering' oval. The bottom of the image has a solid brown horizontal bar.

**Vow
Offering**

**Thank
Offering**

**Freewill (voluntary)
Offering**

Some observations & principles ...

- ❑ Voluntary, but with strict criteria – *God does not demand this, but not whatever we like to offer*
- ❑ Animal (male or female) without defects – *God deserves the best*
- ❑ Free to choose what kind of animal to sacrifice (Lev. 3) – *don't compare - cow is not better than lamb or goat*
- ❑ Deal with sin first – *all thanksgiving is based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ for our sins*
- ❑ Thank offering placed “on top” of burnt offering – *worship is the foundation of all thanksgiving*

Observations and principles ...

- ❑ leaven (or yeast): represents what is false, impure, sinful
- ❑ unleavened breads included in offering; but why also leavened bread?
- ❑ We will never be “perfect” or “without sin” this side of heaven; yet God still invites us to approach Him and to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, which He will accept (Rom. 12: 1)
- ❑ We give thanks for the “good” as well as the “bad” that God has allowed into our lives; God is still working out His purposes for our lives

Observations and principles

- ❑ Peace offering to be shared among the LORD, priest and worshiper
- ❑ All other sacrifices either entirely burnt on the altar, or partly burnt and partly consumed by the priest
- ❑ After the LORD and priest received their portions, worshiper takes remaining portions of meat and bread for a feast with family & friends (ritually pure)
- ❑ Any meat not consumed that day had to be destroyed

The “peace” & “fellowship” of TG Offering

- ❑ worshiper gives thanks to God for the His many blessings
- ❑ Blessings enjoyed through worshiper’s relationship with God, characterized by peace, well-being and wholeness (shalom)
- ❑ Worshiper presents a gift to God; God then graciously shares a portion of gift with worshiper
- ❑ *Generosity and communion expand as worshiper shares his portion with family & friends*

The “peace” & “fellowship” of TG Offering

- “A true act of thankfulness sends out gentle ripples of joy and gratitude that continue to expand, bringing glory to God and blessings to others.”



Thanksgiving 2020 ...

- When you bring a thanksgiving offering to the LORD, sacrifice it properly so you will be accepted. (Lev. 22: 29; NLT)
- Giving thanks to God - *very personal*
- It's a sacrifice between you and God alone
- We can do it anytime; if offered according to the principles we've observed, sacrifice is always accepted
- God will be pleased; He will grant us His **peace** and the joy of **fellowship** with Him and others

Thanksgiving 2020 ...

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- Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4: 6-7; NLT)