

# Leviticus 2 Study Notes (not for preaching)

*[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 [2] and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [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.*

- Fine flour = the best part
- Frankincense = spice, expensive, coupled with gold in Isaiah 60:6 (Wise men prophecy)
  - Isaiah 60:6, [6] A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.
- Food offering = pleasing aroma, purpose of worship
- Memorial portion = remembrance offering
  - NT Example: The thief on the cross recognized this need clearly when he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). It is a prayer Jesus gladly answers: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
  - **So this is to pray, “Lord, remember your promises to us!”**
- The priest would burn only a portion of the grain offering on the altar. Most of the sacrifice was given to the priests for their food allowance (how they got paid).

*[4] “When you bring a grain offering baked in the oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil or unleavened wafers smeared with oil. [5] And if your offering is a grain offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mixed with oil. [6] You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. [7] And if your offering is a grain offering cooked in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. [8] And you shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD, and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. [9] And the priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial portion [the fistful] and burn this on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [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.*

- Three types of breads are mentioned in these verses:
  - Baked in the oven (v. 4)
    - These ovens were often shaped as a dome or cone with an opening at the bottom for a fire that you could stoke. Sometimes the outside of the oven was covered with a plaster
    - Tandoori oven in Greece built and run by Afghans
  - Baked on a griddle (v. 5)
    - Shallow clay bowl, flipped upside down and dough draped on top

- Very thin, breakable
  - Cooked in a pan (v. 7).
    - Probably more like a clay pot w/ a lid (think clay dutch oven) for thicker
- Since the grain offering was holy, the remaining part was to go to the holy priests (v. 10).

*[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. [12] As an offering of firstfruits you may bring them to the LORD, but they shall not be offered on the altar for a pleasing aroma.*

- Leaven here comes from the word ferment or sour - think like a sourdough starter.
- Leaven and honey are both prohibited on the altar, though the text does not explain why. Various explanations for this prohibition have been put forward. It's not that leaven was evil in and of itself b/c you could give it as a firstfruit. Some possibilities:
  - ANE believe leaven changed the composition of things and this may symbolically represented corruption
  - Yeast was alive and couldn't be burned alive
  - They are both byproducts (think excrement processes) and would be unclean
  - Yeast and honey were quite common in other pagan ritual sacrifices and throughout the Law the worship of YHWH is viewed as holy, unique, set apart
    - E.g. The blood was completely removed before sacrifice was burned

*[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.*

- All offerings and sacrifices should have salt. Why?
  - Why? The purpose of salt in sacrifice could be the opposite of yeast and honey:
    - salt is a preservative that prevents decay and putrefaction.
    - Yeast and honey would quicken it since the yeast feeds on the sugar in the grain and the honey
- Probably some other stuff going on here.
  - In the ANE, covenants of a wide variety (in and outside of the Bible) used salt in ceremonies to make a covenant agreement binding
  - Logic: If a treaty is violated, then that person's land would be sowed or plowed under w/ salt so as to ruin it so that it could be farmed
  - Salt is like saying, “If I violate this covenant, I am in trouble” - like a visual that you cannot violate the covenant.
- Salt in the Bible underscores permanence and severity
  - *Numbers 18:19, [19] All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you.”*
  - *2 Chronicles 13:5, [5] Ought you not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?*
- So what is the deal? What does this expression mean?
  - Rooted in the threat of having your land overrun
  - Biblically speaking it is used to underscore permanence.

- It is as if God is reminding them that they are in a binding, covenant relationship with God that is intended to last forever.
- Salt was a perpetual reminder of the enduring relationship between God and the Israelites.
- **So the Grain Offering is a memorial offering to say, “Lord, remember us!” and the salt is to remind them, “Don’t worry, he won’t!”**
  - We remember. He remembers. What? The binding, covenant relationship that occurred at Sinai

*[14] “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. [15] And you shall put oil on it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering. [16] And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of the crushed grain and some of the oil with all of its frankincense; it is a food offering to the LORD.*

*Leviticus 3 [1] “If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. [2] And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar. [3] And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the LORD, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, [4] and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. [5] Then Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire; it is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [The rest of the chapter is by and large the same but w/ animals from the flock and goats]*

