



THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

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INTRODUCTION

There's no doubt that the Book of Leviticus is probably one of the least-read books in the entire Scriptures. Some feel it is irrelevant today, and some feel it has no value for the Christian today, yet it's full of deep truths, concerning sacrifice and worship.

When we approach any book of the Bible, we must remember that it is inspired by God, 2 Timothy 3:16, and it is useful for learning, encouragement, and gives us hope, Romans 15:4.

THE AUTHOR

The Book of Leviticus is part of what is called the Pentateuch, meaning five, 'penta', which means five, and 'teuchos' means tool or implement. It's commonly accepted that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, that is, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Genesis begins with creation, and it depicts the rise of God's people. Exodus begins in bondage; it tells of the redemption from Egypt, and Leviticus begins in sacrifice; it sets forth the ritual of worship.

Moses probably wrote Leviticus during the time Israel was wandering in the wilderness, which would not be long after they had been delivered from Egypt, Exodus 40:17 / Numbers 1:1, between 1,440 and 1,400 B.C.

As we go through this study, you will notice that the phrase, 'the LORD spoke to Moses,' is found several times in the first twenty chapters, Leviticus 1:1-3:17 / Leviticus 4:1-5:19.

You will also notice that God speaks to 'Aaron and his sons,' several times throughout the book, Leviticus 6:9 / Leviticus 6:25 / Leviticus 8:1-2. There are also times throughout the book where God speaks to Moses and Aaron, Leviticus 11:1 / Leviticus 13:1 / Leviticus 14:33 / Leviticus 15:1.

THE BOOK

The book begins with laws and regulations concerning offerings. There are five types of offerings discussed, burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings, Leviticus 1-7.

As the book continues, we read about God's laws concerning sacrifices, Leviticus 8-10, God's ceremonial laws concerning the priesthood, Leviticus 11-22, God's ceremonial laws concerning purification, and His laws concerning sacred feasts and festivals, tithes, offerings, sabbatical and jubilee years and vows, Leviticus 23-27.

THEME

The Book of Leviticus is a book about the rituals of worship and holiness. In this, it is a continuation of the Law, which is outlined in Exodus. Exodus ends with the construction of the Tabernacle, Exodus 40:1-33, and Leviticus tells us about the worship which takes place within that Tabernacle, Leviticus 1:1.

Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord moving into the Tabernacle, Exodus 40:34-38, and Leviticus picks up with the presence of the Lord calling out to Moses from inside the Tabernacle. Leviticus teaches God's people how they are to approach Him and live pleasing in His sight. Its central command is to 'be holy', Leviticus 19:2.

OUTLINE

- Laws concerning Sacrifice, Leviticus 1-7
- A historical section featuring the consecration of the priests, Leviticus 8-9
- The sin of Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10
- A section on laws of purification from ceremonial uncleanness, Leviticus 11-15
- The Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16
- Laws dealing with the conduct of God's people, Leviticus 17-20
- Laws concerning the holiness of the priests, Leviticus 21-22
- A discussion of holy days and feasts, Leviticus 23-24
- The Sabbatical and Jubilee Years, Leviticus 25
- Promises and threats connected with obedience to the laws, Leviticus 26
- A supplement containing the laws concerning vows, Leviticus 27

The last two chapters, dealing with the penalties for disobedience and with the making of vows before the Lord, Leviticus 26-27, have been described as an appendix or a supplement, which is something that was added on at the end of the book because there was no better place for it to go. They describe what is to take place if the people do not pursue a course of holiness.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

'The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.' Leviticus 1:1-2

Moses, being the mediator of God, wants the people to know that these laws didn't come from him. He didn't want them to think they were his laws, and he wants to make it clear that these laws came from God Himself.

God spoke to Moses from the 'tent of meeting', Leviticus 1:1; this is the tabernacle, and it would be from the tabernacle that God would speak to His people for the next five hundred years.

We see here God's intentions concerning any offering; the offering isn't to be forced upon or even asked for by the priests. An offering is given because the offeror simply wants to give, Leviticus 1:2 / 2 Corinthians 8:4.

The word for offering is 'corban', Leviticus 1:2, and it comes from a root word meaning 'to approach' or 'to bring near'. Making an offering gave them the right to approach the Lord. In New Testament times, it came to describe that which was given or dedicated to the Lord, Mark 7:11-12.

In other words, if anyone didn't make an offering, they couldn't approach the Lord, and they couldn't draw near to Him. Without any offering, without any sacrifice meant they couldn't worship God, John 4:24 / Romans 12:1-2 / Hebrews 10:5-9.

Ross, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sacrifice is at the heart of all true worship. It serves as the consecrating ritual for participation in the holy rites, it forms the appropriate tribute due to the LORD, and it represents the proper spiritual attitude of the worshiper.’

THE LAWS OF OFFERINGS

Offering	Purpose	Cow's Portion	Priest's Portion	Symbolism
Bread Offering (Lev. 2:1-17)	Worship (meat)	All that is burned	None (7:9)	It had no offering up for us
Grain Offering (Lev. 2:18-23)	Worship (meat)	All except what is in the breast	Breast and loaves (Lev. 2:18-23)	From the breast of the Lord
Peace Offering (Lev. 3:1-17)	Worship (meat)	All that is burned	Breast and loaves (Lev. 3:1-17)	From the breast of the Lord
Trespass Offering (Lev. 4:1-17)	Restoration for sin	Not burned, outside the camp	They were for the priest (Lev. 4:1-17)	Not to be presented from the priest of food, but from the priest of sin (Lev. 4:1-17)
Tithe Offering (Lev. 27:17-28)	Worship (meat)	All that is burned	None (7:9)	It had no offering up for us

There are five specific types of offerings outlined in **Leviticus 1-7**. In all cases, the offering was to be spotless and without blemish. Furthermore, it was always an animal which had been domesticated and raised by men. Wild animals were never used as offerings.

THE FIVE SACRIFICES

All sacrifices are offered either as a means to secure fellowship or on the basis of an already existing fellowship. The sacrifices are said in Scripture to be the ‘food’ of God offered on the ‘table’ of God, **Leviticus 21:6 / Leviticus 21:8 / Leviticus 21:17 / Leviticus 21:21-22 / Psalm 50:9-12 / Malachi 1:12**.

Various parts of various sacrifices were given to the priest as part of his ‘wages’, **Leviticus 2:3 / Leviticus 6:14-18 / Leviticus 7:6 / Leviticus 7:31 / Leviticus 10:12-15 / 1 Corinthians 9:13**.

The five sacrifices were divided into two classes: first, the ‘sweet-smelling aroma’ class. this included the burnt, **Exodus 29:15-18 / Leviticus 1:1-17**, meal, **Exodus 29:41 / Leviticus 2:1-16 / Leviticus 6:14-23 / Numbers 15:1-10**, and peace offerings, **Exodus 29:28-39 / Leviticus 3:1-7 / Leviticus 7:11-21**.

The first class didn’t deal with the removal of sin or the securing of fellowship. They were offered on the basis of an already existing fellowship. Since they didn’t deal with the horror of sin, which is never pleasing to God, they are called a ‘sweet smelling aroma’, **Leviticus 1:9 / Leviticus 1:13 / Leviticus 1:17**. They are guarded from casualness by being said to be ‘most holy’, **Leviticus 1:17**.

The second class, the ‘sin and transgression offerings’ dealt with the removal of sin whether dealing with the man as a specific crime, involving the idea of restitution, the trespass offering.

There are standard rules established for the offering of all the sacrifices, but there are also a great number of exceptions to the rules depending on your circumstances, for example, your financial state, occasion, or order of sacrifice.

BURNT OFFERINGS

‘If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you. You are to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting. You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.’ Leviticus 1:3-9

BULL OFFERING

Notice that the offeror’s offering was done voluntarily, **Leviticus 1:3 / Leviticus 1:10 / Leviticus 1:14**. It was offered by their own free will and in accordance with what they could afford, **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

Depending upon the financial status of the one making the offering, it could be comprised of a bull, **Leviticus 1:3**, a lamb, **Leviticus 1:10**, or a dove or a young pigeon, **Leviticus 1:4**.

We are taught by this that the sacrifice must be a personal issue. Some things were done by the worshipper and some by the priest, but they must do this for themselves.

The word used to describe the burnt offering is ‘olah’, **Leviticus 1:3**, and is taken from the root verb meaning, ‘to go up’ or ‘ascend’. It is an offering of ascension, which refers to the fact that the entire offering was burned and ‘ascended to God’.

It was the foundational offering which allowed men to come into the presence of the Lord. For this reason, a man makes this offering ‘that he may be accepted before the Lord’, **Leviticus 1:3**, and adds that ‘it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf’, **Leviticus 1:4**.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘By the imposition of hands, the person bringing the victim acknowledged the following.

1. The sacrifice as his own.
2. That he offered it as an atonement for his sins.
3. That he was worthy of death because he had sinned, having forfeited his life by breaking the law.
4. That he entreated God to accept the life of the innocent animal in place of his own.
5. And all this, to be done profitably, must have respect to HIM whose life, in the fullness of time, should be made a sacrifice for sin.
6. The blood was to be sprinkled round about upon the altar, **Leviticus 1:5**, as by the sprinkling of blood the atonement was made; for the blood was the life of the beast, and it was always supposed that life went to redeem life, **Exodus 29:10**.’

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This offering satisfied God’s desire for the love of His redeemed creatures as well as His offended justice. This offering satisfied God by its wholeness quantitatively and qualitatively. The Israelite worshiper offered a whole spotless animal in place of himself.’

A life was offered upon the altar; it was to be completely burnt upon the altar. With the other sacrifices, the offering was eaten by the priests with the one who gave the offering, but the burnt offering was completely consumed by the fire of the altar. This showed that man's duty to God was not in the mere giving up of a portion but the entire surrender of ALL.

The lesson for us in regard to Christ is clear; it must be made 'at the door of the tent', this would help to stop the creation of 'high places', that is, idolatrous shrines, and would at the same time teach the worshipper submission to God, Leviticus 1:3.

WITHOUT DEFECT

Also, notice that the animal had to be 'without defect', Leviticus 1:3 / Leviticus 1:10 / Leviticus 4:4 / Exodus 20:24. This was one of the reasons Christ drove out the money merchants twice from the temple, they were selling all kinds of offerings to the masses and making lots of money from it, many were full of defects, John 2:13-22 / Mark 11:11-17.

The animal's condition had to be perfect, not having any blemishes, and it could not be less than eight days old, Leviticus 22:17-28. It was then presented at the door of the tent, Leviticus 1:3. Before the tabernacle's erection, the animals were to be offered at the Lord's appointed place on an earthen altar, Exodus 20:24-25.

After the tabernacle's erection, the animals were to be offered on the bronze altar at the tabernacle's entrance, Leviticus 17:1-5. After Israel settled in the land of Canaan, they would still bring offerings to the tabernacle's entrance, or later to the temple entrance, Deuteronomy 12:10-14.

The practice of laying their hand upon the head of the animal was done for all the animal offerings, Leviticus 1:4 / Leviticus 3:2 / Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 8:22 / Leviticus 16:21 / Numbers 8:10.

This gives us the idea that the offeror would be connected with the offering as well as the Lord, this had to be personal, Leviticus 1:2-3 / Leviticus 1:10 / Leviticus 1:14. The one who offered the animal had to place his hands upon its head, Leviticus 1:4 / Leviticus 3:1-2 / Leviticus 4:3-4 / Leviticus 4:13-15.

The word 'atonement', Leviticus 1:4, means to cover up; later in the New Testament, the word 'atonement' means to reconcile, Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17. God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders; atonement must be made for sin, Habakkuk 1:13.

The sacrifice was then killed, and the blood of the animal was sprinkled at appointed spots or poured at the altar base, Leviticus 1:5 / Leviticus 1:11 / Leviticus 4:5-6 / Leviticus 4:18-19. The animal was then burned, and the sacrificial meal took place, Leviticus 6:26 / Leviticus 7:8.

In the case of the burnt offering, there was no meal at all since the entire animal was burned. Christ is our perfect sacrifice, Hebrews 9:13-14 / 1 Peter 1:18-19. Of the five main sacrifices, only the meal-offering did not involve blood.

In the private offerings, except where it required skill, the sacrifice was slain by the offeror themselves. In the case of the national or public sacrifices, they were performed by the priest. It was to be slain before the Lord, not only in his presence but with his approval, Leviticus 1:5.

In the blood was the life, Leviticus 17:11; the blood represented the life given. In the burnt and peace offerings, the sprinkling of the blood, though it must be performed, played a subordinate role; in the sin offering, it was central, Leviticus 1:5 / Leviticus 1:11.

Aaron's sons are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, Leviticus 1:6 / Leviticus 1:12 / Leviticus 7:8 / 2 Chronicles 29:34, and put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire, Leviticus 1:7.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the fire, **Leviticus 1:7**.

‘The fire that came out of the tabernacle from before the Lord, and which was kept perpetually burning, **Leviticus 9:24**. Nor was it lawful to use any other fire in the service of God. See the case of Nadab and Abihu, **Leviticus 10:1 / Leviticus 10:2**.’

Then they are to arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar, **Leviticus 1:8**. Finally, they are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and then burn all of it on the altar, **Leviticus 1:9**.

This washing probably symbolised the need for internal purity. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD, **Leviticus 1:9 / Leviticus 1:13 / Leviticus 1:17**.

SHEEP OR GOAT OFFERING

‘If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, you are to offer a male without defect. You are to slaughter it at the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. You are to cut it into pieces, and the priest shall arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of them and burn them on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.’ **Leviticus 1:10-13**

You will notice that the offering of sheep and goats has more or less the same requirements as offering a bull, **Leviticus 1:3-9**. The offeror’s offering was done voluntarily; it was offered of their own free will and in accordance with what they could afford, **Leviticus 1:10 / Leviticus 1:3 / Leviticus 1:14**.

The sheep or the goats were to be a male without defect, **Leviticus 1:10 / Leviticus 1:3**. Notice the worshipper is told where to make the sacrifice, the northward direction from the altar, **Leviticus 1:11**, was designated by God as the place where the sacrifice was to be made. Over and over again, the Scriptures we read about not only how God wants to be worshipped but where He wants to be worshipped, **John 4:21-24**.

Aaron’s sons are to splash its blood against the sides of the altar, **Leviticus 1:11 / Leviticus 1:5**. They are to cut it into pieces, and arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar, **Leviticus 1:12 / Leviticus 1:6-8 / Leviticus 7:8 / 2 Chronicles 29:34 / Genesis 15:10**.

Then they are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of them and burn them on the altar, **Leviticus 1:13 / Leviticus 1:9**. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD, **Leviticus 1:13 / Leviticus 1:9 / Leviticus 1:17**.

The significance of the whole burnt offering was very great; the worshipper kept back nothing for themselves. Neither he nor his friends used or enjoyed any part of it; it belonged exclusively to God.

BIRD OFFERING

‘If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, you are to offer a dove or a young pigeon. The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. He is to remove the crop and the feathers and throw them down east of the altar, where the ashes are. He shall tear it open by the wings, not dividing it completely, and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.’ **Leviticus 1:14-17**

The offeror's offering was done voluntarily; it was offered of their own free will and in accordance with what they could afford, **Leviticus 1:14 / Leviticus 1:3 / Leviticus 1:10**. If its birds, they are to offer a dove or a young pigeon, **Leviticus 1:14**.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Among fowls, only pigeons and turtle-doves were commanded to be offered, except in the case of cleansing the leper, mentioned **Leviticus 14:4**, where two clean birds, generally supposed to be sparrows or other small birds, though of what species is not well known, are specified. Fish were not offered, because they could not be readily brought to the tabernacle alive.’

The priest is to bring a bird to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar and allow its blood to be drained out on the side of the altar, **Leviticus 1:13**. Next, the priests are to remove the crop and the feathers and throw them down east of the altar where the ashes are, **Leviticus 1:14**.

Finally, the priest is to tear it open by the wings, not dividing it completely, and then burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar, **Leviticus 1:17**. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD, **Leviticus 1:17 / Leviticus 1:9 / Leviticus 1:13**. Notice they weren't required to wash the birds; it's possible that they were regarded as clean already.

God always looks after the poor in society and always makes allowances for them, **Leviticus 5:7-10 / Leviticus 12:8 / Leviticus 14:21-32**. We see this happening with Mary and Joseph when they offered their sacrifice. They were obviously very poor, **Luke 2:24**. We must remember in all of these sacrifices that it was the act of the sacrifice itself that was more important to God, **2 Corinthians 9:7 / Mark 12:41-44**.

PLEASING AROMA

The phrase, ‘an aroma pleasing to the LORD,’ is found three times in this chapter, **Leviticus 1:9 / Leviticus 1:13 / Leviticus 1:17**. When the Scriptures speak about an ‘aroma’, a pleasing aroma, this isn't suggesting that God has a nose to smell the sacrifice.

The idea behind it is that God smells or accepts the repentant heart of the person who has been obedient to Him through the offering of sacrifice, **Ephesians 5:2 / Philippians 4:17-18**.

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

This sacrifice sets forth Christ's offering Himself without spot to God in performing the divine will with joy, even to the point of death, **Hebrews 9:11-14**. The offering is a sweet aroma, **Ephesians 5:2**; the whole burnt offering is both atoning and substitutionary, Christ dies in our place.

The animals sacrificed all symbolise Christ in some aspect of His redeeming character. The young bull, His patient endurance as a Saviour, **1 Corinthians 9:9 / Isaiah 52:13**. The goat, a sinner, and when used of Christ, as He who was numbered with the transgressors, **Isaiah 53:12**.

The turtle doves or pigeons, mourning innocence, **Isaiah 38:14 / Hebrews 7:26**. Poverty, **Leviticus 7 / Philippians 2:5-8**, He who became poor that we might become rich, **2 Corinthians 8:9**.

Atonement, Romans 5:11, atoning blood of Christ, Deuteronomy 12:23 / Leviticus 3:17 / Acts 15:20. This is the only sacrifice in which the entire offering is burnt and given to God. Significance of total consecration and devotion to God, Romans 12:1.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘When anyone brings a grain offering to the LORD, their offering is to be of the finest flour. They are to pour olive oil on it, put incense on it and take it to Aaron’s sons, the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the food offerings presented to the LORD.’ Leviticus 2:1-3

THE GRAIN OFFERING

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God having granted forgiveness of sins through the burnt offering, the worshiper responded by giving to God some of the produce of his hands in cereal offering.’

The grain offering didn’t involve the taking of a life; instead, it was made up of the finest flour, Leviticus 2:1 / Genesis 4:3 / Genesis 3:10 / Judges 3:15-18, oil, and incense, Leviticus 2:1.

It looked to the time at creation when God had given to them ‘every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed,’ Genesis 1:29.

This is a picture of the One who became our ‘Bread of Life’, John 6:35, and who was anointed with the ‘oil’ of the Holy Spirit, Acts 10:38. Oil is symbolic of the anointing of God.

The incense was frankincense, Leviticus 2:2, which is white and yellow looking, it was very aromatic but bitter to taste, but when it was burned it produced a sweet-smelling aroma, Exodus 30:34 / Leviticus 24:7 / Jeremiah 6:20 / Song of Songs 3:6.

It was the symbol of a pure and good gift, and also the symbol of prayer, Exodus 30:8 / Psalms 141:2 / Luke 1:10 / Matthew 2:11 / Luke 1:10 / Revelation 5:8 / Revelation 8:3-4.

Honey was forbidden, and frankincense was used instead, Leviticus 2:2 / Leviticus 2:11. The priests would then take out the memorial portion from the offering and burn it on the altar as a food offering, which would become an aroma pleasing to the LORD, Leviticus 2:2 / Leviticus 2:9.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the memorial.

‘The regular name not only for the portion of the minchah which was burned on the altar Leviticus 2:9 / Leviticus 2:16 / Leviticus 5:12 / Leviticus 6:15 / Numbers 5:26, but for the frankincense which was laid upon the showbread Leviticus 24:7. It is the word which is applied to the prayers and alms of Cornelius, Acts 10:4.’

Ross, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The idea of a memorial portion given to God goes beyond a simple reminder. The verb often carries the nuance of beginning to act on the basis of what is remembered. The ‘memorial portion’ thus reminded or prompted worshipers to live according to the covenant obligations, that is, to live as if all they had truly come from the LORD; and it prompted or motivated the LORD to honour and bless those who offered this dedication.’

When we offer anything to the Lord as a sacrifice, we are remembering our covenant relationship with Him, Luke 22:19 / 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. It was the ‘most holy part of the food’, Leviticus 2:3 / Leviticus 2:10, but only for the priests, Leviticus 2:3 / Leviticus 2:10 / Leviticus 10:12-14.

The grain offering is also called a food offering, Leviticus 6:14-23 / Numbers 15:1-10. It was a cereal offering and gave the idea of a gift, an offering of thanksgiving.

Giving to God those things He has so richly given to us was a gift given in recognition of the dignity and authority of another, 1 Chronicles 29:10. They were to give to God the best of the things that He had given them to sustain life, Mark 7:11 / Hebrews 5:1-3 / Genesis 32:13 / Genesis 4:45 / 2 Samuel 8:2.

The basic thrust of the food offering is the consecration of all a person has to God, the fruits of their labour. The food offering would show that there is no real separation between our religious life and our secular life, Colossians 3:17.

‘If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of the finest flour: either thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in or thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with olive oil. If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of the finest flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of the finest flour and some olive oil. Bring the grain offering made of these things to the LORD; present it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar. He shall take out the memorial portion from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the food offerings presented to the LORD.” Leviticus 2:4-10

BAKED IN AN OVEN

If the grain offering was baked in an oven, Leviticus 2:4, it was only cultivated grain, Leviticus 2:4, which was to be offered, partly underground, never in their natural state, using all the labours of man.

It was offered in the shape of roasted ears, and partly fine flour, Leviticus 2:1, and the grains were to be parched dry, Leviticus 2:4 / Leviticus 2:14-16. It could be cooked in various ways or prepared in three different ways.

With oil and incense and seasoned with salt, Leviticus 2:13. Made of fine flour only, no oil or incense, used for sin offering or jealousy offering, Leviticus 5:11 / Numbers 5:15. Made with flour and oil only when used with the burnt offering, Exodus 29:40 / Numbers 15:1-2.

It was also to be without yeast, Leviticus 2:4, or honey; yeast is often compared to sin. Yeast symbolises corruption and immorality of the past, the old ways of Egyptian slavery; no yeast symbolises a new way, God’s way, Matthew 16:6 / Luke 12:1 / 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

PREPARED ON A GRIDDLE

If the grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of the finest flour mixed with oil, and without yeast, Leviticus 2:5. It is to be crumbled with oil poured on it, Leviticus 2:6.

COOKED IN A PAN

If it's cooked in a pan, it is to be made of the finest flour and some olive oil, [Leviticus 2:7](#). The grain offerings are made to the LORD, and they are to be presented to the priest, who will then take them to the altar, [Leviticus 2:8](#). Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Though it fed the priests, the offeror did not offer it for the priests but to God, [Ephesians 6:7](#) / [Colossians 3:23-24](#).’ The priests would then take out the memorial portion from the offering and burn it on the altar as a food offering, which would become an aroma pleasing to the LORD, [Leviticus 2:9](#) / [Leviticus 2:2](#). It was the ‘most holy part of the food’, [Leviticus 2:10](#) / [Leviticus 2:3](#), but only for the priests, [Leviticus 2:10](#) / [Leviticus 2:3](#).

‘Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in a food offering presented to the LORD. You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. ‘If you bring a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire. Put oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as a food offering presented to the LORD.’ [Leviticus 2:11-16](#)

Every grain offering they bring must be made without yeast, because they weren't permitted to burn any yeast or honey in a food offering, [Leviticus 2:11](#). Honey was forbidden, and frankincense was used instead, [Leviticus 2:11](#) / [Leviticus 2:2](#).

This is because honey would eventually turn sour; yeast was also forbidden, but frankincense received its highest degree of fragrance after it had been burned. Honey causes fermentation, and the fermentation of sweet honey would signify something that was corrupted and so unclean. Both honey and yeast were offered as a first fruit gift, but they are never offered on the altar, [Leviticus 2:11](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Honey, being used to produce fermentation, and leaven (or, a small piece of fermented dough) were excluded because fermentation was an apt symbol of the working of corruption in the human heart.’

It is important to note that these could be offered as first-fruit offerings, [Leviticus 2:12](#) / [Deuteronomy 26:2](#) / [Deuteronomy 26:12](#) / [2 Chronicles 31:5](#), but not as an offering that would be burned. They are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma, [Leviticus 2:12](#).

All the grain offerings could be seasoned with salt, salt preserves, and so is symbolic of endurance, [Numbers 18:19](#) / [2 Chronicles 13:5](#) / [Ezekiel 43:23-24](#) / [Matthew 5:13](#) / [Mark 9:49-50](#). They weren't permitted to leave the salt of the covenant out of their grain offerings, [Leviticus 2:13](#).

If they bring a grain offering of firstfruits, they are to offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire, [Leviticus 2:14](#) / [Luke 6:1](#), and they can put oil and incense on it, [Leviticus 2:15](#).

The priest will then burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as a food offering presented to the LORD, [Leviticus 2:16](#).

It's important to remember the Levites didn't inherit any land, [Numbers 18:20-24](#) / [Deuteronomy 10:9](#), but the Israelites were to supply the food for them, [1 Corinthians 9:13-14](#), and so, the first cuttings of the harvest were given to the Lord in support of the Levites. God is the provider of all things, but before we enjoy the fruits of our labour, we first must give God what we have, [Matthew 6:33](#).

The meal offering and drink offering, plus burnt-offering, all went together, [Numbers 15:3-4](#), or with the peace offerings, [Numbers 15:8-9](#), or by themselves, but never with sin or trespass offerings.

Priests were required to give a personal meal-offering twice daily, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour baked on a flat pan with oil and then parted into pieces, one half offered in the morning and the other half in the evening, Leviticus 6:20 / Leviticus 14:10 / Leviticus 14:21.

Meal offerings were offered for the poor for atonement in lieu of the bloody sacrifice, Leviticus 5:11. The gift must be brought by the worshipper himself, but it requires the mediation of a priest. One-tenth of an ephah is given to God, offered on the altar.

Taking a portion of the grain, baked goods, or first fruits, putting oil and frankincense upon it, salting it and then placing it upon the fire. The rest of the offering is given by God to the priests, Leviticus 2:3 / Leviticus 2:10 / Leviticus 6:16.

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

Christ in His human perfection was tested by suffering, Hebrews 2:18. The fine flour represented the sinless humanity of Jesus, 1 Peter 2:22 / 2 Corinthians 5:21 / Hebrews 4:15.

The fire is testing by suffering, Isaiah 48:10 / 1 Peter 1:7, even unto death, Revelation 2:10. Frankincense symbolises the aroma of Christ's life towards the Father, Exodus 30:34.

The absence of yeast, a type of absence of evil, shows forth Christ's character as the truth, John 14:6. Yeast in the New Testament speaks of a bad force of change, a changeable God or one who could be altered or weakened, could certainly not be holy.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘If your offering is a fellowship offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the LORD an animal without defect. You are to lay your hand on the head of your offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons, the priests, shall splash the blood against the sides of the altar. From the fellowship offering, you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is lying on the burning wood; it is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.’ Leviticus 3:1-5

THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

If their offering is a fellowship offering, and they offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, they are to present animals without defect, Leviticus 3:1 / Leviticus 3:6-7 / Leviticus 3:12 / Leviticus 22:22-24, only the best was expected.

Those presenting the offering are to lay their hand on the head of their offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting, [Leviticus 3:2](#) / [Exodus 29:10](#) / [Exodus 29:10](#) / [Leviticus 1:4](#), and then Aaron's sons are to splash the blood against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 3:2](#).

From the fellowship offering, they are to bring a food offering, the internal organs, all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which are to be removed with the kidneys, [Leviticus 3:3-4](#).

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Israelites were not to eat the fat of this sacrifice but to offer it to God on the altar. This may have symbolised that God was worthy of the best since the ancients regarded the fat of an animal as its best part. Another explanation is that since the Old Testament used the kidneys and entrails to represent the seat of human emotions, [Job 19:27](#) / [Psalms 16:7](#) / [Jeremiah 4:14](#) / [Jeremiah 12:2](#), these parts represented the worshiper's best and deepest emotions. This view finds support in the fact that Israelites offered the peace offering in intrinsically emotional situations, when they thanked God or requested from Him.’

Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is lying on the burning wood, and then it will become an aroma pleasing to the LORD, [Leviticus 3:5](#) / [Leviticus 3:16](#).

The significance of the fellowship offering is expanded upon later in [Leviticus 7:11-34](#). Everyone ate a portion of the fellowship offering, the offeror, the Lord, the priest, and even the priest's children, [Leviticus 7:20](#).

In the burnt offering and the grain offering, the Lord and the priest had a portion, but not the one making the offering; this signified communion with God.

Whilst the burnt offering was to be totally consumed by the fire as a sin offering to the Lord, the peace offering was a fellowship meal between the worshipper, his family, and the priests. The meat of the offering was to be eaten by both the priests and the worshippers.

When a person sits at a table and eats with someone, this signifies that they are at peace with the other person, [1 Samuel 9:22-24](#). Christ has become our peace offering; in Him, both God and man find common food.

Although the main reason for this offering was to bring something to the Lord, there was also another reason: this meal keeps God's priests and God's people together.

It's important to remember that this offering was a gift to the priests, and in return, the offeror was blessed to be able to sit down with God's spiritual leaders; it was a real time of fellowship. We can imagine them discussing spiritual and religious matters as they ate together.

LAMB OFFERING

‘If you offer an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, you are to offer a male or female without defect. If you offer a lamb, you are to present it before the LORD, lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. From the fellowship offering, you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD.’ [Leviticus 3:6-11](#)

If they offer an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering, they are to offer a male or female, but the animals used were all to be without defect, [Leviticus 3:1](#) / [Leviticus 3:6-7](#) / [Leviticus 3:12](#) / [Leviticus 22:22-24](#).

Only the best was expected. If they offer a lamb, they are to lay their hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting, and then Aaron's sons are to splash its blood against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 3:7-8](#).

From the fellowship offering they are to bring a food offering and its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which they are to remove with the kidneys, [Leviticus 3:9-10](#) / [Exodus 29:22](#). The fat of the intestines, the richest part, the kidneys, the caul, or midriff, was taken to the altar and burned by the priest, [Leviticus 3:11](#).

Dodd, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The gods of the heathens are said, [Deuteronomy 32:38](#), to eat the fat and drink the wine which were consumed on their altars.’

GOAT OFFERING

‘If your offering is a goat, you are to present it before the LORD, lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. From what you offer, you are to present this food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the LORD's.’ [Leviticus 3:12-16](#)

Whatever the animal was being offered to the Lord, it was brought to the altar by the giver, who then laid his hands on it before killing it, [Leviticus 3:12-13](#). The blood was sprinkled on the altar by Aaron's sons, [Leviticus 3:13](#) / [Leviticus 3:2](#) / [Leviticus 3:8](#) / [Leviticus 3:13](#).

From what they offer, they are to present this food offering to the LORD, the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which they are to remove with the kidneys, [Leviticus 3:14-15](#).

The fat of the intestines, the richest part, the kidneys, the caul, or midriff, was taken to the altar and burned, [Leviticus 3:16](#). This was a pleasing aroma to the LORD, [Leviticus 3:16](#) / [Leviticus 3:5](#).

The blood because it represented the life of an animal, the fat because it represented the best of the animal, [Deuteronomy 32:15](#) / [Psalm 119:70](#) / [Proverbs 11:25](#) / [Proverbs 13:4](#). The blood and the fat belonged to God, [Leviticus 3:16](#).

These were bloody offerings of the flock or herd, like the burnt offerings, a lamb, or a goat, [Leviticus 3:12-16](#). The fellowship offering was always accompanied by a meat and drink offering, [Leviticus 7:11](#).

The fellowship offering was sometimes called the sacrifice of peace, [Leviticus 7:11-38](#) / [Leviticus 19:5-8](#) / [Leviticus 22:21-25](#) / [Numbers 6:13-20](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:6-7](#). This was all about communion with God and His people, but God is always to be served first, [Malachi 1:7](#).

There was a three-fold purpose to this meal: a thanksgiving offering, [Leviticus 7:11-13](#) / [Leviticus 7:15](#); it was also a vow sacrifice, [Leviticus 7:16](#) / [Numbers 6:14](#); and it was also a free-will offering of joy and love, [Leviticus 7:16](#).

The fellowship offering always followed other sacrifices, and it was voluntary and could be offered anytime, [Leviticus 19:5](#) / [Leviticus 22:21-25](#). It was a holy offering that could be enjoyed by all who were clean within the family of the priest or even his servants, [Leviticus 7:20](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:17-18](#).

In the sin-offering, the priest was fed; in the burnt offering, only God was fed; in the meal-offering, God and the priest were fed; in the fellowship offering, God, the priests and the offerors were fed.

The breast and shoulder were the portions of the priests, Aaron and sons, [Leviticus 7:31](#) / [Leviticus 7:34](#). They had to eat it that day; the only exceptions were those offerings for vows or free will offerings, which were eaten that day or no later than the next day, [Leviticus 7:16](#).

