

Giving Thanks

By Steve Pruitt

I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalm 116:17 NKJV

The act of thanksgiving in worship has been around for many years. In fact, God made provision for it in the Levitical law. There were three types of peace offerings; thank-offerings, offerings for vows, and free-will or voluntary offerings. James M. Freeman in his book *Manners and Customs of the Bible* writes, "The offerings were accompanied by the imposition of hands and by the sprinkling of blood around the great altar, on which the fat and the parts accompanying were burned."

Another aspect of the peace offering was that parts of the offering were waved and others were heaved. According to Jewish tradition the parts of the offering were laid on the hands of the offerer. The priest would put his hands under that of the offerer and move them horizontally for the wave offering and vertically for the heave offering. This action was intended to be a presentation of the offering to God acknowledging him as the supreme ruler of heaven and earth.

The tradition of offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving continued with King David, King Solomon, King Hezekiah and later with Ezra and Nehemiah. The importance of giving thanks has always been a part of the church age. Jesus gave thanks. In his epistles the Apostle Paul exhorted the churches to give thanks.

In modern day worship services there is a popular trend of lifting and even waving hands. I dare say many people who express their worship in this manner do so without a clue as to what it represents. You see, the offerer of the Old Testament sacrifice could have waved his hands, but without the blood sacrifice it would have not been acceptable to God. Therefore, the waving or lifting of our hands to God in thanksgiving is not acceptable to God if, through the blood of Jesus, we do not offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

So, as we enter God's gates to come before his presence with our hands extended in thanksgiving, let us remember that we do so, not only in gratitude for his mighty acts, but as a presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice in covenant with him, acknowledging that he is supreme ruler of heaven and earth.

Are you a grateful person? Is your gratitude based on circumstances? Ask the Father to reveal ingratitude in your life. Ask him to give you an attitude of gratitude.

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Scriptures for meditation:

- Philippians 4:6
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- Colossians 3:17