

Meaning of Five Sacrifices *Leviticus 1—7*

<i>Dedicatory</i>			<i>Communal</i>	<i>Expiatory</i>	
BURNT עֹלָה	GRAIN מִנְחָה	DRINK נֶסֶךְ	PEACE שְׁלָם	SIN חַטָּאת	GUILT אָשָׁם
An initiation offering signaling to God that someone is at His front door seeking access to either commune with Him (peace offering) or plea pardon (sin / guilt)	An auxiliary offering accompanying burnt or peace offerings reminding participants of the everlasting covenant between Israel and Yahweh	An auxiliary offering normally accompanying burnt or peace offerings, but never with sin or guilt offering alone	<u>Thank offering:</u> for unexpected deliverance or blessing already granted <u>Votive offering:</u> for blessing or deliverance granted in answer to prayer which had accompanying vow <u>Freewill offering:</u> to express thankful devotion without regard to specific blessing	Blood applied to tabernacle in order to decontaminate sacred space after it was defiled by unintentional sin so that God can continue to dwell among Israel	Misappropriation or denial of rightful due to God or man, normally assessable in monetary compensation
(1:3-17; 6:8-13)	(2:1-16; 6:14-23)	(Lev. 23; Num. 15:1-10)	(3:1-17; 7:11-36)	(4:1—5:13; 6:24-30)	(5:14—6:7; 7:1-10)

Burnt Offering	
Dedicatory?	“Pre-tabernacle this was the only offering to atone for sin; after the tabernacle it is an optional act of worship that atoned for sins in general, accompanied other offerings, and expressed devotion, commitment, and complete surrender to Yahweh” (Jason S. DeRouchie, <i>What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About</i>, 106)
Favor?	“The burnt offering was a gift intended to win divine favour for the worshipper, as indicated by the phrase ‘that he may be accepted’ [1:3, 4]. By contrast, the sin offering (4:1—5:13) was meant to secure divine pardon for the donor.” (R. K. Harrison, <i>Tyndale Old Testament Commentary</i>, 47) “The motive for offering the burnt offering is assumed, not specified, but other references to the sacrifices show that it is offered on such occasions as thanksgiving, penitence, vows, and self-dedication. Instead of focusing on the motive, this text focuses on more fundamental aspects of the sacrifices, such as the symbolism of the shedding of blood and the burning. The mention of ‘a pleasing aroma’ (1:9, 13, 17) implies that the sacrifice results in the Lord’s favor toward the offerer. This could happen in sin contexts, such as Noah’s offering burnt offerings after the flood to appease the wrath of God that was still present after he had destroyed so many of his creatures (Gen. 8:20). This could also happen in praise or thanksgiving contexts, such as the psalmist’s presenting costly and pleasing burnt offerings as acts of praise for the Lord’s deliverance (Psa. 66:13, 15).” (Currid, Kiuchi and Sklar, <i>ESV Study Bible</i>, 217) “The crucial aspect of this sacrifice is that it was totally consumed on the altar, thereby signifying a complete surrender to God (through substitution), as well as complete acceptance by God.” (Paul Tanner)
Propitiatory?	“The sense of ransom is what was primarily involved in the burnt offering. It achieved the effect of averting or reducing God’s anger so that the worshipper would be spared the penalty of his sin. This is supported by several OT examples where the offering of burnt sacrifices was effective in averting or soothing God’s anger (Gen. 8:21; Judg. 13:23; 1 Sam. 7:9; 2 Sam. 24:25; 2 Chron. 29:7-8; Job 1:5; 42:8) ... The burnt offering sees sin as objective guilt before God, and it functioned as the major atoning sacrifice, providing the ransom by which God’s anger was soothed and kept back from venting its full force on the sinner.” (Christopher Wright, <i>New Bible Commentary</i>, 125, 130) “The most common offering in Israel was the burnt offering (Lev 1). It was presented by the priests every morning and evening and more frequently on holy days. Its main distinction was that the animal was entirely consumed by the altar fire. In response to the faithful offering, God’s anger would be turned; and the worshipper would be accepted, freed from punishment by payment of the ransom.” (David S. Dockery, <i>Holman Bible Handbook</i>, 153) “The whole offering was burnt, signifying the complete exhaustion of the wrath of God (as does the death of Christ). Although the offering was not made to ‘obtain acceptance’, it served as public testimony for a believing Israelite in his worship that no one approaches God at any time without a substitutionary atonement that provides acceptance before God.” (Paul Tanner)
Initiating an interaction with God on sacred space	“Leviticus 1 focuses on one offering, the burnt offering. Our focus this episode is how an Israelite (not a modern Christian) would have processed the ritual and its meaning. The burnt offering was not about forgiveness of sin. Rather, it was designed to initiate contact with God—which was viewed as a dangerous thing.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64)

