NIGHT OF WORSHIP
March 1 • 6:30pm • Ash Wednesday
Windows into the Heart of God

LEVITICUS
The theology of sacrifice will make clear the complexity of sin, the grandeur of grace, and the fullness of forgiveness.

Sacrifice: A Robust Theology
The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.
Solomon’s Temple

The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.
Sacrifice: Logical/Theological Order

Burnt (Whole Burnt) Offering
Grain (Meal) Offering
Peace (Fellowship) Offering
Sin (Purification) Offering
Trespass (Reparation) Offering
The peace offering was a shared meal in which the offerer celebrated with those assembled in the sanctuary the benefits of a peaceful relationship with God. It was a joyous time of feasting in the presence of God, made possible by blood atonement and occasion by blessings from God.

Allen Ross
This sacrifice was probably one of the most anticipated occasions of all the rituals because of its nature as a communal meal—it was a great feast.

Peace Offering: Fellowship

Allen Ross
Sacrifice: A Robust Theology

- Atonement (Burnt Offering)
- Dedication (Meal Offering)
- Fellowship (Peace Offering)
Peace Offering: Culmination

When the sacrificial system came into full operation the peace offering was the last offering to be performed. It brought the other offerings to a climax. For that reason it has been called “the completion offering.” Having secured atonement through the sin offering, provided reparation through the guilt offering, expressed consecration in the burnt offering and dedicated ones worked to the Lord in the grain offering, it was possible for the worshiper in Israel to enjoy God's presence and bask in his goodness through the peace offering.

Derek Tidball
Offering (זֶבָח)

This interesting term is used to indicate a sacrificial offering that was eaten at a feast. The term is used in Leviticus in conjunction with “Peace” (שָׁלוֹם) to indicate a communal meal sacrifice.
The principal difference between this sacrifice and the others was that the worshiper was allowed to eat part of the animal himself. In the burnt offering the whole animal is burnt, and in the [grain] offering all but the memorial handful was eaten by the priest. In the peace offering some of the animal was burned, some was eaten by the priests, and the rest was returned to the worshipper for his own consumption. The peace offering was therefore a festive meal eaten in or near the sanctuary.

Gordon Wenham
Peace, Well being, Health (שָׁלוֹם)

This is one of the richest words in the Bible. This common Hebrew greeting carries with it the idea of a full life, well-being, as well as health, completeness and wholeness. This is the blessed life, envied by others.
Peace

(שְׁלָמִם)

Precision:

(שָׁלּוֹם) = make peace
(שָׁלוֹם) = be at peace
(שְׁלָמִם) = intensive plural, full peace
The word shalom (peace) has numerous meanings, one of which involves good health. The verb-form means basically “be intact”, “be complete”, and when applied to mankind it refers to the integration of the human personality.

R.K. Harrison
...the best understanding of peace coincides with the normal meanings of “shalom:” health, prosperity, and peace with God, which are all characteristics of salvation in its fullest sense.

Allen Ross
Peace Offering: Reasons

- Thankfulness/Confession (7:12-15)
- Fulfilling a Vow (7:16-18)
- Free-will Offering (7:16-18)
Peace Offering: Variety

• “From the herd…” (3:1-5)

• “A lamb from the flock…” (3:6-11)

• “A goat from the flock…” (3:12-16)
Peace Offering: Ritual

- An animal with no defect.
- Lay hands on the animal.
- Slaughter the animal before the LORD.
- Splash the blood on the altar.
- Burn the fat and internal organs.
Peace Offering: From the herd . . .

If your offering is a fellowship offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the LORD an animal without defect. You are to lay your hand on the head of your offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron’s sons the priests shall splash the blood against the sides of the altar. From the fellowship offering you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. Then Aaron’s sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is lying on the burning wood; it is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Leviticus 3:1-5
Kidneys
(כִּלְיָה)

This is the inmost parts of a person. In current terminology we would use the heart.

“I love you with all my kidneys.”💕

It is the deepest seat of emotion and will where decisions are made.

This is essentially the conscience of the person.
The NIV (as well as the ESV) usually translates כִלְיָה as “inmost being” or “heart” when human kidneys are involved. The kidneys are viewed as the seat of human joy and grief. Several passages view the kidneys as the seat of one’s moral character. As the creator of the moral/ethical center (Psalm 139:13), God examines it to discover one’s true attitudes and motives and to determine one’s appropriate reward or punishment.

