

# Drink, Heave, Wave And Firstfruits Offerings

The Mosaic Covenant also refers to drink, heave and wave offerings which were to be offered by believers under that covenant. Some of these relate to atonement, while others do not.

Numbers 15:1-5 taught that drink offerings should normally accompany burnt or peace offerings.

Some *heave* offerings were those specific parts of various offerings which were to be eaten by the officiating priest in the Tabernacle. Examples of heave offerings were three cakes from a peace offering (see Leviticus 7:14), the right thigh of the peace offering (see Leviticus 7:32-24) and those parts of the grain, sin and guilt offerings which were not commanded by God to be burnt (see Numbers 18:8-10). Other heave offerings were gifts to God such as the half-shekel atonement money (see Exodus 30:13), tithes for the Levites (see Numbers 18:21-24), tithes of the tithes (tenth) which God commanded to be given to the Levite priests (see Numbers 18:25-32), a part of the plunder taken by the Israelites in war against pagan nations (see Numbers 31:25-29), the first born of the cows, sheep and goats of the Israelites (see Numbers 18:15-19) and a cake from the first dough of the year (see Numbers 15:18-21).

*Wave* offerings referred to two things. First, they applied to a variety of gifts to God and secondly they related to some of those parts of the offerings which were commanded to be given to the officiating priest.<sup>1</sup> Examples of gifts and offerings to God which are called wave offerings are the sheaf of the firstfruits offering (see Leviticus 23:11-15), the two loaves offered on the Day of Pentecost (see Leviticus 23:17), the male lamb of the trespass or guilt offering for the cleansing of lepers (see Leviticus 14:12 and 14:21), the whole tribe of Levi (see Numbers 8:11) and the grain offering of jealousy (see Numbers 5:25).

Examples of those parts of offerings which were to be given to officiating priests and were called wave offerings are the breasts of peace offerings (see Leviticus 7:30) and the boiled shoulder of a ram, one unleavened cake and one unleavened wafer which were parts of the peace offerings related to Nazirite vows (see Numbers 6:19-20). Wave offerings were often waved before the Lord (see Exodus 29:24 and Numbers 19-20). But for example, in the case of the whole tribe of Levi being given as a wave offering, a literal waving of them all would be impossible.

The Mosaic Law also refers to *firstfruits* offerings. One type of grain offering was the offering of the firstfruits of the grain harvest (see Leviticus 2:14). Firstfruits offerings could also be made from the firstfruits of new oil, new wine, first ripe fruit and the first born of all of their clean animals for the support of the priests (see Numbers 18:12-17). Firstfruits offerings were offered at the Feast of the Firstfruits (see Leviticus 23:10) and at the Feast of Weeks (see Leviticus 23:17). Also firstfruits offerings could be made by individuals at any time (see Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

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<sup>1</sup> Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 565.

One view argues that Deuteronomy 26:1-15 proves that the firstfruits offerings and tithes were the same. But the contrary view suggests Numbers 18:12-17, 18:21-24 and Nehemiah 12:44 prove that first fruits offerings and tithes were different.

Proverbs 3:9-10 partly refers to the Mosaic Law principle of giving firstfruits offerings to the Lord: ***“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”*** These above verses relate to Israelites living under the Old Covenant.

#### Bible Study Questions

1. What does the Mosaic Covenant teach about:
  - a) drink offerings?
  - b) heave offerings?
  - c) wave offerings?
  - d) firstfruits offerings?