Any leftover to the third day had to be burned, [Leviticus 7:17](#), to do otherwise was a sin, [Leviticus 7:18](#). The right thigh went to the priest doing the offering, [Leviticus 7:14](#) / [Leviticus 7:32-34](#), the rest of the flesh belonged to the offeror, to be eaten that day, [Leviticus 7:15](#), no-one unclean was to eat of the sacrifice, [Leviticus 7:19-21](#).

Some commentators have suggested that the fat of the animal signifies something which is being stored up for hard times of famine, and so, the fat symbolises the offeror's dependency upon God to look after their future, that which was stored up for famine times.

‘This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.’
Leviticus 3:17

God wanted the fellowship offering to be a ‘lasting ordinance’. God repeats these words seventeen times throughout the Book of Leviticus and beyond, [Exodus 24:5](#) / [1 Samuel 11:15](#) / [2 Kings 8:63](#).

The fellowship offering or peace offering, as some translations render it, is all about communion between God and His people, the priests, and God's people. In other words, peace was to reign within God's people.

It was a fellowship meal where God was the host because the animal sacrificed had been given over to God and no longer belongs to the giver. God directs what shall be burned, what shall be eaten, who shall eat it and where.

The Israelites weren't permitted to eat the fat of the animal, which was the richest part of the animal, only to be given to God, and they weren't allowed to eat the blood of the animal, which represented the preciousness of life.

No one was to eat of the fat or the blood of animals, [Nehemiah 8:10](#). The fat was always put on top of the fire to be consumed, and the blood was used in the altar, [Leviticus 3:17](#) / [Leviticus 7:22-27](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The prohibition against eating blood was especially stressed in the Old Testament. And even in Christianity, the apostles and elders of Jerusalem extended the prohibition against it, making it a Christian ordinance as well.’

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

As a sweet aroma offering portrays Christ as our peace, it was Christ who made peace, [Colossians 1:20](#); it was Christ who proclaimed peace, and it is Christ who is our peace, [Ephesians 2:14-18](#).

The offering sets forth God as appeased and the sinner reconciled. God and the sinner were brought together in peace, and both were satisfied with the finished work of Christ.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands—’ Leviticus 4:1-2

THE SIN OFFERING

Once again, we’re reminded that it’s God who’s speaking to Moses, **Leviticus 4:1**. Orally, God had given commands, and Moses had instilled in them time and time again the commands of God.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, he gathers them all together in the plains of Moab and goes through the entire law with them. God, through Moses, through the priests, made the people familiar with the law and what it taught and their proper response to it, **Deuteronomy 12-26**.

The offerings and sacrifices and the regulations which go with them originate from God, not Moses. An offering is something God has given to man, **Leviticus 17:11**. The first three offerings were offered as acts of worship, but this offering is made for atonement for sin.

These offerings have to happen when the people sinned and the priests themselves. The sin-offerings were not accompanied by meat-offerings or drink-offerings, **Numbers 15:3-11**.

Unintentional sins, **Leviticus 4:2 / Leviticus 4:13 / Leviticus 4:22 / Leviticus 4:27**, mean missing the mark, and there are two categories of motive mentioned here. First, there is missing the mark deliberately or willingly and missing the mark through weakness of the flesh.

In the Old Testament, no provision was made for a deliberate sin; the offender was put to death, **Exodus 31:12 / Exodus 35:2 / Numbers 15:32-36 / Leviticus 24:10-23**. The lack of knowledge was not then and is not now an excuse for the sin that they committed, **Hebrews 10:26**.

Meyrick, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Despite the fact of these other offerings having been outlined first, **Leviticus 1-3**, it was always the sin-offering or the guilt-offering which was first offered in the case of multiple sacrifices. The other three were presented first in the text because, “they were already in existence, and had existed from the time of the Fall.”

THE PRIEST’S OFFERING

‘If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. He is to present the bull at the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD. He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it there before the LORD. Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull’s blood and carry it into the tent of meeting. He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. The rest of the bull’s blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He shall remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering—all the fat that is connected to the internal organs, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys—just as the fat is removed from the ox sacrificed as a fellowship offering. Then the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the internal organs, and the intestines—that is, all the rest of the bull—he must take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it there in a wood fire on the ash heap.’ **Leviticus 4:3-12**

If the anointed priest sins, that is the high priest, **Leviticus 8:12 / Leviticus 21:10 / Exodus 29:7**, bringing guilt on the people he must bring a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed, **Leviticus 4:3**.

For unintentional sins, the priest offered a bull without defect, **Leviticus 4:3 / Leviticus 4:23 / Leviticus 4:28 / Leviticus 4:32 / 2 Corinthians 5:21**, and for sins against holy things, the sacrifice was to God, **Leviticus 5:14-16**.

For sins against a neighbour, the sacrifice was made to God, and a full restoration of property plus one-fifth was made to the neighbour, **Leviticus 6:1-7**. A young bull was sacrificed for the purpose of the consecration of priests and Levites to their office. For the high priest on the Day of Atonement, **Leviticus 16:3**; for the sin of the high priest, **Leviticus 4:3**; for the sin of the entire congregation, **Leviticus 4:13**.

The priest is to present the bull at the entrance to the tent of meeting, lay his hand on its head and slaughter it there, **Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 4:15 / Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:29 / Leviticus 4:33 / Leviticus 1:4**. Next, the priest is to take some of the bull's blood and carry it into the tent of meeting, **Leviticus 4:5**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The treatment of the blood was special in the sin-offerings. In the inferior sin-offerings it was smeared on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, **Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:34**, while in this offering for the high priest, and in that for the nation, the high priest himself sprinkled the blood seven times within the tabernacle and smeared it on the horns of the altar of incense, **Leviticus 4:6-7 / Leviticus 4:17-18**. The different modes of sprinkling appear to have marked successive degrees of consecration in advancing from the altar of burnt-offering to the presence of Yahweh within the veil.’

He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary, **Leviticus 4:6 / Leviticus 4:17 / Exodus 29:30**.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The blood of this sacrifice was applied in three different ways.

1. The priest put his finger in it and sprinkled it seven times before the veil, **Leviticus 4:6**.
2. He put some of it on the horns of the altar of incense.
3. He poured the remaining part at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offerings, **Leviticus 4:7**.’

If the blood was sprinkled in the Holy Place or around the altar or near the veil seven times, then the animal was burned, **Leviticus 6:30**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The sprinkling of the blood so near the veil seems to have resulted from the high rank of the sinner whose transgression was expiated by this offering. The usual place for the sprinkling of blood was upon the altar of burnt-offering, and only in the case of the priest, or of the whole people, was it sprinkled near the veil. The higher the rank of the sinner, the nearer to the presence of Jehovah within the veil was the blood sprinkled.’

The offence caused by the priest or priestly nation, viewed as God's representatives, is taken into the Holy place, **Leviticus 6:30**. On the great day of Atonement, the offering sums up the sins of the people, known and unknown.

Sins not dealt with by the everyday offerings, sins of priests, high priest, nation, and individuals alike and takes them into the very throne room itself.

He is then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting, **Leviticus 4:7**. The remainder of the bull's blood is to be poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting, **Leviticus 4:7 / Leviticus 4:18 / Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:34**

Next, the fat and kidneys were separated from the animal and burned upon the altar, **Leviticus 4:8-10**. When the priest committed a sin of omission, not a deliberate sin, by unconsciously contracting sins from the people in his office.

Maybe it only applies to the anointed high priest; his sin affects the people. This sacrifice is closely linked with the guilt offering and continues in the style of the peace offering, **Leviticus 4:10**.

Clothes which had blood on them had to be washed or destroyed. Pots which were used to cook the portion given to the priests were either broken or scoured and cleaned. If the blood was sprinkled outside the bronze altar, all the fat was to be burned, but the officiating priest received the flesh, **Leviticus 6:24-29**.

This was not something done every day, **Hosea 6:6 / Micah 6:7-8**. The flesh along with the skin, head, bones and remains of the animal were taken outside the camp to a clean place and burned and then buried, **Leviticus 4:11-12 / Leviticus 4:21**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A clean place where the ashes are poured out, **Leviticus 1:16**. It was a place free from impurities, not like those referred to in **Leviticus 14:40 / Leviticus 14:45**. The flesh, though it was burned in an ordinary way, and not sent up in the fire of the altar, **Leviticus 1:9**, was not to be confounded with carrion, but was associated with the remains of the sacrifices. The priests could not eat the flesh of this victim or of that offered for the sin of the congregation, as they ate that of other sin-offerings, **Leviticus 6:26**. Compare **Leviticus 10:17-18**, because they were in these cases in the position of offerors, **Leviticus 16:27 / Hebrews 13:11**. The same rule was observed in regard to the meat-offering of the priests, **Leviticus 6:23**. It was only of the peace-offering that the offeror himself could partake.’

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

This is a picture of Jesus who was crucified outside of Jerusalem, therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate, **Hebrews 13:11-13**.

THE NATION'S OFFERING

‘If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, when they realise their guilt and the sin they committed becomes known, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the tent of meeting. The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull’s head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD. Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull’s blood into the tent of meeting. He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the LORD seven times in front of the curtain. He is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He shall remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar and do with this bull just as he did with the bull for the sin offering. In this way, the priest will make atonement for the community, and they will be forgiven. Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. This is the sin offering for the community.’ **Leviticus 4:13-21**

If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden, even though the community is unaware of the matter, when they realise their guilt and the sin they committed becomes known, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the tent of meeting, **Leviticus 4:13-14**.

The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull's head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered, Leviticus 4:15. This offering of a young bull was made by the whole congregation, incurring the displeasure of God, for a reason not discovered.

It was the same as the priest's offering, but all of the elders placed their hands upon the head of the sacrifice before killing it, Leviticus 4:15 / Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:29 / Leviticus 4:33 / Leviticus 1:4. The idea was to humble the leaders of the people to keep them pure and to keep them in their place.

Then the priest is to take some of the bull's blood into the tent of meeting, Leviticus 4:16. He is to then dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the LORD seven times in front of the curtain, Leviticus 4:17 / Leviticus 4:6 / Exodus 29:30.

The priests is to then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting and the rest of the blood is to be poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting, Leviticus 4:18 / Leviticus 4:7 / Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:34.

The fat is to be removed and burnt on the altar, just as it was done with the bull for the sin offering, Leviticus 4:19 / Leviticus 4:8. In this way, the priest is making atonement for the community, and they will be forgiven, Leviticus 4:19-20 / Leviticus 4:26 / Leviticus 4:31 / Leviticus 4:35 / Hebrews 10:3-4.

The word 'atonement' means to cover up; later in the New Testament, the word 'atonement' means to reconcile, Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17. God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders; atonement must be made for sin, Habakkuk 1:13.

The bull is to be taken outside the camp and burned, as he burned the first bull, Leviticus 4:21 / Leviticus 4:12. This is the sin offering for the community, Leviticus 4:21.

Meyrick, in his commentary, says the following.

'The ceremonial cleansing of the sinful Israelite by the sin-offering in the old dispensation foreshadows the effect of baptism in the new dispensation, for as Calvin noticed in his commentary, 'All sins are now washed away by baptism, so under the Law also sacrifices were expiations, although in a different way'.'

THE RULER'S OFFERING

'When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the LORD his God, when he realises his guilt and the sin, he has committed becomes known, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect. He is to lay his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. He shall burn all the fat on the altar as he burned the fat of the fellowship offering. In this way, the priest will make atonement for the leader's sin, and he will be forgiven.' Leviticus 4:22-26

When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden, when he realises his guilt and the sin he has committed becomes known, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect, Leviticus 4:22-23 / Leviticus 4:3 / Leviticus 4:28 / Leviticus 4:32 / Leviticus 3:5 / 2 Corinthians 5:21.

A male goat was sacrificed for feasts and festivals, Leviticus 16:9 / Leviticus 16:15 / Numbers 28:15 / Numbers 28:22 / Numbers 28:30, for the dedication of the tabernacle and temple, Numbers 7:16, for the consecration of the priests, Leviticus 9:3, and for the sin of a ruler, Leviticus 4:23.

Turtledoves or pigeons were commonly used as a substitute for the lamb in cases of poverty, Leviticus 5:7. In extreme poverty, a tenth of an Ephah of flour was used, which was equal to the daily supply of Manna. Virtually everyone would have been able to take part in this sacrifice to God, Leviticus 5:7-13.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the leaders, Leviticus 4:22.

‘Either the head of a tribe, Numbers 1:4-16, or the head of a division of a tribe, Numbers 34:18, compare Joshua 22:30.’

The leader is to lay his hand on the goat’s head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD; it is a sin offering, Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 4:15 / Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:29 / Leviticus 4:33 / Leviticus 1:4.

Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:34.

All the fat and intestines were to be burnt on the burnt offering altar, Leviticus 4:26. In this way the priest will make atonement for the leader’s sin, and he will be forgiven, Leviticus 4:26 / Leviticus 4:20 / Leviticus 4:31 / Leviticus 4:35.

Clements, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God always remained sovereign over the ritual which was offered to him. Forgiveness was his free prerogative, not man’s right, controlled by rigid conditions.’

The sin of the priests, or the religious leaders, appears to be more serious than the sin of the individual members, and even the rulers. The blood of the offering for the religious leaders was to be placed on the horns of the altar with sweet incense, Leviticus 4:7, whereas the blood of the sacrifice of the ruler or the individual member was to be placed on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OFFERING

‘If any member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, when they realise their guilt and the sin, they have committed becomes known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect. They are to lay their hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In this way, the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.’ Leviticus 4:27-31

If any member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden, when they realise their guilt and the sin they have committed becomes known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect, Leviticus 4:27-28 / Leviticus 4:3 / Leviticus 4:23 / Leviticus 4:32 / 2 Corinthians 5:21.

A female goat was sacrificed by any individual who found they had unintentionally sinned. A female lamb was sacrificed for the sin of the common people, Leviticus 4:28, for a Nazarite to be released from his vow, Numbers 6:14, and for the cleansing of a leper, Leviticus 14:10.

They are to lay their hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering, Leviticus 4:29 / Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 4:15 / Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:33 / Leviticus 1:4.

Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:34.

The priest is to remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, Leviticus 4:10, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, Leviticus 4:31. In this way the priest is making atonement for them, and they will be forgiven, Leviticus 4:31 / Leviticus 4:26 / Leviticus 4:20 / Leviticus 4:35.

‘If someone brings a lamb as their sin offering, they are to bring a female without defect. They are to lay their hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD.

In this way, the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.’

Leviticus 4:32-35

If someone brings a lamb as their sin offering, they are to bring a female without defect, **Leviticus 4:32 / Leviticus 4:3 / Leviticus 4:23 / Leviticus 4:28 / Leviticus 3:7 / 2 Corinthians 5:21**.

They are to lay their hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, **Leviticus 4:33 / Leviticus 4:4 / Leviticus 4:15 / Leviticus 4:24 / Leviticus 4:29 / Leviticus 1:4**.

Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, **Leviticus 4:34 / Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30**. The offence caused to God by an individual member is presented on the horns, the strongest part of the altar.

The priest is then to remove all the fat, **Leviticus 4:15**, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, **Leviticus 4:8-10 / Leviticus 4:19 / Leviticus 4:19 / Leviticus 4:21**. Then the priest is to burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings, **Leviticus 4:35**.

In this way, the priest is making atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven, **Leviticus 4:35 / Leviticus 4:26 / Leviticus 4:20 / Leviticus 4:31**. The sacrifice was aimed at securing forgiveness and obtaining a renewed fellowship.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Three points are to be observed in regard to the victims for sin-offerings.

1. The common people had to offer a female, as the less valuable animal; they might present either a sheep or a goat to suit their convenience.
2. The rulers had always to offer a male goat.
3. The goat was preferred to the sheep, unlike the victim for a peace-offering or burnt-offering.’

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

The shedding of the blood was pointing toward a greater sacrifice in the future, that is, the blood of Christ, **Hebrews 9:10-13 / Hebrews 10:19-22**. With these sacrifices, we can see that the blood moves from the outer circle into the centre as the guilt moves from the heart of an individual towards the heart of a nation.

Sin separates people from God, and the relationship can only be restored by the death of an innocent victim. It stresses the quality of sin, its nature, and thus man’s state because of it. In the sin offering, the attitude of the person is stressed in the trespass, and the act of sin is stressed.

Spiritually minded people should see that all this pointed to Christ, the Messiah. Abraham saw the day of Christ and rejoiced, **John 8:56**; Moses suffered for Christ, **Hebrews 11:26**.

Isaiah saw the glory of the Messiah, **John 12:41**. Christ was the sin and trespass offering, **2 Corinthians 5:21 / Hebrews 9:14 / Hebrews 13:12 / Hebrews 10:14 / Ephesians 5:2**.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

‘If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible.’ Leviticus 5:1

As we enter **Leviticus 5**, we find there are three different offences in which a person would have to submit a guilt offering. The first is directed to anyone who does not publicly speak up to testify to the truth in the courts, **Leviticus 5:1 / Leviticus 6:5 / Judges 17:1 / Matthew 26:63 / John 9:24**.

If they do not speak up, they will be held responsible, **Leviticus 5:1 / Leviticus 5:17**. This would be like holding back evidence from the courts, which could affect the final outcome of the accused person.

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A proclamation was issued, calling anyone who could give information to come before the court and bear testimony to the guilt of a criminal. The manner in which witnesses were interrogated in Jewish courts of justice was not by swearing them in directly, but by adjuring them. The offence, then, for the expiation of which this law provides, was that of a person who neglected or avoided the opportunity to testify.’

‘If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realise their guilt; or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realise their guilt.’ Leviticus 5:2-3

The second one is directed at those who touch anything which is ceremonially unclean, **Leviticus 5:2-3 / Leviticus 12-15**. We can imagine someone walking down the street, and without knowing it, they have touched something which was unclean, but later they become aware of it.

These people needed to offer a sin offering, **Leviticus 5:6**, because they didn’t observe the rules for purification, **Leviticus 11:24-31**. After the purification process, they would be restored to fellowship with God and His people.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘All such persons were to wash their clothes and themselves in clean water, and were considered as unclean till the evening, **Leviticus 11:24-31**. But if this had been neglected, they were obliged to bring a trespass-offering.’

‘Or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realise their guilt—when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned.’
Leviticus 5:4-5

The third offence is directed at those who make oaths, **Leviticus 5:4-5 / Psalms 106:33**. We can imagine someone with all good intentions who makes an oath but fails to fulfil that oath for some reason; they would be guilty of not fulfilling that oath.

We can also imagine someone making a careless oath, an oath that they knew they couldn’t fulfil, they too would be guilty of making such an oath in the first place, **Judges 11:30 / Numbers 11:1-3 / Joshua 6:26**.

If anyone made an oath they didn’t fulfil or made a careless oath, they couldn’t fulfil, they had to confess their sins before they made a sin offering, **Leviticus 5:5**.

These oaths were given on the condition of expectation, it's the hope of receiving, and so the offering was in the form of a vow. The meat had to be eaten, and the carcass had to be burnt within two days of the offering. There were also voluntary oaths, vows or promises to consecrate someone or something to God, **Leviticus 27:1 / Deuteronomy 23:21-24**.

There was also the Nazarite vow, where a person vowed to abstain from wine or all drink that could affect them. It included avoiding contamination from dead bodies, bones, and graves; it also included refraining from mourning the dead and not cutting their hair, **Numbers 6:1-11 / Judges 13:4-5 / Judges 14:6-9 / Luke 1:13-15**.

‘As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.’ **Leviticus 5:6**

The sin offering for anyone guilty of breaking an oath or carelessly giving one is in mind here. The person who broke his oath or carelessly made an oath had to bear the guilt of his sin against another, for the oath was made in reference to another.

A female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin, **Leviticus 5:6**. The word ‘atonement’, means to cover up, later in the New Testament the word ‘atonement’ means to reconcile, **Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17**. God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders, atonement must be made for sin, **Habakkuk 1:13**.

‘Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as a penalty for their sin—one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. They are to bring them to the priest, who shall first offer the one for the sin offering. He is to wring its head from its neck, not dividing it completely, and is to splash some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the altar; the rest of the blood must be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. The priest shall then offer the other as a burnt offering in the prescribed way and make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.’ **Leviticus 5:7-10**

Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as a penalty for their sin, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, **Leviticus 5:7 / Leviticus 1:14-16 / Leviticus 12:8**.

Here we can see God’s provision for those who aren’t well off, **Leviticus 5:7 / Leviticus 5:11**. In other words, people have no excuse to follow and obey God’s requirements for personal sacrifice.

They are to bring their sin offering to the priest, and the priest is to first offer the one for the sin offering, **Leviticus 5:8 / Leviticus 1:16**. He is to wring its head from its neck, not dividing it completely, **Leviticus 5:8**, then to splash some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the altar. While the rest of the blood is to be drained out at the base of the altar, **Leviticus 5:9**.

It is a sin offering, **Leviticus 5:9 / Leviticus 5:12**. The priest is to offer the other as a burnt offering in the prescribed way and make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven, **Leviticus 5:10 / Leviticus 5:13 / Leviticus 6:26 / Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17**.

‘If, however, they cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, they are to bring as an offering for their sin a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour for a sin offering. They must not put olive oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering. They are to bring it to the priest, who shall take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD. It is a sin offering. In this way, the priest will make atonement for them for any of these sins they have committed, and they will be forgiven. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest, as in the case of the grain offering.’ **Leviticus 5:11-13**

Here again, we can see God’s provision for those who aren’t well off. If they cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, **Leviticus 5:7**, they are to bring as an offering for their sin a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour for a sin offering, **Leviticus 5:11 / Leviticus 19:36**.

They are to bring it to the priest, who is to take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD, **Leviticus 5:12**.

It is a sin offering, **Leviticus 5:12 / Leviticus 5:9**. By doing this, the priest is making atonement for them for any of these sins they have committed, and they will be forgiven, **Leviticus 5:13 / Leviticus 5:10 / Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17**. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest, as in the case of the grain offering, **Leviticus 5:13 / Leviticus 2:1-16**.

Clements, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Different types of sacrifices are not needed for different types of sin, nor is there a need to fear that there are some kinds of sin which have not been covered by the sacrifice which God has provided in Jesus Christ. All sin is atoned for by him, so that he fulfils the Old Testament demand for sacrifice as the way of atonement and forgiveness with God.’

We can see that the sin offering was an offering that related to relationships between people. We all know that relationships, especially bad relationships, can affect not only our relationship with God but also with those around us. The point here is simple enough: if your relationship with each other isn't right, then our relationship with God isn't right either.

THE GUILT OFFERING

‘The LORD said to Moses: ‘When anyone is unfaithful to the LORD by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD’s holy things, they are to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. They must make restitution for what they have failed to do in regard to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a fifth of its value and give it all to the priest. The priest will make atonement for them with the ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven. ‘If anyone sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though they do not know it, they are guilty and will be held responsible. They are to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way, the priest will make atonement for them for the wrong they have committed unintentionally, and they will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; they have been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD.’ **Leviticus 5:14-19**

The LORD now tells Moses when anyone is unfaithful to the LORD by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD’s holy things, they are to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel, that is around two and a half ounces, **Leviticus 5:14-15 / Exodus 38:24**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the sanctuary shekel.

‘This was heavier than the ordinary shekel and of more value. All money in those days was calculated by the weight of precious metals.’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The trespass-offerings as they are described in this section and in **Leviticus 7:1-7**, are clearly distinguished from the ordinary sin-offerings in these particulars.

1. They were offered on account of offences which involved an injury to some person (it might be the Lord Himself) in respect to property, **Leviticus 5:16 / Leviticus 6:4-5**.
2. They were always accompanied by a pecuniary fine equal to the value of the injury done, with the addition of one-fifth. Compare **Numbers 5:5-8**.

3. The treatment of the blood was simpler. Compare **Leviticus 4:5**.

4. The victim was a ram, instead of a female sheep or goat.

5. There was no such graduation of offerings to suit the rank or circumstances of the worshipper as is set forth in **Leviticus 4:3 / Leviticus 4:32**, etc.’

The guilty person offered their sacrifice to appease their conscience, this was the guilt offering, **Leviticus 5:15 / Leviticus 6:2**. Then they went to the person they had cheated and made up the difference plus one-fifth of the value price, **Luke 19:8**.

They must make restitution for what they have failed to do in regard to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a fifth of its value and give it all to the priest, **Leviticus 5:16 / Numbers 5:6-8**.

If someone sins against another, they couldn’t just apologise and be done with it; there had to be some kind of restitution, and this had to be done before atonement could be given. In other words, the guilty party needed to demonstrate repentance, which was done by paying some kind of compensation for the damage they had caused.

The priest is to make atonement for them with the ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven, **Leviticus 5:16 / Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17**. If anyone sins and does what is forbidden, even though they do not know it, they are guilty and will be held responsible, **Leviticus 5:17 / Leviticus 5:1**.

They are to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value, **Leviticus 5:18**. In this way, the priest will make atonement for them for the wrong they have committed unintentionally, and they will be forgiven, **Leviticus 5:17 / Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17**.

The unintentional sin of anything was definitely prohibited by the law, **Leviticus 5:17**; this would include things like fraud, suppression of the truth, perjury against a neighbour and slander. It is a guilt offering, and notice they have been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD, **Leviticus 5:18**.

The guilt offering is the only one which is not described as a soothing aroma; even the sin offering is so described in **Leviticus 4:31**. The guilt offering is closely aligned to the sin offering, and yet there are a few subtle differences.

Comparison Between Guilt And Sin Offerings	
Guilt	Sin
Offered the sacrifice for the sins of commission.	Offered the sacrifice for sins of omission, "unknowingly"
Offered to appease the conscience, "sorrow"	Offered to avert punishment.
Offered because of secret sin.	Offered because of open sin.
Ram offered.	Female lamb/goat from the flock.
In cases of poverty, two turtledoves or two pigeons for both offerings.	
In cases of destitution, 1/10 th ephah of flour for both offerings.	

While the sins which call for the sin offering are only mentioned in a general sense, there are several specific offences which mandate a guilt offering. A part of the guilt offering includes a financial recompense to the party that was wronged, **Leviticus 6:5**; thus, the guilt offering included the principle of restitution.

The guilt offering differed from the sin offering because it made atonement for the person of the offended, while the guilty offering only atoned for one special offence.

A breach of faith in anything against the Lord, to make good of any damage that was done. The sin offering speaks of sin against God’s nature, and the guilt offering speaks of sin against God’s government. This shows sin and its practical effects on God and man; it causes damage. Here, sin is viewed as a debt, something to be repaid.

The Five Offerings			
Type Of Offering	Represented	Pictures of Christ	Our Response
Burnt	Total Consecration	Voluntary Death	Total Dedication
Grain	Gift Of Labour	Perfect Life	Holiness
Peace	Reconciliation With God	Makes Peace With God	Fellowship
Sin	Forgiveness Secured	Died For Our Sins	Forgiveness Available
Guilt	Sacrifice And Restitution	Paid Sins Penalty	Salvation Is Ours

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

The guilt offering prefigures Christ's atoning for the damage of sin, **Matthew 26:28**. An innocent animal for a guilty man and a variety of offerings for all people. The sin offering represents Christ as a non-sweet aroma atoning for the guilt of sin, **Hebrews 13:11-12**.

It portrays Jesus as actually burdened with the believer's sin and standing in his place; it's in contrast with the sweet aroma offering, which presents Christ's own perfection. It tells us of our Lord's death as presented in **Isaiah 53**, and it carefully guards the infinite holiness of Jesus, **1 Corinthians 5:11**.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

'The LORD said to Moses: 'If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving a neighbour about something entrusted to them or left in their care or about something stolen, or if they cheat their neighbour, or if they find lost property and lie about it, or if they swear falsely about any such sin that people may commit—when they sin in any of these ways and realise their guilt, they must return what they have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to them, or the lost property they found, or whatever it was they swore falsely about. They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering. And as a penalty, they must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, their guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way, the priest will make atonement for them before the LORD, and they will be forgiven for any of the things they did that made them guilty.' **Leviticus 6:1-7**

In this chapter, we discover that everyone is responsible, not only for their own property but also for the property of their neighbour. God, through Moses, shares four laws concerning property.

The first deals with someone who deceives his neighbour about the property that was left as security, **Leviticus 6:1-2** / **Exodus 22:7**. The second law deals with those who rob someone else's property, **Leviticus 6:2-3** / **Exodus 22:11**. The third law deals with unjust gain from someone else's property, **Leviticus 6:4**, and the fourth law deals with someone who finds something which doesn't belong to them, **Leviticus 6:4-5**.

Notice that in each of the following cases, it was the offending person who had to reveal the offence and had to suffer the punishment, Leviticus 6:4 / Leviticus 5:5 / Exodus 22:7-13. Notice also that the offender had to pay some compensation, Leviticus 5:5.

They couldn't just say sorry and leave it like that; they were to add one-fifth to the total value of the property, Leviticus 5:5. They had to make this restitution first before they could make atonement for their sin. As a penalty, they need to bring to the priest their guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value, Leviticus 6:6 / Leviticus 5:15.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the two kinds of penalties which were incurred.

1. There was the restoration of unlawfully-acquired property to its rightful owner, along with an additional twenty per cent value.
2. There was the required offering of a valuable ram to God, through the priests, as the basis of atonement and forgiveness from God because of the sin against Him.'

When they do this, the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven for any of the things they did that made them guilty, Leviticus 6:7. The word 'atonement', means to cover up, later in the New Testament the word 'atonement' means to reconcile, Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17. God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders, atonement must be made for sin, Habakkuk 1:13.

Notice again, these laws concern relationships, the relationships between neighbours and the relationships between the offender and God. When a person breaks these laws, it not only affects the relationship between the offender and their neighbours but also their relationship with God.

THE BURNT OFFERING

'The LORD said to Moses: 'Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering:

The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar.

Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning, the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.' Leviticus 6:8-13

God now turns His attention away from the people and addresses Aaron and his sons, as they were the ones who would be responsible for carrying out the ceremonial sacrifices on behalf of God's people, Leviticus 6:8-9.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'This law properly refers to that burnt-offering which was daily made in what was termed the morning and evening sacrifice; and as he had explained the nature of this burnt-offering in general, with its necessary ceremonies, as far as the persons who brought them were concerned, he now takes up the same in relation to the priests who were to receive them from the hands of the offeror, and present them to the Lord on the altar of burnt-offerings.'

Notice the fire of the burnt offering was to be continually burning, Leviticus 6:9 / Leviticus 6:20 / Exodus 29:38-46. This is symbolic of God, who continually required their offerings for sin, and that the priest was on duty, Exodus 29:38-39.

The priest is to put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, Exodus 28:1-39, and remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar, Leviticus 6:10.

Then he is to take off these clothes, put on others and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean, [Leviticus 6:11](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the ceremonially clean place.

‘A place where no dead carcasses, dung, or filth of any kind was laid, for the ashes were holy, as being the remains of the offerings made by fire unto the Lord.’

Notice again, the emphasis on the fire to be continually burning, [Leviticus 6:12-13](#). The idea is that when someone brought their offering to the priest, the fire would already be burning, which signified that God always welcomed the sacrifices they brought for their sins, [Hebrews 5:6](#) / [Hebrews 7:25](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘References to the burnt-offering here pertain to the daily sacrifices, ‘consisting of two lambs offered one in the morning at sunrise, the other in the evening when the day began to decline, [Exodus 29:38](#) / [Numbers 28:3](#). The officiating priests laid the pieces of the sacrifice upon the altar in such a manner as to expedite keeping the fire going continually.’

THE GRAIN OFFERING

‘These are the regulations for the grain offering: Aaron’s sons are to bring it before the LORD, in front of the altar. The priest is to take a handful of the finest flour and some olive oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, and burn the memorial portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Aaron and his sons shall eat the rest of it, but it is to be eaten without yeast in the sanctuary area; they are to eat it in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. It must not be baked with yeast; I have given it as their share of the food offerings presented to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy. Any male descendant of Aaron may eat it. For all generations to come, it is his perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD. Whatever touches them will become holy.’ The LORD also said to Moses, ‘This is the offering Aaron and his sons are to bring to the LORD on the day he is anointed: a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. It must be prepared with oil on a griddle; bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The son who is to succeed him as anointed priest shall prepare it. It is the LORD’s perpetual share and is to be burned completely. Every grain offering of a priest shall be burned completely; it must not be eaten.’ [Leviticus 6:14-23](#)

For the grain offering, [Leviticus 2:1-16](#) / [Exodus 29:41](#), Aaron’s sons are to bring it before the LORD, in front of the altar, [Leviticus 6:14](#). The priest is to take a handful of the finest flour, some olive oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, [Leviticus 2:1-10](#) / [Exodus 29:40-41](#). He is to burn the memorial portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, [Leviticus 6:15](#) / [Leviticus 5:21](#).

Notice that Aaron and his sons were to eat of the grain, [Leviticus 6:16](#), sin, [Leviticus 6:26](#), and trespass offerings, [Leviticus 7:6](#). This was God’s way of letting the Israelites know that they were responsible for supporting Aaron and his sons, whilst they did their priestly work in the tabernacle. The grain which was left over wasn’t to be shared with anyone else except Aaron and his sons.

