

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 03:12-16

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue to read Leviticus 03:12-16.

When offering a peace offering to God, there are three possible motivations: giving thanks to God, fulfilling a vow, or simply offering out of love and a willing heart. The peace offering is a joyful occasion, a feast shared by God, the priests, and the one offering the sacrifice. We've already read that cattle or sheep can be offered as peace offerings, and both males and females can be offered, which is different from the burnt offering.

In burnt offerings, only male animals like bulls or rams are acceptable because the burnt offering is directed towards God, representing Christ, who is the Son of God. Therefore, the burnt offering requires a male animal. On the other hand, the peace offering primarily concerns the offeror, who presents the offering as a grateful to God for the grace they have experienced. The grace one experiences can be nurturing, like that of a mother, or protective, providential, and instructive, like that of a father. Therefore, you can offer either a male or female animal, depending on what you are thanking God for.

The choice of different animals for the sacrifice was based on the offeror's means. However, from a spiritual perspective, cattle emphasize diligent labor and service, while sheep emphasize obedience to God's will. If offering a sheep as a peace offering, you can choose either a sheep or a goat. But what is the difference between offering a sheep and offering a goat?

Yesterday, when we read about offering a sheep as a peace offering, we mentioned that Palestinian sheep have particularly large, fat tails filled with fat, which must be removed and offered to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice on the altar. In contrast, goats have short tails and no fat, so there's no need to remove them. This is a

physical difference between the animals, leading to different ways of handling the sacrifices.

Spiritually, what is the difference between offering a sheep and a goat? Today, let's spend some time exploring this question. Understanding the spiritual significance of offering a sheep versus a goat will allow us to quickly read through the rest of the similar passages, focusing on the key differences.

Before we delve into the text, let's consider the spiritual difference between offering a sheep and a goat as a peace offering. First, what I share here is my personal insight. Usually, when I gain new insights, I search for interpretations from earlier scholars. If I find similar interpretations, I feel more confident and boldness in sharing them with the saints. However, if no previous scholars have said the same, I proceed cautiously, fearing that I might overstep my boundaries. Therefore, as I share today, I ask the saints to receive it with a discerning spirit. Sharing God's word is not the same as academic research, which encourages new insights and interpretations to establish a unique viewpoint. In contrast, sharing God's word aims to help the saints understand it and live a life that aligns with God's will. So, I share based on my understanding, and I ask the saints to receive it prayerfully and with discernment.

Let's start with what is undisputed: the nature of sheep is obedience. Offering a sheep as a peace offering represents gratitude for experiencing God's grace in obedience to Him. Yesterday, we also cited Matthew 25:31-46, where we see the distinction between sheep and goats, understanding that sheep are pleasing to God while goats are not. So, in terms of obedience to God, what do sheep and goats represent? Before answering this, we need to consider God's will for humanity.

How do people understand God's will for them? In eternity, God, according to His good pleasure, established an eternal plan that will not change and will certainly be fulfilled. The entire Bible speaks extensively about God's eternal plan. Paul summarizes this in Ephesians 1:3-12 into three parts: the Father's choosing and predestination, the Son's redemption plan, which was completed during His earthly ministry, followed by His resurrection, ascension, and the ongoing work of

gathering all things in unity and securing the inheritance for all. These plans are still unfolding, as they require human cooperation. This leads to the third part: the work of the Holy Spirit, which has two aspects: sealing the saints to accomplish the plan of unity and secure the pledge to fulfill the inheritance plan.

Here, we see that humanity occupies the center place in God's eternal plan. God intends to use humans as His vessels to accomplish His eternal plan. Throughout this process, God's method must be followed. Therefore, God, based on His righteous nature, established the moral law, which was given to humanity through Moses as the standard for human conduct.

So, what is God's will for humanity? It is for each person, within the framework of God's eternal plan, to act according to the moral law to fulfill the specific mission God has entrusted to us. This is God's will for us. For example, God's will for you might be to move from point A to point B. Within the principles of moral law, there can be many different routes, but one of them is God's best will. If you can obey God's best will, you will harmoniously cooperate with God's will for others and smoothly accomplish His eternal plan. God's best will for you usually involves suffering and can sometimes be very challenging.

To help people obey His best will, God established Jesus as the perfect example of someone who fully embraced God's best will throughout life. Jesus' earthly ministry, described in the four Gospels, shows us that it was not an easy path. Jesus' words, actions, and life were entirely in line with God's best will.

Remember Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He said, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Here, we see that the cup God had ordained for Jesus was incredibly difficult, even to the point of separation from the Father. This was not something Jesus desired, so He struggled and prayed to the Father repeatedly. But ultimately, He said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Jesus was determined to obey God's best will.

This was not only true for Jesus; the apostles of the early church, continuing Jesus' earthly ministry, also sought to obey God's best will. In Acts 16, during Paul's second

missionary journey, he reached Asia Minor. Paul intended to stay there to preach the gospel and establish churches, but Acts 16:6 records, "They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia." This is very significant. The people of Asia needed the gospel, so why did the Holy Spirit prevent Paul from preaching there? Because that was not God's best will.

