

The Sacred Offerings and Festivals in Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Future

Ezekiel 45:16–46:15, 19–24

Veritas Adult Community

College Church

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The Prince and the Offerings (*tě́rûmâ*)

¹⁶ All the people of the land are obligated to the prince in Israel in presenting this offering (*tě́rûmâ*). ¹⁷ But the prince shall be responsible for the whole burnt offerings (*’ólôt*), the grain/tribute offerings (*minhâ*), and the libations (*něsek*) at the festivals (*haggîm*), the new moon celebrations (*hōdošîm*), the sabbaths (*šabbātôt*), and all the other appointed convocations (*mō’ēdîm*) of the house of Israel. He shall provide the purification offerings (*hāṭṭā’î*), the grain/tribute offerings (*minhâ*), the whole burnt offerings (*’ólôt*), and the peace offerings (*šēlāmîm*), to make atonement (*kippēr*) on behalf of the house of Israel.

The New Passover

¹⁸ Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: On the first (*ri’šôn* [day of each year], on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without defect and purify (*hīṭṭe’î*) the House. ¹⁹ Then the priest shall take some of the blood from the purification offering and smear it on the doorposts of the House, and on the four sides of the ledge of the altar, and to the gate of the inner court.

²⁰ You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month on behalf of anybody who sins inadvertently or out of ignorance. Thus you shall purge (*kippēr*) the House.

²¹ On the fourteenth day of the first month you shall celebrate the Passover. The festival shall last for seven days, during which time bread made without yeast shall be eaten. ²² On that day the prince shall provide a bull for a purification (*hāṭṭā’î*) offering on his own behalf and on behalf of all the people of the land. ²³ During the seven days of the festival he shall offer a whole burnt offering to YHWH consisting of seven bulls and seven rams without defect, every day for seven days. Each day he shall also offer a male goat as a sin offering. ²⁴ He shall also provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil for each ephah. ²⁵ In the seventh month, beginning on the fifteenth day of the month, in a similar seven-day festival, he shall provide for the same purification (*hāṭṭā’î*), whole burnt, grain, and oil offerings.

Other Festivals

^{46:1} Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall remain closed during the six working days. But on the Sabbath day it shall be opened, and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened. ² The prince shall enter from the outside by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and he shall stop next to the doorpost of the gate, while the priests present his whole burnt offering and his peace offerings. Then he shall prostrate himself on the threshold of the gate and make his exit. But the gate shall not be closed until the evening.

³ The people of the land shall prostrate themselves before YHWH at the entrance of that gate on the sabbaths and the new moon festivals. ⁴ And the whole burnt offering that the prince presents to YHWH on the Sabbath day shall consist of six lambs without defect and a ram without defect. ⁵ A grain offering of one ephah

shall accompany the ram, whereas the grain offering accompanying the lambs shall be as much as he can afford. A hin of oil shall accompany each ephah.

⁶ On the day of the new moon the offering shall consist of a young bull without defect, six lambs, and a ram without defect. ⁷ As a grain offering, he shall present an ephah for the bull and an ephah for the ram, whereas for the lambs he shall bring whatever he can afford. A hin of oil shall accompany each ephah. ⁸ When the prince enters, he shall come in by way of the vestibule of the gateway; and he shall exit by the same way. ⁹ When the people of the land come before YHWH at the appointed celebrations, anyone who enters by way of the north gate to worship shall leave by way of the south gate. And whoever enters by way of the south gate shall leave by way of the north gate. They shall not go back through the same gate by which they entered. They shall indeed exit through the opposite gate. ¹⁰ And the prince shall come in among them when they enter, and he shall exit among them when they leave.

¹¹ At the pilgrim festivals and at the appointed celebrations the grain offering accompanying the bull shall be an ephah, and for the ram it shall be and ephah. But for the lambs it shall be whatever he can afford. A hin of oil shall accompany each ephah.