It must not be baked with yeast, and God has given it as their share of the food offerings presented to Him. Like the sin offering, [Leviticus 6:24-30](#), and the guilt offering, [Leviticus 5:14-19](#), it is most holy, [Leviticus 6:17](#). Any male descendant of Aaron may eat it, and for all generations to come, it is their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD, [Leviticus 6:18](#).

It’s not clear as to the meaning of the phrase, ‘whatever touches them will become holy’, [Leviticus 6:18](#). It probably means that anyone who is holy should only touch holy things, [Isaiah 52:11](#). Notice also that the grain offering was to be done twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, [Leviticus 6:19-20](#) / [Leviticus 6:9](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the day mentioned in Leviticus 6:20.

‘The day of this offering was probably the eighth day of the ceremony of consecration, Leviticus 8:35 / Leviticus 9:1, when the high priest appears to have entered upon the duties of his office.’

This was to ensure Aaron and his sons didn’t run out of grain for food. It is to be prepared with oil on a griddle, Leviticus 2:5, and they are to bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, Leviticus 6:21 / Leviticus 6:15.

The son who is to succeed him as anointed priest is to prepare it. It is the LORD’s perpetual share and is to be burned completely, Leviticus 6:22. Every grain offering of a priest is to be burned completely, and notice that it must not be eaten, Leviticus 6:23 / Leviticus 6:30 / Leviticus 4:12.

Ainsworth, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The people’s meat-offering was eaten by the priests that made atonement for them, Leviticus 6:15-16 / Leviticus 7:7, but because no priest, being a sinner, could make atonement for himself, therefore his meat-offering might not be eaten, but all burnt on the altar, to teach him to expect salvation, not by his legal service or works, but by Christ; for the eating of the sin-offering figured the bearing of the sinner’s iniquity, Leviticus 10:17.’

THE SIN OFFERING

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron and his sons: ‘These are the regulations for the sin offering: The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in the sanctuary area, in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in the sanctuary area. The clay pot the meat is cooked in must be broken; but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. Any male in a priest’s family may eat it; it is most holy. But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place must not be eaten; it must be burned up.’ Leviticus 6:24-30

God once again speaks to Moses and asks him to tell Aaron and his sons the regulations for the sin offering, Leviticus 6:24-25. The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, Leviticus 1:11, and God says it is most holy, Leviticus 6:25 / Leviticus 2:3.

Notice that this sin offering was to be eaten in the outer courtyard of the tabernacle structure, and it was only to be eaten by those whom God had separated for the priesthood, Leviticus 6:26 / Leviticus 6:16 / Leviticus 7:6.

The blood and fat of the sacrificed animal weren’t permitted to be eaten, but they were to be burnt with fire. The fat was used as oil for the continual burning of the sacrificial fires.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The key to the special sanctity of the flesh of the sin-offering, as set forth in Leviticus 6:26-30, must, it would seem, be found in the words of Moses to the priests, Leviticus 10:17. The flesh of the victim, which represented the sinner for whom atonement was now made, was to be solemnly, and most exclusively, appropriated by those who were appointed to mediate between the sinner and the Lord. The far-reaching symbolism of the act met its perfect fulfilment in the One Mediator who took our nature upon Himself. Philippians 2:7.’

Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, the priest must wash it in the sanctuary area, Leviticus 6:27. The clay pot the meat is cooked in is to be broken, but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water, Leviticus 6:28.

Because Aaron and his sons were a holy priesthood, a separated people, they could eat the meat of the offering so that they could bear the sins of God’s people, Leviticus 6:29.

Any sin offering whose blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place, Leviticus 10:18, must not be eaten, and it must be burned up, Leviticus 6:30. Since God is addressing Aaron and his sons, I thought it would be useful to end this chapter with some thoughts on the priests.

THE PRIEST

The descendants of Aaron were to be the priests, Exodus 28:1; all of the priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. After the return from captivity, those who claimed to be priests had to prove their genealogical claim to the priesthood, Ezra 2:59-63.

In 70 A.D., all the genealogical records were destroyed along with the temple; the Jews cannot prove that they are descendants of Aaron. Today, if there are no priests, there are no sacrifices and no taking away of sins according to the Law.

They have only a Rabbi in synagogues today. No one of legitimate birth could be excluded; sadly, the Sanhedrin in later times inquired into the genealogy and used it in order to cull out the good from the bad in qualifications.

They would sit in the 'Hall of Polished Stone' in Jerusalem and judge those who would be priests. There were one hundred and sixty things that could disqualify a person from serving as a priest.

Failure to pass meant that you would be clothed in black and permanently removed, but if you passed, then you would be clothed in white, and your name would then be inscribed in the hall, Revelation 3:5.

PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS

They must not have any physical imperfections that are noticeable, Leviticus 21:16-24. If they did, they could be a priest but not a high priest; no abnormalities were permitted, and there had to be perfection of the body.

They had to be aged between twenty-five and thirty, Numbers 8:24-25. At twenty-five years of age, they began to train to serve, Numbers 4:3, and between the ages of thirty and fifty, they could serve as priests.

The priest could only marry an Israelite virgin, Leviticus 21:13-15; the priest who was to be high priest could not go near death, nor rent his garments, Leviticus 21:10-12.

SOCIAL QUALIFICATIONS

They weren't permitted to drink wine or strong drinks, no alcohol. The High Priest was always on duty; he had to be wise enough to distinguish between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, and he had to be able to teach, Leviticus 10:8-11. These three qualifications apply to elders today, 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

THE PRIEST'S FUNCTION AND SERVICE

Jesus is the representative of mankind to God, Hebrews 2:17, and the Jewish High Priest represented the whole of the Jewish nation, Exodus 28:12. On each shoulder, he had six stones, each one with the name of a tribe of Israel, and on his breastplate, he had twelve stones. If the priest sinned, it was as if the whole nation sinned, Leviticus 4:3. It was the main duty of a priest to reconcile man to God by making atonement for their sins. There are two aspects of reconciliation. First, there is reconciliation, which comes about after mutual hostility, Matthew 5:24, and then there's reconciliation if the problem was only on one side; it is our anger with God, so it is not His fault, 2 Corinthians 5:19. Priests offered supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving. The blood sprinkled on the mercy seat under the Aaronic system served to cover the guilt or sins of the people, on their behalf, from the face of God and at the same time, it was an appeal to God to pardon and accept His people through Jesus interceding for us, Hebrews 7:25. The Old Testament priesthood pointed forward to the better priesthood, the New Testament priesthood of all believers in Christ, 1 Peter 2:4-9. We are living sacrifices, Romans 12:1-2.

THE PRIEST'S WAGES

The word 'tithe' generally means a tenth, and the Jews were to give a tenth of their general gains to the priesthood, Leviticus 23:10, but the priests also had to tithe, Numbers 18:21-28.

There was a special tithe every third year; they received the money that was used to redeem the firstborn, which amounted to five shekels per child. This is based on the value of the temple shekel, Numbers 18:16.

The priests received parts of the offerings not consumed, firstborns of the flock and herd, Numbers 18:8 / Numbers 18:21, firstfruits, Numbers 18:12-17 / Leviticus 7:32, and they received a percentage of the spoils from war, Numbers 31:25-47.

Their income largely depended on the varying religious state of the nation, from the burnt offering they received the skin, Leviticus 7:8. They had no inheritance of the land, Numbers 18:23-24, but they did have permission to stay in forty-eight cities set aside for their use, Numbers 35:1-29 / Joshua 21:41-42. Surrounding each city, an area of pastureland was marked out for them.

GARMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST

God intended the priests to have special, unique clothing, which God called holy. The material used in their construction was of the highest quality, fit for a king. They were garments that radiated glory and beauty and through that reflected the glory of the one they served, Exodus 28:2-3. Special gifts or abilities were given to those who were to make these garments, demonstrating that all good gifts come from God, James 1:17.

The whole picture is seen when we take the garments together. There were linen garments, including underpants, a coat and tunic, a linen girdle or sash, and a turban or mitre.

The high priest also wore an ephod, the breastplate of judgment, and the long robe with bells and pomegranates at the bottom and the gold plate or crown, Exodus 28:1-43.

The linen coat was a coat which covered the special underwear, Exodus 28:39 / Exodus 28:42-43 / Exodus 39:27-28 / Leviticus 8:6-7. This seems to have been the white linen undergarment of the priest, used for everyday business. The underwear was to be worn next to the body and covered the hips and thighs.

Over this was worn the coat woven in a checkered work of fine linen; it fitted the body closely and had tight sleeves over the arms extending to the wrists. In length, it came down almost to the feet and was bound to the body with its own girdle or sash of needlework, [Exodus 28:39-42](#).

The ephod or tunic, [Exodus 28:4](#) / [Exodus 28:31-35](#) / [Exodus 39:22](#), was a blue garment, worn over the tunic and underneath the ephod, [Leviticus 8:7](#). It was a sleeveless dress woven in one piece, with alternating golden bells, purple, gold, and scarlet. chequered work effect.

It had an opening in the top and in the middle of it, and it had a band woven into it to prevent it from being torn when taken on or off, [Exodus 28:32](#) / [Exodus 39:23](#).

It had alternated pomegranates and golden bells hanging about the hem at the bottom of the skirt. This would be seen because the Ephod came down no farther than the knees, [Exodus 28:33-35](#) / [Exodus 39:24-26](#). Pomegranates symbolised fruitfulness.

The sound of the bells enabled others to follow the movement of the high priest when he was in the Holy of Holies. They would be able to join in worship with him by following his movements, [Psalm 89:15](#) / [Exodus 28:31-35](#), and also let other priests know the high priest was coming.

The ephod was a double apron-like garment, like a vest or waistcoat, with a back section joined to the front section by shoulder straps over the shoulder. The shoulder straps were joined by two onyx stones set in gold; these two were inscribed with the names of the tribes of Israel, six on each stone, [Exodus 28:9-14](#) / [Exodus 28:25](#) / [Exodus 31-35](#) / [Exodus 39:6-7](#) / [Exodus 39:22-26](#).

Then there was a chain of pure gold attached to these two together; the two remaining ends of the straps were attached to the breastplate. It is interesting to note that the ephod later became quite a common wear at a later date. Samuel wore one when he was a child, [1 Samuel 2:18](#), and by David's time, all the priests wore them, [1 Samuel 22:18](#).

The girdle, [Exodus 28:4](#) / [Exodus 28:8](#) / [Exodus 28:39](#) / [Exodus 39:29](#), was a wide sash made of the same material as the ephod and used to bind the ephod about the waist.

The breastplate, [Exodus 28:4](#), was a beautiful cloth backing, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, [Exodus 28:15](#) / [Exodus 39:8](#). It was two spans long and a span wide, nine inches, folded double into a sort of square pouch, [Exodus 28:16](#) / [Exodus 39:9](#).

There were four rows of three gems, twelve altogether were set upon it, each gem was a different type and engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes, [Exodus 28:17-21](#) / [Exodus 39:10-14](#).

It was attached to the ephod by gold rings and golden chains, and a blue cord, [Exodus 28:22-28](#) / [Exodus 39:15-21](#). The chains would have to be attached in a cross shape to keep the pouch square and offset the weight of the stones and their gold settings.

The rings on the lower corners of the breastplate were connected securely to the bottom rings of the ephod above the girdle or sash by a type of blue ribbon lace. This breastplate or pouch carried the Urim and Thummim, [Exodus 28:30](#). The twelve stones were worn in this way and carried into the Holy of Holies and represented the people approaching God, as they themselves were forbidden to, [Exodus 28:15-19](#) / [Exodus 39:8-21](#).

No one really knows what the Urim and Thummim were like; they are not described in the Scriptures as to shape or material. We know that Moses gave them to Aaron on his consecration day, [Leviticus 8:8](#). Urim signifies 'lights' and Thummim signifies 'perfections'.

We know that the will of God was made known when there was doubt in the mind of the inquirer, [Numbers 27:21](#) / [1 Samuel 23:9-12](#) / [Exodus 25:22](#) / [Joshua 7:6-10](#) / [Judges 20:27-28](#) / [1 Samuel 30:7-8](#) / [Judges 1:1-2](#).

The turban, [Exodus 28:36-38](#) / [Exodus 39:30-31](#), was the priest's headdress. It was beautiful, reflecting the glory of God. Upon its front was attached a golden plate inscribed 'HOLY TO JEHOVAH' and it was held at the lower forefront by a ribbon of blue lace, [Exodus 28:36-38](#).

The inscription was a constant reminder to Aaron, his sons, and other priests that God is Holy, and if His priests were to find favour with Him, they also had to be holy, Zechariah 14:20-21.

Comparisons	
Old	New
Called by God, Exodus 28:1	Called By God, Hebrews 5:1-6
Sinful, Leviticus 16:3-6	Sinless, 2 Corinthians 5:21
Many High Priests, Hebrews 7:23	One High Priest, Hebrews 7:24-25
Many Sacrifices, Hebrews 7:26-27	One Sacrifice, Hebrews 7:24-28
Animals Offered, Hebrews 10:1-4	Jesus Offered, Hebrews 10:10-14

A PICTURE OF CHRIST

Christ is our high priest, Hebrews 4:14-16, who is perfect, not capable of making an error. Christ is now our High Priest, Hebrews 3:1, but note that Jesus didn't come from Levi, but from Judah, Hebrews 7:11-14.

Christ was washed in baptism before He began His public ministry; He was clothed in a holy garment of a pure life. His anointing was with the Spirit, He shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sins, and He serves as our High Priest in the most holy place.

In the Old Testament, there was a difference between the temple, the priest, and the People, but in the New Testament, all three are combined; all Christians are the temple of God, the people of God, and the priests of God, 1 Peter 2:9-10.

All Christians are holy, blameless and sanctified through the sacrifice of Jesus. We are royal priests with priestly duties to lead people to Christ, prayer, and sacrifices.

The priest is a servant, Romans 12:1-2 / Hebrews 13:15-16, who speaks of the sacrifices we are to offer. Our bodies as a living sacrifice to God's work and will, we are to be dedicated, sanctified to serve.

All Christians offer the sacrifice of praise and prayer; it is not a sacrifice because of sin, but the nature of our worship, Hebrews 8:15 / Hebrews 10:14, and it is acceptable to God through Jesus, Hebrews 11:24-25 / Hebrews 10:19-20.

CHAPTER 7

INTROUCTION

'These are the regulations for the guilt offering, which is most holy: The guilt offering is to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and its blood is to be splashed against the sides of the altar. All its fat shall be offered: the fat tail and the fat that covers the internal organs, both kidneys with the fat on them near the

loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which is to be removed with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD. It is a guilt offering. Any male in a priest's family may eat it, but it must be eaten in the sanctuary area; it is most holy. 'The same law applies to both the sin offering and the guilt offering: They belong to the priest who makes atonement with them. The priest who offers a burnt offering for anyone may keep its hide for himself. Every grain offering baked in an oven or cooked in a pan or on a griddle belongs to the priest who offers it, and every grain offering, whether mixed with olive oil or dry, belongs equally to all the sons of Aaron.' Leviticus 7:1-10

GUILT OFFERING

As we enter this chapter, we find God being specific with His instructions for Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial duties in reference to their part of the offering made by the people, [Leviticus 6:8-23](#).

The guilt offering, which is most holy, [Leviticus 7:1](#) / [Leviticus 7:6](#), is to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and its blood is to be splashed against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 7:1-2](#) / [Leviticus 1:5](#) / [Leviticus 1:11](#).

All its fat is to be offered, the fat tail, the fat that covers the internal organs, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which is to be removed with the kidneys, [Leviticus 7:3-4](#) / [Leviticus 3:9](#) / [Leviticus 4:8](#).

The priest is to burn them on the altar as a food offering; it is a guilt offering, [Leviticus 7:5](#). Any male in a priest's family may eat it, but it must be eaten in the sanctuary area because it is most holy, [Leviticus 7:6](#) / [Leviticus 7:1](#).

The same law applies to both the sin offering, [Leviticus 4:1-35](#), and the guilt offering, [Leviticus 7:7](#) / [Leviticus 6:1-7](#). They belong to the priest who makes atonement with them, [Leviticus 7:7](#).

The priests were permitted to eat the meat from the animal sacrifices, [Leviticus 7:8](#) / [Leviticus 4:11-12](#) / [Leviticus 6:22](#), but they weren't allowed to eat the skin or the fat from the animal, [Leviticus 7:3-4](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'It is most likely that the skins of the sin-offering and the trespass-offering also fell to the lot of the officiating priest.'

They were permitted to store up the flour from the grain offerings and the parched grains, [Leviticus 7:9-10](#) / [Leviticus 2:5](#), but the meat had to be eaten straight after it had been offered, for obvious reasons, the meat would go off, [Leviticus 7:15](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Because in such a hot country it was apt to putrefy, and as it was considered to be holy, it would have been very improper to expose that to putrefaction which had been consecrated to the Divine Being.'

THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

'These are the regulations for the fellowship offering anyone may present to the LORD: 'If they offer it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering they are to offer thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in, thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with oil, and thick loaves of the finest flour well-kneaded and with oil mixed in.' Leviticus 7:11-12

If the fellowship offering is an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering, they are to offer thick loaves made without yeast, with olive oil mixed in, thin loaves made without yeast, brushed with oil, and thick loaves

of the finest flour well-kneaded and with oil mixed in, Leviticus 7:11-12. Note that the KJV uses the word ‘cakes’ instead of ‘loaves’.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The peace-offering was the only sacrifice in which the worshiper himself was privileged to eat the meat offered and to share it with his friends.’

For the fellowship offering, everyone ate a portion of the peace offering, the offeror, the Lord, the priest, and even the priest’s children, Leviticus 7:20 / Leviticus 3:2-17.

Because cakes and unleavened bread are mentioned, this tells us it was a real time of fellowship for all of God’s people and the priests. In the burnt offering and the grain offering, the Lord and the priest had a portion, but not the one making the offering. This signified communion with God.

When a person sits at a table and eats with someone, it signifies that they are at peace with them. Christ has become our peace offering; in Him, both God and man find common food.

It is noteworthy that the fellowship offering was generally accompanied by a drink of wine. We see this bread and wine at the table of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

The fellowship offerings consisted of three offerings: the thanksgiving offering, Leviticus 7:12, the vow offering, Leviticus 7:16, and finally the freewill offering, Leviticus 7:29.

THE THANKSGIVING OFFERING

‘Along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving, they are to present an offering with thick loaves of bread made with yeast. They are to bring one of each kind as an offering, a contribution to the LORD; it belongs to the priest who splashes the blood of the fellowship offering against the altar. The meat of their fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; they must leave none of it till morning.’ Leviticus 7:13-15

Along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving, they are to present an offering with thick loaves of bread made with yeast. Leviticus 7:35. They are to bring one of each kind as an offering, a contribution to the LORD, and it belongs to the priest who splashes the blood of the fellowship offering against the altar, Leviticus 7:14. Note that the KJV uses the word ‘cakes’ instead of ‘loaves’.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘One loaf or cake out of each kind of meat-offering was to be a heave-offering, Leviticus 7:32, for the officiating priest. According to Jewish tradition, there were to be ten cakes of each kind of bread in every thank-offering. The other cakes were returned to the sacrificer.’

The meat of their fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; they must leave none of it till morning, Leviticus 7:15, for obvious reasons, the meat would go off.

Cate, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The peace-offerings of Leviticus 3:2-17 were further classified as: (1) thanksgiving, Leviticus 7:12-15; (2) votive, Leviticus 7:16-18; and (3) freewill. The difference between the first and the other two was in the times when they could be eaten.’

The thanksgiving offering was made in reference to what God had blessed the worshipper, Psalms 107:22. It was to be eaten the same day as it was offered, which means they spent time together in fellowship, Deuteronomy 12:12.

This was a real friend and family affair, where everyone came together to simply give thanks to God for His blessings. Because everyone brought an offering, this was a time of receiving and sharing for everyone involved.

THE VOW OFFERING

‘If, however, their offering is the result of a vow or is a freewill offering, the sacrifice shall be eaten on the day they offer it, but anything left over may be eaten on the next day. Any meat of the sacrifice left over till the third day must be burned up. If any meat of the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day, the one who offered it will not be accepted. It will not be reckoned to their credit, for it has become impure; the person who eats any of it will be held responsible. ‘Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean must not be eaten; it must be burned up. As for other meat, anyone ceremonially clean may eat it. But if anyone who is unclean eats any meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD, they must be cut off from their people. Anyone who touches something unclean—whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean creature that moves along the ground—and then eats any of the meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD must be cut off from their people.’ [Leviticus 7:16-21](#)

If their offering is the result of a vow or is a freewill offering, the sacrifice is to be eaten on the day they offer it, but anything left over may be eaten on the next day, [Leviticus 7:16](#).

The vow offering was made when an individual vowed to give something to God out of appreciation for God’s great blessings, [Psalm 66:13-14](#) / [Psalm 116:1-19](#). It was a free-will offering in the sense that the worshipper chose to make the offering in thankfulness for all that God had done for them.

Any meat of the sacrifice left over till the third day is to be burned up, [Leviticus 7:17](#). If any meat of the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day, then the one who offered it will not be accepted, [Leviticus 7:18](#). It will not be reckoned to their credit, for it has become impure and the person who eats any of it will be held responsible, [Leviticus 7:18](#).

Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean must not be eaten, and so, it is to be burned up, [Leviticus 7:19](#). As for other meat, anyone ceremonially clean may eat it, [Leviticus 7:19](#), however, if anyone who is unclean eats any meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD, they must be cut off from their people, [Leviticus 7:20](#). Anyone who touches something unclean, whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean creature that moves along the ground and then eats any of the meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD must be cut off from their people, [Leviticus 7:21](#) / [Exodus 31:14](#).

Bamberger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Several related passages make it clear that it is God who cuts the offender off from his kin, [Leviticus 17:10](#) / [Leviticus 20:3-6](#). The term then refers to divine rather than human punishment, most probably premature death.’

EATING FAT AND BLOOD FORBIDDEN

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘Do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep, or goats. The fat of an animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it. Anyone who eats the fat of an animal from which a food offering may be presented to the LORD must be cut off from their people. And wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. Anyone who eats blood must be cut off from their people.’ [Leviticus 7:22-27](#)

Moses is now to tell the Israelites that they cannot eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats, [Leviticus 7:22-23](#) / [Leviticus 7:33-36](#). The fat of an animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but they must not eat it, [Leviticus 7:24](#) / [Leviticus 11:39](#).

Anyone who eats the fat of an animal from which a food offering may be presented is to be cut off from their people, [Leviticus 7:25](#). Wherever they live, they must not eat the blood of any bird or animal, [Leviticus](#)

7:26 / Leviticus 17:10-15, and anyone who eats blood must be cut off from their people, Leviticus 7:27 / Leviticus 3:17 / Genesis 17:14.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Blood represented life that was the medium of atonement for humankind and as such is inappropriate for human consumption, Leviticus 17:10-14 / Genesis 9:4 / Acts 15:29. God claimed the lives and best of His people. There may have been a hygienic reason for God prohibiting the eating of animal fat, too.’

THE FREE WILL OFFERING

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘Anyone who brings a fellowship offering to the LORD is to bring part of it as their sacrifice to the LORD. With their own hands, they are to present the food offering to the LORD; they are to bring the fat, together with the breast, and wave the breast before the LORD as a wave offering. The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. You are to give the right thigh of your fellowship offerings to the priest as a contribution. The son of Aaron who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering shall have the right thigh as his share. From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is presented and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as their perpetual share from the Israelites.’ Leviticus 7:28-34

THE PRIESTS’ SHARE

Anyone who brings a fellowship offering to the LORD is to bring part of it as their sacrifice to the LORD, Leviticus 7:28-29. Notice that with their own hands they are to present the food offering, Leviticus 7:30. This offering was offered purposely. In other words, it was what they had decided beforehand to give, Exodus 35:5 / Exodus 35:21 / 2 Corinthians 9:7.

They are to bring the fat, together with the breast, and wave the breast before the LORD as a wave offering, Leviticus 7:30 / Exodus 29:27. The wave offering is in reference to the manner in which those portions were handled before God’s altar.

The breast was waved, passed from right to left and left to right after being elevated in the hands of the worshipper. It was lifted up toward heaven and lowered perhaps several times.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The priest laid the object to be waved upon the hands of the offeror, and then placed his own hands underneath, and moved the hands of the offeror backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction, to indicate by the movement forwards, i.e., in the direction towards the altar, the presentation of the sacrifice, or the symbolical transference of it to God, and by the movement backwards, the reception of it back again, as a present which God handed over to His servants the priests.’

The priest is to burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons, Leviticus 7:31. Within the fellowship offering, there was a free-will offering involved, which we would call a gift.

Notice they are to give the right thigh of their fellowship offerings to the priest as a contribution, Leviticus 7:32 / Exodus 29:27. This means that no payment was made for the offering; otherwise, the gift would be cancelled because the offeror would be receiving a reward for the offering they brought.

In this sense, it was a freewill offering that cost the offeror something. If the offeror didn't sacrifice something, then the offering would be useless because it meant nothing. In other words, the offering had to be a sacrifice by the one who brought it because no one else could pay for someone else's sacrifice; it had to be personal.

The son of Aaron who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering has the right thigh as his share, [Leviticus 7:33](#). Notice though that the meaning of this was the portion actually belonged to God, [Leviticus 7:34](#).

Hence why they lifted it up and the lowering down of the offering indicates that God is returning it to the priests as a gift. The various portions of these sacrifices were given to the priests, but it is God who is actually the giver.

‘This is the portion of the food offerings presented to the LORD that were allotted to Aaron and his sons on the day they were presented to serve the LORD as priests. On the day they were anointed, the LORD commanded that the Israelites give this to them as their perpetual share for the generations to come. These, then, are the regulations for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering and the fellowship offering, which the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai in the Desert of Sinai on the day he commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to the LORD.’ [Leviticus 7:35-38](#)

This is the portion of the food offerings presented to the LORD that were for Aaron and his sons on the day they were presented to serve as priests, [Leviticus 7:35](#) / [Leviticus 7:31-34](#).

On the day they were anointed, the LORD commanded that the Israelites give this to them as their perpetual share for the generations to come, [Leviticus 7:36](#) / [Exodus 40:15](#).

It's important to remember that the law of sacrifice for sins did not begin at Mount Sinai; it began when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, [Genesis 3:21](#). What we find here is the beginning of the Law, which was given to Moses at Mount Sinai concerning all those different kinds of sacrifices, [Leviticus 7:37-38](#) / [Exodus 19:1](#).

Offering	Purpose	Cow's Portion	Priest's Portion	Significance
Burnt Offering (1:3-17)	Worship (burnt) God	All flesh is burned	None (7:16)	It is a sacrifice offered up for us
Grain Offering (2:1-16)	Gratitude and a willing heart to the Lord	All except what is in the breast	Breast and oil (2:16-17)	Gratitude to the Lord of Life
Peace Offering (3:1-17)		All flesh is burned	Breast & right shoulder (7:31-32)	Gratitude & a testimony of reconciliation to bring us back to God
Sin Offering (4:1-13)	Restoration for the sinner	Each animal outside the camp	They were for the priest of 4 types and covered the Tabernacle (7:1-7)	The Lord is merciful over the presence of God, that from that sacrifice the camp (Leviticus 15:1-15)
Guilt Offering (5:1-13)		All flesh is burned	None (7:18)	It is a sacrifice offered up for us

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

[Leviticus 1-7](#) have a gradual shift to the part of the priesthood in the various offerings, and this, in turn, brings us to the laws of the priests.

Gradual Shift From Leviticus 6 To Leviticus 10		
Laws Of Offerings (1-5)	Priest's Part In Offerings (6-7)	Laws For The Priesthood (8-10)

In this chapter, we find the Lord addressing the responsibilities of the priests in their role as mediators for the nation. You will notice that time and time again God wants them to be obedient in every aspect of their roles as priests, [Leviticus 8:4-5](#) / [Leviticus 8:9](#) / [Leviticus 8:13](#) / [Leviticus 8:17](#) / [Leviticus 8:21](#) / [Leviticus 8:29](#) / [Leviticus 8:34](#) / [Leviticus 8:36](#).

THE ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting.’ Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Moses said to the assembly, ‘This is what the LORD has commanded to be done.’ Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also fastened the ephod with a decorative waistband, which he tied around him. He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron’s head and set the gold plate, the sacred emblem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.’ [Leviticus 8:1-9](#)

The Lord wants Moses to bring Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, [Exodus 28:1](#), their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, [Leviticus 8:1-2](#) / [Exodus 29:1](#).

Moses is to bring them out in front of the whole assembly, [Leviticus 8:3-5](#), and so everything which follows in this chapter was publicly done in front of the whole nation of Israel.

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Aaron appears throughout as foreshadowing Christ, while his sons speak of individual believers of this age.’

The first thing Moses did was wash Aaron and his sons, [Leviticus 8:6](#) / [Exodus 29:4](#). This was the beginning of the priesthood and the priests being set apart from all the other Israelites.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The significance of this initial ‘washing’ is profound. Not even Jesus Christ was anointed as the Messiah by his reception of the Holy Spirit until he had been baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan River! The inescapable connection of the ‘washing’ here with the ordinance of Christian baptism, as a symbol and type thereof, is certain. “His baptism was part of his installation.”

The priests were unique among God’s people, and they had to stay unique; otherwise, there would be a penalty to pay, [Exodus 30:19-21](#). The priests were now Israel’s spiritual leaders, doing everything according to God’s will and in doing so, they would now become the prime example of obedience to the rest of the nation.

Esses, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Now they are to be baptised. The baptism was to be performed in the court of the tabernacle, and the priest’s entire body had to be immersed in water. As Christians, we will not have the power to overcome unless we have gone to death with Christ in the waters of baptism.’

THE ROBE

Next, Moses put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him, [Leviticus 8:7](#). The robe of the ephod was made entirely of blue, [Exodus 28:31](#) / [Exodus 39:22](#). It had an opening for the head in the middle and in order to stop it from tearing, a woven edge like a collar was to be made, [Exodus 28:32](#) / [Exodus 39:23](#).

Fields, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This pullover robe of one piece reminds us of Christ’s seamless robe. [John 19:23](#) seems almost an indirect reference to Christ’s High Priestly office.’

It had a hem, attached to which were pomegranate motifs, in blue, purple, and scarlet, with golden bells alternating in between the pomegranates, [Exodus 28:33-34](#) / [Exodus 39:24-26](#).

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The pomegranate was probably a symbol of the spiritually nourishing quality of God’s Word, [Proverbs 25:11](#) / [Psalms 19:8-11](#) / [Psalms 119:25](#) / [Psalms 119:43](#) / [Psalms 119:50](#) / [Deuteronomy 8:3](#) / [Proverbs 9:8](#) / [Ecclesiastes 12:9-11](#) / [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#). The bell was evidently a symbol of the sounding or proclamation of God’s Word through testimony.’

Aaron must wear it when he ministers, and the sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place and when he comes out, so that he will not die, [Exodus 28:35](#).

The golden bells were an audible announcement of the high priest’s service, a beautiful sound, backed up by beautiful fruits, the pomegranates. This same balance of words and deeds we find in the Lord Jesus, [Luke 24:19](#).

THE EPHOD

The ephod, [Leviticus 8:7](#), is the apron-like garment worn by the high priest, and it was made in four colours, blue, purple, scarlet and the white of the fine linen, [Exodus 28:6-8](#) / [Exodus 39:2-5](#).

These are the same colours that can be seen at the door to the outer court, [Exodus 27:9-15](#), the door to the sanctuary, [Exodus 26:36-37](#), and in the veil, [Exodus 26:31-35](#); they refer to Christ as He is revealed in the four Gospels. In the four colours, we see Jesus as He was in His earthly ministry. Jesus has lived as a man on earth, a working man, the carpenter of Nazareth, [Mark 6:3](#),

He also knows what is involved when having to rely on others to provide for His living, [Luke 8:3](#). He knows what it means to be tired out, [John 4:6](#), hungry, [Matthew 4:2](#) / [Mark 6:31](#), thirsty, [John 4:7](#), pressurised, [Mark 1:32-34](#) / [Mark 2:2](#) / [Mark 5:22-24](#).

Tempted, [Luke 4:2](#) / [Hebrews 2:18](#), bereaved, [John 11:35](#), desperate in prayer, [Luke 22:44](#) / [Hebrews 5:7](#), disappointed by friends in a time of need, [Luke 22:45-46](#), in pain, [Matthew 27:26](#), mocked and spat on, [Matthew 27:29-31](#), He knows what it is to die, [Luke 23:46](#). Because He has passed through all these experiences, and many others also, the four colours tell us He is able to sympathize with us, [Hebrews 4:15](#).

There is an important additional feature of the ephod, though gold thread, cut from a gold plate, was interwoven with the other colours, [Exodus 39:3](#). Gold is not only precious, but it also implies ‘of God, divine and heavenly’. The gold thread is a beautiful ‘type’ of Christ’s heavenly ministry as the great High Priest for His own.

He is risen from the dead, He has ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 / Hebrews 1:3. There, as a merciful and compassionate High Priest, Jesus always lives and prays for His own to help them in their difficulties, Hebrews 2:17.