Paul, seeking God's best will, obeyed the Holy Spirit's leading and passed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia. He did not stop but continued until he reached the border of Mysia. Paul thought God might want him to go north to Bithynia, a less developed and more challenging region, and he was ready to go with a heart prepared for suffering. But Acts 16:7 records, "But the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them."

At this point, Paul was likely confused, not knowing where God wanted him to go. But Paul, with his heart set on seeking God's best will, did not stop and continued westward until he reached Troas, a port city facing the Aegean Sea with no further road to travel. Then, that night, Acts 16:9 records, "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'"

Only then did Paul realize that God's best will was for him to cross the Aegean Sea to Philippi in Macedonia. By obeying God's best will, Paul brought the gospel to Philippi and later to Europe. The church passed the gospel from generation to generation, eventually spreading it from Europe to every corner of the world. If Paul had not obeyed God's best will, the history of the gospel would have been completely different.

Obeying God's best will is not easy, and offering a sheep as a grateful peace offering represents someone who, after obeying God's best will, offers a sheep as a grateful sacrifice. The fat tail of the sheep, filled with fat, symbolizes the fruitful result of obeying God's best will. This person can manifest God's glory and abundance, pleasing God greatly. Therefore, this fat-filled tail is burned on the altar as a sweet-smelling sacrifice.

In contrast to God's best will is God's permissive will. God's best will is initiated by God, and when people obey, they follow it. Sometimes, however, people struggle to obey and instead pray for what they prefer. In His love and tolerance, God may sometimes permit it, which is God's permissive will. God's permissive will is initiated by people but still operates within the framework of God's eternal plan and must not violate the principles of moral law. Although this path may be more challenging, it still ultimately leads to God's original destination. When this happens, a person offers a goat as a grateful peace offering.

The key difference is this: offering a sheep as a grateful peace offering represents obedience to God's best will, while offering a goat as a grateful peace offering represents obedience to God's permissive will.

Verse 12: "If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord."

When offering a goat as a peace offering, the person making the sacrifice must bring the goat before the Lord. God is the recipient of the sacrifice, and as the Master, the one offering the sacrifice must present the goat before Him. Although it is not explicitly mentioned here, it is likely that the goat can be either male or female. The choice depends on what the person is expressing gratitude to God for in their submission to His permissive will. If it is for the nurturing of life, a female goat may be offered. If it is for God's powerful protection and provision, a male goat may be offered.

Verse 13: "He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar."

This is similar to offering a lamb as a peace offering. The offeror must first lay his hand on the goat's head, symbolizing his union with the goat—what the goat undergoes represents his own experience. He then kills the goat before the tabernacle, testifying to others how he has submitted to God's permissive will.

Here, we can imagine that his testimony emphasizes not his own obedience, but rather how God, in His mercy, has shown compassion and understanding. Though he initially struggled to follow, God has graciously guided him onto a path of blessing.

Aaron's sons, serving as priests to assist in the offering, are to take the goat's blood into the tabernacle and sprinkle it around the altar. This blood is not for atonement, as the peace offering must be made on top of the burnt offering, where the sin has already been covered before God. Instead, the blood is sprinkled around the altar to cleanse the offeror's conscience, enabling him to offer the peace offering without fear.

Verse 14 - 15: "Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord: the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove."

This passage is similar to the instructions for offering a sheep as a peace offering, except that it omits the tail. The tail of a goat is short and lacks the fat tail of a sheep, so it does not need to be separated and offered. From a spiritual perspective, this offering represents not obedience to God's perfect will but to His permissive will. Such obedience does not have a glorious and abundant ending and is not particularly noteworthy. Therefore, a goat can be offered as a peace offering of gratitude without needing to separate the tail.

On the other hand, like the offering of a sheep, all the fat must be removed, including the fat that covers the entrails, the fat between the organs, the fat associated with the kidneys, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver. These fats represent the beauty and abundance of Christ. Additionally, the two kidneys symbolize the most delicate and sincere emotions of Christ. All these are to be removed as they represent what is experienced in obedience to God's permissive will.

Verse 16: "The priest shall burn them on the altar as food offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. All the fat is the Lord's."

The priest is to receive all the fat and the two kidneys from the offeror, and place them on the altar to be burned, turning into a sweet-smelling aroma offered to the Lord as a food offering. It is specifically noted that this sweet-smelling fire offering is God's food. Similarly, the breast and right thigh of the goat are allocated to the priest as his food, while the remaining portions are given to the offeror for sharing with family and friends. Thus, the peace offering of the goat involves burning the fat and kidneys on the altar for God; the breast and right thigh go to the priest; and the rest is given to the offeror and his family and friends. This is a feast enjoyed by God, the priest, and the offeror together.

Dear brothers and sisters, here we see God's loving acceptance. When we fall short of His best will and pray to Him, negotiating within His permissible will, we still receive His grace. Offering a goat as a peace offering of gratitude is pleasing to God. In the peace offering, we have a two-way interaction with God, which aids our spiritual growth and helps us better follow His best will.

Let us pray together: Dear Heavenly Father, You are a God full of compassion. When we struggle to keep up or walk with You, You come to our level, bestowing grace upon us, supporting us, and guiding us in Your permissible will. Through the peace offering, help us to know You better, understand Your will for us, and desire to obey Your best will. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.