Robert Chisholm
Liver
(כָּבֵד)

The seat of emotions and thoughts. Laughter and sorrow come form here. It is from here that we know if a person is happy or unhappy.
The distraught author of Lamentations moaned that his liver (2:11; NIV heart/ESV bile), viewed as the seat of emotions, was “poured out on the ground”. In the parallelism of Psalms 16:9 the heart/liver is viewed as the seat of the psalmist’s emotions.
Internal Organs

Thus the inner parts of the body and its organs are at the same time the bearer of man’s spiritual and ethical impulses.

Hans Walter Wolff
If you offer an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, you are to offer a male or female without defect. If you offer a lamb, you are to present it before the LORD, lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron’s sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. From the fellowship offering you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD.

Leviticus 3:6-11
If your offering is a goat, you are to present it before the LORD, lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron’s sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. From what you offer you are to present this food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the LORD’s.

Leviticus 3:12-16
Peace Offering: No Fat or Blood

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

Leviticus 3:17
Reason: The Revelation of Offering

Peace with God is established by the blood of a substitute (Leviticus 3:1-2, 6-8, 12-13).
Peace Offering: Substitute Life

Here a life was relinquished for the offerer and the accompanying band of supporters. The theme was taught over and over again: no one could approach God apart from the forfeiture of life—albeit by the grace of God through the life of the substitute.

Allen Ross
Reason: The Revelation of Offering

- The substitute is offered in place of the sinner.
- The substitute must be perfect.
- The substitute must die.
- The best part must be completely surrendered.
The celebration of peace with God is characterized by surrender (Leviticus 3:3-4, 9-10, 14-15).

Reason: The Revelation of Offering
Reason: The Revelation of Offering

• The fat represents the best being given to the Lord.
The fat (heleb), which included the tissues that it covered, are prohibited to the Hebrews for food, being regarded generally in a metaphorical sense as satisfying a particularly choice portion, and therefore in the sacrificial rituals the privilege of God alone.
By giving the fat the worshiper was giving the best of the animal; and insofar as the animal was thought to represent the man, the worshiper showed he was giving God the best part of his life.
Reason: The Revelation of Offering

- The fat represents the best being given to the Lord.

- The internal organs represent the will and emotions surrendered to the Lord.
Fat and Organs: *Choice Portion*

In offering these parts of the anatomy to God, then, those who drew near with a peace offering were not only offering God the best, but also offering up their greatest strengths and deepest emotions of gratitude to the LORD in submissive worship.

*Derek Tidball*
The symbolism of these elements indicates celebrating peace with God must be accompanied by surrendering to him the best—indeed, one's will, one's whole life.

Allen Ross
Reason: The Revelation of Offering

The celebration of peace is pleasing to God (Leviticus 3:5, 11, 16).
The sacrifice, then, was an expression and celebration of being at peace with God; it was occasioned by tangible provisions from God that gave witness to that relationship.

Allen Ross
Communal Meal: Assurance

The meal speaks of the assurance Israel feels in the presence of the God of the covenant, and tells of the bounty they have received from his hand. It was a happy, beneficial and settled relationship, as long as Israel kept their obligations under the covenant.

Derek Tidball
Peace Offering: *Fellowship*

The ceremony concluded with the worshiper and his friends or family joining in a sacred meal to eat up the rest of the meat.
Meat was a luxury in ancient Israel and these celebrations would have been occasional rather than regular. The menu consisted not only of meat but also of both leavened and unleavened bread.

Derek Tidball
The LORD accepts with pleasure whoever surrenders their heart to Him and comes into His presence on the basis of shed blood and invites them to fellowship with Him in a communal meal.
Peace Offering: All of Grace

All of this ritual was one of the greatest expressions of communion with God. That the communal meal was received from the sacrifices is striking. In almost all other sacrifices it was the offerer giving to God; but here it is as if God was returning a portion of the sacrifice for the faithful to eat in his presence. This indicates the LORD'S gracious bounty to his people and the peaceful relationship that existed within the covenant.

Allen Ross
But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

(Ephesians 2:13-16)
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

(Romans 5:1-2)
As in Old Testament times the worshiper praised God, made vows, and brought his petitions to God at the peace offering, so the Christian should make the communion service an occasion at which he rededicates himself to God’s service and brings his prayers and praises to his Lord.

Gordon Wenham
Peace Offering: Application

Such bounty must be publicly acknowledged and shared in the congregation. But the passage reminds believers that (1) in all the enjoyment of his benefits they must never forget that the best they have should be given to him; (2) in offering their praise to him they must never forget that the blood atonement is the basis for the benefits; and (3) in their celebration of his bounty they must remember to surrender their lives to him.

Allen Ross
When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

(Luke 22:14-18)
After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

(Luke 22:19-20)
Windows into the Heart of God

LEVITICUS