Furthermore, because He is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, He is also ABLE to do something through His interceding for us, Hebrews 7:25. He aids us, Hebrews 2:16, showing us His mercy and ministering to us the supply of His grace to help in times of need, Hebrews 4:16, especially when we face temptation, Hebrews 2:18.

THE SHOULDER STONES

On each shoulder piece of the ephod was a precious stone, Exodus 28:9 / Exodus 39:6. Six names were written on each of the stones, altogether naming the twelve tribes of Israel, Exodus 28:10-11 / Exodus 39:6.

Josephus, in his writings, says the following.

‘The names of Jacob’s six oldest sons were on the stone on the right shoulder, and the names of his six youngest sons were on the stone on the left.’

The names known to the high priest are engraved on the stones, Exodus 28:11 / Exodus 39:6. This is no passing whim; they cannot be erased, ‘I give My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand,’ John 10:28.

Every time the high priest went before God at the golden incense altar, Exodus 30:1-10, the names of all the people of God were upon His shoulders, Exodus 28:12 / Exodus 36:7. They are to make gold filigree settings and two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, and attach the chains to the settings, Exodus 28:13-14 / Exodus 39:6.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning these stones.

‘The symbolism of these indicated that when the High Priest fulfilled his mission of entering the Holy of Holies, he did so as a representative of all Israel. These memorial stones were a reminder primarily to Israel of this supplication upon their behalf, and also to Aaron in order that he might not forget that his was a mission ON BEHALF OF the whole nation.’

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, John 10:11. He knows His sheep, John 10:14, and goes after each one that is lost in the wilderness, Luke 15:4. Individually, when He finds each sheep that is lost, the Good Shepherd lays them on His shoulder, Luke 15:5-7.

The shoulder stones represent the collective good shepherding by the Lord Jesus in millions of lives. He bears them all before God, as today in heaven He is interceding for us, Romans 8:34 / Hebrews 7:25. The shoulders speak of His strength. How powerful and prevailing His intercession has been in our lives!

THE BREASTPLATE

The breastpiece, Leviticus 8:8, was for making decisions, Exodus 28:15 and like the ephod, the colours used were gold, blue, purple, scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen, Exodus 28:16 / Exodus 39:8 / Exodus 28:6-8 / Exodus 39:2-5.

The breastplate was square in its proportions, [Exodus 28:16](#) / [Exodus 39:9](#), and the breastplate was folded double to form a pocket, [Exodus 28:16](#) / [Exodus 39:9](#). Four rows of precious stones were to be mounted upon it, [Exodus 28:17](#) / [Exodus 39:10](#).

There were twelve precious stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, [Exodus 28:17-20](#) / [Exodus 39:10-13](#). Each stone had the name of the respective tribe engraved upon it, [Exodus 28:21](#) / [Exodus 39:14](#). For the breastpiece they are to make braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, [Exodus 28:22](#) / [Exodus 39:15](#).

Two gold rings were also to be made for the breastplate and they were to be fastened to two corners of the breastpiece, [Exodus 28:23](#) / [Exodus 39:16](#). They are to fasten the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, and the other ends of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front, [Exodus 28:24-25](#) / [Exodus 39:17-18](#).

Two gold rings were to be made, which were to be attached to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod, [Exodus 28:26](#) / [Exodus 39:19](#).

Another two gold rings were to be made and they were to be attached to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod, [Exodus 28:27](#) / [Exodus 39:20](#).

In order to stop the breastpiece from swinging out of the ephod, the rings of the breastpiece were to be tied to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband, [Exodus 28:28](#) / [Exodus 39:21](#).

The high priest bears the names on the breastplate 'over His heart' when he goes before the Lord 'as a memorial,' [Exodus 28:29](#), foreshadowing the eternal love of the Lord Jesus for His sheep, [John 13:1](#). This shows the Good Shepherd knows His sheep so well He calls them each by their own name, [John 10:3](#).

As the high priest goes about the service of the Holy Place, wearing the breastplate with the engraved names, he passes the lampstand and light shines onto the names, the Light of Life, [John 8:12](#).

He approaches the showbread table and the names correspond with one another in a fellowship of nourishment, the Bread of Life, [John 6:35](#), he comes before the golden incense altar and bears the names individually and collectively before God, praying that we may be given eternal life, which means to know the only true God in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, [John 17:3](#).

Here in the Holy Place, the emphasis is on life. Jesus the great High Priest has come so that they, the names, may have life, even eternal life, and have it abundantly, [John 10:10](#). The High Priest must yet bring us into the Holy of Holies for the fullest view and experience of eternal life, though.

For us to enter in and have this life abundantly and eternally, the veil must be removed. It must be rent from top to bottom, by God, [Matthew 27:51](#). Then we have access through Him, the veil, inside One Spirit, typified by both the anointed unique high priest and by the anointed Tabernacle, now made into just one room, unto the Father, [Ephesians 2:18](#).

Jesus, our great High Priest, carries the names of all His redeemed ones on His strong shoulders. Besides that, all the individual names are brought together in groups, separated only by genealogy and by locality of dwelling, like the tribes of Israel.

The collective names are permanent, like each engraved stone of the breastplate, carried on His loving heart. The breastplate is therefore a foreshadowing of the one church expressed as local churches, one in each place, in God's design.

URIM AND THUMMIM

The Urim and the Thummim, Leviticus 8:8, were to be kept in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD, and so Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD, Exodus 28:30.

The breastplate was folded double to form a pocket Exodus 28:16 / Exodus 39:9. Inside the pocket, the Urim and Thummim were kept. Urim means 'lights' and Thummim means 'perfections'. They were probably two jewels. When someone had to make an important decision, the request was made known to the high priest. He would stand before the lampstand, holding the Urim in one hand and the Thummim in the other.

As the light reflected from the Urim and the Thummim onto the stones of the breastplate, this flash of light provided up to twenty-four combinations, two by twelve. Since there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the flashes of light could produce strings of letters.

As God breathed through the ark, the veil would move, permitting a breeze to flicker the flames in the Lampstand to momentarily alter the direction of the light onto the Urim and Thummim, and thence to the Breastplate. Thus, God was able to communicate directly, but not audibly, to the high priest and answer the enquiry.

The Urim and Thummim were a means of revelation entrusted to the high priest. No description of them is given. This oracular apparently consisted of a material object or objects since it was physically stored in the breastpiece of the high priest, Exodus 28:30 / Leviticus 8:8.

Most people today think that the Urim and Thummim were a lottery oracle, but this is by no means certain. Besides being mentioned by their full name, Exodus 28:30, and Leviticus 8:8, and Ezra 2:63, and Nehemiah 7:65, in reverse order with possessives, Deuteronomy 33:8, the Urim and Thummim could also be referred to by Urim alone, Numbers 27:21, and 1 Samuel 28:6.

Sometimes the mention of the ephod, on which the breastpiece housing the Urim and Thummim were fastened, includes a reference to the Urim and Thummim, 1 Samuel 23:9-12, and 1 Samuel 30:7-8. Also, the verb 'inquire of' followed by 'the Lord' or 'God' when no means of revelation is specified refers to a usage of the Urim and Thummim.

The Urim and Thummim were used at critical moments in the history of God's people when special divine guidance was needed. The civil leader was expected to make use of this means for all important matters for which he needed direction.

Although referred to in Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65, there is no convincing evidence that the Urim and Thummim were used after the time of David. The reason for the demise of the Urim and Thummim is not explicitly given. Since the Urim and Thummim, in whatever way they functioned, were a physical means of revelation, it appears that God was taking his people away from the easy certainty inherent in a mechanical means of revelation to the more consistent use of prophecy and the Word alone.

This would require the more difficult application of the norms for true and false prophecy, Deuteronomy 13:1-4 and Deuteronomy 18:20-22, and thus necessitate a faithful teaching priesthood, Deuteronomy 33:10 / Malachi 2:7. Although the lot theory has wide support today, there are significant difficulties in identifying the Urim and Thummim.

It is questionable whether the key evidence, the Greek text of 1 Samuel 14:41, is really to be preferred over the Hebrew text. Also, the vocabulary of lot casting is not used, and the answers contain more information than the casting of lots could yield, e.g. 1 Samuel 1:1, and 1 Samuel 5:23-24.

This last point suggests the involvement of prophecy and the divine inspiration of the high priest in giving revelation. It can also be noted that the use of the actual object(s) constituting the Urim and Thummim appears to have been self-authenticating.

Even in extremely difficult circumstances, the guidance of the Urim and Thummim is followed, Judges 20:18-28. It could be theorised that a perfect light that miraculously shone from the gem(s) constituting the Urim and Thummim, which belonged to God, Deuteronomy 33:8, gave the needed authentication to the actual answer spoken by the high priest under divine inspiration.

In this way, the judgment of the Urim, the light, may have been given, Numbers 27:21. Such authentication would not have been out of place in Old Testament times when special signs were provided more often.

Newton, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They were something in Aaron’s breastplate, but what, critics and commentators are by no means agreed. It is most probable that they were only names given to signify the clearness and certainty of Divine answers which were obtained by the High Priest consulting God with his breastplate on, in contradistinction to the obscure, enigmatical, uncertain, and imperfect answers of the heathen oracles.’

THE TURBAN AND THE CROWN

Attached to the turban, Leviticus 8:9, and upon the forehead of the high priest was the crown, a gold plate on which ‘HOLY TO THE LORD’ was engraved, Exodus 28:36 / Exodus 39:30 / Zechariah 14:20. This seal of God is legitimately there on the forehead of our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest.

They were to fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban, Exodus 28:37 / Exodus 39:31. It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be and it was to be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD, Exodus 28:38 / Isaiah 53:6.

The turban was made of white fine linen, Exodus 28:39 / Exodus 39:27, and the sash is to be made of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, the work of an embroiderer, Exodus 28:39 / Exodus 39:29.

Generally, fine white linen signifies righteous deeds, Revelation 19:8. Here the emphasis is on our mind, the covering of our thought processes, ‘taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,’ 2 Corinthians 10:5, by taking ‘the helmet of salvation,’ Ephesians 6:17.

Our mind is the big problem. When Zechariah saw the vision of Joshua, Zechariah 3:1-5, the Lord began to address the problem of the filthy garments by putting a clean Turban on his head.

Since the Hebrew words for Joshua, ‘Yoshuah’ and salvation, ‘yeshuah’, are so close, we see here the picture of taking up the helmet of salvation, to deal with our filthy thoughts of unrighteousness.

But for us, whom He has also made priests, Revelation 1:5-6, there is a clear indication that we are not just to be outwardly dressed up in Christ, He must transform us, by the renewing of our mind that we may prove the will of God, our sanctification, Romans 12:2 / 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

How we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, to put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness, Ephesians 4:23-24 / Hebrews 3:1 / Hebrews 4:14-16.

THE ANOINTING OF AARON

‘Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to

consecrate them. He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.'
Leviticus 8:10-12

Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it and consecrated them, Leviticus 8:10. He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them Leviticus 8:11.

Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him, Leviticus 8:12. The Hebrew word for 'anoint' is the root word from which we get the word, Messiah. There were only three groups of people who were commonly anointed in the Old Testament.

1. Priests.

2. Prophets, 1 Kings 19:16.

3. Kings, 1 Samuel 9:16 / 1 Samuel 10:1.

Jesus filled each of these positions, and because He did, He is the Messiah, the 'anointed One'. To be anointed meant that they would be set apart from other people. Once anointed, the person would then be given the responsibility of doing any special work which the Lord had for them to do.

THE ANOINTING OF AARON'S SONS

'Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and fastened caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses. He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger, he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So, he consecrated it to make atonement for it. Moses also took all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar. But the bull with its hide and its flesh and its intestines he burned up outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses. He then presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Then Moses slaughtered the ram and splashed the blood against the sides of the altar. He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. He washed the internal organs and the legs with water and burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he splashed blood against the sides of the altar. After that, he took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. And from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took one thick loaf, one thick loaf with olive oil mixed in, and one thin loaf, and he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh. He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and they waved them before the LORD as a wave offering. Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD. Moses also took the breast, which was his share of the ordination ram, and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses.' Leviticus 8:13-29

Moses then brings Aaron's sons forward, puts tunics on them, ties sashes around them and fastens caps on them, Leviticus 8:13 / Exodus 29:8-9.

Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following.

'They do not seem to have been anointed, as Aaron was, by having oil poured upon their heads, but only by having some of it sprinkled upon their garments, Exodus 29:21 / Leviticus 8:30.'

Notice the detail which Moses goes into here concerning the consecration of the priests for their work as priests, their work in the tabernacle and all their service to God. The reason for all the details is to let everyone know the importance of having ministers and ministries; both mean they are totally committed to God.

Moses then presents the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head, [Leviticus 8:14](#) / [Leviticus 8:18](#) / [Leviticus 8:22](#). This was offered each day during the seven days of consecration, [Exodus 29:36](#).

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The procedure here followed the instructions given in [Leviticus 4:6-7](#) in most particulars, but not in all of them, due to the special circumstances. ‘The blood is smeared on the altar of burnt-offerings rather than on the veil and altar of incense.’

Moses now slaughters the bull, takes some of the blood, and with his finger, he puts it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar, [Leviticus 8:15](#). He pours out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, and by doing so, he consecrates it to make atonement for it, [Leviticus 8:15](#).

Moses also took all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar, [Leviticus 8:16](#). However, the bull with its hide and its flesh and its intestines he burned up outside the camp, [Leviticus 8:17](#).

Moses then presents the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head, [Leviticus 8:18](#) / [Leviticus 8:14](#). Moses slaughters the ram and splashes the blood against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 8:19](#). He then cuts the ram into pieces and burns the head, the pieces, and the fat, [Leviticus 8:20](#).

He then washes the internal organs and the legs with water and burns the whole ram on the altar, [Leviticus 8:21](#). It was a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD, [Leviticus 8:21](#) / [Leviticus 8:28](#).

Moses then presents the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head, [Leviticus 8:22](#) / [Leviticus 8:14](#) / [Leviticus 8:18](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Notice that the rules concerning wave-offering, [Leviticus 7:33-34](#), were not followed here. This ordination was a one-time event; presumably, there were no special rules.’

Moses slaughters the ram and notice what Moses did with the blood to Aaron and his sons, ‘he put it on the lobe of their right ears, on the thumb of their right hands and on the big toe of their right feet’, [Leviticus 8:23](#) / [Exodus 29:20](#).

The same procedure was done for Aaron’s sons, [Leviticus 8:24](#). This was a reminder to Aaron and his sons that as priests they must continually listen to God, they were to continually serve God and His people and continually walk in the holiness.

Moses then splashes blood against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 8:24](#). After that, he took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh, [Leviticus 8:25](#). From the basket of bread made without yeast, he took one thick loaf, one thick loaf with olive oil mixed in, and one thin loaf, and he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh, [Leviticus 8:26](#).

Moses put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and they waved them before the LORD as a wave offering, [Leviticus 8:27](#) / [Leviticus 7:30](#) / [Exodus 29:27](#).

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The priest laid the object to be waved upon the hands of the offeror, and then placed his own hands underneath, and moved the hands of the offeror backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction, to indicate by the movement forwards, i.e., in the direction towards the altar, the presentation of the sacrifice, or the symbolical transference of it to God, and by the movement backwards, the reception of it back again, as a present which God handed over to His servants the priests.’

Moses then takes the wave offering from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD, [Leviticus 8:28](#) / [Leviticus 8:21](#).

Moses also takes the breast, which was his share of the ordination ram, and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, Leviticus 8:29. The wave offering is in reference to the manner in which those portions were handled before God's altar.

The breast was waved, passed from right to left and left to right after being elevated in the hands of the worshipper. It was lifted up toward heaven and lowered perhaps several times.

‘Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So, he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments. Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, ‘Cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I was commanded: ‘Aaron and his sons are to eat it.’ Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread. Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days. What has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for you. You must stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded.’

So, Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.’ Leviticus 8:30-36

Moses now takes some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments, Leviticus 8:30.

The consecration of the priests, Leviticus 8:30, now means they weren't permitted to own any property or support themselves, Deuteronomy 10:9. It's clear that God intends that all their support should come from the nation of Israel, in order that they can dedicate themselves fully to God and to the duties within the tabernacle.

Moses then tells Aaron and his sons to cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings. Aaron and his sons are to eat it, Leviticus 8:31.

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The eating of the sacrifices and the bread illustrates the necessity of believer-priests feeding upon Christ, John 6:50-55, and remembering the benefits of His death through partaking of the Lord's table, 1 Corinthians 11:25-27. The seven-day span of the feast may envision this present age, when a heavenly priesthood (the church) is spiritually feasting on Christ.’

Moses is to burn up the rest of the meat and the bread, Leviticus 8:32. After having been cleansed and anointed, Aaron and his sons were required to stay at the door of the tabernacle for seven days, Leviticus 8:33 / Exodus 29:30. Moses tells Aaron and his sons that what has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for them, Leviticus 8:34. They must stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so they will not die, Leviticus 8:35.

Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses, Leviticus 8:36. Aaron and his sons were being set apart for the work of the Lord.

They were holy, and this meant that they must be separate and distinct from the rest of the people. They were to minister the sacrifices of the tabernacle, and so they learned that they must stay within the compounds of the tabernacle.

On the eighth day, another sacrifice was made, and Aaron blessed the people, Leviticus 9:22. Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering, the burnt offering and the peace offerings, Leviticus 9:22.

Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out and blessed the people, ‘THE GLORY OF THE LORD’ appeared to all the people. Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces, Leviticus 9:23-24.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

‘On the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. He said to Aaron, ‘Take a bull calf for your sin offering and a ram for your burnt offering, both without defect, and present them before the LORD. Then say to the Israelites: ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb—both a year old and without defect—for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD, together with a grain offering mixed with olive oil. For today the LORD will appear to you.’ They took the things Moses commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the LORD. Then Moses said, ‘This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.’ Moses said to Aaron, ‘Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded.’ Leviticus 9:1-7

THE PRIESTS BEGIN THEIR MINISTRY

It was now time for Aaron and his sons to obediently put into practice everything they had learned and been commanded to do. It was time to begin their work as priests of Israel.

Remember, the first seven days were all about consecrating the priests who were to take care of the tabernacle, Leviticus 8:33-35. It is now the eighth day, Leviticus 9:1, which was the day the tabernacle was finally erected, Exodus 40:27.

The eighth day in Scripture is interesting, if we remember it was also the eighth day that circumcision was to take place, Genesis 17:12 / Leviticus 12:3, and it was the eighth day that the Lord appeared to the Israelites, Leviticus 9:4 / Leviticus 9:23.

The first thing Aaron did was to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering, for himself and his sons, Leviticus 9:2 / Leviticus 4:3. Moses tells Aaron to take a bull calf for his sin offering and a ram for his burnt offering, both without defect, and present them before the LORD, Leviticus 9:2.

Moses then says to the Israelites to take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb, both a year old and without defect for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD, together with a grain offering mixed with olive oil, Leviticus 9:3-4. Notice that Aaron offered a young calf, Leviticus 9:3; a sin offering for the high priest was usually a young bull, Leviticus 4:3.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In Leviticus 4:14, a young bullock is commanded to be offered for the sin of the people; but here the offering is a kid, which was the sacrifice appointed for the sin of the ruler, Leviticus 4:22-23, and hence some think that the reading of the Samaritan and the Septuagint is to be preferred. Speak unto the ELDERS of Israel, these being the only princes or rulers of Israel at that time; and for them, it is possible this sacrifice was designed. It is, however, supposed that the sacrifice appointed, Leviticus 4:14, was for a particular sin, but this for sin in general, and that it is on this account that the sacrifices differ.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Aaron’s full dignity had not yet devolved upon him. That full dignity would fall upon Aaron after he was ushered into the Holy Place by Moses, Leviticus 19:23.’

Notice the words, ‘for today the LORD will appear to you, Leviticus 9:4. They took the things Moses commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the LORD, Leviticus 9:5. Then Moses says this is what the LORD has commanded them to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to them, Leviticus 9:6 / Leviticus 9:23-24.

Moses asks Aaron to come to the altar and sacrifice his sin offering and his burnt offering and make atonement for himself and the people, and then sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, Leviticus 9:7 / Leviticus 8:22 / Hebrews 5:3 / Hebrews 7:27-28 / Hebrews 9:7.

‘So, Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. His sons brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger into the blood and put it on the horns of the altar; the rest of the blood he poured out at the base of the altar. On the altar he burned the fat, the kidneys, and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering, as the LORD commanded Moses; the flesh and the hide he burned up outside the camp.’ Leviticus 9:8-11

Aaron had to offer his own sacrifice first so that he would be acceptable to God, and in turn, he would be able to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people. We read here that Aaron did everything God told him to do regarding the sin offering, Leviticus 1-7.

The calf was to be killed on the north side of the altar, Leviticus 9:8, where all the sin offerings and burnt offerings were killed, Leviticus 1:11. The blood of the calf was collected in a basin, and Aaron would then dip his fingers in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, Leviticus 9:9 / Leviticus 1:5 / Leviticus 8:15. The rest of the blood was then poured out on the bottom of the altar.

All the fat, leftover blood, and inward parts all belong to God, and they are burned as a sweet aroma to God, Leviticus 9:10. He didn’t eat the flesh of his own sin offering; he burned the flesh and the hide outside the camp, Leviticus 9:11.

Because all four of Aaron’s sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Numbers 3:2, were assistants and witnesses of this solemn ordination of the high priest, some suggest that this is symbolic of the Christ who was also assisted by the four witnesses of the Christian Gospel, that is, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

‘Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. His sons handed him the blood, and he splashed it against the sides of the altar. They handed him the burnt offering piece by piece, including the head, and he burned them on the altar. He washed the internal organs and the legs and burned them on top of the burnt offering on the altar.’ Leviticus 9:12-14

The ram, Leviticus 9:2, was also sacrificed by Aaron on behalf of himself. The ram was killed at the north side of the altar, Leviticus 1:11. The blood again was collected in a basin, but this time Aaron splashed the sides of the altar with the blood, Leviticus 9:12 / Leviticus 9:18 / Leviticus 8:19.

The ram was then cut into pieces, Leviticus 9:13 / Leviticus 8:20, and burned, Leviticus 9:13 / Leviticus 8:21. The reason for washing all the internal organs and legs is simply because God won’t accept anything unclean, Leviticus 9:14.

‘Aaron then brought the offering that was for the people. He took the goat for the people’s sin offering and slaughtered it and offered it for a sin offering as he did with the first one. He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the prescribed way. He also brought the grain offering, took a handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning’s burnt offering. ‘He slaughtered the ox and the ram as the fellowship offering for the people. His sons handed him the blood, and he splashed it against the sides of the altar. But the fat portions of the ox and the ram—the fat tail, the layer of fat, the kidneys, and the long lobe of the liver—these they laid on the breasts, and then Aaron burned the fat on the altar. Aaron waved the breasts and the right thigh before the LORD as a wave offering, as Moses commanded.’ Leviticus 9:15-21

Aaron now brings the offering that was for the people and so he takes the goat for the people’s sin offering, slaughtered it and offered it for a sin offering as he did with the first one, Leviticus 9:15 / Leviticus 9:3 / 2 Corinthians 5:21.

He brings the burnt offering and offered it in the prescribed way, [Leviticus 9:16](#), that is, in the way he was commanded. Aaron also brought the grain offering, took a handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning's burnt offering, [Leviticus 9:17](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the morning's burnt offering, [Leviticus 9:17](#).

'This is a reference to the morning and evening sacrifices which were offered daily, that offering, no doubt, having been rather thoroughly burned up in the time of the ceremony recorded here.'

Aaron now slaughters the ox and the ram as the fellowship offering for the people, and his sons handed him the blood, and he splashed it against the sides of the altar, [Leviticus 9:18](#) / [Leviticus 9:12](#) / [Leviticus 8:19](#). All the fat, leftover blood, and inward parts all belong to God, and they are burned, [Leviticus 9:20](#) / [Leviticus 9:10](#).

Aaron waved the breasts and the right thigh before the LORD as a wave offering, [Leviticus 9:21](#). The wave offering is in reference to the manner in which those portions were handled before God's altar.

The breast was waved, passed from right to left and left to right after being elevated in the hands of the worshipper. It was lifted up toward heaven and lowered perhaps several times.

Some commentators suggest there's a great deal of significance attached to what was being offered here. For example, the ram being offered was to bring to Israel's mind that great event when Abraham was to sacrifice his son, but God provided the ram in his place, [Genesis 12:9](#).

The goat being offered was to bring to Israel's mind the goat which was killed by Joseph's brothers in order to deceive their father Jacob, [Genesis 37:31](#). The calf being offered was to bring to Israel's mind their sin when they made a golden calf, [Exodus 32:4](#). The lamb which was bound was to bring to Israel's mind Isaac being bound by his father before being sacrificed, [Genesis 22:7](#).

What we must remember in all of this is that God wanted these services for everyone, including Aaron and his sons, because all of them were sinners, [Hebrews 7:27](#).

It's only when we come to the New Testament do we find that Jesus who is now our High Priest, who was without sin, is the one who was able to enter the presence of God on our behalf. All of these sacrifices, including the blood, were pointing to the Christ, the perfect lamb of God, [John 1:29](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:21](#).

'Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.' [Leviticus 19:22-24](#)

Aaron lifts up his hands and blesses the people, [Leviticus 19:22](#), but we're not told what words he uses, possibly the same words as we find in [Numbers 6:22-26](#). After sacrificing the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down, [Leviticus 9:22](#).

Notice that Moses and Aaron then go into the tent of meeting', [Leviticus 9:23](#), this would be the Holy of Holies, the inner part of the tabernacle, [Hebrews 10:19](#). It appears that it was during this time in the tabernacle that Moses formally placed Aaron in charge of everything to do with the tabernacle, and so Aaron would then be the high priest. This was the first time Aaron had been in here, and it would be the last time that Moses would enter. When they came out of the tabernacle, they both blessed the people, [Leviticus 9:23](#) / [2 Chronicles 6:3-11](#), which emphasised the harmony between them both.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'According to one tradition, the form used by Moses and Aaron resembled [Psalms 90:17](#). But another form is given in the Targum of Palestine, 'May your offerings be accepted, and may the Lord dwell among you and forgive you your sins.'

Notice also that it was then the glory of the Lord appeared to everyone, Leviticus 9:23. Exactly how God's glory appeared, we are not told, but there's a reasonable probability it may have been in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Exodus 13:21-22 / Exodus 40:34-38.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘To show that everything was done according to the Divine mind.

1. The glory of Jehovah appears unto all the people.

2. A fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt-offering. This was the proof which God gave upon extraordinary occasions of his acceptance of the sacrifice. This was probably done in the following cases.

1. In the case of Abel, Genesis 4:4.

2. In the case of Aaron, Leviticus 9:24.

3. In the case of Gideon, Judges 6:21.

4. In the case of Manoah and his wife. Compare Judges 13:19-23.

5. In the case of David dedicating the threshing-floor of Ornan, 1 Chronicles 21:28.

6. In the case of Solomon dedicating the temple, 2 Chronicles 7:1.

7. In the case of Elijah, 1 Kings 18:38.

Fire then comes out from the presence of the Lord, Leviticus 9:24 / Leviticus 6:13, possibly from the Holy of Holies, and consumed the offering, Judges 13:19-20 / 1 Kings 18:38 / 1 Chronicles 21:26.

Keil, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The miracle recorded in this verse, Leviticus 9:24, did not consist in the fact that the sacrificial victims placed upon the altar were burned by fire which proceeded from Jehovah, but in the fact that the sacrifices, which were already on fire, were SUDDENLY consumed by it.’

The people shout for joy and fall facedown, Leviticus 9:24 / Judges 13:15-23 / 2 Chronicles 7:1-7 / 1 Kings 18:38-39.

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Each time, confronted with the awe-inspiring reality of God, the worshippers fell to the ground and praised God.’

What a wonderful day this must have been for God's people; they are now one with God and each other, God will be their God, and they will be His people. The priesthood is now up and running, and everything to remain in fellowship with God and each other is in place.

They've witnessed God's glory and are now full of joy. However, as we see time and time again with God's people, this time of joy won't last very long, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

We left the Israelites full of joy in the previous chapter; they were one with God and each other, God would be their God, and they would be His people. The priesthood is now up and running, and everything to remain in fellowship with God and each other is in place. However, this chapter reveals that their time of joy didn't last very long.

THE DEATH OF NADAB AND ABIHU

‘Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorised fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So, fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Moses then said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: ‘Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.’ Aaron remained silent.’ [Leviticus 10:1-3](#)

The event surrounding the death of Nadab and Abihu is well known by many, but sadly, the lessons we learn from this event are ignored by many more. The offering had been consumed by the supernatural fire of God, [Leviticus 9:24](#), but the sons of Aaron took it upon themselves to use an ‘unauthorised fire’ upon the altar, [Leviticus 10:1](#), that is, a fire which was different from the flame which the Lord had.

We don’t know exactly what this ‘unauthorised fire’ was, but there are a few possibilities.

1. It’s possible they didn’t make the incense according to how God wanted it to be made, [Exodus 30:34-38](#).
2. It’s possible they used fire which wasn’t from the altar, [Leviticus 16:12](#).
3. It’s possible that the offering was offered at the wrong time, [Exodus 30:7-8](#).
4. It’s possible they used the wrong censers, and finally, it’s possible that Nadab and Abihu assumed the role of their father, Aaron, as the high priest.

We don’t know exactly what it was they did, but we do know it wasn’t authorised by the Lord and therefore sinful. The result was that fire came out from the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle and killed them both, [Leviticus 10:2](#) / [2 Corinthians 2:16](#).

This isn’t the only time God has judged His people like this. We see God judging the first two sons of Judah because they didn’t fulfil their roles to Tamar, [Genesis 38:7-10](#).

Later, we read about Uzzah being struck down by God for touching the ark of the covenant, [2 Samuel 6:7-8](#). In the New Testament, we see Ananias and Sapphira being struck down by God for lying to God, [Acts 5:1-11](#).

Moses then says to Aaron, this is what the LORD spoke of when He said, among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured, [Leviticus 10:3](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The words used by Moses on this occasion are not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch. But the sense is implied in such passages as [Exodus 19:22](#) / [Exodus 28:41](#) / [Exodus 29:1](#) / [Exodus 29:44](#).’

And notice that Aaron remained silent, [Leviticus 10:3](#) / [Psalms 39:9](#).

LESSONS FROM NADAB AND ABIHU

We learn that God must be worshipped as He ordains, we must worship Him as He requires; this is called the regulative principle, [Deuteronomy 4:2](#) / [Proverbs 30:6](#) / [Revelation 22:18-19](#).

We learn that obedience is better than sacrifice, [1 Samuel 15:22](#). This obedience extends to the rituals which God has ordained. The presence of God can be either a curse or a blessing. The same fire which warmed the Israelites by night could also be used for judgment against those who sinned.

While Jesus will be Judge when He sits ‘as a refiner and purifier of gold and silver’, [Malachi 3:3](#) / [Malachi 4:1](#), He will also be the ‘Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings’, [Malachi 4:2](#).

It is possible to do the right thing in the wrong way. It is not that these sons of Aaron were trying to do evil; they appear to have been acting on good motives, and they were seeking to worship the Lord. Like Uzzah, 2 Samuel 6:7, they try to do a service for the Lord, but they do it improperly.

Knight, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Theirs was a flagrant piece of disobedience and disloyalty to God. These men were virtually saying, ‘Our fire is as good as yours, God! We don’t need yours.’ This is an acted parable of the way secular man thinks about his relation to God.’

Moses was heavily involved in this whole incident because He knew that obedience was important to God, and the Israelites would now know that God demands obedience. This would be an event that the Israelites wouldn’t forget in a hurry, 1 Samuel 15:22.

‘Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, and said to them, ‘Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary.’ So, they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses ordered. Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, ‘Do not let your hair become unkempt and do not tear your clothes, or you will die, and the LORD will be angry with the whole community. But your relatives, all the Israelites, may mourn for those the LORD has destroyed by fire. Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting or you will die, because the LORD’s anointing oil is on you.’ So, they did as Moses said.’ Leviticus 10:4-7

Moses then calls for Mishael and Elzaphan, Exodus 6:18 / Exodus 6:22, sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, Exodus 6:18-22, and tells them to come and carry their cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary, Leviticus 10:4. They did so, still in their tunics, Exodus 28:39, outside the camp, Leviticus 10:5.

Bamberger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Being Levites, they were forbidden to defile themselves by contact with the dead. Aaron, as High Priest, was explicitly forbidden to do so, whereas ordinary priests were allowed to defile themselves for near relatives, Leviticus 21:1-2.’

Imagine if Nadab and Abihu were your sons, and imagine finding out they are now both dead. This must have been heartbreaking for Aaron and his other two sons.

The heartache would be even greater as Israel was permitted to mourn their loss, but Aaron and his two other uncles’ sons weren’t permitted to mourn their loss, Leviticus 10:6 / 1 Corinthians 12:26. The reason they weren’t permitted to mourn was that this could be interpreted by others as them excusing the actions of Nadab and Abihu.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was a custom to let the hair grow long and fall loosely over the head and face, Leviticus 13:45 / 2 Samuel 15:30 / 2 Samuel 19:4, and the substance of the command would thus be that they should not let the hair go dishevelled. Ripping the clothes in front so as to lay open the breast was one of the most common manifestations of grief, Genesis 37:29 / Genesis 44:13 / 2 Samuel 1:11 / Job 1:20 / Joel 2:13, etc. The garments as well as the persons of the priests were consecrated; this appears to be the reason for the prohibition of these ordinary signs of mourning, Leviticus 20:10.’

