

Video: The Tribute Offering (Peter Leithart): https://youtu.be/mq-t_kgMfck

1. **The Grain (Tribute) Offering.** The offering in Leviticus 2 is called a “mincha” (Strong 4503) which generally means a gift, but in Leviticus it has a narrower meaning of a grain offering given to God as **tribute**, a gift from an inferior to a superior showing respect, allegiance, and thankfulness.

Read 1 Kings 4:21. All the surrounding kings brought **tribute** (mincha) to king Solomon.

The tribute offering symbolized the dedication to God of the **fruit of man’s labor**. The worshipper returned to God some of his agricultural produce as an act of thanksgiving for God’s rich blessings.

2. **Grain Offering Distinctives.** Read Lev 2:1-10, 13.

- a. A **non-bloody** offering. The grain offering did not involve killing an animal like the burnt, peace, purification and trespass offering did.

- b. A **vegetable** offering. The ingredients of the grain offering consisted of wheat flour, olive oil, frankincense, and salt, prepared either uncooked (flour) or cooked (bread or roasted grains).

- 1) **Fine** flour. This was the best type of flour, the kind Sarah used to make cakes for the 3 special heavenly visitors (read Gen 18:1-2,6). It was not the lower quality flour like the widow of Zarephath offered to Elijah.

- Jesus is bread, the best of the best. His grain offering was himself. Read John 6:48-51. Then read Gen 3:22. What two foods in the Bible, if eaten, convey immortality? 1) the fruit from the tree of life; 2) the “living bread” from heaven, the “bread of life.” Was Jesus like fruit hanging on a tree of life? What bread did Jesus say he would give us?

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem. What does that village name mean? House of **Bread**.

Crushing grain to make flour was a **labor-intensive** task. It would take about 3 hours to produce enough flour to make daily bread for a family of five.

- Read Isaiah 53:5,10. Notice the word “crushed.” Yahweh crushed Jesus to **fine** flour for us.

- 2) **Oil.** Whether flour or cooked bread, oil must be added to it. Oil is a symbol of the **Holy Spirit**. To anoint is to pour oil on something. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit at his conception and was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism. Read Mark 1:9-11. Read Luke 4:18-19.
- 3) **Frankincense.** Frankincense was put on top of the handful of the uncooked flour given to the priest to burn up on the altar. Read Mat 2:11. What 3 gifts were given to the infant Jesus?
- 4) **Salt of the covenant.** The addition of salt to the offering was a reminder that the worshipper was in an **eternal covenant** with God. Read Num 18:19 and 2 Chron 13:5. In antiquity salt was something that had permanence... fire could not destroy it (salt boils at 2,575 Fahrenheit!). If it dissolved in water, it would return as crystals when the water evaporated.

Salt is also a **seasoning** to enhance flavor. In this aspect the New Testament relates salt to grace. Read Col 4:6. What does it say needs to be salted with grace?

- c. **Forbidden Ingredients.** Read Lev 2:11-12. Two ingredients were forbidden in the portion of the grain offering that was burned on the altar. Both caused fermentation, the probable reason for exclusion.
 - 1) **Leaven.** Leaven usually (but not always) represents corruption or sin permeating something. It also symbolizes **pride**. It causes bread to be “puffed up,” being bigger than it really is. Read 1 Cor 5:6 and 1 Cor 8:1. Do you feel superior to any others in our church due to your wealth, looks, intellect, career, background, or personality? Read 1 Cor 1:26-29.
 - 2) **Honey.** Honey was a word used for anything used to sweeten food. It could be bee honey, or sweet syrup from dates, grapes, or other fruits. Like leaven it caused fermentation.

- d. **Food Portions Eaten.** The grain offering was eaten by both God and the priests in the courtyard.
- 1) **God's portion.** This was called a "memorial" portion. Read Lev 6:14-15. It consisted of a handful, as well as **all** the frankincense. And like the burnt offering, when turned to smoke this offering became a "pleasing aroma" to the LORD.
 - 2) The **priestly portion.** Read Lev 6:16-18. God shared his food offering with his priests.
 "I have given it as their portion" (v17). The worshipper gave his grain offering to God. God then gave back **most** of it to his priests... He only reserved a token portion of it for Himself. God was the host sharing food at his table with the priests.
 The priests were dependent on God for their food. Read Mat 6:11. This became their "**daily bread**" to eat while they were serving in the tabernacle.
 God takes care of his own household. Read 1 Tim 5:8. What promise does Psalm 37:27 give?
 God is a generous employer who will reward faithful service. Jesus says the same in Rev 22:12.
 - 3) **Most holy** food. The food Yahweh shared with the priests from his altar acquired a status of "most holy." This is mentioned 4 times for emphasis (Read Lev 2:3; 2:10; 6:16-17; 10:12).
 It could only be eaten by the **priests** (not their families) and must be eaten near the bronze altar (a holy place).
 Read Lev 6:18. Contact with most holy bread made a person holy. Do you have the privilege of eating most holy bread?
 Adam and Eve ate forbidden food in the garden. We eat commanded food in the assembly of believers. Read 1 Cor 11:23 and notice the command, twice given, to "**Do this.**"
 - 4) A **New Testament application.** Read 1 Cor 9:13-14. What should the NT church learn from the Levitical practice of taking care of the priests through the offerings of the people?
- e. **Combo Offerings.** The grain offering could be offered by itself. However, it was also included in combination with burnt and peace offerings. A "combo" meal included meat, bread and drink.
- f. The Public **Daily Grain Offering** of the High Priest. Read Lev 6:19–23. Every day the priest would offer a daily grain offering, twice per day, for himself and the priesthood. It consisted of baked pieces mixed with oil. All of it had to be burned. None could be eaten by the priests.

3. Reflections

- a. The grain offering was a combination of what God had created (the grain itself) **plus** the products of **human labor** (grinding to flour, crushing of olives for oil, baking). As such it symbolized the dedication of all that we **do** to God. Read Col 3:23-24. Do you dedicate the work you spend doing your job, parenting, daily chores (meal prep, laundry, grocery shopping, etc.) as done "unto the Lord?"
- b. Jesus' parable of the talents (Mat 25:14-30) teaches us that He expects a **return on his investment** in us. He doesn't just want his talent back; he expects we will work and labor (by grace) to multiply what he entrusts to us so that we give him back his money plus what we've earned with it. Is he getting a return on his investment with your life?
- c. God does not view our lives as part sacred and part secular. To him, **everything we do is sacred** when dedicated to him for His glory. Is your life **integrated** such that the sacred oil permeates all the flour of your life, making the entire loaf a holy offering to God?
- d. We **become what we eat**. If we are not seeing true spiritual transformation, then we need to question what we are feeding upon. Eating holy food, according to Leviticus, will produce holy people. Do you need to adjust your diet to consume more of Christ and his word?