

Leviticus 1—3

Bible Study

Chapters 1-3 Introduction

Chapters 1-3 are a single, uninterrupted speech from God— the theme is **gift offerings**

(Tanakh) “**Gift offerings** as distinct from expiatory sacrifices (Ch. 4-5) express the worshiper’s desire to present something to the Lord as a token of love and reverence”

Three types of gift offerings (sweet savor offering) :

- The burnt offering (Chapter 1)
- The cereal offering (Chapter 2)
- The peace offering (Chapter 3)

‘an offering’ [Heb. *Korban*]

“A term expressing the notion of something presented in homage. It does not mean ‘sacrifice’ in the sense of giving something up”

Leviticus 1

Leviticus 1:1 indicates that the tabernacle is now fully operative, and this links the book with the last part of Exodus [same day]

The very 1st instructions from God, from the tabernacle

¹ Now the Lord **called to Moses**, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying,

“called to Moses”—special formula of revelation...used only 3 times: [Ex. 3:4; Ex. 19:3; Ex. 24: 16]

Instead of calling Moses from Mount Sinai, he speaks to him from the tabernacle

Moses no longer had to go up Sinai to receive instructions from God, he received them directly at the tabernacle (tent of meeting)

v. 1 **called to Moses** (New Int. Comm. On the Old Test.)

“ he calls to Moses and this hints at the significance of what is coming. Sacrifice is the heart of Israel’s worship, and therefore the regulations on sacrifice which are about to be announced are most important”

1 Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the **tabernacle of meeting**, saying,

‘tabernacle (tent) of meeting’ (Heb. *Ohel moed*)

➤ One of the names of the tabernacle

The terms, ‘tent of meeting’ and ‘tabernacle’ refer to the same structure but convey a different emphasis

▪ Tabernacle (Heb. *Mishkan*)—where God dwells
Occurs only 4 times in Lev. : Lev. 8:10; 15:31; 17:4; 26:11)

▪ Tent of meeting—where God meets with the leader or people on special occasions

(Expositors) “Instead of each man building an altar wherever convenient, there was to be a tabernacle where all could worship.

Certain types of sacrifice were prescribed for the people, the nation, and the priests themselves”

²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When **any one of you** brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.

‘any one of you’=[OKJ] ‘any **man** of you’
(Companion) (Heb. *Adam*) “a descendent of Adam, not the priests”

“any of you”

(Jewish Study Bible , Tanakh) (Heb. *Adam* , human being)

“Refers to male and female alike...opportunities for individual worship are identical for male and female; only the public ritual was confined to males, namely, the Aaronic priesthood”

(Word, notes) “The formula ‘**if anyone**’ is rare in the O.T. occurring elsewhere only in 13:2 and Num. 19:14; usually the formula is *if any person*” ...

(Word) “is a racially inclusive term. It does not specifically mean ‘Israelites’. Therefore this term makes it possible for Gentiles who conform to all the standards of the covenant to offer sacrifices to Yahweh”

²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring **your offering** of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.

“an offering to the Lord”

(Word) “This statement excludes any idea of presenting a sacrifice before the tent of meeting to any other deity or subordinate heavenly creature”

‘your offering’

(Tyndale) “The offerings described are voluntary and personal in nature...private sacrifices would be offered in order to express thanksgiving, the desire for renewed fellowship with God..or to indicate the need for forgiveness of sin”

v. 2 (last part) “of the livestock” —the domestic herd, not wild animals

Instructions regarding **burnt offerings** (main sacrifice)

³If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.