	“<i>Olah</i> is a specific term for burnt offering. And I'm bringing it because ... I want God to accept me as a visitor. I want to be safe in his presence so I'm bringing this gift.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64) “It's a way of initiating a visit ... a little time of fellowship and communion with God. It's like you get invited over to somebody's house to eat ... there's no specific sin that needs to be forgiven” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64) “It's a signal to God that this worshiper wants to spend a little time with him, maybe wants to offer a prayer, maybe wants the priest to pray for him. We don't really know but there's some reason to be there that isn't, oh, I did this is horrible thing over here and I need forgiveness. That is not the purpose of the burnt offering.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64) “Now frequently the burnt offering was the first sacrifice in a ritual that included other sacrifices. You can see the logic. This is the kickstart or this is the signal to God that somebody's at the door ... This is the one that initiates the communing event.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64) “Leviticus 1, the worshiper says I want to spend some time with God so I have to go to his house. And he goes to the door of the tent of meeting, brings the offering. Why? He wants to be accepted. He doesn't want anything bad to happen. He wants to initiate that relationship and you do that, you signal to God that you're there, that you want some of his time, and if you bring acceptable sacrifice, you'll get that time.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 64) “Leviticus 1 ... the burnt offering, otherwise known as the whole burnt offering ... the point of that offering was ... to initiate contact with God ... It was a signal to God that the worshiper wanted some of God's time.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65)
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Grain Offering	
Initiate request	The memorial portion “served as the Israelites’ way of asking the Lord to ‘remember’ them with favor as they made their request or offered their praise” (Currid, Kiuchi and Sklar, <i>ESV Study Bible</i> , 218)
An appeal to “remember” the permanency of the covenant relationship	“This was an offering of remembrance, remembering the permanency, the binding relationship between God and his people.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65) “The burnt offering is this initial knock on the door. I want to spend time with God. I want to approach God and I hope God will accept me. Then we have the grain offering, the <i>minchah</i>, which says I am reminded of the relationship, the binding relationship, that we have entered into with God as a people and I have entered into because I'm a member of this community.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65)

	“And this isn’t the only offering that’s going to be called a memorial portion. It’s to remember. God’s going to remember. It’s for us to remember, too. It’s a memorial event, a memorial act to remember the binding covenant relationship that we entered into voluntarily at Sinai with the God of Israel, and all the baggage that comes with it the blessings and the cursings.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65) “the phrase [“covenant of salt”] occurs in covenant relationships that are designed to last forever [see Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5] ... you Israelites have entered into a binding covenant relationship with your God that is intended to last forever. So salt included in the sacrifices was a perpetual reminder of the enduring, at least intentionally, the enduring relationship between the Yahweh, the God of Israel, and his people Israel ... This is how you signify a permanent binding covenant relationship.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65)
God’s ownership	“Whereas the burnt offering bore testimony of acceptance with God based on substitutionary atonement, the meal offering was a recognition that everything the worshipper was and had belonged to God ... The faithful Israelite would be saying in effect, "If God is gracious to provide a substitute for my atonement, then I want to recognize that all I am and have now belongs to Him."” (Paul Tanner)
Tribute	“Thus its purpose was not so much to secure atonement. But as its name (<i>minhah</i>, that is, gift, tribute) and the use of salt (2:13) imply, it attested to the covenant relationship (re)established by atonement. That is, the grain offering was a harvest tribute paid to the sovereign Lord.” (David Dockery, <i>Holman Bible Handbook</i>, 154) “The preserving character of salt suggests the enduring nature of the covenant bond between the Lord and his people. The commitment was permanent.” (Richard Averbeck, <i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>, 576)