¹² Whenever the prince presents a voluntary whole burnt offering or voluntary peace offerings to YHWH, the gate that faces east shall be opened for him. Then he shall present his whole burnt offering and his peace offerings exactly as he does on the Sabbath day. Afterwards he shall leave, and when he has made his exit, the gate shall be closed behind him.

¹³ You shall provide a one-year-old lamb without defect for the whole burnt offering to YHWH daily. You shall provide it every morning. ¹⁴ And every morning you shall provide with it a grain offering, consisting of one-sixth of an ephah and one-third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour. It is a grain offering for YHWH, a permanent ordinance. ¹⁵ Thus they shall present the lamb and the grain offering, and the oil every morning as a regular whole burnt offering.

The Temple Kitchens

¹⁹ Then he brought me through the passage at the side of the gateway, to the sacred chambers of the priests, which faced north. And there I noticed an area at the far side to the west! ²⁰ He said to me, “This is the place where the priests shall boil the reparation offering and the purification offering, and where they shall bake the grain offering, to prevent them from bringing them (the offerings) out into the outer court, thereby rendering the people holy.

²¹ Then he took me out to the outer court and led me past the four corners of the court. In each corner of the court I noticed an enclosure. ²² The fenced-in enclosures in the four corners were all the same size—each one measuring forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide. ²³ Inside each, all around was a row [of masonry]. Beneath the rows, hearths were constructed all the way around. ²⁴ Then he said to me, “These are the kitchens where those who minister in the Temple shall boil the sacrifices presented by the people.”

Exposition

Introduction

Ancient Near Eastern background to Ezekiel’s instructions on offerings and festivals: “A Prayer to Every God”

A. The Categories and Nature of Israel's Sacrifices and Offerings (*zevah*)

1. Whole burnt offerings (*'ôlôt*).
2. Peace/fellowship offerings (*šélāmîm*).
3. Grain/tribute offerings (*minḥâ*).
4. Libations (*nēsek*), often translated as “drink offerings.”
5. Purification offerings/sin offerings (*ḥaṭṭā'î*).
6. Reparation/Guilt offering (*'āšām*).

B. The Categories and Nature of Israel's Festivals (*ḥag* [*hajj*])

1. The New Year and Passover Observance in Ezek 45:18–25.
2. The Offerings of the Seventh Day Sabbath, the Appointment Festivals (other Sabbaths), and the New Moon Festivals (46:1–15).

A Comparison of Mosaic and Ezekielian 7 th -day Sabbath Offerings		
Element	Mosaic Torah (Num 28:9–10)	Ezekielian Torah (46:4–5)
Number of lambs	2	6
Number of rams	—	1
Amount of grain per lamb	2/10 ephah of flour	according to means
Amount of grain per ram	—	1 ephah
Amount of oil	unspecified — mixed with flour	1 hin/ephah

A Comparison of Mosaic and Ezekielian New Moon Offerings		
Element	Mosaic Torah (Num 28:9–10)	Ezekielian Torah (46:4–5)
Number of bulls	2	1
Number of rams	1	1
Number of lambs	7	6
Amount of grain per bull	3/10 ephah of flour	1 ephah
Amount of grain per ram	2/10 ephah of flour	1 ephah
Amount of grain per lamb	1/10 ephah of flour	according to means
Amount of oil	unspecified — mixed with flour	1 hin/ephah
Amount of grain per bull	1/2 hin	—
Amount of grain per ram	1/3 hin	—
Amount of grain per lamb	1/4 ephah of flour	—

Theological and Practical Lessons from Ezekiel's Instructions on Offerings and Festivals

1. The details of Ezekiel's instructions differ slightly from those of Moses, but many of these reflect the new eschatological context of this image, and in any case were probably not intended to be instituted literally.
2. By his grace YHWH not only invites the worship of mortals; he reveals to them activities that guarantee acceptance with him and appoints officials whom he will receive on their behalf.
3. These offerings assume the original relationship between the sacrifices and offering sunder Israel's original constitution.
4. In Ezekiel for the first time the Passover offering is linked to sin (cf. Isa 53:10–12; Matt 26:20–29; Rev 19:6–10).