(New International Commentary on the Old Testament)

“The reason for describing the burnt offering first is that it was the most commonest of all the sacrifices, performed every morning and evening, and more frequently on holy days”

‘his own free will’ [OKJ] ‘his own voluntary will’

(Companion) “(Heb.) here= ‘to be accepted for him’, i.e in his stead”

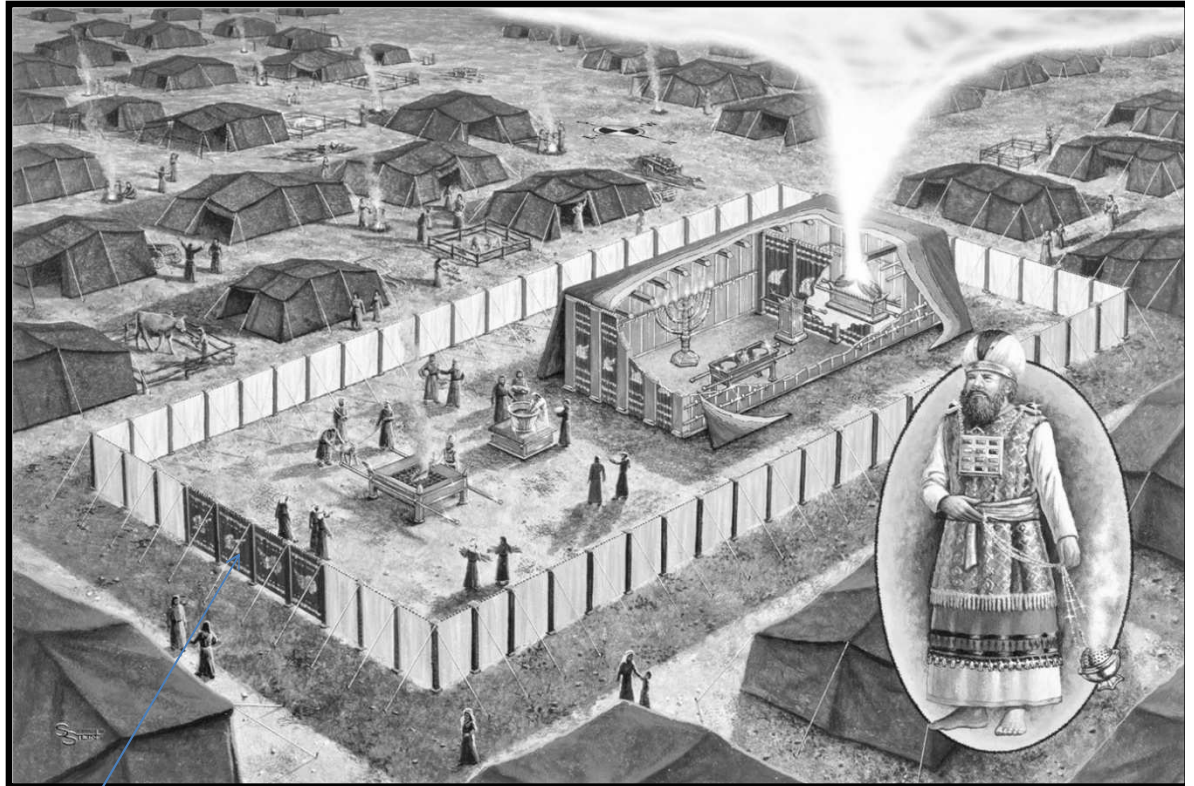
“he shall offer it of his own free will”

(The Law of the offerings, Andrew Jukes) – [better translation] ‘he shall offer it for his acceptance’...

“it was offered to God to secure the acceptance of the offerer”

v. 3-9 concern burnt offerings of cattle (herd)

³If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the **door of the tabernacle** of meeting before the Lord.



‘door of the tabernacle’

(BKC) “The actual presentation of the sacrifice probably took place at the actual entrance or gateway to the outer court before the priest, worshiper, and animal moved to the area **north of the altar** to enact the sacrificial procedure”

³If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male **without blemish**; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.

