

Exegetical Notes – Leviticus 3:1-17

“Communion”

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Leviticus 3:1-17

Verse 1-2

If someone's offering is a fellowship offering, and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before YHWH an animal without defect. He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides.

- The third voluntary offering that the Hebrews were encouraged to make was the Fellowship Offering. This offering was to be an ox, sheep or goat of either sex but totally without flaw.
- It was to be slaughtered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting just as was the Burnt Offering (see chapter 1).

Verse 3-4

From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to YHWH by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys.

- In this offering, the priest removes certain very specific parts that are to be offered to God.

Verse 5

Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is on the burning wood, as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to YHWH.

- The portion of the offering that is to be given to God is then laid on the altar on top of the burnt offering. This offering is meaningful

because of its association with the burnt offering (see chapter 1) and cannot be made independently of it.

Verse 6-11

If he offers an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to YHWH, he is to offer a male or female without defect. If he offers a lamb, he is to present it before YHWH. He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to YHWH by fire: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made to YHWH by fire.

- If the offering is a sheep, it is to be done in this way. The breed of sheep common in this area has a “fat tail,” a lump of fat just above its tail that could weigh up to forty pounds. This fat portion was to be given to God.

Verse 12-16

If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before YHWH. He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. From what he offers he is to make this offering to YHWH by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver which he will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is YHWH's.

- If the offering is a goat, it is to be done this way.

Verse 17

This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.

- The blood and the fat of an animal are forbidden to Jews in all generations. They may not be eaten because these parts are considered sacred to God. The kidneys and the liver were thought to retain quantities of blood even after the animal was drained of its blood.

- The portions of the fellowship offering that were not burned on the altar were returned to the giver so that he might eat them with his family and friends (see Lev. 7:15).

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