Peace Offering	
Signifies reconciliation	“This signified that all was well (i.e., peaceful) in the relationship between the Lord and his people and therefore always came last when offered in a series with other kinds of offerings.” (Richard Averbeck, <i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>, 576) “The purpose was, like the grain offering, not to effect atonement but to celebrate covenant union.” (David Dockery, <i>Holman Bible Handbook</i>, 154)
Response to answered prayer	“The fellowship or peace offerings (Lev 3) were unique in that these were optional, brought in response to an unexpected blessing (a “thank” offering), a general thankfulness (a “freewill” offering), or a prayed-for deliverance (a “vow” offering).” (David Dockery, <i>Holman Bible Handbook</i>, 153) “This optional act of worship celebrated the offerer’s fellowship with Yahweh and was given in the context of thanksgiving, vows, general praise (i.e., “free will”), or ordination (Lev. 3:1–17; 7:11–36). The offerer consumed the peace offering (except the priestly portions).” (Jason S. DeRouchie, <i>What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About</i>, 106)

Affirmation of covenant	“The ritual as a whole symbolizes a communion meal that is held between the offerer, the officiating priest, and the Lord. In OT times such meals were a means of affirming a covenant relationship (Gen. 26:28-30). Generally speaking, then, this offering was a time to remember and reaffirm the covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel (1 Cor. 10:16-18; 11:23-26).” (Currid, Kiuchi and Sklar, <i>ESV Study Bible</i>, 218) “what makes this particular sacrifice of well-being, the ‘peace offering’, distinctive is that it's a communal celebration of worshipers, the offerers, occasioned by and sort of constructed around the meat of the offering. It's a fellowship meal. It's a communion meal that indicated the fact that there was peace between God and the person bringing the offering” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 65)
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Sin Offering	
Forgiveness of sin	“The sin offering was the primary blood atonement offering in the sanctuary system of offerings through which worshipers could receive forgiveness for their sin and deal with the degree to which they might have contaminated the tabernacle” (Richard Averbeck, <i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>, 577) “Mandatory atonement for contamination of God's holy places or objects; the focus was on purification or consecration of individuals or community after specific sins, whether prohibitive (“don't's”) or performative (“do's”), unintentional (negligence or ignorance) or intentional (Lev. 4:1–5:13; 6:24–30; cf. 8:14–17; 16:3–22, 29–34). The priests consumed the sin offering (unless the offering was their own, in which case the whole animal was burned outside the camp).” (Jason S. DeRouchie, <i>What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About</i>, 106)
Unintentional sin	“the sin is not premeditated or intentional—he did not know that he had sinned, but found out afterward. Lev. 4:13 says that the sin is hidden from his eyes. Josh. 20:3 says it is done without knowledge, or without conscious intent. In the context, these sins are sins of ignorance (Lev. 4), sins of carelessness (5:4), or sin without defiance (Numbers 15:30).” (Allen P. Ross)
“Sin” as ritual impurity	“in our age the term “sin offering” could be construed to mean that this offering focused on the problem of moral and social sin. In the Old Testament such sins were included as part of the purpose for sin offerings, but the sin offering could also be brought for physical impurities that had nothing to do with moral failure” (Richard Averbeck, <i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>, 577) “the ‘sin’ offering, the <i>chatat</i>, is required for people who've committed no moral offense at all. In fact, it's required for simple ritual impurity. For instance, in Leviticus 5, the ‘sin’ offering is used for those who have been defiled by touching a corpse. ... The sin offering isn't about deliberate moral offenses. It's about unintentional defilement, and in this case something [that occurs] in the natural course of life. Leviticus 12 prescribes the ‘sin’ offering for a woman after she gives birth ... this is what Luke 2:22-24 is referring to when Mary has to bring an offering after giving birth.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 66)
Decontaminate sacred space	“The four blood sacrifices portray four distinct, though obviously related and overlapping, models of sin, and offer remedies that apply to those different dimensions ... The sin offering sees sin as dirt and pollution, which inevitably offends the presence of the holy God, and thus