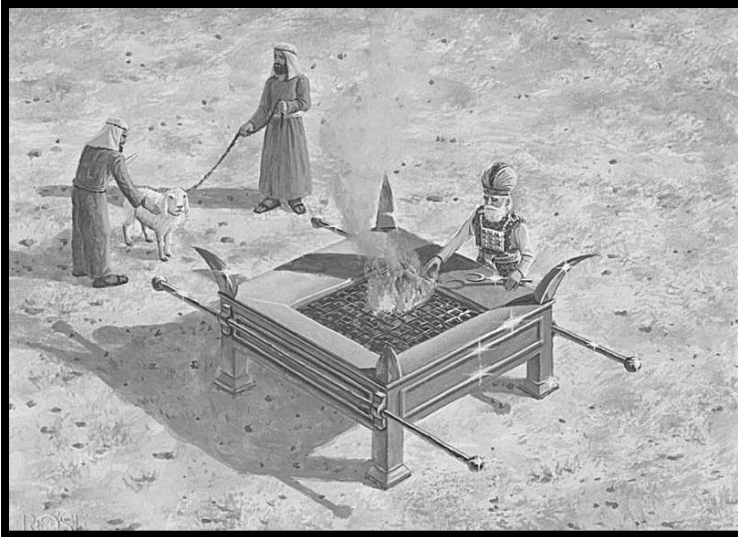
'without blemish' (the best of your stock)

(Tyndale) "An important principle underlying Old Testament sacrificial tariffs is enunciated here, namely that any sacrifice must represent a specific **cost** to the one who offers it to God"

1 Peter 1:19

¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

⁴Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it **will be accepted** on his behalf to make atonement for him.



“it will be accepted”

(BKC) “The worshiper was to lay his hand on the head of the animal so that it would be accepted on his behalf”

(New International Commentary on OT)

“Leviticus mentions only the act, but it is very unlikely that it was all done in silence. Most probably the worshipper explained why he was bringing the sacrifice; e. g. childbirth, healing or uncleanness”

“Atonement” –meaning here:

(JSB, Tanakh) “serve as a ransom or payment for one’s life...as a substitute for the worshipper himself.

The lay person’s private burnt offering would then be one way of symbolically offering oneself to God”

⁵He shall kill the bull before the Lord;
and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

v. 5 The worshiper killed the young bull

'before the Lord'

(BKC) "simply being a general term applicable to any place in the forecourt which obviously included the north side of the altar"

(BKC) "The next step...passed to the priest who caught the blood in a bowl as the animal was slain and then splashed it on all four sides of the altar of sacrifice"

(Expositors) "The blood was to be sprinkled on the altar to emphasize the fact of substitution by death (for the blood is life 17:14)"

(Word) "The blood rite signifies that animal's life is poured out to Yahweh"

⁶And he shall skin the burnt offering and **cut it into its pieces.**

(BKC) “The person who was to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces was the worshiper, not the priest”

(Companion) “Skin not offered with burnt offering, only with the sin offering”

(NSB) “The skin was the only part of the burn offering that was not burned. The officiating priest received it as part of his wages.”

(Tyndale) “The division into pieces is reminiscent of Abraham’s covenantal offering [Gen. 15:10]”

Genesis 15:7-10

⁷Then He said to him, “I *am* the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”

⁸And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?”

⁹So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

⁷The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire.

‘the priest shall put fire on the altar’

(JFB) “stir or rouse the fuel; for the fire made use there descended from heaven (Ch. 9:24)”

(Companion) “wood= logs. No other fuel might be used”

⁸Then the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar;

‘in order’

(Companion) “Because with the future Antitype all was to be in order”

9 (first part) but he shall wash it entrails and it legs with water.

v. 9 (first part)
The worshiper washed the entrails and legs

'wash'
(Companion) "To render sacrifice like the Antitype" (Christ)



Ephesians 5: 25-26
... "just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word"

⁹but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest **shall burn all** on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

‘burn all’—it was **completely consumed on the fire**...it was the only sacrifice that was completely consumed

➤ Foreshadows the total sacrifice of Christ



(NSB) “The **burnt sacrifice** was the only sacrifice that was entirely consumed on the altar.... it symbolizes that the worshipper must hold nothing in reserve when coming to God”

v. 9 (last part) ‘**a sweet aroma to the Lord**’:

(BKC) “expression indicating the Lord’s approval and acceptance of the completed sacrifice”

Ephesians 5:2

²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Burnt offering—sheep or goats

¹⁰If his offering *is* of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish.

¹¹He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

¹²And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar;

¹³but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring *it* all and burn *it* on the altar; *it is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord

(New International commentary on OT)

“The ancient worshipper...was **actively involved** in the worship. He had to choose an unblemished animal from his own flock, bring it to the sanctuary, kill it and dismember it with his own hands, the watch it go up in smoke before his very eyes.