- V3, Unlike the burnt offering, the offerer takes the fat and organs and gives it to the priest who puts it on top of the burnt offering
  - So this goes in conjunction with the first offering
- The fat represents the idea of the best part, which is why Rib Eye tastes better than eye round
  - The fat is for the Lord. If we jump to v17, *[17] It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood.”*
  - The fat is the Lord’s and the blood is life
- What’s the purpose of this offering? It’s a food offering with a pleasing aroma
- Let’s step back a second as we look at these first three offerings.
- There is no mention of anything negative. These offerings aren’t about sin. They are about WORSHIP and thanksgiving.
- This isn’t about how to GET peace with God but how to celebrate the covenantal peace that you already HAVE with God
  - Burnt Offering - “I want to approach God and I hope he will accept me.”
  - Grain Offering - “I ask God to remember his covenant and I have confidence that he will.”
  - Sacrifice of Peace Offering - “I have peace with God and want to thank Him.”

- This third offering is, also, about worship - worshipping God because of our relationship (all the while remembering b/c of the salt that relationship is a privilege so I can't be flippant)
- Celebrating Together
  - The Sacrifice of Peace Offering is also a communal celebration with the family and the priest - a meal of fellowship before the Lord with all involved. In Leviticus 7 we will see that after processing all these offerings, they sit down and enjoy a meal before the Lord together - priest and family. It is a meal of worship!
    - Celebrating that they have been accepted (burnt)
    - Celebrating that they have promises from God (grain)
    - Celebrating that they are right with him and have peace (peace)
  - This isn't about forgiveness (yet), but worship, thankfulness, and celebration because of a good and faithful God with an enduring covenant of salt.
  - So these three offerings are almost like preparing a banquet for God and the worshipper with a main course and side dishes. Of course God doesn't actually eat the animal - it's representative

#### HOW DOES THIS LOOK TO JESUS?

- Fellowship at the Lord's Table no longer has an animal sacrifice
  - Jesus' sacrifice was once for all (which is different from what the RC church teaches in the eucharist, by the way). Jesus was sacrificed a single time. Now, since the sacrifice is finished we simply celebrate with wine and grain.
  - The purpose remains the same → celebrating peace and communion with God because of his enduring covenants.
  - The cross accomplished this!
    - *Colossians 1:19–22, [19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.[21] And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, [22] 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...*
- Jesus, I think, references the Salt of the Covenant in Matthew 5:13
  - *[13] "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."*
  - When Jesus said these words, the people were still in exile although in Judea b/c not all the tribes had returned. They were in a situation where they didn't know if God had forgotten them.
    - They were waiting for God to remember his covenant! (Salt of the Covenant)
    - Little did they know, Jesus was the fulfillment of all they were waiting for
  - He says to them, "You are the salt of the earth." // You are the covenant people.
    - Salt can't lose its saltiness - it is a chemical compound, it's impossible. It's like he is saying. God has not forgotten you or his promises.

- He continues in Matthew 5:17–18
  - *[17] “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. [18] For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*
- This will usher in a New Covenant, the New Covenant, prophesied about in the Old and commemorated at the Lord’s Supper (which looks back to the Passover, yes, but also to the burnt, grain, and peace offering).
  - Having been rescued by the Exodus, we now celebrate this covenantal relationship. This is what the Lord’s Supper ultimately represents
  - Hark! The Herald Angels sing summarizes it nicely, and a fitting way to kick off our Advent (arrival) season:
    - *Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled.”*
- APPLICATION
  - This is about worship and thanksgiving - a true thanksgiving meal. These are the rich truths that should be on our mind and were on the early church’s mind when they celebrated the Lord’s Supper (after all, they stopped performing other offerings and sacrifices!)
  - **Celebrate your acceptance.** The Lord has heard Jesus, the priest, and you may draw near with confidence.
  - **Celebrate the fact that God remembers his covenant.** He will never leave you nor forsake you. You belong to him.
  - **Celebrate the peace that you have with God and man** in Christ Jesus and in his Church.
  - Live a life of thanksgiving and worship in response.