

**THE OFFERINGS (18)**

—H. L. Heijkoop

*Leviticus 7:19-36*

So far we have seen what the peace-offering actually represents. It is a meal of the family of God. God, as the Head of this family, receives His portion and the sons of Aaron also receive a part. Then we read in Leviticus 7:19, "And the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten." It is very clear therefore that absolute holiness is a requisite, and that for two reasons. In the first place because we are in God's presence. Here the Lord Jesus is presented to us as Priest, which means that we do not find God here as Father, but as God. The Lord Jesus is not the Priest with the Father, but He is a Priest with God, as we read it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, therefore the place where we come together ought to bear the mark of His holiness. The second reason for absolute holiness is the fact that that which we "eat" is the Lord Jesus in His work upon the cross. For us this means that the Lord Jesus is seen as having died under the judgment of God. Why did He die? Hebrews 9:26 tells us, "For the putting away of sin." In Him God executed the entire judgment over sin. The cross proved how holy God is and how much He hates sin. This then being the centre of the meal, we understand that this is the holiest place on earth. God must be sanctified in those that approach Him, so we read in verses 19 to 21.

First of all then, the place itself can be unclean, for we read that the flesh may have touched something unclean whereby it would have become unclean itself. The flesh in itself is of course entirely clean, for it speaks of the Lord Jesus who died rather than allowing sin to continue. The place where the flesh is must be clean; and as we see, the flesh becomes unclean when the place is unclean. The Word of God gives us some clear examples of this. For instance, we find it in principle expressed in Haggai 2:11-13. In 1 Corinthians 5 sin in the midst of the assembly is mentioned and God says, "Remove the wicked person from amongst yourselves" (1 Cor. 5:13). In 2 Timothy 2 we are told to separate ourselves from unrighteousness within the house of God and to seek a place where no unrighteousness is found. How could a place marked by sin, where for instance the doctrine of the eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus or of His true Manhood is questioned or a place without discipline, ever be the place where we could meet with God? God says that He cannot dwell in such places. Such flesh is unclean and does not speak of the Lord Jesus who has died upon the cross. No one is allowed to eat it, but it has to be burned with fire.

The second half of verse 19, however, contains something beautiful: "As to the flesh, all that are clean may eat the flesh." The flesh is meant for all the people. Naturally it is not for unbelievers, for an unbeliever cannot be clean; he is unclean from the head to the sole of his foot. All who know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, whose sins have been washed by His blood, are clean in principle. Everyone belonging to the people of God may come to take his place at the Lord's table, but of course only if he is not practically unclean.

This is the significance of verses 20 and 21. For in verse 20 we encounter someone who eats of the flesh while his uncleanness is upon him. We are at the holy place, where God invites His own to come to Him. But now someone enters who himself is not clean. That happened in Corinth; we have seen how God intervened there. In 1 Corinthians 5 we read of someone whose sin has become public knowledge, and God says: "Remove the wicked person from amongst yourselves." Such a person is not to be tolerated in the midst of the saints. Here we find the same thing: "But the soul that eateth the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offering which is for Jehovah, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his peoples." I suppose every believer will understand that this is a necessity. Few believers will claim that the wicked person in Corinth did not need to be excommunicated. Someone who lives publicly in such deep sin, may not occupy his place at the Lord's table.

But then in verse 21 a second thought is expressed: "And if any one touch anything unclean, the uncleanness of man, or unclean beast, or any unclean abomination, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offering, which is for Jehovah, that soul shall be cut off from his peoples." It says here: "if any one *touch* anything unclean." Although the individual in this particular case is not unclean himself, he nevertheless is in connection with something unclean. Men as we are, we often look entirely different at a thing like this.

This became evident when about 125 years ago, the first great division occurred amongst so called Brethren. That division was based on this principle. A false teacher injured the pure manhood of the Lord Jesus. Brethren separated themselves from him, but there was one assembly that did not wish to go all the way. True enough, the man himself was not received

by this assembly, but his friends were. Thereby could people who broke bread with the false teacher in other places, take part in the breaking of bread in that assembly. That assembly claimed: "Fellowship with uncleanness does not make unclean, as long as a person himself is not unclean." Leviticus, however, tells us how God thinks about such things: "When anyone *touches* anything unclean."