Moses tells them to stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting, or they too will die, Exodus 28:35, because the LORD’s anointing oil is on them, Leviticus 8:12 / Leviticus 8:30, and they obeyed, Leviticus 10:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The holy oil, as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Life and immortality and joy, was the sign of the priests being brought near to Yahweh. It was therefore by its meaning connected both with the general law which forbade

the high priest ever to put on signs of mourning on account of death, Leviticus 21:10-12, and with the special reason for the prohibition on this occasion.’

‘Then the LORD said to Aaron, ‘You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, so that you can distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and so you can teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses.’ Leviticus 10:8-11

God tells Aaron that he and his sons must be different from all the other Israelites. The only way to ensure this happens is to refrain from drinking alcohol whenever they go into the tent of meeting; otherwise, they will die, Leviticus 10:8.

Anyone who has ever been involved in alcohol knows that it severely impacts our decision-making and our behaviour, Proverbs 20:1 / Proverbs 26:9. Being drunk in the tabernacle whilst serving the Lord is not a good idea. God wants them to have clear minds and clear heads because service to Him was important, and there is no room for errors, Romans 12:1-2.

This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come and so they need to be able to distinguish between what is right and wrong, what is holy and unholy, and what is clean and unclean, Leviticus 10:9-10 / Acts 10:14. Then they will be able to teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses, Leviticus 10:11.

‘Moses said to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, ‘Take the grain offering left over from the food offerings prepared without yeast and presented to the LORD and eat it beside the altar, for it is most holy. Eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is your share and your sons’ share of the food offerings presented to the LORD; for so I have been commanded. But you and your sons and your daughters may eat the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. Eat them in a ceremonially clean place; they have been given to you and your children as your share of the Israelites’ fellowship offerings. The thigh that was presented and the breast that was waved must be brought with the fat portions of the food offerings, to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering. This will be the perpetual share for you and your children, as the LORD has commanded.’ When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s remaining sons, and asked, ‘Why didn’t you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? It is most holy; it was given to you to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them before the LORD. Since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, as I commanded.’ Aaron replied to Moses, ‘Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?’ When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.’ Leviticus 10:12-20

Moses instructs Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar to take the leftover grain from the fellowship offering and eat it beside the altar, for it is most holy, Leviticus 10:12. They are to eat it in the sanctuary area because it is Aaron’s share and Eleazar and Ithamar’s share of the food offerings presented to the LORD, Leviticus 10:13.

Moses instructs them that they and their families can eat the shoulder and breast in a clean place, Leviticus 19:14. They were given to them and their children as their share of the Israelites’ fellowship offerings, Leviticus 19:14 / Leviticus 7:30.

The thigh that was presented and the breast that was waved are to be brought with the fat portions of the food offerings, to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering, Leviticus 19:15 / Exodus 29:27. This is to be the perpetual share for him and his children, Leviticus 19:15.

The wave offering is in reference to the manner in which those portions were handled before God’s altar. The breast was waved, passed from right to left and left to right after being elevated in the hands of the worshipper. It was lifted up toward heaven and lowered perhaps several times.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The priest laid the object to be waved upon the hands of the offeror, and then placed his own hands underneath, and moved the hands of the offeror backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction, to indicate by the movement forwards, i.e., in the direction towards the altar, the presentation of the sacrifice, or the symbolical transference of it to God, and by the movement backwards, the reception of it back again, as a present which God handed over to His servants the priests.’

When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar and asked them why they didn’t eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area.

It is most holy; it was given to them to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them, [Leviticus 10:16-17](#) / [Exodus 28:38](#) / [Leviticus 6:26](#) / [Leviticus 9:15-16](#).

Moses then reminds them that since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, they should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, [Leviticus 10:18](#) / [Exodus 26:33](#) / [Exodus 28:29](#).

Aaron now replies to Moses and says, today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today? [Leviticus 10:19](#).

Aaron didn’t eat what was for him, which again was to show that he didn’t approve of Nadab and Abihu’s actions. Moses is more than happy to accept his answer, [Leviticus 10:20](#). Aaron took upon himself the sins of the sinful sons, which is a perfect picture of the Christ, who took upon Himself the sin of the world, [1 Peter 2:24](#).

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

This section begins with a general chapter on unclean foods, [Genesis 7:2](#), both animals and water. It has been noted that many of these dietary requirements have value with regard to the kinds of diseases which could be caught. However, the purpose given for these laws was that God’s people might be holy, [Leviticus 11:44](#). Uncleanliness was not limited to that which could be eaten or drunk; there were other aspects of ceremonial uncleanliness which were maintained within a person’s body.

Laws OF Purity. Leviticus 11-15
Uncleanliness In Childbirth (12)
Tests For Leprosy (13)
Varied Seminal Discharges (15)
The Law of the Leper (14)

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOOD

‘The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof, and that chews the cud. ‘There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.’ Leviticus 11:1-8

ANIMALS WHICH HAVE DIVIDED HOOFS AND CHEW THE CUD

Leviticus 11:1-23 deals with clean food, that is, food which may be eaten, and unclean food, that is, food which cannot be eaten. We could summarise Leviticus 11:1-16 like this: God commanded Israel through Moses and Aaron to eat only those animals that were ruminants, that is, animals that have four stomachs, have a divided hoof and chew the cud, Leviticus 11:1-4. These animals, such as the camel, Leviticus 11:4, the hyrax, Leviticus 11:5 / Proverbs 30:26 / Psalms 104:18, are small herbivorous mammals.

The rabbit, Leviticus 11:6, although literally, rabbits do not chew the cud, but their mouth moves rapidly back and forth, and it seems that they are chewing, like cattle. Maybe the Hebrew word means ‘to chew thoroughly’. The pig, Leviticus 11:7, wasn’t allowed to be eaten and was classed as unclean.

To eat or touch any dead carcass or any unclean animal, dead or alive, made a person unclean, Leviticus 11:8. This could be related to ceremonial uncleanliness and hygiene because if an animal had an infection, that infection could spread to humans.

CREATURES WITHOUT FINS AND SCALES

‘Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean. And since you are to regard them as unclean, you must not eat their meat; you must regard their carcasses as unclean. Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean by you.’ Leviticus 11:9-12

The Israelites could eat any creature living in the water of the seas and the streams that have fins and scales, Leviticus 11:9 / Deuteronomy 14:9. These creatures, which live in the water or streams without fins and scales, Leviticus 11:10, would include creatures such as any kind of shellfish, oysters, eels, and crabs.

They weren’t allowed to be eaten and classed as unclean, Leviticus 11:11. Since they are classed as unclean, even their dead carcasses are unclean, Leviticus 11:11. Anything living in the water that doesn’t have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean, Leviticus 11:12.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Because these, of all the fish tribe, are the most nourishing; the others, which are without scales, or whose bodies are covered with a thick glutinous matter, being in general very difficult of digestion.’

BIRDS AND FLYING INSECTS

‘These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, any kind of black kite, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat. ‘All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you.

There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. Of these, you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket, or grasshopper. But all other flying insects that have four legs you are to regard as unclean.’ Leviticus 11:13-23

There is a whole host of birds listed here which were classed as unclean and cannot be eaten. Leviticus 11:13 / Deuteronomy 14:11-18. The eagle, Leviticus 11:13 / 2 Samuel 1:23 / Psalms 103:5 / Proverbs 23:5, the vulture, Leviticus 11:13, the black vulture, Leviticus 11:13 / Isaiah 34:15.

The red kite, Leviticus 11:14 / Job 28:7, any kind of black kite, Leviticus 11:14, any kind of raven, Leviticus 11:15, the horned owl, Leviticus 11:16, the screech owl, Leviticus 11:16, the gull, Leviticus 11:16, any kind of hawk, Leviticus 11:16 / Job 39:13-18.

The little owl, Leviticus 11:17, the cormorant, Leviticus 11:17, which is usually thought to be a pelican, Deuteronomy 14:17. The great owl, Leviticus 11:17, the white owl, Leviticus 11:18.

The desert owl, Leviticus 11:18, the osprey, Leviticus 11:18, the stork, Leviticus 11:19, any kind of heron, Leviticus 11:19, the hoopoe, which is like a grouse, and the bat, Leviticus 11:19.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the bat.

‘Of particular interest is the inclusion of a mammal (the bat) along with the birds. Our modern way of classifying this little creature is based upon the fact that the bat GIVES BIRTH to its young. The ancients did not classify creatures by this criterion but included the bat with birds because of its being a FLYING creature, also one of the most efficient flyers known.’

It’s interesting to note that all insects have six legs, but here we have mention of insects with four legs, which walk on all fours, Leviticus 11:20 / Genesis 1:21 / Genesis 8:17 / Exodus 8:3 / Psalms 105:30.

Some commentators see this phrase, ‘walk on all fours’, as a figure of speech which means these insects which walked with their bodies horizontally to the ground were classed as unclean.

There were, however, some insects which walked on all fours and were classed as clean and could be eaten, Leviticus 11:21. The locust, Leviticus 11:22, which we know John the baptiser ate, Matthew 3:4.

Katydid, Leviticus 11:22, which was similar to a cricket but larger, the cricket, Leviticus 11:22, or grasshopper, Leviticus 11:22. All other flying insects that have four legs are to be regarded as unclean, Leviticus 11:23.

TOUCHING UNCLEAN ANIMALS

‘You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘Every animal that does not have a divided hoof or that does not chew the cud is unclean for you; whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean. Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. These animals are unclean for you.’ Leviticus 11:24-28

In Leviticus 11:24-47, we find a list of things which make a person unclean by touching them. They will make themselves unclean by touching any carcass and will remain unclean till evening, Leviticus 11:24. Anyone who picks up a dead carcass must wash their clothes and will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 11:25.

Any animal that doesn't have a divided hoof or that doesn't chew the cud is classed as unclean, and whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean, Leviticus 11:26.

Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean, and whoever touches their dead carcass will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 11:27.

We must remember that in our culture today, these ceremonial uncleanness laws may seem foreign to us in the UK. We love our 'pawed' animals, Leviticus 11:27, dogs, and cats, but for the Israelites, it meant the difference between being a part of the community or not.

If they had become unclean, they couldn't take part in any social events or worship; this is why they had to wash their clothes and wait until the evening, at which point, they would become clean again, Leviticus 11:28.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'If the due purification was omitted at the time, through negligence or forgetfulness, a sin-offering was required, Leviticus 5:2.'

ANIMALS WHICH MOVE ALONG THE GROUND AND CLAY POTS

'Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink, and the chameleon. Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening. When one of them dies and falls on something, that article, whatever its use, will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, hide or sackcloth. Put it in water; it will be unclean till evening, and then it will be clean. If one of them falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot. Any food you are allowed to eat that has come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean. Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean. A spring, however, or a cistern for collecting water remains clean, but anyone who touches one of these carcasses is unclean. If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, they remain clean.

But if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.' Leviticus 11:29-38

The animals listed here as unclean are the weasel, Leviticus 11:29, the rat, Leviticus 11:29, any kind of great lizard, Leviticus 11:29, the gecko, Leviticus 11:30, the monitor lizard, Leviticus 11:30, the wall lizard, Leviticus 11:30, the skink, which is a small lizard and the chameleon, Leviticus 11:30.

They are all classed as unclean, and whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 11:31. Note the difference between these dead animals touching the pot and falling into the pot.

If any of these animals dies or falls into a vessel, whatever it's made out of, it would make the vessel unclean; it had to be washed and kept in water until evening, Leviticus 11:32, then it would be clean again and ready to be used.

If any of these animals fall into a clay pot, this made everything in that pot unclean; the pot had to be broken, Leviticus 11:33 / Leviticus 11:35. If any food they were allowed to eat that had come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean, Leviticus 11:34.

Anything that a dead carcass falls on becomes unclean, and an oven or cooking pot must be broken up, Leviticus 11:35 / Leviticus 11:33. They are unclean, and they are to regard them as unclean, Leviticus 11:35.

A spring or a cistern for collecting water remains clean, but anyone who touches one of the dead carcasses is unclean, Leviticus 11:36. If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, the seed remain clean, Leviticus 11:37, however, if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean, Leviticus 11:38.

TOUCHING DEAD ANIMALS

‘If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening. Anyone who eats some of its carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.’ Leviticus 11:39-40

Any clean animal, which would include the ox, sheep, goat, deer, etc., dies, and someone touches it, then that person would become unclean until evening, Leviticus 11:39.

If anyone eats part of the animal’s body, it will also be unclean; therefore, they must wash and become clean in the evening. The same applies to anyone who picks up one of these dead animals, Leviticus 11:40.

CREATURES WHICH MOVE ALONG THE GROUND

‘Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean; it is not to be eaten. You are not to eat any creature that moves along the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is unclean. Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them.’ Leviticus 11:41-43

Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean and is not to be eaten, Leviticus 11:41. Most commentators believe these verses are addressing vermin, Leviticus 11:29-30.

Notice the difference, not only does the text speak of things which ‘walk on all fours’ but things which ‘move on their belly’, Leviticus 11:42. This would include animals like snakes, worms, maggots, moles, rats, mice, caterpillars, and centipedes. These are all classed as unclean, Leviticus 11:42.

They are told not to defile themselves by any of these creatures and do not make themselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them, Leviticus 11:43.

A HOLY GOD DEMANDS A HOLY PEOPLE

‘I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore, be holy, because I am holy.’ Leviticus 11:44-45

They are to consecrate themselves and be holy because the LORD, God, is holy, Leviticus 11:44 / Exodus 6:7 / Exodus 16:12 / Exodus 23:2. They are not to make themselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground, Leviticus 11:44 / Leviticus 11:41-43.

As God reminds them that He is the One who brought them out of Egypt, Genesis 15:12-21. He also reminds them that He is a holy God and His people must be holy too, Leviticus 11:45. God didn’t give them these rules for the fun of it; it was all about obedience and healthy living.

‘These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground. You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.’ Leviticus 11:46-47

Moses finishes by reminding the Israelites about the regulations concerning animals, Leviticus 11:1-8, birds, Leviticus 11:13-23, every living thing that moves about in the water, Leviticus 11:9-12, and every creature that moves along the ground, Leviticus 11:29-38.

It's clear that God wanted them to learn and distinguish between what is clean and unclean, Leviticus 11:47 / Leviticus 10:10 / Leviticus 20:25-26 / 1 Peter 1:15-16. They had to be obedient to God with these laws if they wanted to remain in fellowship with God and His people.

These dietary restrictions separated Israel from every other nation on earth. It would be later, when Christ comes on the scene, that these laws would be abolished, Mark 7:19 / Acts 10:11-16 / 1 Timothy 4:4-5.

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day, the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding.’ Leviticus 12:1-5

PURIFICATION OF WOMEN AFTER CHILDBIRTH

As we read through this short chapter, it would be a mistake to think that God is saying that giving birth is somehow unclean. After all, it was God who told mankind to get together to fill the earth, Genesis 1:28.

In Bible times, giving birth to children was seen as a rich blessing from God, Genesis 33:5. Children were seen as a gift from God in the marriage relationship, Psalms 127-128. If a woman didn't have any children, it was widely accepted amongst the Jews that they were under some kind of curse.

This chapter, along with Leviticus 15, shows us that God has the health of the mother and the child in mind. He wanted to ensure that mother and baby were well and the mother had time to recover from giving birth.

A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period, Leviticus 12:1-2.

On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised, Leviticus 12:3. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and His people, which God originally made with Abraham when He commanded him to circumcise his offspring, Genesis 17 / Exodus 4:25. The ceremony of circumcision was to be a sign of the covenant and so, everyone who was circumcised actually shared in this covenant.

Notice that God knew things back then that scientists today have not long discovered. God commands that those boys who were eight days old were to be circumcised. Why eight days? This was the earliest safe day to be circumcised because the blood was full of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting.

When we move into the New Testament, we see the real value in circumcision. Galatians 5:6 tells us that it had no benefit, it's faith that counts. Colossians 2:11-12 tells us that baptism is a sign of the new covenant, and if someone refuses to be baptised, they're effectively refusing the new covenant.

The woman is to wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding and she must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over, Leviticus 12:4.

If the woman gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period and then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding, Leviticus 12:5.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The term purifying here does not imply that there is anything impure in the blood at this or the other times referred to above; on the contrary, the blood is pure, perfectly so, as to its quality, but is excessive in quantity for the reasons above assigned. The idle tales found in certain works relative to the infectious nature of this fluid, and of the female in such times, are as impious as they are irrational and absurd.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Some have thought that this doubling of each of the two periods was intended to remind the people of the fact that woman represents the lower side of human nature, and was the first to fall into temptation, 1 Timothy 2:13-15 / 1 Peter 3:7. The ancients had a notion that the mother suffers for a longer time after the birth of a girl than after the birth of a boy.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘To each of the numbers thirty-three days, Leviticus 12:4, and sixty-six days, Leviticus 12:5, one must add the seven days of Leviticus 12:2, and the fourteen days of Leviticus 12:5, making totals of 40 and 80. When a male child was circumcised on the ‘eighth day,’ Leviticus 12:3, that day was reckoned with the 33.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The highly symbolical meaning of the number ‘forty’ is frequently apparent in the Bible. There were forty-day fasts by Elijah, 1 Kings 19:5-7, Moses, Exodus 34:28, and Christ, Matthew 4:2. There were forty years of punishment for Israel in the wilderness, Numbers 32:13. It rained for ‘forty’ days and nights during the flood, Genesis 7:12.’

‘When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. He shall offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood. ‘These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl. But if she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.’ Leviticus 12:6-8

When the days of purification were over, the mother was instructed to give according to what they could afford. The wealthy could offer a year-old lamb for a burnt offering, Leviticus 12:6, which was an expression of thankfulness.

The poorer could offer a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering, Leviticus 12:6, possibly because during the birth process, in the hours of labour and agony. She may have used inappropriate words, Genesis 3:16, or more probably because during the birth process she became contaminated with blood, Leviticus 15:19-30.

The priest is to offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood, Leviticus 12:6. These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl, Leviticus 12:7.

The poorer mother could offer two doves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering, Leviticus 12:8 / Luke 2:24. In this way, the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean, Leviticus 12:8.

When we carefully read these verses, we notice that these purification requirements were carried out by Jesus’ mother, Mary. In fact, when we read Luke 2:22-24, we find the exact same words recorded. This implies that these words recorded here are prophetic in nature, looking forward to the birth of Christ, Luke 2:30.

These laws of clean and unclean are given by God not only to promote obedience but to promote healthy living for His people. It's possible that the Israelites didn't understand all the health benefits like we do today, but that's not the point; the point is that God knew the health benefits.

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest. The priest is to examine the sore on the skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling skin disease. When the priest examines that person, he shall pronounce them ceremonially unclean. If the shiny spot on the skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine them, and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, he is to isolate them for another seven days. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine them again, and if the sore has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them clean; it is only a rash. They must wash their clothes, and they will be clean. But if the rash does spread in their skin after they have shown themselves to the priest to be pronounced clean, they must appear before the priest again. The priest is to examine that person, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease. When anyone has a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to the priest. The priest is to examine them, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, it is a chronic skin disease, and the priest shall pronounce them unclean. He is not to isolate them, because they are already unclean.’ Leviticus 13:1-11

LAWS ABOUT DEFILING SKIN DISEASES

The skin disease described here is leprosy and it shows itself in six different ways, a scab, [Leviticus 13:2-8](#), a spot on the flesh after a boil, [Leviticus 13:12-23](#), a burn, [Leviticus 13:24-28](#), a rash in the hair or beard, [Leviticus 13:29-37](#), spots on the skin, [Leviticus 13:38-39](#), and a sore on a man's bald head, [Leviticus 13:42-44](#).

You will notice in [Leviticus 13:1-28](#), four different cases of suspected leprosy are described: the first is described in [Leviticus 13:1-8](#), the second is described in [Leviticus 13:9-17](#), the third is described in [Leviticus 13:18-23](#), and the fourth is described in [Leviticus 13:24-28](#).

LEPROSY

The term ‘leprosy’, which includes the words leper, lepers, leprosy, leprous, occurs sixty-eight times in the Bible, fifty-five times in the Old Testament, ‘tsara’ath’ and thirteen times in the New Testament, ‘lepros’, ‘lepra’.

In the Old Testament, the instances of leprosy most likely meant a variety of infectious skin diseases, and even mould and mildew on clothing and walls. In the New Testament, it seems to mean an infectious skin disease. The disease itself was considered by some as some kind of sin, but not necessarily a specific sin relating to the lepers themselves.

A SCAB

The LORD tells Moses and Aaron that when anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a defiling skin disease, and so, they must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest, Leviticus 13:1.

It was the priest's duty, acting on behalf of God, to determine if a person had leprosy or not, Leviticus 13:2-3. If the hair in the sore had turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling skin disease, Leviticus 13:4 / Exodus 4:6.

The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

‘This is the first symptom, and the most noticeable as the commencement of the disease. The hair around the spot loses its colour and becomes thin and weak, the separate hairs being hardly stronger or individually thicker than down. The second symptom is when the plague is deeper than the skin of his flesh; that is, below the upper skin, or cuticle, and in the real cutis. These two symptoms distinguish real leprosy from other affections which at first bear a similar appearance.’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This dreadful disorder has its name leprosy, from the Greek, which means a scale, because in this disease the body is often covered with thin white scales, so as to give it the appearance of snow. Hence it is said of the hand of Moses, Exodus 4:6, that it was leprous as snow; and of Miriam, Numbers 12:10, that she became leprous, as white as snow; and of Gehazi, 2 Kings 5:27, that, being judicially struck with the disease of Naaman, he went out from Elisha's presence a leper as white as snow, Exodus 4:6.’

When the priest examines that person, they will pronounce them ceremonially unclean, Leviticus 13:4. If the shiny spot on the skin is white but doesn't appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it hasn't turned white, the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days, Leviticus 13:5.

On the seventh day the priest is to examine them again and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and hasn't spread in the skin, he is to isolate them for another seven days, Leviticus 13:6.

On the seventh day the priest is to examine them again, and if the sore has faded and hasn't spread in the skin, the priest is to pronounce them clean because it's only a rash, Leviticus 13:6 / Leviticus 13:45-49 / Leviticus 14:1-32 / Luke 5:14. However, they need to wash their clothes, and they will be clean, Leviticus 13:6 / Leviticus 13:34 / Mark 1:40-45.

But if the rash does spread in their skin after they have shown themselves to the priest to be pronounced clean, they must appear before the priest once again, Leviticus 13:7. The priest is to examine that person, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce them unclean because it's a defiling skin disease, Leviticus 13:8.

When anyone has a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to the priest, Leviticus 13:9. The priest is to examine them, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, it is a chronic skin disease and the priest is to pronounce them unclean, Leviticus 13:10-11. However, the priest isn't to isolate them, because they are already unclean, Leviticus 13:11.

The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

‘When the characteristic white spot and white hair are present (if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white), and if a third symptom be present—if there be quick raw flesh in the rising, that is, if there be an ulcer underneath the white scab, there is to be no delay, as in the previous case, but judgment is to be passed at once. The priest shall pronounce him unclean and shall not shut him up: for he is manifestly unclean.’

A SPOT ON THE FLESH AFTER A BOIL

‘If the disease breaks out all over their skin and, so far as the priest can see, it covers all the skin of the affected person from head to foot, the priest is to examine them, and if the disease has covered their whole body, he shall pronounce them clean. Since it has all turned white, they are clean. But whenever raw flesh appears on them, they will be unclean. When the priest sees the raw flesh, he shall pronounce them unclean. The raw flesh is unclean; they have a defiling disease. If the raw flesh changes and turns white, they must go to the priest. The priest is to examine them, and if the sores have turned white, the priest shall pronounce the affected person clean; then they will be clean. When someone has a boil on their skin, and it heals, and in the place where the boil was, a white swelling or reddish-white spot appears, they must present themselves to the priest. The priest is to examine it, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has turned white, the priest shall pronounce that person unclean. It is a defiling skin disease that has broken out where the boil was. But if, when the priest examines it, there is no white hair in it and it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for seven days. If it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling disease. But if the spot is unchanged and has not spread, it is only a scar from the boil, and the priest shall pronounce them clean.’ [Leviticus 13:12-23](#)

If the disease breaks out all over their skin and, so far as the priest can see, it covers all the skin of the affected person from head to foot, then the priest is to examine them, and if the disease has covered their whole body, the priest is to pronounce them clean, [Leviticus 13:12-13](#).

Because it has all turned white, they are clean, [Leviticus 13:13](#), however, whenever raw flesh appears on them, they will be unclean, [Leviticus 13:14](#). When the priest sees the raw flesh, he is to pronounce them unclean, [Leviticus 13:15](#). The raw flesh is unclean and they have a defiling disease, [Leviticus 13:15](#) / [Job 2:7](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:27](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:35](#).

If the raw flesh changes and turns white, they must go to the priest, [Leviticus 13:16](#). The priest is to examine them, and if the sores have turned white, the priest is to pronounce the affected person clean, and then they will be clean, [Leviticus 13:17](#).

When someone has a boil on their skin, and it heals, and in the place where the boil was, a white swelling or reddish-white spot appears, they must present themselves to the priest, [Leviticus 13:18-19](#).

The priest is to examine it, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has turned white, then the priest is to pronounce that person unclean, because it’s a defiling skin disease that has broken out where the boil was, [Leviticus 13:20](#).

However, if when the priest examines it, there is no white hair in it and it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for seven days, [Leviticus 13:21](#).

If it is spreading in the skin, then the priest is to pronounce them unclean because it is a defiling disease, [Leviticus 13:22](#). However, if the spot is unchanged and has not spread, it is only a scar from the boil, and the priest shall pronounce them clean, [Leviticus 13:23](#).

The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

‘A reappearing ulcer is to be regarded as leprous, if it has the characteristic marks of leprosy; that is, if it be below the cuticle, and the hairs round it turned white. If it has not these marks, it has to be watched for seven days, and if in that time it does not spread, it is to be declared a burning boil, or rather an ulcerous scar, in which case the priest shall pronounce him clean.’

A BURN

‘When someone has a burn on their skin and a reddish-white or white spot appears in the raw flesh of the burn, the priest is to examine the spot, and if the hair in it has turned white, and it appears to be more than skin deep, it is a

defiling disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease. But if the priest examines it and there is no white hair in the spot, and if it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for seven days. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine that person, and if it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease. If, however, the spot is unchanged and has not spread in the skin but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce them clean; it is only a scar from the burn.’ Leviticus 13:24-28

When someone has a burn on their skin and a reddish-white or white spot appears in the raw flesh of the burn, the priest is to examine the spot, and if the hair in it has turned white, and it appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest is to pronounce them unclean because it is a defiling skin disease, Leviticus 13:24-25.

If the priest examines it and there is no white hair in the spot and if it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for seven days, Leviticus 13:26.

On the seventh day the priest is to examine that person, and if it is spreading in the skin, then the priest is to pronounce them unclean because it is a defiling skin disease, Leviticus 13:27.

If, however, the spot is unchanged and has not spread in the skin but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest is to pronounce them clean because it is only a scar from the burn, Leviticus 13:28.

Remember, the priests weren’t doctors as we understand doctors today, but God gave them enough insight to recognise what leprosy looked like. We can only imagine the fear that the Israelites must have felt every time a boil or burn appeared on their bodies. It must have been devastating for those who were declared unclean because they had to dress as mourners, Leviticus 10:6 / Leviticus 21:10 / Ezekiel 24:17 / Micah 3:7.

They also had to live outside the camp, isolated from their friends and family, 2 Kings 7:3 / 2 Kings 15:5 / Luke 17:12, and they also had to cry out, ‘unclean! unclean!’ when anyone was passing by them, Leviticus 13:45.

A RASH IN THE HAIR OR BEARD

‘If a man or woman has a sore on their head or chin, the priest is to examine the sore, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it is yellow and thin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease on the head or chin. But if, when the priest examines the sore, it does not seem to be more than skin deep and there is no black hair in it, then the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine the sore, and if it has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it and it does not appear to be more than skin deep, then the man or woman must shave themselves, except for the affected area, and the priest is to keep them isolated another seven days. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine the sore, and if it has not spread in the skin and appears to be no more than skin deep, the priest shall pronounce them clean. They must wash their clothes, and they will be clean. But if the sore does spread in the skin after they are pronounced clean, the priest is to examine them, and if he finds that the sore has spread in the skin, he does not need to look for yellow hair; they are unclean. If, however, the sore is unchanged so far as the priest can see, and if black hair has grown in it, the affected person is healed. They are clean, and the priest shall pronounce them clean.’ Leviticus 13:29-37

If a man or woman has a sore on their head or chin, then the priest is to examine the sore, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it is yellow and thin, the priest is to pronounce them unclean because it is a defiling skin disease on the head or chin, Leviticus 13:29-30.

If, when the priest examines the sore, it doesn’t seem to be more than skin deep and there is no black hair in it, then the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days, Leviticus 13:31.

On the seventh day, the priest is to examine the sore, and if it has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it and it doesn’t appear to be more than skin deep, then the man or woman must shave themselves, except for the affected area, and the priest is to keep them isolated another seven days, Leviticus 13:32-33.

On the seventh day, the priest is to examine the sore, and if it hasn't spread in the skin and appears to be no more than skin deep, then the priest is to pronounce them clean, Leviticus 13:34. However, they must wash their clothes, and they will be clean, Leviticus 13:34 / Leviticus 13:6 / Mark 1:40-45.

If the sore does spread in the skin after they are pronounced clean, then the priest is to examine them, and if he finds that the sore has spread in the skin, he doesn't need to look for yellow hair because they are unclean, Leviticus 13:35-36.

If, however, the sore is unchanged so far as the priest can see, and if black hair has grown in it, the affected person is healed, Leviticus 13:37. They are clean, and the priest is to pronounce them clean, Leviticus 13:37.

A SORE ON A MAN'S BALD HEAD

‘When a man or woman has white spots on the skin, the priest is to examine them, and if the spots are dull white, it is a harmless rash that has broken out on the skin; they are clean. ‘A man who has lost his hair and is bald is clean. If he has lost his hair from the front of his scalp and has a bald forehead, he is clean. But if he has a reddish-white sore on his bald head or forehead, it is a defiling disease breaking out on his head or forehead. The priest is to examine him, and if the swollen sore on his head or forehead is reddish-white like a defiling skin disease, the man is diseased and is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean because of the sore on his head.’ Leviticus 13:38-44

The falling off of the hair, Leviticus 13:40, when the baldness commences in the back part of the head, Leviticus 13:41, is another symptom which creates a suspicion of leprosy, but it was not itself a decisive sign unless taken in connection with other signs, such as a ‘sore of a reddish-white colour’, Leviticus 13:42-43.

When we read these verses, we read that not all the usual signs of leprosy meant that the person actually had leprosy. Nevertheless, the person still had to present themselves to the priests for the final verdict; in this case, the priest is to pronounce him unclean, because of the sore on his head, Leviticus 13:44.

‘Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ As long as they have the disease, they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.’ Leviticus 13:45-46

Notice again that if a person was judged to have leprosy, they were to be isolated from everyone else, their clothes were to be torn, their hair wasn't allowed to grow long, and their upper lip was to be covered, Leviticus 13:45. We can imagine that it wouldn't be difficult to recognise someone who had leprosy in those days.

Not all leprosy was infectious, but this leprosy certainly was, hence why the leper had to cry out, ‘unclean! unclean’, Leviticus 13:45, whenever anyone walked near them, this must have been humiliating on so many levels. North, in his commentary, says the following.

‘What of those who were declared unclean? Their lot was tragic indeed. They were compelled to dress as mourners, Leviticus 10:6 / Leviticus 21:10 / Ezekiel 24:17 / Micah 3:7, and to dwell apart from all human habitation, 2 Kings 7:3 / 2 Kings 15:5 / Luke 17:12, and to warn any person passing by through chance by crying ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ Like the Pariah in India, they were untouchable.’

Notice they must live alone outside the camp, Leviticus 13:46.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Not every place outside the camp was unclean; there were clean places outside the camp, Leviticus 4:12. However, the unclean person was to live in an unclean area outside the camp. The idea was that he or she could not come close to God, who resided in the tabernacle at the centre of the camp.’