He was convinced that something very significant was achieved through these acts and knew that his relationship with God was profoundly affected by this sacrifice”

¹⁴And if the burnt sacrifice of **his offering** to the Lord *is* of **birds**, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons.

¹⁵The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn *it* on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar.

(Tyndale) “There would be persons in Israel who could not afford to slaughter a prime animal, even if they possessed one. For such poor people the law permitted fowl to be presented..”

v. 15 ‘the priest’

(Companion) “To make up for the humble offering, the priest did this instead of the worshipper”

¹⁶And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes.

¹⁷Then he shall split it at its wings, *but* shall not divide *it* completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that *is* on the fire. It *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Leviticus 2

The **cereal offering**

(Tyndale) “was a voluntary gift to God designed to promote or secure his favor” ...the motivation identical to animal sacrifice

¹When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be *of* fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.

‘grain offering’ — (OKJ) ‘meat offering’
(Companion) “Better, *an oblation of a meal offering*”

‘oil’ — olive oil
(Tyndale) “Like the grain, oil was a product of human labor, so that the cereal offering symbolized the dedication of man’s work to God”

“Frankincense” — a balsamic resin
(Tyndale) “”Frankincense was symbolic of holiness and devotion” [Ps. 141:2]

(New Int. Com. OT) “The cereal offering is a kind of tribute from the faithful worshipper to his divine overlord”

²He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his **handful** of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

(Word) "The term *memorial* conveys the idea that the person who makes the offering is remembering God's grace in giving him his daily food"

³The rest of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the Lord made by fire.

'the rest of the grain offering'
What was left over was eaten by the priests in the sanctuary [wages]

v.3 "It is most holy of the offerings"

(Word) "Because it belongs to the priests, it is defined as 'most holy'....it could only be eaten in a restricted area of the temple precinct by priests, who are ritually clean..."

⁴And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

⁵But if your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a pan, *it shall be of* fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil.

⁶You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; *it is* a grain offering.

⁷If your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a covered pan, it shall be made *of* fine flour with oil.

Three ways to cook the bread: v. 4 in an oven; v. 5 in a pan [type of griddle]; or v. 7 a covered pan [fried]

v.7 'a covered pan' [Heb. *Marheset*]

(Tyndale) "was a stew pot or cooking pot used as a deep fat fryer...authorities suggest that the cereal offering cooked in the *marheset* would look like a modern deep fried doughnut"

(Tyndale) "The breaking of bread ministers in normal life to both physical and social needs within the context of a meal, whether among one's family members or friends"

⁸You 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.

⁹Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar.
It is an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

¹⁰And what is left of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the Lord made by fire.

v. 10 “what is left...shall be Aaron's and his sons’

The grain offering provided the major portion of food the priests who served the Lord

(New International Commentary, OT)

“The cereal offering also served a practical purpose—of providing the priests with their staple foodstuffs...the priests and the Levites had no land of their own and were entirely dependent on the people's good will”

¹¹No grain offering which you bring to the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the Lord made by fire.

¹²As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the Lord, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma.

¹³And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

v. 11 “nor any honey”

(Tyndale) “It has been conjectured that honey was a favorite food of the gods in some heathen cults”

v. 12 ‘the firstfruits’

(Tyndale) “The firstfruits...the beginnings of the harvest, and the offering of a token first portion to God symbolized the dedication of the entire crop to him, the giver of all good things”

Salt symbolized the binding power of the covenant

(Tyndale) “salt typified maintenance and purity, as in the ‘salt covenant’ [Num. 18:19] or Near Eastern method of establishing a bond or friendship by the eating of salt”

¹⁴If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the Lord, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads.

¹⁵And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It *is* a grain offering.

¹⁶Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: *part* of its beaten grain and *part* of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the Lord.

v. 14 The regulations for offering the first ripe grain

(Word) “It was mandatory that the first fruits be presented to Yahweh”

v. 16 the priest took a handful of the mixture [wafers with oil] and the incense and burned it as a memorial portion...the rest was given to the priests to eat

Chapter 3

Peace offering (Tyndale) “better rendered a sacrifice of well-being”

¹When his offering *is* a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers *it* of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord.