The issue there was not one's own uncleanness, but the uncleanness of something else or of other persons. When someone is connected with such things and yet eats the flesh of the peace-offering, that soul shall be cut off from his peoples. To God it is one and the same, whether we are personally unclean, or whether we are connected with someone else who is unclean. God does not invite such persons to His table; if in spite of this they would take part, they would have to be cut off.

The reason given for this is most important: "The flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offering, (which) is *for Jehovah*." People are inclined to think that the flesh belonged to the one who sacrificed; after all, so they reason, *he* brought the animal and *he* slaughtered it. They think perhaps all the more that their reasoning is justified since the one who sacrificed was allowed to eat the remainder of it with others who were clean, as long as he had first given a part of it to the Lord. Chapter 17 gives further light on all of this. As long as the people were in the desert, everyone who wanted to slaughter an animal for food had to bring it to the gate of the tent of meeting to slaughter it there as a peace-offering. It is evident then that in the wilderness no one was allowed to eat meat if it did not come from a peace-offering. It was brought to the tent of meeting by the one who sacrificed, as a gift *for God*, and from then on it belonged to God. True enough, it was presented by the one who sacrificed, but spiritually it spoke of the Son of God and of His work upon the cross and it was God who gave His Son. So when the peace-offering had been presented, it belonged to God and only He could determine who could take part of it. These things we learn from these verses.

Verses 22 to 27 deal with the fat and the blood. We have covered this previously, so I do not want to dwell too long on it here. As we saw, the fat speaks of the energy of the will. But where does our will originate? It stems from the feelings of our heart. I want that which I love, and consequently our will is determined by the longings and the desires of our heart. Who has a rightful claim to the feelings of my heart? The answer to this question we find in Deuteronomy 6:5. The Creator has formed man, He created him for Himself and demands that man loves Him with His whole heart. Man must love God with his whole heart, with his whole soul — and the Lord Jesus adds to this in Luke 10:27 and Mark 12:30: "... with all thine understanding, and with all thy strength." This means that God has a right to the will of man. It is rather obvious that a creature ought not to have his own will, but that he has to obey. Therefore God says that the fat is to be for Him alone, and this all the more so in the case of the peace-offering.

As mentioned, it is a general principle that in the case of the peace-offering everything speaks of the Lord Jesus, of His will power when He died, of the feelings of His heart, when He finished the work. We know that He was "obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross." In John 14:31 He says, "I love the Father..." God has given us a beautiful example of this, namely in the description of the Hebrew slave in Exodus 21. After the slave had served for 6 years, he was allowed to go out free. However, if his master had given him a wife, he could say, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free" (v. 5). Then his ear was pierced, as a sign that he desired to be a servant forever. Herein we see the Lord Jesus. Why did He deliver Himself up? "I love My Master, My wife and My children." The Bible says that He loved me personally. Out of love to me He went to the cross. The Scriptures also say that He loves all of us, "Christ also loved the Assembly and has delivered Himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). But Scripture also says that He loves the Father and that He gave Himself out of love to Him, to glorify Him. In these things we see the fat that a few verses onward is brought in connection with the breast (v. 30). His love was most precious to God, as Ephesians 3:19 expresses it, but it is larger than we can understand. The fat had to be offered entirely to God.

We realize that the same holds true for the blood. In Leviticus 17 we noticed in verse 11 that "the soul of the flesh is in the blood" and that "it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (v. 11). So, the blood is meant for God alone. Life comes from God. He alone has the right to it, for this reason man is not allowed to eat blood. Even today we are not allowed to do so either; Acts 15:29 says so explicitly. Leviticus 7:27 adds to this: "Whatever soul it be that eats any manner of blood, that soul shall be cut off from his peoples."

From verse 28 onward we see what the one who brought the peace-offering was allowed to do. His was a wonderful service. The order in God's Word is always the same: we can only enjoy the highest blessings, if we pay attention to the precepts which are connected with it. The higher place we take, the closer we approach to God, the greater holiness behoves us, for in God's presence there is no darkness. For this reason we find here first the precepts and only afterwards the actual service.

