

# Studies in Leviticus

## The Cereal Offering (Leviticus 2:1-16)

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### Background

#### Introduction

In our first study, we looked at the first chapter of Leviticus, which focussed on the burnt-offering (*’ôlâ*). In this study we want to look at the second chapter of Leviticus, which focuses on the cereal-offering (*minhâ*), an offering of dedication or consecration.

Since both the burnt offering and the cereal offering are both offerings of dedication, they very much belong together. It was common practice for the cereal offering to be presented as an appendage to the burnt offering (Leviticus 23: 12, 13, 18; Numbers 28: 7 - 15; Judges 13: 19; Ezra 7: 17).

The burnt offering was entirely consumed upon the altar, and symbolically represented the consecration of the one who offered it, with God’s subsequent acceptance of it as a fragrant sacrifice - an aroma pleasing to the Lord or a ‘sweet smelling savour’ (*rēah nîhōah*). It is in this fashion that we can view the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us (Ephesians 5: 2, John 6: 38), since Christ was male, without blemish or stain, He gave His life up to God, He was ceremonially washed etc. In fact the New Testament contains many references to Jesus as the slain lamb of God, whose precious blood takes away the sin of the world (John 1: 29, 36; 1 Peter 1: 18 - 19; Revelations 5: 6 - 10; 13: 8).

### The Message

#### Features of the Cereal, Grain or Meal Offering

The Cereal, Grain or Meal offering, which was composed mainly of fine flour was derived from wheat (Ezra 6: 9; 7: 22). Wheat was a symbol of God’s goodness and provision (Psalm 81: 16; 147: 14). Such an offering formed part of the sacrifice made by David on Ornan’s threshing floor (1 Chronicles 21: 23).



The cereal offering had to fulfil certain criteria (presupposing a sanctuary, an altar, and an officiating priesthood), which included:

- i. It had to be derived from fine flour (Verses 1 - 3), baked cakes (Verses 4 - 10) or raw grain (Verses 14 - 16).
- ii. It was accompanied by oil and frankincense.
- iii. It could be accompanied by salt or wine.
- iv. It had to be free from leaven (Verse 11).
- v. It had to be free from honey (Verse 11).
- vi. A ‘memorial portion’ was burnt on the altar (Verse 2).
- vii. The remainder was kept by the priest alone (Verses 2, 3, 10).
- viii. It was the only bloodless offering.
- ix. Cereal offerings from the priest himself had to be totally burnt (Leviticus 6: 22 - 23)..

#### Other Information

The Cereal offering was derived from fine flour or grain. Leviticus 2: 1 and 2: 14 give us some idea of this, also giving us the sense of the grain being firstfruits. (See also Leviticus 23: 10 - 11; Exodus 23:

16, 19; Numbers 15: 18 - 20; Deuteronomy 18: 4 - 5; 26: 1 - 11). This means that the offering had to be of the best available, putting the Lord first. Our lives too are to be a sacrifice to God, but do we always give Him the best of ourselves - always putting Him first?

The Cereal offering had to be free from leaven and honey since they represent decay and corruption. It is interesting to note that honey can have a sweet savour and taste until it is consumed by the fire. Is our life before God like honey, which seems so rich and sanctified until it is exposed to the refiner's fire?

The salt is a symbol of purity (Matthew 5: 13; Mark 9: 50).

The following table shows further references to the twice-daily burnt and cereal offerings:

Offerings	Morning		Evening	
Bible References	<i>‘ôlâ</i> (burnt-offering)	<i>minhâ</i> (cereal-offering)	<i>‘ôlâ</i> (burnt-offering)	<i>minhâ</i> (cereal-offering)
Exodus 29: 38 - 42	●	●	●	●
Numbers 28: 3 - 8	●	●	●	●
1 Kings 18: 29				●
2 Kings 3: 20		●		
2 Kings 16: 15	●			●
Ezekiel 46: 13 - 14	●	●		