LAWS ABOUT DEFILING MOULDS

‘As for any fabric that is spoiled with a defiling mould—any woollen or linen clothing, any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather—if the affected area in the fabric, the leather, the woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a defiling mould and must be shown to the priest. The priest is to examine the affected area and isolate the article for seven days. On the seventh day, he is to examine it, and if the mould has spread in the fabric, the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a persistent defiling mould; the article is unclean. He must burn the fabric, the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has been spoiled; because the defiling mould is persistent, the article must be burned. ‘But if, when the priest examines it, the mould has not spread in the fabric, the woven or knitted material, or the leather article, he shall order that the spoiled article be washed. Then he is to isolate it for another seven days. After the article has been washed, the priest is to examine it again, and if the mould has not changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean. Burn it, no matter which side of the fabric has been spoiled. If, when the priest examines it, the mould has faded after the article has been washed, he is to tear the spoiled part out of the fabric, the leather, or the woven or knitted material. But if it reappears in the fabric, in the woven or knitted material, or in the leather article, it is a spreading mould; whatever has the mould must be burned. Any fabric, woven or knitted material, or any leather article that has been washed and is rid of the mould, must be washed again. Then it will be clean.’ Leviticus 13:47-59

In Leviticus 13:45-46, we read that if anyone had leprosy, they were to go into isolation, Leviticus 13:46, they were to separate themselves from others in the community. In these verses, we read about various kinds of clothing material. What we’re reading about here is the danger of infection from infected clothing.

In our modern society, where clothes are thrown away for any reason, we must remember that clothing was very valuable in Bible times. People weren’t as well off as we are today, and they certainly didn’t have any bargain stores to go to and buy cheap clothes; they made their own.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the clothing mentioned in Leviticus 13:47.

‘The clothing, referring to the ordinary dress of the Israelites in the wilderness; namely, a linen tunic with a fringe, Numbers 15:38, and a woollen cloak or blanket thrown on in colder weather.’

Any material with a defiling mould, either woollen or linen clothing, woven or knitted material of linen or wool, leather or anything made of leather, if the affected area in the fabric, the leather, the woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a defiling mould, must be shown to the priest, Leviticus 13:47-49.

If any kind of mould was found in any of the listed garments, then the garment was to be removed and isolated for seven days, Leviticus 13:50. On the seventh day, the priest is to examine it, and if the mould has spread in the fabric, the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a persistent defiling mould and so, the article is unclean, Leviticus 13:51.

Any item of material which had become contaminated with mould had to be burned, Leviticus 13:52 / Leviticus 13:57. If the mould spread further on the garment, then it was unclean and to be burned, but if the mould didn’t spread after the seven days, it was to be washed and put aside for another seven days, Leviticus 13:53-54.

After the article has been washed, the priest is to examine it again, and if the mould hasn’t changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean and it is to be burned, no matter which side of the fabric has been spoiled, Leviticus 13:55. If the infected areas didn’t change in colour, then only the affected areas were to be removed and burned, Leviticus 13:56.

If the moulded area had changed colour, then those areas were to be cut from the garment, but if the moulded area had spread after the second seven days, then the whole garment was to be burned, Leviticus 13:57. If the mould disappeared after the garment was washed, then the garment was washed again and pronounced clean, Leviticus 13:58.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘According to the Jews, the first washing was to put away the plague, the second to cleanse it.’

These are the regulations concerning defiling moulds in wool, linen clothing, woven, knitted material, or any leather article, for pronouncing them clean or unclean, Leviticus 13:59.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘These are the regulations for any diseased person at the time of their ceremonial cleansing, when they are brought to the priest: The priest is to go outside the camp and examine them. If they have been healed of their defiling skin disease, the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the person to be cleansed. Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn, and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the defiling disease and then pronounce them clean. After that, he is to release the live bird in the open fields. ‘The person to be cleansed must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe with water; then they will be ceremonially clean. After this, they may come into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days. On the seventh day, they must shave off all their hair; they must shave their head, their beard, their eyebrows, and the rest of their hair. They must wash their clothes and bathe themselves with water, and they will be clean. ‘On the eighth day, they must bring two male lambs and one ewe lamb, a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil. The priest who pronounces them clean shall present both the one to be cleansed and their offerings before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ‘Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil; he shall wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. He is to slaughter the lamb in the sanctuary area where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy. The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. The priest shall then take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the LORD seven times. The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. The rest of the oil in his palm, the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for them before the LORD. ‘Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from their uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for them, and they will be clean.’ Leviticus 14:1-20

CLEANSING FROM DEFILING SKIN DISEASES

The purpose behind these regulations concerning a leper who was now clean was to let other people know that they should now be accepted back into the community.

The now clean leper was brought to the priest outside the camp, and when the priest saw that the leprosy had gone, the now clean leper was to take two birds, Leviticus 14:4, cedarwood, scarlet and hyssop so that they could perform the cleaning ceremony, Leviticus 14:1-4 / Leviticus 14:7-8 / Leviticus 14:11 / Leviticus 14:14 / Leviticus 14:17-19. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As the priest alone had authority to declare a person clean or unclean, it was necessary that the healed person should show himself to the priest, that he might make a declaration that he was clean and fit for civil and religious society, without which, in no case, could he be admitted; hence, when Christ cleansed the lepers, Matthew 8:2-4, he commanded them to go and show themselves to the priest.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Leviticus 14:4.

‘These three substances were used as the common materials in rites of purification (compare Exodus 12:22 / Numbers 19:8 / Psalms 51:7 / Hebrews 9:19: the ‘cedar’, or juniper, the resin or turpentine of which was a preservative against decay, and employed in medicines for elephantiasis and other skin diseases: the ‘scarlet’, a ‘tongue,’ or band, of twice-dyed scarlet wool, with which the living bird, the hyssop, and the cedar wood were tied together when they were dipped into the blood and water: the colour expressing the rosinness associated with health and vital energy: and the ‘hyssop’, Exodus 12:22, probably the Caper plant, whose cleansing virtues as a medicine, and use in the treatment of ulcers and diseases of the skin allied to leprosy, were known to the ancients. It has been conjectured that the scarlet band was used to tie the hyssop upon the cedar, so as to make a sort of brush, such as would be convenient for sprinkling.’

One of the birds was to be killed over fresh water in a clay pot, Leviticus 14:5 / Genesis 26:19 / Numbers 19:17. The live bird was to be dipped, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water, Leviticus 14:6 / Psalms 51:7. Seven times the priest is to sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the defiling disease, and then pronounce them clean, Leviticus 14:7.

Hahmah, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The text uses the reflexive rather than passive inflection to refer to the leper’s process of purification. In both instances, Leviticus 14:7 / Leviticus 14:11, the leper is referred to as ‘he who is to cleanse himself’ and not as ‘he who is to be cleansed.’ This is to indicate that the leper must do his share to become pure. He himself must seek to attain purity by way of repentance and appropriate conduct.’

After the priests announced that the person was now clean, the bird was set free, Leviticus 14:7 / Leviticus 14:53 / Leviticus 16:5-10, which signified that the person was now free to rejoin the community.

Jellie, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The symbolism of the slain bird suggests the death of Christ, and the soaring bird the resurrection of Christ.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This release of the bird also suggests a similar thing observable in the two goats on the Day of Atonement, one being sacrificed, the other being released to roam beyond the camp, and the certain identification of that ceremony with Jesus Christ, as outlined in Hebrews 13:12-13, makes it very likely that a similar identification is also in this. In the scapegoat analogy, the goat bore the sins of Israel away into the wilderness, but here the released bird, sprinkled with the blood, flies away into heaven, suggesting the offering of Christ’s blood ‘in heaven’ for us, Hebrews 10:12.’

After washing himself, his clothes and shaving all the hair off their body, they were to go to their tent and remain outside of it for seven days, Leviticus 14:8. After the seven days, if there was still no sign of the disease, they were to go ahead and shave their heads, beards, and eyebrows, Leviticus 14:9.

After doing this, they were wash their clothes and body and be declared clean, Leviticus 14:9, and it was at this point they could return to their family and the rest of the community.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Son of God proved His divine mission by healing the lepers Matthew 11:5, He did not excuse them from going to the priest to ‘offer for the cleansing those things which Moses commanded’, Mark 1:44 / Luke 5:14, ‘for a testimony to the people,’ Matthew 8:4.’

On the eighth day they must bring two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an ephah, that is around eleven pounds of the finest flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, and one log, which is one-third of a litre of oil, [Leviticus 14:10](#) / [Leviticus 14:12](#) / [Leviticus 19:35](#).

The priest who pronounces them clean is to present both the one to be cleansed and their offerings before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting, [Leviticus 14:11](#) / [Leviticus 1:3](#).

Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil and he is wave them before the LORD as a wave offering, [Leviticus 14:12](#) / [Exodus 29:27](#) / [Numbers 8:11-15](#) / [Leviticus 7:38](#).

The wave offering is in reference to the manner in which those portions were handled before God's altar. The breast was waved, passed from right to left and left to right after being elevated in the hands of the worshipper. It was lifted up toward heaven and lowered perhaps several times.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The priest laid the object to be waved upon the hands of the offeror, and then placed his own hands underneath, and moved the hands of the offeror backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction, to indicate by the movement forwards, i.e., in the direction towards the altar, the presentation of the sacrifice, or the symbolical transference of it to God, and by the movement backwards, the reception of it back again, as a present which God handed over to His servants the priests.’

The priest is to slaughter the lamb in the sanctuary area where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered, [Leviticus 14:13](#). Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy, [Leviticus 14:13](#) / [Leviticus 6:25](#).

Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, [Leviticus 14:14](#) / [Leviticus 8:23](#) / [Exodus 29:20](#).

The priest is to take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, and dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the LORD seven times, [Leviticus 14:15-16](#).

The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering, [Leviticus 14:17](#).

The rest of the oil in his palm the priest is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for them, [Leviticus 14:18](#) / [Leviticus 8:11](#) / [Leviticus 8:15](#).

The word ‘atonement’, means to cover up, later in the New Testament the word ‘atonement’ means to reconcile, [Romans 3:25](#) / [Hebrews 2:17](#). God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders, atonement must be made for sin, [Habakkuk 1:13](#).

Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from their uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for them, and they will be clean, [Leviticus 14:19-20](#).

This ceremony of sacrifices is basically a series of fellowship meals that celebrate the person who is now healed from their leprosy. Notice that the ceremony is very similar to the opening ceremony done by the priests, [Leviticus 8:23-24](#).

This would be such a happy event for anyone now cured of leprosy, and their family and friends. We can imagine them not only being near their family and friends but actually hugging and kissing them again.

‘If, however, they are poor and cannot afford these, they must take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved to make atonement for them, together with a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, a log of oil, and two doves or two young pigeons, such as they can afford, one for a sin offering and the

other for a burnt offering. ‘On the eighth day, they must bring them for their cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting, before the LORD. The priest is to take the lamb for the guilt offering, together with the log of oil, and wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. He shall slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. The priest is to pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand, and with his right forefinger sprinkle some of the oil from his palm seven times before the LORD. Some of the oil in his palm he is to put on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering—on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. The rest of the oil in his palm, the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for them before the LORD. Then he shall sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons, such as the person can afford, one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. In this way, the priest will make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the one to be cleansed.’ These are the regulations for anyone who has a defiling skin disease and who cannot afford the regular offerings for their cleansing.’ [Leviticus 14:21-32](#)

God always looks after the poor of society, and here He tells the leper who is now cleansed but is poor to take a tenth of an ephah, which was served for the grain offering, [Leviticus 14:21](#), and two doves or two young pigeons, which they would offer as a burnt offering and a sin offering, [Leviticus 14:21-22](#) / [Leviticus 14:32](#).

Notice that the requirement for the guilt offering remained the same, [Leviticus 14:23-31](#) / [Leviticus 14:14-18](#). This is because the guilt offering was all about relationships; it was all about reconciliation, not only with God but also with His people. Again, we can imagine the joy everyone would experience as the person who had leprosy is now healed and accepted back into the community.

The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

‘The concession to poverty consists in the substitution of two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, for the two lambs required for the sin offering and the burnt offering, and one tenth-deal of flour for three tenth-deals of flour in the meat offering. But no difference is made as to the lamb required for the trespass offering, or the log of oil. These must be provided by the poor as well as by the rich, and the ceremonies used at their offering must be the same for poor and rich, as they are essential to the rite.’

CLEANSING FROM DEFILING MOULD

‘The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mould in a house in that land, the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, ‘I have seen something that looks like a defiling mould in my house.’ The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mould, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this, the priest is to go in and inspect the house. He is to examine the mould on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days. On the seventh day, the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mould has spread on the walls, he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. Then they are to take other stones to replace these, and take new clay and plaster the house. ‘If the defiling mould reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house scraped and plastered, the priest is to go and examine it and, if the mould has spread in the house, it is a persistent defiling mould; the house is unclean. It must be torn down—its stones, timbers and all the plaster—and taken out of the town to an unclean place. ‘Anyone who goes into the house while it is closed up will be unclean till evening. Anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash their clothes. ‘But if the priest comes to examine it and the mould has not spread after the house has been plastered, he shall pronounce the house clean, because the defiling mould is gone. To purify the house, he is to take two birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop. He shall kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot. Then he is to take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird, dip them into the blood of the dead bird and the fresh water and sprinkle the house seven times. He shall purify the house with the bird’s blood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet yarn. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields outside the town. In this way, he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean.’

These are the regulations for any defiling skin disease, for a sore, for defiling moulds in fabric or in a house, and for a swelling, a rash, or a shiny spot, to determine when something is clean or unclean. These are the regulations for defiling skin diseases and defiling moulds.’ Leviticus 14:33-57

These verses deal with moulds which are found on physical things within a person’s home, Leviticus 13:47-59. These laws are given in reference to Israel coming into the land of Canaan and also in reference to the homes they built afterwards.

The reason for this is simply that when they finally inherited the Promised Land, most of them would move into the houses which already existed, the unclean houses built by the Canaanites.

Notice that God says, ‘I put a spreading mould in a house’, Leviticus 14:33-34. This simply means that God would allow the normal course of the work of mould to happen within the structure of a house.

God wants His people to understand that when they enter the land, there is no such thing as evil spirits cursing people. He wants them to know that there is no such thing as someone’s home being possessed by an evil spirit or any object within that home being possessed by some kind of evil spirit, as many of the Canaanites believed.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Leviticus 14:33-34.

‘It was probably from this text that leprosy has been generally considered to be a disease inflicted immediately by God himself; but it is well known that in Scripture God is frequently represented as doing what, in the course of his providence, he only permits or suffers to be done. It is supposed that the infection of the house, as well as of the person and the garments, proceeded from animalcule, Leviticus 13:47 / Leviticus 13:52.’

Notice that if the owner of the house found mould, they were to ‘tell the priest’, Leviticus 14:35. Mould, like leprosy, had to be assessed by the priest to see if it was a concern or not, Leviticus 13:9-28.

If the house was judged to have mould, then the contents of the house were to be removed, and the house was to be left closed up for seven days, Leviticus 14:36-38.

If the mould had spread during those seven days, then the infected stones were to be removed and placed somewhere outside of the city, which was designated unclean, and the house should be rebuilt, Leviticus 14:39-42.

If the mould returned, the whole house was to be totally destroyed, Leviticus 14:43-45. If anyone goes into the house while it is closed up, they will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 14:46, and if anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash their clothes, Leviticus 14:47.

If the house was announced clean, Leviticus 14:48, then there was to be a public ceremony done so that everyone would know the house was now clean to visit, and the owners of the house could return to live in it and invite guests into the house to visit them.

To purify the house the priests is to take two birds, some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop, Leviticus 14:49 / Psalms 51:7. He is then to kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot, Leviticus 14:50, and then take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird, dip them into the blood of the dead bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times, Leviticus 14:51 / Psalms 51:7.

The priest is to purify the house with the bird’s blood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn, Leviticus 14:52 / Psalms 51:7.

Then the priests are to release the live bird in the open fields outside the town, Leviticus 16:5-10, and so, in this way he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean, Leviticus 14:53 / Leviticus 14:7, which signified that the person was now free to re-join the community.

These are the regulations for any defiling skin disease, for a sore, Leviticus 14:54 / Leviticus 14:1-33, for defiling moulds in fabric or in a house, Leviticus 14:55 / Leviticus 14:33-53 / Leviticus 13:47-59.

And for a swelling, a rash or a shiny spot, Leviticus 14:56, to determine when something is clean or unclean, Leviticus 14:57 / Leviticus 13:1-46. These are the regulations for defiling skin diseases and defiling moulds, Leviticus 14:57.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When any man has an unusual bodily discharge, such a discharge is unclean. Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness: ‘Any bed the man with a discharge lies on will be unclean, and anything he sits on will be unclean. Anyone who touches his bed must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. Whoever sits on anything that the man with a discharge sat on must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘Whoever touches the man who has a discharge must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘If the man with the discharge spits on anyone who is clean, they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘Everything the man sits on when riding will be unclean, and whoever touches any of the things that were under him will be unclean till evening; whoever picks up those things must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘Anyone the man with a discharge touches without rinsing his hands with water must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘A clay pot that the man touches must be broken, and any wooden article is to be rinsed with water. ‘When a man is cleansed from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his ceremonial cleansing; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean. On the eighth day, he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the LORD to the entrance to the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way, he will make atonement before the LORD for the man because of his discharge.’ Leviticus 15:1-15

DISCHARGES CAUSING UNCLEANNESS

Abnormal discharge was second only to leprosy in cutting the person off from the temple and worship. It also cut them off from all social life. These laws were a reminder of Israel’s high calling, a Holy God wanted a Holy people, a people consecrated to special lives, in obedience to God. Undoubtedly, social diseases were a large contribution to the nation’s problems.

Sometimes overcrowded conditions, sometimes cultic and heathen influences. Purity was stressed, and so, the disease had an adverse effect on both the guilty and the innocent, yet both were cut off.

The bodily discharges mentioned in this section would make a person unclean, including both the main sexual organs, as well as any unhygienic discharge. Any discharge from the body was unclean, [Leviticus 15:1-3](#), the bed where one lay with a discharge or whatever he sat on also became unclean, [Leviticus 15:4](#).

This contact could be by laying on his bed, [Leviticus 15:5](#), sitting on his seat, [Leviticus 15:6](#). Those who came into contact with the person with a discharge were to wash themselves and their clothes and would be unclean until evening, [Leviticus 15:6](#).

This contact could be by touching him, [Leviticus 15:7](#), or having him spit on you, [Leviticus 15:8](#). The saddle that the person with the discharge sat upon was unclean, [Leviticus 15:9](#); if he touched something, [Leviticus 15:10](#), it was unclean.

Anyone the man with a discharge touches without rinsing his hands with water must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening, [Leviticus 15:11](#).

If it was a clay pot it was to be broken, [Leviticus 15:12](#), if something else, it was to be washed, [Leviticus 15:12](#). After seven days he was to wash himself and his clothes in running water, [Leviticus 15:13](#).

On the eighth day he was to offer two turtle doves and two pigeons as a sin offering and burnt offering, Leviticus 15:14 / Leviticus 15:29 / Leviticus 15:30 / Leviticus 14:10-20.

The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering and by doing so, he will make atonement before the LORD for the man because of his discharge, Leviticus 15:15 / Leviticus 15:30.

Remember, anyone who was unclean was out of fellowship with God's people, but after these offerings were given, they would once again be restored to fellowship with God's people.

What we see here is that life lived for God meant all of life was lived for God, and here in the Old Testament, we see that a person's physical cleanliness was necessary for them to approach God. A person had to be clean to continue to have a relationship with God.

‘When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening. Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening.

When a man has sexual relations with a woman, and there is an emission of semen, both of them must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.’ Leviticus 15:16-18

When a man has an emission of semen he is was to wash himself and be unclean until evening, Leviticus 15:16. Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 15:17. If the man was lying with a woman, she also had to wash herself and be unclean until evening, Leviticus 15:18.

Bamberger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is no implication that the woman is NOT the man's wife, or that the marital act is in any way degrading or sinful.’

In other words, God's holy people must not be defiled. Being unclean in reference to sexual fluid emissions wasn't sinful, though one was to wash his body and clothing in order to remove the uncleanness.

In reference to sexual intercourse, the only defilement would be for a man to have intercourse with a woman who was going through her monthly period, which Moses deals with next.

‘When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening. ‘Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. Anyone who touches her bed will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who touches anything she sits on will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, they will be unclean till evening. ‘If a man has sexual relations with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days; any bed he lies on will be unclean.’ Leviticus 15:19-24

Knight, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Leviticus 15:19 implies that a woman's menstrual period is to be respected. Here we meet with suggestions about tenderness, affection, and self-control in the married state, and the need for the male to respect the rhythmical cycle of a woman's sexual being.’

Harrison, in his commentary, says the following concerning the seven days, Leviticus 15:19.

‘By placing the woman in what amounted to a state of isolation, the legislation made it possible for her to enjoy some respite from her normal duties and gave her an opportunity of renewing her energy.’

Because of the blood which comes when a woman is going through her monthly period, the woman was unclean for seven days and whoever touched her was unclean until the evening, Leviticus 15:19.

Whatever the woman sat on or lay on also became unclean, Leviticus 15:20, and whoever touched the place where she sat or washed herself was unclean until evening, Leviticus 15:21.

Anyone who touches anything she sits on will be unclean and they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 15:22. Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, they will be unclean till evening, Leviticus 15:23.

If they had a sexual relationship whilst the woman was having her period, in order to remove the uncleanness, the person simply had to wash, bathe, clean their clothes and wait seven days, Leviticus 15:24 / Leviticus 20:18.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sexual intercourse during a woman’s period is expressly forbidden, Leviticus 18:19 / Ezekiel 18:6 / Ezekiel 22:10.’ Notice that there were no sacrifices involved for the person to become a part of the community again. This is because having a sexual relationship wasn’t sinful.

‘When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. Anyone who touches them will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. ‘When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean. On the eighth day, she must take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way, he will make atonement for her before the LORD for the uncleanness of her discharge. ‘You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.’ These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, for a woman in her monthly period, for a man or a woman with a discharge, and for a man who has sexual relations with a woman who is ceremonially unclean.’ Leviticus 15:25-33

Note that the text here isn’t dealing with the menstrual discharge; the text implies that the woman was to be unclean as if it were her monthly period, Leviticus 15:25 / Mark 5:24-32.

Whatever the woman sat on or lay on was also unclean, Leviticus 15:26; whoever touched the place where she sat or washed herself was unclean until evening, Leviticus 15:27.

After seven days she was to wash herself, Leviticus 15:28, and on the eighth day, she was to offer two turtle doves and two pigeons as a sin offering and burnt offering, Leviticus 15:29 / Leviticus 15:14 / Leviticus 15:30.

The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering and by doing so, he will make atonement for her before the LORD for the uncleanness of her discharge, Leviticus 15:30 / Leviticus 15:15.

Moses and Aaron must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling God’s dwelling place, that is, the tabernacle, which is among them, Leviticus 15:31. The words, ‘keep separate’, come from the root of the word ‘Nazarite’.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The mention of the tabernacle here indicates that one of the principal things pertaining to these regulations was the purpose of avoiding any ‘unclean’ person’s having anything whatever to do with the tabernacle ceremonies. That there were hygienic and other valid reasons underlying these laws is also evident.’

Ross, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God was teaching the household of faith the distinction between the physical and the holy. Anything connected with sexual function was part of the physical world; it was categorised as common, not holy. Sex could never be brought into the sanctuary, for unlike the Canaanite view, sexual activity was not a way to enhance spirituality or commune with God.’

These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, Leviticus 15:1-15, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, Leviticus 15:15-18, and for a woman in her monthly period, Leviticus 15:19-23.

For a man or a woman with a discharge, Leviticus 15:25-27, and for a man who has sexual relations with a woman who is ceremonially unclean, Leviticus 15:24.

These laws were a part of the bigger picture, which separated God's people from the nations around them. Yes, other nations had laws, but none of them was as strict as God's laws, especially these laws concerning cleanliness.

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

Occupying a central place in the Book of Leviticus is the most holy day of the year, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This is all about the Israelites, who were in a covenant relationship with God, being reconciled to God. Later, we will also see that what was to take place here on this very special day was pointing to something and Someone greater, that is, Christ.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

'The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, who died when they approached the LORD. The LORD said to Moses: 'Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. 'This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so, he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. From the Israelite community, he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 'Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat. 'Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the tablets of the covenant law, so that he will not die. He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover. 'He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way, he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household, and the whole community of Israel. 'Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.' Leviticus

We can't help but notice the seriousness of this chapter, as it points to the death of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, [Leviticus 16:1](#) / [Leviticus 10:1-7](#). As we go through this chapter, we soon discover that Aaron, as the high priest, couldn't just approach God whenever he felt like it, [Leviticus 16:2](#) / [Exodus 26:33-34](#) / [Hebrews 9:3](#). He must approach God on God's terms and conditions.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

'The high priest, the chief officiant, had been set aside for seven days to ensure his ritual purity, Yoma 1:1.'

This tells us that Aaron had to pay close attention to the instructions given to God or else he too would die, [Leviticus 16:2](#). For God is going to appear in the cloud over the atonement cover, [Leviticus 16:2](#) / [Exodus 16:10](#) / [Exodus 25:17](#).

Notice that this service was performed by the High Priest alone, [Leviticus 16:3](#). He is to first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, [Leviticus 16:3](#).

The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

'Holiness communicated to Aaron did not cancel his sin but only covered it for the performance of his official duties. So long as the Law which produced a knowledge of sin, but not its forgiveness, existed, the holy God was and remained to mortal men a consuming fire.'

On this special day, the High Priest would be clothed in simple linen, [Leviticus 16:4](#) / [Exodus 28:40-43](#). The breastplate and the tunic and the gold and the blue and the scarlet would all be put aside. This is a picture of the Messiah who would lay aside His glory, [John 13:1-5](#) / [Philippians 2:7](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'This significance belonged to the high priest only in his official capacity as mediator: in his own person he had infirmity, and was required 'to offer up sacrifice, 'first' for his own sins, and then for the people's,' [Hebrews 7:27](#).' Esses, in his commentary, says the following.

'When the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he had to wear a simple linen garment without seams, a garment of the type Jesus wore when he went to the Cross as our sacrifice, [John 19:23-24](#).'

From the Israelite community, he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, [Leviticus 16:5](#). Before he could act as a mediator between God and the people, the High Priest first had to offer up a bull as an atonement for his own sins and for those of his family, [Leviticus 16:6](#) / [Leviticus 16:11](#).

Two goats were brought before the presence of the Lord, [Leviticus 16:7](#), but there was nothing to distinguish them apart. Lots were cast, and these lots would determine which goat would live and which would die, [Leviticus 16:8](#) / [Joshua 7:16-17](#) / [Joshua 14:2](#) / [Proverbs 16:33](#) / [Acts 1:26](#).

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

'The priest placed one of the goats on his right hand, and the other on his left. Two pieces of gold exactly alike, inscribed "for Jehovah" and "for Azazel", were then placed in a bag or covered box, and the priest placed both hands inside and took out both pieces, one in each hand. That in his right hand, he placed on the head of the goat on that side, and that in his left hand on the other goat's head. This determined the fate of each.'

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

'These two goats were to be equal in 'appearance, height, and value', Yoma 6:1. The High Priest shook a box that held two lots, or stones, in it, Yoma 4:1-2.'

The goat on whom the lot fell was killed and used as a sin offering; the other goat is referred to as the 'scapegoat,' [Leviticus 16:8-10](#) / [Leviticus 16:21](#). The phrase translated 'for the scapegoat' is the Hebrew word,

‘aza’zel’, which is a compound word made up of the joining of two Hebrew words. The problem is that we are not entirely sure which words are indicated.

1. ‘Az’ is the Aramaic word for a ‘goat,’ but this is normally used to refer only to a female goat.

‘Az’ can also be used in Hebrew as an adjective describing that which is ‘strong’ or even the quality of ‘ferocity.’

2. ‘Azel’ is the verb, ‘to go.’

Thus, this can refer either to the ‘goat of sending away’ or ‘the sending away of ferocity.’ Either one is possible, and both would seem to fit the context.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The goat itself did not lose the sacred character with which it had been endued in being presented before Yahweh. It was, as much as the slain goat, a figure of Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, on whom the Lord laid the iniquity of us all, Isaiah 53:4 / Isaiah 53:6, that we might become a sanctified Church to be presented unto Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, Ephesians 5:26-27.’

Aaron again is to bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering, Leviticus 16:11 / Leviticus 16:6.

Aaron is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD, Exodus 25:38, and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain, Leviticus 16:12. Notice that this service involved passing within the veil, Leviticus 16:12 / Leviticus 16:15.

The priests were required to minister within the tabernacle each morning and each evening, but the one thing they were never permitted to do in any of their ministries was to pass beyond the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The one exception to this rule took place on the Day of Atonement. On this day, and only on this day, the High Priest was permitted to pass beyond the veil into the very presence of God.

He was to offer incense, Leviticus 16:13, that would form a cloud to cover the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant; it would form a cloud above the tablets of the covenant law, Leviticus 16:13.

Maclaren, in his commentary, says the following concerning the cloud, Leviticus 16:13.

‘This did not cover the ‘glory’ that Aaron might not gaze upon it, but it covered him that Jehovah might not look upon him and his sin!’

After entering the Most Holy Place, he was to do this in atonement for himself and his family, and he was to make atonement for the people by sprinkling the blood of the sin offering on the front of the atonement cover and then sprinkling some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover, Leviticus 16:14.

The word ‘atonement’ means to cover up; later in the New Testament, the word ‘atonement’ means to reconcile, Romans 3:25 / Hebrews 2:17. God cannot be approached with the guilt of sin on our shoulders; atonement must be made for sin, Habakkuk 1:13.

Aaron is to then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people, take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull’s blood and sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it, Leviticus 16:15.

By going this, Aaron will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness, Leviticus 16:16 / Exodus 30:10.

The tabernacle was to be emptied of all other inhabitants upon this day. The High Priest would be completely alone as he performed those parts of the ritual which took place within the tabernacle, Leviticus 16:17. This is a picture of Jesus, who was forsaken by all when He became the covering for our sins, Psalms 22:1.

When Aaron comes out, he is to go to the altar to that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar, Leviticus 16:18 / Exodus 28:38 / Leviticus 4:25 / Leviticus 4:30 / Leviticus 4:34.

He is to sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites, Leviticus 16:19. Everything done here was done to make atonement for Israel as a whole because of their inability to live perfect lives for God, Romans 3:9 / Romans 3:10 / Romans 3:23.

‘When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness. ‘Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. He shall bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. ‘The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward, he may come into the camp. The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up. The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward, he may come into the camp. ‘This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month, you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you—because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. It is a day of sabbath rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community. ‘This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.’ And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.’ Leviticus 16:20-34

When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he is to bring forward the live goat, Leviticus 16:20 / Leviticus 16:7-10.

Notice that Aaron was to take this goat and place both his hands upon it as he confessed all of the sins of Israel, for most sacrifices, he only placed one hand upon the animal, Leviticus 16:21.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘During the ceremonies, the scapegoat was presented to the high priest, and he laid his hands over the animal and prayed, Yoma 6:2.’

The sins of the nation would be identified with the goat, Leviticus 16:21. This figure was later applied to Jesus as He bore our sins on the cross, Psalms 32:1 / Isaiah 53:4 / Isaiah 53:12 / John 1:29.

In other words, if sins are to be forgiven, they must be taken away by someone else. The goat would be led away into the wilderness, Leviticus 16:21 / Leviticus 16:10, signifying that the sins of the people had been carried away, Leviticus 16:22. Symbolically, this meant that the sins of Israel would be put outside the camp.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘Select non-priestly men then drove the goat over the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem and deep into the wilderness of Judea. When the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness, the crowd assembled at the Temple and then cried out, ‘Bear our sins and be gone! Bear our sins and be gone!’, Yoma 6:4.’

Two observations about this ceremony.

1. Though this solemn ceremony was repeated for nearly 1500 years, from the time of Moses till the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, all of the blood of those bulls and goats put together could not forgive a single sin; they only withheld the judgment of God for another year.

2. If the high priest who performed this ceremony was still alive the following year, he got to perform the ceremony all over again, and when he died, his descendants would carry out the same services till they died.

The language used here is later repeated to speak of how the Lord would lay upon the Messiah the sins of us all, [Isaiah 53:6](#). The writer of the letter to the Hebrews sets forth a series of contrasts and comparisons between the ritual sacrifices of the Day of Atonement and the work of Christ upon the cross.

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant
Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these" (9:23)	that the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these (9:23)
For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one (9:24)	But into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (9:24)
Now was it that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own; otherwise, he would have needed to offer often since the foundation of the world (9:25-26)	But now once at the consummation of the ages, He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (9:26)
And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment (9:27)	So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him (9:28)

The rituals of the Day of Atonement were to be repeated each year, and for over a thousand years, this drama was acted out, first within the tabernacle, and later within the temple.

The ritual found its fulfilment on a spring day in the first century A.D. The Romans had set aside three crosses, and three thieves were destined to hang upon those crosses.

They had been apprehended, judged, and found to be guilty. They were placed under the sentence of death, but one of those thieves missed his appointment; he never went to the cross. His name was Barabbas.

Another man went to the cross in his place, Jesus died upon the cross of Barabbas and Barabbas was set free, [Matthew 27:16-26](#). We have been set free, too, and it was not because we were any more deserving; it was a gift of grace, [Ephesians 2:8-9](#).

Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there, [Leviticus 16:23](#).

He is to bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments and then come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people, [Leviticus 16:24](#). Then, Aaron is to burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar, [Leviticus 16:25](#).

The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat needs to wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, and afterwards he may come into the camp, [Leviticus 16:26](#) / [Leviticus 16:21](#).