In chapter 3 we noticed how someone who brought a peace-offering had hardly anything to do. Indeed, he had to bring his sacrifice and he had to slay it, but all other tasks belonged to the priest. Here, however, we see something that was

omitted in chapter 3. Here we see, that the one who brought the sacrifice had still another service to perform; and what a beautiful service it was! Verse 29 says, "He that presents the sacrifice of his peace-offering to Jehovah shall bring his offering to Jehovah of the sacrifice of his peace-offering." It shows that he personally had to bring his sacrifice to the Lord, and verse 30 underscores it: "His own hands shall bring Jehovah's offerings by fire, the fat with the breast shall he bring: the breast, that it may be waved as a wave-offering before Jehovah."

What a wonderful thought! As we have seen, God invites everyone of His people to come to Him at the brazen altar to this wonderful meal for the family of God. We know now that this is a type of the Lord's table. God desires, that everyone brings an offering and that everyone's heart longs to bring a peace-offering. God wishes every heart to be filled with the glory of the Lord Jesus, and that every heart is filled with thanksgiving for what God has done to him, so that everyone brings a sacrifice with his own hands. Yes, God desires that everyone brings it with his own hands to Him. We should not think that this or that brother can do it much better. It is quite likely that a son of Aaron could have brought the sacrifice in a much better way, but it was the task of the sons of Aaron to sprinkle the blood, and it was the task of the one who sacrificed to bring the sacrifice to God. *He* had to offer it and *his* hand had to bring it.

These instructions should cause us to deeply contemplate these matters. Once I asked a brother who never participated on Sunday mornings whether he had nothing that he could express. He answered that others could do it so much better than he. It is quite possible that other brothers could express themselves better, but God says nothing about this. God says that *all* who have something, have to bring it with their own hands and He desires to accept His portion out of the hand of each of His children. And what is His portion? It is the fat with the breast. The breast is a picture of the feelings of the heart and the fat speaks of the will power. So we can say that it expresses the power of the unfathomable love of the Lord Jesus.

Does not this make us think of the Song of Songs: "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as Sheol... many waters cannot quench love, neither do the floods drown it: even if a man gave all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" (8:6,7). Ephesians 3:19 says that love surpasses knowledge. Such love we cannot comprehend in its entirety, it is too great for us. Only God really knows it. Do we not, every time again, wonder when we think of the love of the Lord Jesus to us? Why did He love me so much that He wanted to die for me? I do not understand it, there is no good in me. And why does He love me now? I do not understand it, every day again I have to humble myself before Him and confess how cold my heart is and how little I love Him, and yet He loves me! I do not understand it, but the Father knows it. The Father knows how much the Son loves Him, and God says that this love is unfathomable to you and me. Contemplating it, we will be convinced of this, but we must bring it to God: the fat together with the breast.

But how is this done? "The fat with the breast shall he bring: the breast, that it may be waved as a wave-offering before Jehovah" (v. 30). This is a service that God gives us on Sunday morning. But what was the significance of the "waving"? It meant that the sacrifice held in the hands, was moved back and forth. In daily life we do this when we want to show something. God says, "Do this and show Me what you have seen of the love of the Lord Jesus." What a wonderful service! God knows the love of the Lord Jesus better than we do, but He desires that we see it and that we express what we have seen of this love. That is the significance of the "waving."

Then we read: "And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar." That which we have moved back and forth before the face of God is offered by the priest upon the altar. It is God's part and God calls it "His bread," "His food" (Lev. 3:11 and 16). Let us ponder this for a moment! God accepts something from our hand which He calls His bread. This is a part of our service on Sunday morning. We are responsible to bring God His bread, His food!

But now follows the second part of the offering: "And the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons' " (v. 31). The breast speaks of the love of the Lord Jesus, and of that which we can understand of it. That is given to Aaron and his sons. Aaron is a type of the Lord Jesus, and we have also seen what the significance is of the sons of Aaron. They are the ones who realize what they possess in Christ, who are accustomed to be in God's presence and who have learned in His presence how God judges things. Therefore they see everything as it were through the eyes of God. In the New Testament such people are referred to as spiritual brothers and sisters.