(New Int. Commentary, OT)

“The peace offering was an optional sacrifice, which a man could bring when he felt like it. Lev. 7: 12 gives three possible reasons for bringing it: as a confession offering, as a free-will offering, or to fulfill a vow.”

One principal difference between this offering and the others was that the worshipper could eat part of the animal himself

(Expositors) “The word translated ‘peace’ [‘fellowship’ NIV], includes the ideas of health, wholeness, welfare and peace.

The question is, Does this offering symbolize internal peace or peace with God? The answer is probably to be found in the fact that here the worshiper joins in the sacred meal.”

Ephesians 2:14

¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

This part of the ceremony was identical to the burnt offering

²And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.

(Tyndale)

“Like the burnt sacrifice, the peace or well-being offering contains a strong substitutionary element”

(Expositors)

“As was usual in the other offerings, the worshiper laid his hand on the head of the animal in symbolic identification and transfer of guilt”

³Then 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,
⁴the 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;
⁵and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that
is on the fire, *as* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

(New Int. Commentary, OT)

“Instead of the whole animal being burned on the altar, only the kidneys, the fat covering the intestines, and the long lobe of the liver...were burned on the altar..”

(Expositors) “Of course, the handling of the blood and burning of the fat on the altar show that the basis of communion is atonement;
but with the atonement goes ‘peace’ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” [Romans 5:1]

⁶If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord *is* of the flock, *whether* male or female, he shall offer it without blemish.

⁷If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the Lord.

⁸And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

v. 6 (Tyndale)

“The regulations emphasize again the standard established for sacrificial offerings. Only the choicest animals of the herds and flocks are to be presented to God”

v. 7 ‘lamb’ (Companion) “Better sheep”

(Barnes) “The word signifies a full-grown sheep in its prime”

⁹Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the Lord, its fat *and* the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails,

¹⁰the 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;

¹¹and the priest shall burn *them* on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

(Tyndale)

“The fat which also included the tissues that it covered, was prohibited to the Hebrews for food, being regarded generally in a metaphorical sense as signifying a particularly choice portion [Deut. 32: 14], and therefore in the sacrificial rituals the prerequisite of God alone.”

(Tyndale)

“The prohibition of animal fat for human consumption seems also to have been based in part on dietary considerations”

¹²‘And if his offering *is* a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord.

¹³He 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.

¹⁴Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails,
¹⁵the 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;

¹⁶and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat *is* the Lord’S.

‘all the fat is the Lord’s

(Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh) “Best of all are the layers of suet (Heb. *‘helev’* translated as ‘fat’, the hard subcutaneous fatty tissue surrounding the internal organs; therefore these portions would be assigned to God.

(New Int. Commentary, OT) “The ceremony concluded with the worshipper and his friends or family joining in the sacred meal to eat up the rest of the meat”

¹⁷*This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.’’*

(Expositors) “Neither fat nor blood was to be eaten. The prohibition of blood to the Jew is well known and explained at 17: 10-14. Life is in the blood. This is the basis for the sacrificial symbolism. Life is given for life. Blood is obviously and intimately associated with life.

“perpetual statute”
(Word) “No exceptions to this stipulation are to be made because of the circumstances of a particular time or a special location, such as distance from the central sanctuary”

Lessons

The sacrifices typified Christ's ultimate sacrifice—he has become the true sacrifice for mankind

They represent us presenting ourselves as living sacrifices [Romans 12:1]

The burnt offering was the only offering entirely consumed on the altar—it symbolizes that the worshipper must hold nothing in reserve when coming to God

The grain or meal offering was a joyful tribute from the faithful worshipper to God

➤ We express joyful tribute to God in commitment, service and devotion

Peace offering—symbolized fellowship with God/His presence near

➤ Jesus Christ has made peace for us by his atoning death, breaking down the barrier between us and God (Ephesians 2: 14-16)...we can approach and have God's presence near