	offers the means of cleansing and purification so that God can continue to dwell among his people.” (Christopher Wright, <i>New Bible Commentary</i>, 130) “The sin or purification offering (Lev 4:1–5:13) served to purify the sanctuary so that God could continue to dwell with a sinful people.” (David Dockery, <i>Holman Bible Handbook</i>, 153) “This was designed to purify the sanctuary from sin that was committed unintentionally, and thereby allow God to continue dwelling with His people” (Clendenen, <i>Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary</i>, 1430) “This is usually translated ‘sin offering’. But its purpose was not so much to deal with sin itself (though it did have an atoning dimension, like all the blood sacrifices) as to cleanse away the effects of sin, i.e. the pollution or defilement it causes. Whereas the burnt offering was the primary sacrifice for atonement through its propitiation of God’s anger, this offering was primarily for purification of the holy place and the altar, so that God could continue to live in the midst of his people. God cannot dwell in uncleanness, so this sacrifice cleansed his dwelling place. Hence some scholars translate it, ‘purification offering’.” (Christopher Wright, <i>New Bible Commentary</i>, 127) “in view of what's done with the blood in this chapter, the point of the ritual being to maintain the purity of the sanctuary, to protect it from infection by people who have become infected by sinning unintentionally, that become unfit to occupying sacred space. In view of that what’s actually done with the blood. Some have opted for purification offering.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 66) “that's why the blood is applied to the sanctuary and to sacred objects. It is shielding them. It is protecting them from infection. It is ensuring decontamination. It's like creating a clean room” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 66) “The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Think about that statement. The blood of bulls and goats is applied to the sanctuary. It's about decontaminating the place. It's not about taking away your guilt. It's not about moral absolution.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 66)
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Guilt Offering

<i>Restitution offering</i>	“The four blood sacrifices portray four distinct, though obviously related and overlapping, models of sin, and offer remedies that apply to those different dimensions ... The guilt offering sees sin as a wrong or a debt which has to be repaid and, therefore, demands full restitution as well as sacrifice.” (Christopher Wright, <i>New Bible Commentary</i>, 130) “The basic significance of this offering is to point out that there are times when one must go beyond confession and forgiveness so as to make reparation wherever possible, i.e., to restore what was defrauded. One cannot honestly enter into worship and service without making things right.” (Paul Tanner)
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<i>Interpersonal property violations</i>	“The exception is something that is done intentionally and if there is regret ... then the guilty person is allowed an opportunity to pay retribution or reparations.” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 67) “It is apparently beside the point that some of these sins were unintentional (cf. comments on Lev. 4:1–2), since the sins listed in 6:2–5 were obviously intentional sins against man, though not defiant sins against the Lord (cf. Num. 15:30). Thus the common occasion of the guilt offering was an offense that caused damage or loss whether unintentional or deliberate, and either against God or against man.” (F. Duane Lindsey, <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary</i>, 183) “The trespass (or guilt) offering is actually an extension of the sin offering. Both involve sins which are done "unwittingly" (Ps 5:15). The essential difference is that the trespass offering involves a <i>reparation</i>. This is due to the fact that these violations seem all to involve loss of property by fraud. There is a point to be stressed in this type: sin often involves the defrauding of God or of men; when sin is confessed, the wrong must be made right.” (Paul Tanner)
<i>Cultic violations</i>	“The purpose of the guilt offering was to make atonement for ‘desecration’ of ‘sancta’, that is, the mishandling of holy (sacred) things by treating them as if they were common rather than holy” (Richard Averbeck, <i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>, 578) “the ‘breach of faith’ here has something to do with the unintentional misuse or destruction or some kind of misappropriation, misuse of sanctuary property ... unintentional taking of something that should've been used only for the sanctuary” (Michael Heiser, <i>Naked Bible Podcast</i>, Episode 67) “Mandatory atonement for desecration of God’s holy things or the property of others; the focus was on re-consecration of God’s sacred things or people with compensation (restitution of what was violated + 1/5) for specific sins against others, whether prohibitive (“don’t”) or performative (“do”), unintentional (negligence or ignorance) or intentional (Lev. 5:14–6:7; 7:1–10; cf. Num. 5:6–8). The priests consumed the guilt offering.” (Jason S. DeRouchie, <i>What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About</i>, 106)