So the breast was for Aaron and his sons. The Lord Jesus receives His part, and we also share a part with Him. He does not keep this portion for Himself alone; no, he joyfully shares it with us. When the prodigal returns in Luke 15, the fatted calf is slaughtered and there is a feast. Surely we do not suppose that the son held the feast by himself? No, the entire house shared in it, and most of all the father. Here it is the same. The Lord Jesus receives His part and He shares a part of it with us. What, however, is the specific part for the priestly family? The breast! Yes, every believer understands something of the love of the Lord Jesus, but only when we are accustomed to be in the presence of the Lord and we have, consequently, come to know Him better, we can increasingly value His love and our hearts can feed themselves with that which is found in His.

"And the right shoulder of the sacrifices of your peace-offering shall ye give as heave-offering unto the priest" (v. 32). A heave-offering was taken and as it were brought to God, but the priest received it. In verse 33 we find for which priest it was meant to be: "He of the sons of Aaron that presents the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part." So the right shoulder was meant for the one who had brought the blood upon the altar, for in doing this he had shown the value of it. He was able to do that work because he was a priest; he knew the value of the blood and of the work of the Lord Jesus because he had been thoroughly occupied with it. And in return he received the right shoulder which pictures the power of the Lord Jesus in His walk and in His accomplishing the work upon the cross.

This reminds us of the significance of the fat, the power of the Lord's love wherewith He finished the work on the cross (this power manifested itself also in His life, but here it is related to His death). It was the part of the priest who had brought the blood and only he ate from it. What a precious part! Our natural bodies are built up by that which we eat and which our body takes in, and so it is in the spiritual realm. The spiritual food we take in forms our spiritual being. The priest who occupies himself with the Lord Jesus needs spiritual power for that. When he occupies himself with the blood, by sprinkling it upon the altar, he receives the power that he needs to fulfill his service.

Now we have looked at God's part, the part of the Lord Jesus, and the part of every son of Aaron, and more particularly at the part of that priest who sprinkled the blood. We also read that every clean person received his portion. Everyone who belongs to the people of God is allowed to come, even those who had very recently been converted and had found peace with God. Even those who have not occupied themselves sufficiently with the Lord Jesus are allowed to come. If they had nothing to offer the others will bring an offering and they have the right to eat of it. True enough, it is God's desire that everyone brings something, but if someone has nothing to bring he is yet allowed to come. Others bring their sacrifices and as long as he is clean, he may eat of it together with them. That is the service the Lord has given us. Isn't it a wonderful service?

God desires to prepare us for this. At the end of the seven chapters, describing the sacrifices, God confronts us with the end result. God caused us to consider the burnt-offering so that we could see the perfections and glory of the work of the Lord Jesus in it, and that we might understand how perfectly God has been glorified through the work upon the cross, which in turn will cause us to know what we have become in Him before God. God has given us the Lord Jesus during His life as the meal-offering, so that we would have a subject for our hearts for the time we are here upon earth. He gave us the sin- and trespass-offering so that we, if we have sinned, can see what sin really means by taking a look at the cross whereby we come to a true judgment of self. This should cause us to realize that all of us are invited to His table, not just the sons of Aaron, but all who belong to His people and are clean, to present our offerings there in fellowship with one another. God desires that each one comes with his own sacrifice. Everyone ought to occupy himself with the Lord Jesus, so that the Holy Spirit can use each one of us to bring a sacrifice with our "own hands." But even so, also he who has nothing to sacrifice is welcome. He may, together with God, the Lord Jesus and the entire family of God, share the meal and feed himself with the precious food.

We saw how holy this place is; the place where God invites His people is a holy place upon earth. That place is presented by the brazen altar which was so holy that God's judgment could neither touch nor consume any part of it (cf. Num. 16:36-39).

After considering verses 28 and 36, do we not have to conclude that this is a most precious place and that a more wonderful place cannot be found anywhere? This is the place which God has given us already here upon earth! For we know that the brazen altar stood in the court and the court typifies this earth as the place where the cross of the Lord Jesus stood. Such a service God has given us. Are we aware of this?

*To be cont'd*

## **THE FAITH TO CONTEND FOR (6)**

—R. K. Campbell

### *6. The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

These two ordinances, which were both ordained by the Lord in the Gospels, are an important part of the Christian faith. They were practiced by the apostolic Church as recorded in the divine history book of Acts and the doctrine concerning them was taught in the Epistles of Paul.

There has been and is much error and confusion prevalent in the professing Christian world concerning these two divine ordinances, so there is great need of careful searching of the Scriptures regarding them. The confusion is not in what the Bible teaches on these subjects, but in what man and his religious systems has added to the Word of God and is teaching about these divine institutions. We shall first consider the subject of Baptism.

### *Baptism*

In Matthew 28:19 we have the commission given by the Lord to the disciples about baptism. They were told, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things." First they were to make disciples of all nations, and then they were to baptize those who were taught or had become disciples of Christ.

In Mark's account we see that the commission to baptize is clearly connected with believing the gospel. There we read: "Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that disbelieves shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Those that believe the gospel are to be baptized, and if one does not believe in his heart, he shall be damned, even though baptized. The last clause of the verse definitely shows that salvation depends on believing and not upon baptism. This same order is given in Galatians 3. In verse 26 Paul writes: "Ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus." Then in the next verse he speaks of the baptism of those who are sons of God.

In the book of Acts we have the commission as to baptism carried out. On the day of Pentecost those of the Jewish company and of the proselytes who repented at the preaching of Peter about Jesus Christ were baptized. It is recorded that "Those then who had accepted his word were baptized," and added to the disciples (Acts 2:41). In Acts 8 we read of Philip preaching Christ in the city of Samaria and "when they believed Philip announcing the glad tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (v. 12). In the same chapter we read of Philip baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch after he had preached Jesus to him and the eunuch requested the privilege of baptism. "Then went down both to the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (vv. 35, 36, 38). We may notice here that baptism indicates an immersion in the water as the Greek word also means. In Acts 10 we read about Gentiles who heard the word of salvation from Peter and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (verses 43-48). In the sixteenth chapter Lydia, a seller of purple, and her household were baptized after she attended to the things spoken of by Paul (vv. 14-15). Then we read of the conversion of the Philippian jailor who "rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God." Then we read how Paul baptized him and all his after they had all heard the word of the Lord (v. 32-34). Then the eighteenth chapter tells us of the preaching of Paul at Corinth, and that "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized" (v. 8).

These many examples of the practice of baptism in the days of the early Church show clearly that believers in Jesus Christ were baptized. In some cases it is definitely stated that they had received the Holy Spirit and were saved and rejoiced in the Lord. Then they were baptized in public identification with Christ in His death. They were not baptized to get saved, or as a necessary step to salvation, but as that which the Lord had ordained as a public confession of discipleship.

The doctrinal meaning of Christian baptism is given us in Romans 6:3-5. There the inspired apostle says that those who have been "baptized unto Jesus Christ, have been baptized unto His death. We have been buried therefore with Him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection."

From these verses we learn that baptism by water is a public identification with Christ and His death for us. It is a burial with Him. The going down into the water and being immersed is a going into "the likeness of His death"; it is a picture and figure of death, of Christ's death for us. The one who is being baptized thereby owns that he, the sinner, deserves to die. He puts himself figuratively in that place of death where Christ has gone, thus openly confessing his faith in Christ's death for his sins. Then the coming up out of the waters of baptism is a figure of resurrection and a profession on the part of the baptized, that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus and is now going to walk in newness of life, the Christian life. So also Colossians 2:12 says, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

There is therefore nothing in the Bible about baptism being a means of grace whereby the new birth is accomplished and one is regenerated, or made anew; nor that one obtains thereby eternal salvation or is received into communion with the Triune God. This is what many professing Christians believe and teach, but they do so without any scriptural foundation whatever. Baptism is not a saving ordinance, but follows the obtaining of salvation by faith in Christ's death. It is to be submitted to at the beginning of one's Christian life as an intelligent act of a disciple of Christ.

*To be cont'd*