The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp, and their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up, [Leviticus 16:27](#) / [Leviticus 1:9](#).

The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, and afterwards he may come into the camp, [Leviticus 16:28](#). This is to be a lasting ordinance for Israel, on the tenth day of the seventh month, [Leviticus 16:29](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The month Ethanim or Tisri, as being the seventh in the Sacred year, has been called the sabbatical month. On the first day was celebrated the Feast of Trumpets, Leviticus 23:24, the tenth day was the Day of Atonement, and on the fourteenth day the Feast of Tabernacles commenced, Leviticus 23:24 / Exodus 23:16.’

On that day they must deny themselves, meaning fast, Leviticus 23:27-32, and not do any work, Exodus 20:10, whether native-born or a foreigner residing among them, Exodus 12:38 / Exodus 12:48, because on this day atonement will be made for them, to cleanse them, then, before the LORD, they will be clean from all their sins, Leviticus 16:29-30. It is a day of sabbath rest, and they must deny themselves; it is a lasting ordinance, Leviticus 16:31.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning denying themselves.

‘This means observe a fast, as indicated by Psalms 35:13 and Isaiah 58:3 / Isaiah 58:5. This was the only fast enjoined in the Mosaic law.’

The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community, Leviticus 16:32-33.

Once again, we are reminded that this is to be a lasting ordinance for Israel. atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites, Leviticus 16:34. It was done, as the LORD commanded Moses, Leviticus 16:34.

This ceremony remained unchanged in the time of Jesus, with but a few exceptions. Only the stone, ‘foundation stone’, on which the ark rested remained, and so the priest rested the incense censer and sprinkled the blood on this stone. Today, over this very stone, stands the Muslim holy place known as the Dome of the Rock.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘On this day, ‘eating, drinking, washing, anointing with oils, putting on sandals, and marital intercourse are forbidden.’ Mishnah, Yoma 8:1.’

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

As we enter the next four chapters, we are informed about the laws of holiness, Leviticus 17-20. These laws were designed to make the people of God different from the rest of the people of the world.

1. Laws of blood, Leviticus 17.

There was a definite injunction against eating or drinking blood. The reason for this was that blood symbolised life, Leviticus 17:11.

2. Laws of sexual morality, Leviticus 18.

The Ten Commandments had forbidden adultery. Now the Law goes on to specify the various forms of sexual immorality which are forbidden in that general law. It includes such issues as incest, adultery and homosexuality.

3. General laws, Leviticus 19-20.

The general laws follow a varied pattern of subjects as we move from law to law.

Be Holy
Sabbaths, Idols and Sacrifices (19:3-8)
Fields and the Needy (19:9-10)
Dealing with Neighbours (19:11-18)
Statutes and Sacrifices (19:19-22)
Fields and Fruit (19:23-25)
Avoid occult practices (19:26-31)
Honour the Aged (19:32)
Dealing with strangers and neighbours (19:33-37)
Avoid occult practices (20:1-6)
Honour your parents (20:9)
Laws of sexual morality (20:10-21)

As can be seen from the chart, the main theme of this section, if not of the entire book, is to ‘be holy’, Leviticus 19:2 / Leviticus 20:7 / Leviticus 20:26.

There is an important principle here: the foundation for all true morality rests upon the existence of a holy God.

These laws included the treatment of one’s neighbour, Leviticus 19:13. One of the commands given in this section is to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’, Leviticus 19:18.

We normally think of this command as having come from Jesus, but it had its origins in the Old Testament. This command is also extended to strangers and aliens who reside among the Israelites, Exodus 19:34.

EATING BLOOD FORBIDDEN

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘This is what the LORD has commanded: Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it instead of bringing it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD—that person shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; they have shed blood and must be cut off from their people. This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the tent of meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings. The priest is to splash the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.’ ‘Say to them: ‘Any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice and does not bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD must be cut off from the people of Israel.’ Leviticus 17:1-9

Moses is to speak to Aaron, his sons and to all the Israelites, and he is to tell them what the LORD has commanded, Leviticus 17:1-2. Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it instead of bringing it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD, that person shall be considered guilty of bloodshed and must be cut off from their people, Leviticus 17:3-4 / Leviticus 17:9 / Leviticus 17:10.

The Israelites are to bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields, and so, Israel must bring their sacrifices to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the tent of meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings, Leviticus 17:5.

In other words, if someone kills their sacrifice outside the camp and brings it to the altar to be offered to God then that is fine, but if someone sacrifices it outside the camp, this shows that they are worshipping others.

In effect, bringing their sacrifices to the priests and before the Lord meant that the Israelites were in constant contact with God and His priests. In Old Testament times, there were many nations around who had superstitious beliefs concerning demons and evil spirits.

Hence why God wanted His people to bring their sacrifices to the priests and before Him. In other words, the more time they focused on God, the less time they had to focus on all these other superstitious beliefs, which would be idolatry.

The blood must be sprinkled at the altar at the door of the tabernacle, the blood of the beast must be offered at the tabernacle and nowhere else, Leviticus 17:6. They are to stop offering their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves, Leviticus 17:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The word in the original is the ‘shaggy goat’ of Leviticus 4:23. But it is sometimes employed, as here, to denote an object of pagan worship or a demon dwelling in the deserts, 2 Chronicles 11:15 / Isaiah 13:21 / Isaiah 34:14. The worship of the goat, accompanied by the foulest rites, prevailed in Lower Egypt; and the Israelites may have been led into this snare while they dwelt in Egypt.’

The use of the ‘prostitute’ is a metaphor, Leviticus 17:7. They left their first love, Revelation 2:4, and played the prostitute. They completely abandoned the One who had set them apart and ‘prostituted’ with another.

Whatever takes us away from God in that, He is no longer our primary or first love, is the master and we are the slaves to it. We have played the prostitute to whoever dominates our life, taking them away from the service and glorification of God.

Gomer in the Book of Hosea is a good example of the contrast of leaving the one who loved you, Hosea 2:2 / Hosea 2:4-5 / Hosea 3. We read about the jealousy of Paul in the church at Corinth, who was leaving the one they were married to, 2 Corinthians 11:2.

These pictures show God as a jealous God; there is to be no trifling with His covenant and no changing His laws to suit the people. This is one of the strongest and most persistent pictures of Israel, where we have a disobedient people and yet a God who still loves them. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Israel and for the generations to come, Leviticus 17:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This law could only be kept as long as the children of Israel dwelt in their camp in the wilderness. The restriction was removed before they settled in the holy land, where their numbers and diffusion over the country would have rendered its strict observance impossible, Deuteronomy 12:15-16 / Deuteronomy 12:20-24.’

Even though the Israelites were spread out throughout the land, they must still obey the instructions about their offerings, Deuteronomy 12:13, to neglect these laws would lead to religious anarchy, Hosea 8:8-14, and the consequence of such disobedience would lead to them being cut off by God, Leviticus 17:8-9 / Leviticus 17:4 / Leviticus 17:10 / Exodus 31:14.

Coleman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The word from which this comes means to ‘root out,’ ‘to maim,’ or to ‘destroy.’ It is not certain whether it meant the death penalty or excommunication.’

‘I will set my face against any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who eats blood, and I will cut them off from the people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life. Therefore, I say to the Israelites, ‘None of you may eat blood, nor may any foreigner residing among you eat blood.’ ‘Any Israelite or any foreigner residing among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, ‘You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off.’ ‘Anyone, whether native-born or foreigner, who eats anything found dead or torn by wild animals must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be ceremonially unclean till evening; then they will be clean. But if they do not wash their clothes and bathe themselves, they will be held responsible.’ Leviticus 17:10-16

The laws given to them were moulded to fit the people and adapt a physical concept of worship to a Holy God. We see through the course of the Old Testament and New Testament mankind's inability to take and deal with the laws God has given them to follow and live by, despite the revelation of a better existence to follow.

This again brings us to the concept of the precious blood which was shed because 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God', Romans 3:23. We see God's concern for Israel's loyalty, the invasion of rights over life, exemplified by blood and yet this is clearly an attitude of love. It is made clear by the use of both extremes in Leviticus 17. The background of the sacredness of blood is at least as old as Noah, Genesis 9:3-6.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning eating blood.

'The prohibition first appeared in Genesis 9:4. It has already been given twice in Leviticus, Leviticus 3:17 / Leviticus 7:26, and it appeared again in Leviticus 19:26, and also in Deuteronomy 12:16, and in Deuteronomy 15:23. Even a seventh time the prohibition will appear even in the New Covenant, Acts 15:20.'

God's attitude towards anyone who eats blood is seen in that fact that He will cut them off from the people, Leviticus 17:10 / Leviticus 17:8-9 / Leviticus 17:4. God takes blood, especially the eating of blood very seriously, because 'the life of a creature is in the blood,' Leviticus 17:11 / Acts 15:29.

Notice the redemptive use which God assigns to blood, redemption is only possible through the blood being shed, Leviticus 17:11. Notice also that God says, 'I have given it to you', Leviticus 17:11.

This was the foreshadowing of God's 'indescribable gift' the precious blood of Christ, 2 Corinthians 9:15. The command not to eat blood is repeated again, Leviticus 17:12.

Notice also that if an animal had been killed during a hunt, the blood which came out of it was to be covered with earth, Leviticus 17:13, that is dirt. The blood equals life, Leviticus 17:14, because it was the blood that made atonement.

We can understand why the animals became holy things for Israel, which in turn helps us understand that if anyone ate blood, they would be cut off from God and His people, Leviticus 17:14 / Hebrews 10:28-29.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Right here in this short paragraph lies the basis for the Jews' insistence upon eating only that which is 'kosher,' even to this day. The reasons for God's requirement in this particular case are easy to see.

1. It created and cultivated in the people of Israel a reverence and respect for their sacrifices, many of which required the shedding of blood.
2. It was a perpetual reminder to them of the means of forgiveness and salvation. Even under the law, 'Without the shedding of blood, there was no remission of sins', Hebrews 9:22.
3. It was designed to direct their attention to the Holy One, even Christ, who in the fullness of time would make an atonement for the sins of all people by the shedding of his blood.
4. It was to provide a wall of separation between the Israel of God and the pagan world of unbelievers whose sacrifices included the eating, even the drinking, of blood.
5. Also, by refraining from eating flesh with blood in it, a man is honouring life.'

Anyone who eats anything found dead or torn by wild animals must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be ceremonially unclean till evening. Afterwards, they will be clean, Leviticus 17:15. However, if they do not wash their clothes and bathe themselves, they will be held responsible, Leviticus 17:16.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'This law appears to be grounded on the fact that the body of an animal killed by a wild beast, or which has died of itself, still retains a great portion of its blood. The importance ascribed to this law in later times may be seen in 1

Samuel 14:32-35 / Ezekiel 4:14 / Ezekiel 44:31, and still more in the apostolic decision regarding ‘things strangled,’ which are pointedly connected with blood, Acts 15:20.’

Blood continuing to flow in our veins was crucial for our existence, and therefore, to show its precious purpose, it was not to be eaten or consumed. It flows through the body and gathers all the impurities of the body in its path. In a warm climate, it could be dangerous to our health.

This chapter clearly points toward the Christ, the life of the animal was in the blood, and so, eternal life in the future would be purchased by the blood of the Son, Acts 20:28.

The problem in the Old Testament was that there was no real forgiveness through the blood of animals, Hebrews 10:1-4. Thankfully, Jesus was willing to give His blood that we might live and be forgiven, Ephesians 1:7.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

The Ten Commandments had forbidden adultery, Exodus 20:14; now the law goes on to specify the various forms of sexual immorality which are forbidden in that general law. It includes such issues as incest, adultery and homosexuality. This chapter also prohibits the marrying of a sister to a brother, etc., keeping it in the family.

UNLAWFUL SEXUAL RELATIONS

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.’ Leviticus 18:1-5

Israel as a nation had to learn to live differently from the nations around them; their God wasn’t a fragment of their imagination, He was real, He was the God who brought them out of Egypt, Leviticus 18:1-3 / Leviticus 18:30 / Exodus 20:2 / Deuteronomy 5:6.

The Israelites had been nomads, and when they reached Canaan, they were required to settle down and become farmers. The Canaanites taught them that their pagan ideas, Leviticus 18:3, concerning growing food, i.e. in order for the land to produce, they had to practise immorality.

Every aspect of their lives was to be governed by the will of God, Leviticus 18:4-5 / Luke 10:28 / Romans 10:5 / Galatians 3:12. God promised them that if they continued to live according to God’s will, they would live well and prosper in the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 5:33.

UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES AND INTERCOURSE

‘No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD. ‘Do not dishonour your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. ‘Do not have sexual

relations with your father's wife; that would dishonour your father. 'Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. 'Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonour you. 'Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister. 'Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. 'Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. 'Do not dishonour your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. 'Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. 'Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonour your brother. 'Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. 'Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living. 'Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period. 'Do not have sexual relations with your neighbour's wife and defile yourself with her. 'Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. 'Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable. 'Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.' Leviticus 18:6-23

When we read through these verses, we see that God is dealing with marriages which were unlawful and sexual intercourse outside of the marriage relationship. Remember this is what the nations around them were practising, and so, Israel can be different from all those nations, Leviticus 18:3.

We begin with incest, which is having a sexual relationship with someone else within the family, Leviticus 18:6 / 1 Corinthians 5:1. We read that incest with your mother was forbidden, Leviticus 18:7, as was having sexual relations with your father's wife, Leviticus 18:8; this would include stepmothers / Genesis 49:3-4 / 1 Corinthians 5:1.

Sexual relations with your sister, half-sister, or step-sister was forbidden, Leviticus 18:9. Sexual relations with your granddaughter, whether by a son or a daughter was forbidden because it was dishonourable, Leviticus 18:10. Sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father, that is, your half-sister, was forbidden because she is your sister, Leviticus 18:11.

The Israelites were also forbidden to marry a mother, daughter or granddaughter at the same time; the penalty for this was also death, Leviticus 20:14. Sexual relations with your father's sister were forbidden because she is your father's close relative, that is, a paternal aunt, Leviticus 18:12.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The instance of Amram and Jochebed, Exodus 6:20, seems to show that marriage with an aunt was not considered wrong by the Israelites when they were in Egypt.'

Sexual relations with your mother's sister were forbidden because she is your mother's close relative, that is, a maternal aunt, Leviticus 18:13. Sexual relations with your father's brother were forbidden because it is dishonourable and she is your aunt, that is, an aunt by marriage, Leviticus 18:14.

Sexual relations with your daughter-in-law were forbidden because she is your son's wife, Leviticus 18:15. Sexual relations with your brother's wife, that is, your sister-in-law, were forbidden because that would dishonour your brother, Leviticus 18:16.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Leviticus 18:16.

'That is, if she had children, Deuteronomy 25:5. The law here expressed was broken by Antipas in his connection with Herodias Matthew 14:3-4.'

Sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter, either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter was forbidden because they are her close relatives and notice God describes this as wickedness, Leviticus 18:17. They are forbidden to take their wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living, that is, marriage to the sister of one's wife during the wife's life-time, Leviticus 18:18 / Genesis 29:30.

Having sexual relations with a woman during the uncleanness of her monthly period was forbidden, Leviticus 18:19. They could not marry sisters as a rival; intercourse with a woman during her uncleanness was forbidden, Leviticus 20:18.

Sexual relations with your neighbour's wife were forbidden because this is defilement, Leviticus 18:20. Adultery was also forbidden, and the penalty was death, Deuteronomy 22:22 / Romans 13:9, but in the case of a slave who was not killed, a sin offering was to be made.

MOLEK

They were forbidden to give any of their children to be sacrificed to Molek, because this would profane the name of their God, Leviticus 18:21 / Leviticus 20:2-5 / Deuteronomy 12:31 / Deuteronomy 18:10 / 1 Kings 11:7.

Molek was a Canaanite god, and he was represented in the fashion of a bronze statue with outstretched hands in front of him. The Canaanites would light a fire inside the hollow statue at the back and lay their children on the open arms and sacrifice them to Molek.

In the temple of Molek, the Canaanites would have illicit sex with the temple prostitutes. This would be one of the reasons God threw them out of the Promised Land, Genesis 15:16.

Again, we begin to understand why the Israelites had to be different, not only in their beliefs but in their practices of worship. They were God's people, and they must live according to God's will if they want to continue living in the land.

Nichol, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Solomon, under the influence of idolatrous wives, built a high place for Molech in Jerusalem, 1 Kings 11:31-33.

Both Ahaz and Manasseh, kings of Israel, made their sons ‘pass through the fire to Molech’, 2 Kings 16:3 / 2 Kings 21:6. And with the head of state openly worshipping such a pagan deity, the extent of popular acceptance of it must have been widespread. ‘Ezekiel speaking to the exiles in Babylon, refers to the practice of causing children to pass through the fire to heathen divinities as long established, and proclaims the wrath of God against it, Ezekiel 16:20 / Ezekiel 20:26 / Ezekiel 20:31 / Ezekiel 23:37.’

Homosexuality was forbidden because it is detestable, Leviticus 18:22 / Romans 1:27 / 1 Corinthians 6:9, and death was the penalty, Leviticus 20:13 / Romans 1:32.

Bestiality was also forbidden because that is a perversion, Leviticus 18:23, and death was the penalty, Leviticus 20:15-16. Prostitution was also forbidden, Deuteronomy 23:17 / Leviticus 21:9. The penalty for these sexual offences was death, Leviticus 20:11-12 / Leviticus 20:17 / Leviticus 20:19-21.

OTHER RELATIONAL LAWS

Rape was also forbidden, Deuteronomy 22:25-29. For the person who was engaged, Deuteronomy 22:23-27, in the city, both were put to death, Deuteronomy 22:23-24. In the field, only the men were put to death, Deuteronomy 22:25-27.

For the person who wasn't engaged, Deuteronomy 22:28-29 / Exodus 22:16-17. In this case, the father was given fifty shekels of silver; the man had to marry her and could not divorce her.

All other marriages would be lawful; this would include a captive who could marry after mourning her parents. She was also to shave her head and trim her nails, [Deuteronomy 21:10-14](#). A brother of a man who died having no children was to go into his brother's wife to raise up children for his brother, [Deuteronomy 25:5-10](#).

There were also laws concerning jealousy, a law for a suspected wife, [Numbers 5:11-31](#). The man was to offer a grain offering for jealousy, [Numbers 5:15](#). The woman was to drink some water of bitterness, [Numbers 5:16-28](#), if her stomach swelled, she was guilty; if not, she was innocent.

A law for a suspected bride, [Deuteronomy 22:13-21](#), the determining factor would be the evidence of the girl's virginity presented by the girl's parents, [Deuteronomy 22:15-17](#).

If the charges were false, the man was chastised and fined a hundred shekels of silver; he also had to marry her and could not divorce her, [Deuteronomy 22:13-19](#). If the charge was true, the woman was stoned to death, [Deuteronomy 22:20-21](#).

Eunuchs and illegitimates were forbidden to enter the assembly, [Deuteronomy 23:1-2](#). There were also laws concerning divorce. A certificate of divorce could be given if the husband was displeased with his wife, but he could not remarry her after she married someone else, [Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#).

Cases, where divorce was forbidden, include false charges against a bride, [Deuteronomy 22:19](#), and mistreatment of a virgin, [Deuteronomy 22:28-29](#). This divorce was allowed by God because of the people's hard hearts, [Matthew 19:3-9](#).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

‘Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so, I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

‘Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practised before you came, and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God.’ [Leviticus 18:24-30](#)

The Israelites were not defile themselves in any of ways mentioned above, because this is how the nations that God is going to drive out before them became defiled, [Leviticus 18:24](#).

Even the land was defiled and so, God punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants, [Leviticus 18:25](#). Israel need to keep God's decrees and laws, [Leviticus 18:26](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The land designed and consecrated for His people by Yahweh, [Leviticus 25:23](#), is here impersonated, and represented as vomiting forth its present inhabitants, in consequence of their indulgence in the abominations that have been mentioned. The iniquity of the Canaanites was now full, [Genesis 15:16](#) / [Isaiah 24:1-6](#).’

The native-born and the foreigners residing among them must not do any of these detestable things, because all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before them, and the land became defiled, [Leviticus 18:26-27](#).

If Israel defiled the land, it would vomit them out as it vomited out the nations that were before them, [Leviticus 18:28](#). Everyone who does any of these detestable things is to be cut off from their people, [Leviticus 18:29](#) / [Exodus 31:14](#).

Josephus, in his writings, says the following concerning being cut off from their people, [Leviticus 18:29](#).

‘To those who were guilty of such insolent behaviour, he (Moses) ordained death for their punishment.’

Israel is to keep God's requirements, not follow any of the detestable customs that were practised before they came and not defile themselves with them, Leviticus 18:30.

When it comes to God's promise for the Israelites to live in the Promised land, Genesis 15:16 / Genesis 50:24-25, many people forget there were terms and conditions attached to the promise, Deuteronomy 5:33.

They had to fully obey God's laws, Leviticus 18:4-5, but if they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Canaanite culture and get involved in idolatry, then they would forfeit the land.

When we think about it, Israel's future was in Israel's own hands; obedience meant they would be blessed in the land, but disobedience meant they would be removed from it and lose it altogether.

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter and the next, as we move from law to law, we find some general laws which follow a varied pattern of subjects. More importantly, we come across the theme of holiness once again.

Be Holy
Sabbaths, Idols and Sacrifices (19:3-8)
Fields and the Needy (19:9-10)
Dealing with Neighbours (19:11-18)
Statutes and Sacrifices (19:19-22)
Fields and Fruit (19:23-25)
Avoid occult practices (19:26-31)
Honour the Aged (19:32)
Dealing with strangers and neighbours (19:33-37)
Avoid occult practices (20:1-6)
Honour your parents (20:9)
Laws of sexual morality (20:10-21)

As can be seen from the chart, the main theme of this section, if not of the entire book, is to 'be holy', Leviticus 19:2 / Leviticus 20:7 / Leviticus 20:26.

There is an important principle here: the foundation for all true morality rests upon the existence of a holy God.

These laws included the treatment of one's neighbour, Leviticus 19:13. One of the commands given in this section is to 'love your neighbour as yourself', Leviticus 19:18.

We normally think of this command as having come from Jesus, Matthew 22:39, but it had its origins in the Old Testament. This command is also extended to strangers and aliens who reside among the Israelites, Exodus 19:34.

VARIOUS OTHER LAWS

'The LORD said to Moses, 'Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy. 'Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the

LORD your God. 'Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.' Leviticus 19:1-

4

God doesn't mix His words in these verses; He wants Israel to be holy because He is holy, Leviticus 19:1-2. Each of them needs to respect their mother and father, Exodus 20:12, and they must observe God's Sabbaths, Leviticus 19:3 / Leviticus 19:30 / Exodus 31:13-14.

They must not turn to idols or make metal gods for themselves because this would be idolatry, Leviticus 19:4 / Exodus 20:4-6. In other words, they need to live totally different lives from the other nations around them, and these laws will help them do that. If anything was going to make their lives stand out from the other nations around them, it was God's laws.

'When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. Whoever eats it will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the LORD; they must be cut off from their people. 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.' Leviticus 19:5-10

Notice again, the fellowship offering was offered in order to stay at peace with God and His people, Leviticus 19:5. The fellowship offering is to be eaten on the day they sacrifice it or on the next day and anything left over until the third day must be burned up, Leviticus 19:6.

If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted, Leviticus 19:7. Whoever eats the leftover will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the LORD, and they must be cut off from their people, Leviticus 19:8.

Because God is concerned about the vulnerable in society, so should Israel as a whole. When they reap the harvest of their land, they weren't permitted to reap to the very edges of their fields or gather the gleanings of your harvest, Leviticus 19:9.

They weren't permitted to go over their vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen, Leviticus 19:10. God wants them at harvest time to allow the poor people and any strangers among them to have a portion of the harvest, Leviticus 19:10. When the fields are reaped then the field corners are to be left for mothers in the morning, nurses at noon and the elderly at evening, Deuteronomy 24:19-21.

'Do not steal. 'Do not lie. 'Do not deceive one another. 'Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. 'Do not defraud or rob your neighbour. 'Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight. 'Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD. 'Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly. 'Do not go about spreading slander among your people. 'Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life. I am the LORD. 'Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in their guilt. 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD. 'Keep my decrees. 'Do not mate different kinds of animals. 'Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. 'Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material. If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment. Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the LORD. With the ram of the guilt offering, the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.' Leviticus 19:11-22

Again, God has relationships in mind in these verses, therefore stealing, lying, and deceiving people were forbidden, Leviticus 19:11. Bearing false witness was forbidden, they weren't permitted to make false oaths to their neighbour or speak the Lord's Name in vain, Leviticus 19:12.

Fraud, robbing their neighbour and holding back a hired worker's wages was forbidden, Leviticus 19:13 / Deuteronomy 24:14 / James 5:4. Wages were to be paid every day.

Taking advantage of someone who was physically deaf and blind was forbidden, Leviticus 19:14. Perverting justice and showing partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great was forbidden; they must judge their neighbour fairly, Leviticus 19:15.

Slandering, Matthew 26:60, and endangering their neighbour's life was forbidden, Leviticus 19:16. Hating their fellow Israelite in their heart was forbidden, and they are to rebuke their neighbour frankly so they will not share in their guilt, Leviticus 19:17.

Seeking revenge or bearing a grudge against anyone among their people was forbidden, but they were to love their neighbour as themselves, Leviticus 19:18 / Leviticus 19:34 / Matthew 22:39. They must keep God's decrees; they weren't permitted to mix any breeds of animals, seeds or fabrics, Leviticus 19:19 / Deuteronomy 22:9-11.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Leviticus 19:19.

'There may be an allusion to the practice of magic, in which unnatural mixtures played an important part.'

If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but hasn't been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment; they are not to be put to death, because she hadn't been freed, Leviticus 19:20 / Deuteronomy 22:23-24.

The man must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the LORD, Leviticus 19:21. With the ram of the guilt offering, the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven, Leviticus 19:22.

'When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years, you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year, all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. But in the fifth year, you may eat its fruit. In this way, your harvest will be increased. I am the LORD your God. 'Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it. 'Do not practice divination or seek omens. 'Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard. 'Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD. 'Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness. 'Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD. 'Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. 'Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD. 'When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God. 'Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. 'Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the LORD.' Leviticus 19:23-37

When Israel enters the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, they are to regard its fruit as forbidden and for three years they are to consider it forbidden, it must not be eaten, Leviticus 19:23 / Exodus 13:12 / Exodus 34:19.

However, in the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD, Leviticus 19:24. But in the fifth year they may eat its fruit, in this way their harvest will be increased, Leviticus 19:25.

They were forbidden to eat any meat with the blood still in it, Leviticus 7:26 / Leviticus 17:10, or practice divination or seek omens, Leviticus 19:26 / 2 Samuel 20:9 / Isaiah 7:20 / 2 Samuel 10:4. Cutting their hair at the sides of their head or clipping off the edges of their beard was forbidden, Leviticus 19:27 / Leviticus 21:5 / Deuteronomy 14:1.

Herodotus, in his writings, says the following concerning this haircut.

'The use of this type of haircut, forming what is called a tonsure, was the practice of pagan religious cults of ancient times, who did so honouring one of their gods.'

Cutting their bodies for the dead or putting tattoo marks on themselves was also forbidden, Leviticus 19:28.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Tattooing was probably practised in ancient Egypt, as it is now by the lower classes of the modern Egyptians and was connected with superstitious notions. Any voluntary disfigurement of the person was in itself an outrage upon God’s workmanship and might well form the subject of a law.’

They weren’t to give their daughters into prostitution, or the land would turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness, [Leviticus 19:29](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The outstanding characteristic of ancient paganism was the substantial company of ‘sacred prostitutes’ who were the source of the income for pagan temples as well as the principal advocates of their system. A poor man could be tempted, by money, to devote his daughter to such a profession, but God strictly forbade it.’

Israel is to observe God’s Sabbaths, [Leviticus 19:3](#), and have reverence for His sanctuary, [Leviticus 19:30](#). Turning to mediums or seeking out spiritists, [1 Samuel 28:3-7](#), was forbidden because they would be defiled by them, [Leviticus 19:31](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The people whose God was Yahweh were not to indulge those wayward feelings of their human nature which are gratified in magical arts and pretensions, [Isaiah 8:19](#).’

They are to stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere God, [Leviticus 19:32](#) / [Isaiah 3:5](#). Through all these laws God was protecting everyone in society, the rich and the poor as well as the stranger, there was to be no racial prejudice, after all, they were foreigners and strangers themselves, [Leviticus 19:33-34](#) / [Leviticus 16:29](#) / [Exodus 23:9](#).

Notice they are to love the foreigner as they love themselves, [Leviticus 19:34](#) / [Leviticus 19:18](#) / [Matthew 22:39](#). Using dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity was forbidden.

Instead they are to use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah which is around twenty-two litres, [Exodus 29:40](#), and an honest hin, which is around one gallon, [Leviticus 19:35](#) / [Leviticus 14:10](#) / [Amos 8:4-6](#).

If anyone broke any of these laws, then relationships within the society would begin to fall apart, but if they obeyed them, then peace would continue throughout their whole land. The reason for Israel being obedient to these laws is simply because God is the One who brought them out of Egypt, [Leviticus 19:36](#).

Israel are to keep all God’s decrees and all God’s laws and follow them, [Leviticus 19:37](#). They needed to understand that their newfound freedom came with responsibilities; if they wanted to remain free, then they had to obey God’s will.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him. I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If the members of the community close their eyes when that man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death, I myself will set my face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.’

Leviticus 20:1-5

PUNISHMENTS FOR SIN

Not only did God give the Israelites laws to remind them they were to be different from the nations around them, but He also gave them consequences for breaking His laws.

Most of the sins mentioned here are in relation to the Canaanite God, Molek, Leviticus 20:1-2 / 1 Kings 11:5 / 2 Kings 23:10. To sacrifice their children to Molek was nothing less than spiritual adultery, which God took very seriously, so seriously that the punishment was to be stoned to death, Leviticus 20:2.

There are various ways in which a person was stoned to death, the most common way in Bible times, especially for adultery, was a hole was first dug, and then the person was placed in the hole with their arms at their side, then they were partially buried up to their shoulders, or breasts if it was a woman.

Next, the charges were read out, and the stoning began. It was actually an organised and court-sanctioned affair. The size of the stones was usually ones that could be held and thrown by one hand, John 8:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The commonest form of capital punishment. It was probably preferred as being the one in which the execution was the act of the whole congregation.’

The seriousness of this is seen in that God Himself will set His face against him and will cut him off from his people, Leviticus 20:3. By sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled God’s sanctuary and profaned His holy name, Leviticus 20:3.

If the members of the community just ignore the man who sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death, then God Himself will set His face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek, Leviticus 20:4-5.

MOLEK WORSHIP

Molek was the fire god, a bronze idol which was used for human sacrifices. Mainly, human children were offered to him. The inside was hollow, and a fire was lit inside, making the idol red hot.

The victim was then placed on the outstretched arms of the idol. There would be screams from the victims, but this would be drowned out by the drums. This took place in the valley of Hinnom, and it became known as the valley of the Drums, Tophet, Jeremiah 7:31.

IDOLATRY

If a prophet tempted others to get involved in idolatry, they were not to listen to the prophet’s advice to worship other gods. They were to worship only, and the false prophet who spoke rebellion was to be put to death, Deuteronomy 13:1-5.

If a relative or close friend tempted others to get involved in idolatry, they weren’t to be listened to. The one who spoke to him was not to pity him, spare him, or hide him; instead, he was to be the first one to stone him, and then all

the other people were to join in, Deuteronomy 13:6-11. Such action was to cause great fear in Israel, Deuteronomy 13:12-18.

If a whole city turned to idolatry, then it was to be completely destroyed, even the cattle were to be killed, and everything was to be burned in the middle of the open square. The city was not to be rebuilt, no one was to take any booty for themselves, and those who faithfully served God would be blessed, Deuteronomy 13:12-18.

‘I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people. ‘Consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.’ Leviticus 20:6-8

Anyone who turned to mediums and spiritists was to be cut off from Israel, Leviticus 20:6 / Leviticus 19:31 / Exodus 22:18, and those who practised such were to be stoned to death, Leviticus 20:27 / John 8:7.

There is a long list of practices like this which were strictly forbidden, human sacrifices, Deuteronomy 18:10, divination, witchcraft, omen interpreters, sorcerers, spell casters, Deuteronomy 18:11, spiritists, one who calls up the dead, such things are an abomination to God, Deuteronomy 18:12-14.

The Canaanites and other nations around them truly believed in demons and spirits; they were very superstitious. However, we must remember that God didn’t forbid these practices because they were real.

He forbade them because He knew they weren’t real and didn’t want His people to believe in the things that the Canaanites were making up in their minds.

Even in today’s society, the people who practice these things use them to create fear in people’s minds and vulnerable people who don’t know God’s Word are easily deceived into thinking that these people have some sort of supernatural power.

Israel is to consecrate themselves and be holy, Leviticus 20:7. They are to keep God’s decrees and follow them because He is the LORD, who makes them holy, Leviticus 20:8.

‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. Because they have cursed their father or mother, their blood will be on their own head. ‘If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbour—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death. ‘If a man has sexual relations with his father’s wife, he has dishonoured his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. ‘If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads. ‘If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. ‘If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you. ‘If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and you must kill the animal. ‘If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. ‘If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They are to be publicly removed from their people. He has dishonoured his sister and will be held responsible. ‘If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them are to be cut off from their people. ‘Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonour a close relative; both of you would be held responsible. ‘If a man has sexual relations with his aunt, he has dishonoured his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless. ‘If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonoured his brother. They will be childless.’ Leviticus 20:9-21

If a child is at the age of accountability and they cursed their father or mother, they were to be put to death by stoning, Leviticus 20:9 / Exodus 20:12 / Exodus 21:17.

The examples given here are adultery, Leviticus 20:10 / Exodus 20:14, having sexual relations with your stepmother, Leviticus 20:11, your own daughter in law, Leviticus 20:12 / Leviticus 18:1-30, homosexuality, Leviticus 20:13, a man marrying both a woman and her mother, Leviticus 20:14.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The burning under the sentence of the Law took place after the death of the criminal by stoning, or strangling, Joshua 7:25.’

Bestiality, Leviticus 20:15-16.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘We have the authority of one of the most eminent historians in the world, Herodotus, to say that this was a crime not unknown in Egypt; yea, that a case of this nature actually took place while he was there.’

A mother and her daughter, half-sister, Leviticus 20:17. Notice they are to be publicly removed from their people, Exodus 31:14, because he has dishonoured his sister and will be held responsible, Leviticus 20:17. A woman who has her monthly period, Leviticus 20:18, the sister of either your mother or your father, Leviticus 20:19.

An aunt, Leviticus 20:20, uncle’s wife and a brother’s sister, Leviticus 20:21. Anyone who was involved in illicit sexual relations outside the marriage relationship was also to be put to death, Leviticus 18:6-20 / Leviticus 18:22-23. The phrase, ‘they will be childless’, Leviticus 20:21, may have a couple of meanings. It could refer to someone being stoned to death before they are able to have children of their own, or it could be referring to those who have been stoned to death before they had a chance to get married, Leviticus 20:9.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

‘Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. But I said to you, ‘You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.’ I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations. ‘You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own. ‘A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.’ Leviticus 20:22-27

Israel is commanded to keep all of God’s decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where He is bringing them to live may not vomit them out, Leviticus 20:22 / Leviticus 18:24-30.

They mustn’t live according to the customs of the nations He am going to drive out before them, because they did all these things, and God abhorred them, Leviticus 20:23.

God said to them they will possess their land and He will give it to them as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey, Leviticus 20:24 / Exodus 3:8. He is the LORD their God, who has set them apart from the nations, Leviticus 20:24.

They must make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds, Leviticus 20:25. They mustn’t defile themselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground, those that God has set apart as unclean for them, Leviticus 20:25 / Leviticus 11:20-23.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The distinction between clean and unclean for the whole people, and not for any mere section of it, was one great typical mark of ‘the kingdom of priests, the holy nation’, Leviticus 11:42.’

They are to be holy to God because He, the LORD, is holy, and He has set them apart from the nations to be His own, Leviticus 20:26. All mediums or spiritists among them are to be put to death; they are to be stoned, and their blood will be on their own heads, Leviticus 20:27 / Leviticus 20:6.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A spirit or demon, which, by magical rites, is supposed to be bound to appear at the call of his employer, Genesis 41:8 / Genesis 41:8 / Exodus 7:11 / Exodus 7:22 / Exodus 7:25 / Leviticus 19:31.’

As we saw at the end of Leviticus 18:24-30, when it comes to God’s promise for the Israelites to live in the Promised Land, Genesis 15:16 / Genesis 50:24-25, there were terms and conditions attached to the promise.

They had to fully obey God’s laws, but if they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Canaanite culture and get involved in idolatry, then they would forfeit the land.

Israel’s future was in Israel’s own hands; obedience meant they would be blessed in the land, but disobedience meant they would be removed from it and lose it altogether. They had to learn that they were different from the nations around them, God is a holy God, and His people also need to be holy.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean for any of his people who die, except for a close relative, such as his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother, or an unmarried sister who is dependent on him since she has no husband for her he may make himself unclean. He must not make himself unclean for people related to him by marriage and so defile himself.

‘Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies. They must be holy to their God and must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the food offerings to the LORD, the food of their God, they are to be holy. ‘They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. Regard them as holy because they offer up the food of your God. Consider them holy because I, the LORD, am holy—I who make you holy. ‘If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire.’ Leviticus 21:1-9

LAWS OF THE PRIESTS

The following two chapters deal with laws concerning the priests. It was the priest’s responsibility to stand between God and His people, which meant they were to be holy.

They were to be segregated from the world and the Israelites in order to serve God, His people and carry out their priestly duties within the tabernacle. Except for the death of any relative, they were to keep themselves from contact with the dead, Leviticus 21:1-3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These prohibitions given to the people at large (compare the margin reference) had a special fitness for the Hebrew priests. They were the instruments of the divine will for averting death; all their sacrifices were a type of the death of Christ, which swallowed up death in victory, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, and it would therefore have been unsuitable that they should have the same freedom as other people to become mourners.’

He mustn’t make himself unclean for people related to him by marriage and so, defile himself, Leviticus 21:4.

Lofthouse, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A married sister would ordinarily be mourned by her husband – this is probably the meaning of the original text of Leviticus 21:4. If his sister were a widow, the priest might act in the place of her husband.’

Priests weren’t permitted to shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies, Leviticus 21:5 / Leviticus 19:27-28.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is supposed that these things were particularly prohibited, because used superstitiously by the Egyptian priests, who, according to Herodotus, shaved the whole body every third day, that there might be no uncleanness about them when they ministered in their temples.’

They must be holy to God and mustn’t profane the name of their God, Leviticus 21:6. Because they present the food offerings to the LORD, the food of their God, Leviticus 3:11 / Leviticus 3:16 / Leviticus 22:11, they are to be holy, Leviticus 21:6.

Also, notice the priest’s wife was also to be holy; the priests weren’t allowed to marry a prostitute or someone who was divorced, Leviticus 21:7-8 / Ezekiel 44:22. An immoral Israelite was punished, but a member of a priest’s family who committed an immoral act was burnt with fire, Leviticus 21:9.

Clements, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Leviticus 21:9 refers to the Canaanite practice of cultic prostitution in which a religious purpose (pagan) was thought to be served by such immorality.’

‘The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt or tear his clothes. He must not enter a place where there is a dead body. He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, nor leave the sanctuary of his God or desecrate it, because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

‘The woman he marries must be a virgin. He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, so that he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the LORD, who makes him holy.’ Leviticus 21:10-15

The laws concerning the high priests were a lot stricter than those concerning the ordinary priests. The high priest who has had the anointing oil poured on his head, Exodus 30:22-33 / Leviticus 8:12, and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, mustn’t let his hair become unkempt, Leviticus 10:6, or tear his clothes, Leviticus 21:10. He mustn’t enter a place where there is a dead body, and he mustn’t make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, Leviticus 21:11. The ordinary Israelite could touch his parent’s corpse at the funeral, but the priest couldn’t. The ordinary Israelite could marry whomever he chose, but the priest couldn’t.

He isn’t permitted to leave the sanctuary or desecrate it, because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil, Leviticus 21:12. When God says the high priests weren’t allowed to leave the sanctuary.

This doesn’t mean he could never leave the sanctuary; it means that he wasn’t permitted to leave the sanctuary when he was in mourning. The high priest wasn’t allowed to cover his head or tear his clothes when he was mourning.

The priest must marry a virgin, Leviticus 21:13, and he is not permitted to marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, Leviticus 21:14. The reason for this is to prevent him from defiling his offspring; it is God who makes him holy, Leviticus 21:15.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Since all Israelites were required to marry within the chosen race, the meaning of ‘his own people’ actually applied to his kinship, the Levitical tribe of Israel.’

The high priest symbolises the highest purity within Israel and so was only permitted to marry an Israelite’s daughter who was a virgin, that is, someone who has never been married before, Luke 1:27 / Luke 1:34 / Matthew 1:23.

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come, none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.’ So, Moses told this to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.’ [Leviticus 21:16-24](#)

Not only were the animals which were to be sacrificed to be without defect, [Leviticus 1:3](#) / [Leviticus 3:1](#), but the priests were also to be without any defect, [Leviticus 21:16-17](#). This law was probably just for the high priests, as the text mentions, coming ‘near to offer the food of his God’, [Leviticus 21:17](#).

No man who has any defect may come near, and no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed and no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles, [Leviticus 21:18-20](#).

No descendant of Aaron who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD, because he has a defect and so, he must not come near to offer the food of his God, [Leviticus 21:21](#).

It’s clear that God only wanted the purest and the perfect to be representatives before Him; this is also seen in the priests who were unclean and weren’t permitted to touch anything which was holy, [Leviticus 22:1-9](#).

He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food, [Leviticus 21:22](#), but he mustn’t go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate God’s sanctuary, [Leviticus 21:23](#).

It was God and God alone who was able to make His priests holy, [Leviticus 21:23](#), it was God who set them apart to minister to the religious and spiritual needs of His people. Moses told this to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites, [Leviticus 21:24](#).

The priests had a great privilege; they were permitted to serve in the tabernacle and to partake of the holy things; however, with that increased privilege came increased responsibility.

There is a principle here: for every liberty, there is a corresponding responsibility; for every privilege, there is a corresponding duty. This has an application today when we realise that all believers are priests, [1 Peter 2:9](#).

We have the privilege of entering into the Holy Place, [Hebrews 10:19-22](#), but with that great privilege comes great responsibility; it is the responsibility to be holy, [Ephesians 5:27](#).

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will not profane my holy name. I am the LORD. ‘Say to them: ‘For the generations to come, if any of your descendants is ceremonially unclean and yet comes near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD, that person must be cut off from my presence. I am the LORD. ‘If a descendant of Aaron has a defiling skin disease or a bodily discharge, he may not eat the sacred offerings until he is cleansed. He will also be unclean if he touches something defiled by a corpse or by anyone who has an emission of semen, or if he touches any crawling thing that makes him unclean, or any person who makes him unclean, whatever the uncleanness may be. The one who touches any such thing will be unclean till evening. He must not eat any of the sacred offerings unless he has bathed himself with water. When the sun goes down, he will be clean, and after that, he may eat the sacred offerings, for they are his food. He must not eat anything found dead or torn by wild animals and so become unclean through it.

I am the LORD. ‘The priests are to perform my service in such a way that they do not become guilty and die for treating it with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.’ Leviticus 22:1-9

MORE LAWS FOR THE PRIESTS

As we read in the last chapter, this chapter continues with more laws concerning the priests. Moses is to tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to God, so they will not profane His holy name, [Leviticus 22:1-2](#).

Notice the phrase, ‘I am LORD’ is mentioned throughout this chapter, [Leviticus 22:2](#) / [Leviticus 22:3](#) / [Leviticus 22:8](#) / [Leviticus 22:9](#) / [Leviticus 22:16](#) / [Leviticus 22:30](#) / [Leviticus 22:32](#) / [Leviticus 22:33](#).

They were to be careful about how they handled the items in the tabernacle. If any of their descendants are ceremonially unclean and yet come near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD, that person must be cut off from God’s presence, [Leviticus 22:3](#) / [Leviticus 20:17](#).

God says that even the consecrated priests, while suffering uncleanness from diseases, [Leviticus 22:4](#) / [Leviticus 15:1-30](#). The prospect of a leper’s recovery, which was allowed, shows that leprosy included less serious skin diseases than true leprosy, [Leviticus 13:1-57](#).

Discharges, [Leviticus 22:4](#) / [Leviticus 15:13-16](#), and contact with dead men or animals, [Leviticus 22:4](#), weren’t permitted to eat the holy food or to perform any of their sacred duties until their ceremonial cleansing had occurred, [Leviticus 22:5](#) / [Leviticus 11:29](#), which included bathing and waiting until the beginning of a new day at sunset, [Leviticus 22:6-7](#).

They aren’t permitted to eat anything found dead or torn by wild animals, as it would make them unclean, [Leviticus 22:8](#) / [Leviticus 11:39](#) / [Leviticus 17:15](#) / [Exodus 22:31](#).

The priests are to perform God’s service in such a way that they don’t become guilty and die for treating it with contempt, it is God who makes them holy, [Leviticus 22:9](#).

‘No one outside a priest’s family may eat the sacred offering, nor may the guest of a priest or his hired worker eat it.

But if a priest buys a slave with money, or if slaves are born in his household, they may eat his food. If a priest’s daughter marries anyone other than a priest, she may not eat any of the sacred contributions. But if a priest’s daughter becomes a widow or is divorced, yet has no children, and she returns to live in her father’s household as in her youth, she may eat her father’s food. No unauthorised person, however, may eat it. ‘Anyone who eats a sacred offering by mistake must make restitution to the priest for the offering and add a fifth of the value to it. The priests must not desecrate the sacred offerings the Israelites present to the LORD by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.’ Leviticus 22:10-16

Notice that the priest’s family were permitted to eat the priest’s offering, which they brought to the Lord. Those who weren’t allowed to sit and eat with the priests were strangers, those who were travelling through and hired servants, [Leviticus 22:10](#) / [Exodus 29:33](#). A legal slave could also sit with the priests and eat the food, [Leviticus 22:11](#) / [Exodus 21:2](#) / [Exodus 21:20-21](#).

If one of the daughters of a priest were married to another man, the husband’s family weren’t permitted to eat with the priests, [Leviticus 22:12](#). A priest’s daughter who was a widow or divorced was permitted to sit with the priests and eat the food from the food offering, [Leviticus 22:13](#).

God says, No unauthorised person may eat it, [Leviticus 22:13](#). If anyone ate the sacred offering by mistake, they must make restitution to the priest for the offering and add a fifth of the value to it, [Leviticus 22:14](#) / [Leviticus 4:2](#).

The priests mustn’t desecrate the sacred offerings by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment, [Leviticus 22:15](#).

The reason behind these regulations was to protect the holiness of the priests. God is a holy God, Leviticus 22:16, and His priests must be holy and take every precaution to protect their holiness.

UNACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘If any of you—whether an Israelite or a foreigner residing in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfil a vow or as a freewill offering, you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the LORD to fulfil a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD. You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, but it will not be accepted in fulfilment of a vow. You must not offer to the LORD an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn, or cut. You must not do this in your own land, and you must not accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects.’ Leviticus 22:17-25

Moses is to speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and tell them, if any of them, whether an Israelite or a foreigner residing in Israel presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfil a vow or as a freewill offering, Leviticus 22:17-18

They must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on their behalf, Leviticus 22:19. God wants the best from their flocks, and animals without any defect, otherwise it will not be accepted on their behalf, Leviticus 22:19-22 / Leviticus 22:2.

They were permitted to present as a freewill offering an ox or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, but it will not be accepted in fulfilment of a vow, Leviticus 22:23 / Leviticus 21:19 / Deuteronomy 15:21. They weren’t permitted to offer an animal whose testicles were bruised, crushed, torn, or cut, Leviticus 22:24.

Coleman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Stones bruised, crushed, or broken, or cut, Leviticus 22:24 are the four ways in which this mutilation was generally done.’

They mustn’t do this in their own land, and they mustn’t accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God, Leviticus 22:24-25 / 1 Kings 8:41. They will not be accepted on their behalf because they are deformed and have defects, Leviticus 22:25.

It’s clear from these verses that God didn’t want any old animal to be sacrificed. This would imply that those animals were used for breeding purposes, which in turn means God wanted something very personal from them, something upon which their livelihood depended.

In other words, to really sacrifice anything to God means that it was going to cost them. God wanted something which they actually wanted themselves, and only then would it be acceptable to Him as a sacrifice.

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘When a calf, a lamb or a goat is born, it is to remain with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as a food offering presented to the LORD. Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day. ‘When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. It must be eaten that same day; leave none of it till morning. I am the LORD. ‘Keep my commands and follow them. I am the LORD. Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who made you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD.’ Leviticus 22:26-33

God tells Moses that when a calf, a lamb or a goat is born, it is to remain with its mother for seven days, [Leviticus 22:26-27](#). From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as a food offering presented to the LORD, [Leviticus 22:27](#). The priests are not to slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day, [Leviticus 22:28](#) / [Exodus 23:19](#). When they sacrifice a thank offering, they are to sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on their behalf, [Leviticus 22:29](#). This must be eaten that same day, and none was to be left till morning, [Leviticus 22:30](#) / [Leviticus 7:15](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The rules for the priests were MORE STRICT than those for all the people, and it was ‘the congregation of Israel’, [Leviticus 19:2](#), who were allowed two days, but here ‘Aaron and his sons,’ the priests, were the principal persons addressed, [Leviticus 22:17](#).’

Once again, God reminds Israel to keep His commands and follow them, [Leviticus 22:31](#). They are not to profane God’s holy name, for God must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites, [Leviticus 22:32](#). It is God who makes them holy, [Leviticus 22:32](#), and it was God who brought them out of Egypt to be their God, [Leviticus 22:33](#).

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These chapters, like many others in this book, form the background to much New Testament teaching. Christ is both perfect priest, [Leviticus 21:17-23](#) / [Hebrews 7:26](#), and perfect victim, [Leviticus 22:18-30](#) / [Hebrews 9:14](#) / [1 Peter 1:19](#) / [1 Peter 2:22](#). His bride, [Leviticus 21:7-15](#), is the Church, whom he is sanctifying to make her ‘without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish, [Ephesians 5:27](#) / [Revelation 19:7-8](#) / [Revelation 21:2](#).’

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.’ [Leviticus 23:1](#)

THE APPOINTED FESTIVALS

In this chapter and the following two chapters, we read about seven convocations, that is, seven different times God’s people were to come together and stand before the Lord.

The Book of Leviticus started the setting forth of five types of offerings, [Leviticus 1-7](#). Now, as we near its close, we have set forth for us seven appointed convocations. The word ‘convocations’ means appointed time, [Leviticus 23:1-2](#). Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Days of sabbatical rest for the whole people; they owed their name to gatherings for religious edification, which, in later times, were probably held in every town and village in the holy land. There were in the course of the year, besides the weekly Sabbaths, seven days of holy convocation, [Exodus 12:16](#) / [Numbers 28:18](#) / [Numbers 28:25-](#)

26 / Numbers 29:1 / Numbers 29:12 / Numbers 29:35, with a distinction between them as regards strictness of observance, Leviticus 23:3 / Leviticus 23:28 / Leviticus 23:7.’

THE WEEKLY SABBATH

‘There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the LORD.’ Leviticus 23:3

The Sabbath itself wasn’t one of the celebration feasts but was to be kept as a sign of the covenant between God and the Israelites, Exodus 20:8-11 / Exodus 31:12-17.

This also demonstrated to the other nations around that they were in a covenant agreement with God. Since the Sabbath was a sign, this demonstrated that, since the time of creation, no other nation kept the Sabbath as a special day, Genesis 2:1-3.

The sign of the Sabbath began at Mount Sinai, Exodus 16:23 / Exodus 20:8, and it was this day that Israel wasn’t permitted to work. Whilst all the other nations around them worked on this day, the Israelites were not permitted to work; instead, they were to rest and reflect upon the covenant they had with their God, Leviticus 23:3.

Some religious groups today maintain that the fourth commandment found in Exodus 20:8, ‘Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy,’ is binding on Christians today. But by simply showing that this command, along with the rest of the old law, has been abolished, proves this view to be wrong.

The Sabbath command was given in 1446 B.C. The children of Israel came into the wilderness, Exodus 16:23. It was enforced when the children of Israel were at Mount Sinai, Exodus 20:8. Nehemiah reminds the people where it originated from, namely, Mount Sinai, Nehemiah 9:13-14.

The Sabbath was given by God, Exodus 20:8 / Nehemiah 9:14. And notice to whom it was given, the children of Israel, Exodus 31:13 / Leviticus 23:3 / Deuteronomy 5:15.

But what was the purpose of this Sabbath Day? Why was it given to the Israelites? It was a sign between God and the children of Israel, that they may know He is the Lord who sanctified them, Exodus 31:13 / Genesis 2:3.

Notice it’s not stated here that God rested from all activity, but that He rested from creation, ‘the work which he had been doing,’ which is an expression repeated twice. Please note that this has no reference whatever to the Jewish Sabbath. This doesn’t refer to the days of the week, but to the days of the creation.

This day of God’s rest is still going on, Hebrews 4:4-6 / Hebrews 4:11, and will obviously continue until Christ returns. There is no command here for man to rest, no revelation whatever to Adam or his posterity suggesting or commanding the observance of any such thing as the Jewish sabbath.

Notice also, the specific thing from which it’s stated that God rested is the work of creation, a fact which is obvious enough in the fact that the creation isn’t still going on. There is also no mention here of ‘evening and morning,’ which tells us that the close of the seventh day is still in progress.

We must remember that the sabbath that God blessed was the first day of Adam’s life, not the seventh, and there’s no indication whatever that Adam ever heard of a sabbath.

The sabbath was made known, not to Adam, but to Moses, Nehemiah 9:13-14, and the reason for the Jewish observance of the sabbath given to them wasn’t because God rested on the creation sabbath, but ‘the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt,’ Deuteronomy 5:15. The sabbath was never a sign between God and all men, but ‘it is a sign between me (God) and the children of Israel,’ Exodus 31:17.

God created everything in six days, **Genesis 1 / Exodus 20:11**. At the end of the sixth day, God looked at everything He had made and said it was ‘very good’, **Genesis 1:31**.

The next day, day seven, God rested from His work of creating because it was all finished, **Genesis 2:2**. God then blessed this day because it was the day that He chose to rest from His work, **Genesis 2:3**.

Why did God rest? Was he tired from all the work of creating? Not at all! The Bible tells us that God doesn’t get tired or sleep, **Psalm 121:3-4**. He rested to establish a pattern for us to follow.

As Christians, we believe what the Bible says, and that is simply that the Sabbath was abolished in 30 A.D. with the death of Christ on the cross, **Colossians 2:14 / Hebrews 9:16-17**.

The Sabbath observance was abolished at Jerusalem, at Golgotha, Calvary, **Matthew 27:33 / Luke 23:33**. And so, it’s very clear that the Bible teaches it was abolished by Christ Himself, **2 Corinthians 3:7-11 / 2 Corinthians 3:14 / Ephesians 2:15 / Colossians 2:14 / Hebrews 8:13**.

Why did Christ abolish the Sabbath? Well, simply because Jesus was the only person who ever fulfilled the old law, **Matthew 5:17**. In Christ, we now have a better covenant, **Hebrews 8:6-13**.

Some religious groups today make a lot of assumptions. They believe that the law, the ten commandments, existed before sin came into the world, since creation. They believe the Sabbath was given at creation, and they use the following Scriptures to make their point.

1. God made all things, **John 1:1-3**.
2. The Sabbath was made for man, **Mark 2:27**.
3. Adam was a man, **Genesis 2:7**.
4. Sabbath must have been made at creation for Adam to keep.

Some religious groups today believe that the Ten Commandments were given at creation. Below is their argument for thinking this way.

1. Adam couldn’t have known sin without the law, **Romans 3:20 / Romans 5:13**.
2. Adam sinned, **Genesis 3:6**.
3. The Ten Commandments must have existed since creation. They give a couple of examples:
 - a. Adam broke the eighth commandment by stealing the fruit, **Exodus 20:15**.
 - b. Adam broke the sixth commandment because he brought death upon himself, ‘slow suicide’, **Exodus 20:13**.

However, the Bible teaches otherwise; the Bible clearly teaches that the Sabbath wasn’t given at creation. The Sabbath isn’t even mentioned before **Exodus 16**, **Exodus 16:23**.

The Bible clearly teaches that the Sabbath was given to Israel, not Adam, **Exodus 31:16**. The Bible clearly tells us that the Sabbath wasn’t made known until the law was given, **Nehemiah 9:13-14**.

The Bible nowhere teaches that the Ten Commandments were given at creation. The Covenant wasn’t made with anyone before creation, **Deuteronomy 5:3 / Deuteronomy 5:15**.

Again, this is reinforced, because we know that the old law was given after the promise to Abraham, **Galatians 3:17**. And if we read on, we’ll see that the old law was given because of sin, **Galatians 3:19**.

What was abolished? Jewish observances were abolished, **Colossians 2:16 / Galatians 4:9-11**. Jewish observances were abolished, and this includes the Weekly Sabbath, **1 Chronicles 23:31 / 2 Chronicles 2:4 / 2 Chronicles 8:13 / 2 Chronicles 31:3 / Nehemiah 10:33 / Ezekiel 45:17**.

Compare all those verses above with **Galatians 4:10**. Compare all those verses above with **Colossians 2:16**. Do you see how the days, months, and years pattern has changed?

The Bible tells us that the entire old law was abolished, **Jeremiah 31:31-32 / 2 Corinthians 3:7-11 / 2 Corinthians 3:14 / Romans 6:14 / Romans 7:4 / Romans 7:6 / Romans 8:2 / Ephesians 2:15 / Hebrews 7:12 / Hebrews 8:7 / Hebrews 8:13**.

‘These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times.’
Leviticus 23:4

The annual festivals that all the Israelites celebrated were times of holidays and were joyous occasions for everyone, **Leviticus 23:4**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As a matter of fact, and of history, religious meetings for the purpose of conducting worship were held every sabbath day WHEREVER Jews lived; and it was out of these that the synagogues arose.’

THE PASSOVER

‘The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.’ **Leviticus 23:5**

The deliverance from Egypt is such a significant act that God tells the children of Israel to remake their calendar, the new year will now start with the month of their redemption from Egypt, **Exodus 12:1**.

On the tenth of this first month, the month of Abib, **Exodus 13:4**, each family, or household, is to take a lamb, **Exodus 12:2-3**. If a household was too small for a whole lamb, then they shared it with their nearest neighbour, taking into account the number of people staying in the house, **Exodus 12:4**.

They are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat, **Exodus 12:4**. The lamb was to be year-old males and without blemish, **Exodus 12:5**. This sacrifice unto the Lord had to be as perfect as a lamb could be, **John 1:29 / 1 Corinthians 5:7 / 1 Peter 1:19 / Revelation 12:13**.

A lamb from the sheep or the goats, **Exodus 12:5**, may sound confusing, but the Hebrew word for lamb can refer to either a young sheep or a young goat. The lamb is to live with the family for the four days until twilight, which would be Passover, **Exodus 12:6 / 2 Samuel 12:1-3**.

In this way, the lamb was to be part of the family; when it was sacrificed on the fourteenth, it would be cherished and mourned. God wanted the sacrifice of something precious. The rabbis later determined that there should be at least ten people for each Passover lamb, and not more than twenty.

Remember, the Israelites couldn’t sacrifice and worship in Egypt because the sacrifice involved the killing of sheep, **Exodus 8:26 / Genesis 46:34**, and because the Egyptians also worshipped lambs.

We can only imagine what the Egyptians were thinking when they saw the Israelites taking a lamb into their homes for four days, with the intention of slaughtering and eating it.

Before the Passover lamb could be eaten, its blood had to be applied to the doorway of the home, and the top, and upon each side the blood was applied, **Exodus 12:7 / Hebrews 10:22**. The only part of this sacrifice given to God was the blood; the rest was eaten by each family or discarded.

Then, the lamb could be eaten but only if it had been roasted, with the lamb itself coming into contact with the fire, and with bitter herbs accompanying the meal, **Exodus 12:8**.

As our Passover sacrifice, Jesus had to come into direct contact with the ‘fire’ of the Father’s judgment on our behalf, and the bitterness of the cross is reflected in the bitter herbs.

They were to eat bread made without yeast, **Exodus 12:8**. They weren’t permitted to eat the meat raw or boiled in water but roast it over a fire, with the head, legs, and internal organs, **Exodus 12:9**.

The Passover lamb had to be eaten completely; a family had to totally consume the sacrifice and if anything was left it must be burned first thing in the morning, **Exodus 12:10**. Notice they are to eat it with their cloak tucked into their belt, sandals on their feet and staff in their hand, **Exodus 12:11**.

The Passover lamb had to be eaten in faith, trusting that the deliverance promised to Israel was present and that they would walk in that deliverance immediately, **Exodus 12:11**.

Faith was essential to the keeping of Passover, **Hebrews 11:28**. The LORD says that He Himself will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and He will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt, **Exodus 12:12**.

The blood will be a sign for them on the houses where they live, and when He sees the blood, He will pass over them, hence no destructive plague will touch them when He strikes Egypt, **Exodus 12:13**.

For Israel to be spared the judgment on the firstborn, they had to apply to blood just as God said they should, **Exodus 12:7**, the blood of the lamb was essential to what God required.

If an Israelite home didn't believe in the power of the blood of the lamb, they could sacrifice the lamb and eat it, but they would still be visited by judgment. If an Egyptian home believed in the power of the blood of the lamb, and they made a proper Passover sacrifice, they would be spared the judgment.

Additionally, an intellectual agreement with what God had said about the blood was not enough; they actually had to do what God said should be done with the blood.

The judgment on the firstborn was a powerful act of God because the firstborn was always thought to be favoured and privileged before God. If God judges the firstborn, then what of the rest of us?

For Christians today, this feast is really important because Jesus is our Passover Lamb, **John 1:29 / 1 Corinthians 5:7**. Just as Israel was redeemed from Egyptian slavery, so too has the Christian been redeemed from the slavery of sin, **Galatians 3:16 / Titus 2:14**.

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

‘On the fifteenth day of that month, the LORD’s Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days, present a food offering to the LORD. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.’ **Leviticus 23:6-8**

The day following the Passover was to begin a week of feasting, **Leviticus 23:6**. For this entire week, God’s people were to eat unleavened bread, **Leviticus 23:6**. On the Sabbath Day they weren’t permitted to do any work, **Leviticus 23:3**.

But here they are allowed to work but they weren’t permitted to do any regular work, **Leviticus 23:7-8 / Leviticus 23:21 / Leviticus 23:25 / Leviticus 23:35-36**, and on each day an offering was to be presented to the Lord, **Leviticus 23:8 / Numbers 28:19-24**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the meaning of not working, **Leviticus 23:7-8**.

‘Literally, no work of labour, no work that belongs to one’s worldly calling, such as labour in agriculture or handicraft. The preparation of food was permitted, **Exodus 12:16**, a licence not granted on the weekly Sabbath, or on the day of atonement, **Leviticus 23:28 / Leviticus 23:30 / Exodus 20:10 / Exodus 35:3**.’

Passover began on the tenth, and on the fourteenth, they ate the Passover, **Exodus 12:14**, which is the first day of unleavened bread. Then, for the next seven days, they would eat only unleavened bread, **Exodus 12:15 / Leviticus 23:4-8 / Numbers 28:16-25 / Deuteronomy 16:1-8**.

On the first day they were to remove the yeast from their houses, and if anyone ate anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh needs to be cut off from Israel, **Exodus 12:15**.

On the first day they are to hold a sacred assembly, and another one seven days later, however, no one was permitted to work during these days, except if they were preparing food to eat, **Exodus 12:16**.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread was to be celebrated because it would be the day that God brought them out of Egypt, Exodus 12:17. This was to be lasting ordinance for the generations to come, Exodus 12:17.

In the first month they are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, Exodus 12:18. There is to be no yeast in their homes for seven days

Anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it needs to be cut off from the community of Israel, Exodus 12:19. They are to eat nothing made with yeast, and wherever they live, they must eat unleavened bread, Exodus 12:20.

For the first Passover, the unleavened bread was a practical necessity; they left Egypt in such a hurry that there was no time to allow for the dough to rise. Leaven was also a picture of sin and corruption because of the way a little leaven would influence a whole lump of dough, and also because of the way leaven would ‘puff up’ the lump, even as pride and sin make us ‘puffed up.’

Significantly, God called them to walk ‘unleavened’ after their initial deliverance from Egypt; symbolically, they were being called to a pure walk with the Lord. Some suggest there was also a health aspect in getting rid of all the leaven, that since they used a piece of dough from the previous batch to make the bread for that day, and did so repeatedly, harmful bacteria could take hold in the dough, so it was good to remove all leaven and start all over at least once a year.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Bread signifies communion or fellowship with Christ, and the leaven, which was purged out, signifies sin, or evil. Christians are commanded to ‘purge out the old leaven’, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 / 2 Corinthians 7:1 / Galatians 5:7 / Galatians 5:9.’

OFFERING THE FIRSTFRUITS

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land, I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect, together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with olive oil—a food offering presented to the LORD, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.’ Leviticus 23:9-14

Most of us don’t pay much attention to the agricultural cycles of nature, but Israel was deeply aware of its own food cycles. The festivals of Judaism followed the agricultural cycle, Deuteronomy 8:8. The first fruits of the harvest were collected in baskets and taken to Jerusalem, Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

Once the Israelites were in the land, they would further celebrate this feast by bringing a sheaf of the firstfruits of their harvest, Leviticus 23:9-10 / Deuteronomy 24:19 / Ruth 2:7 / Exodus 16:16.

The firstfruits were the first of four specific laws that God gave Israel that they were to keep when they came into the land of promise, Leviticus 25:2 / Leviticus 14:34 / Leviticus 19:23.

The first fruits indicated that all nourishment came from God, and so, the offering of the first-fruits was an expression of thanksgiving to God for His provision.

It also indicated that God would bless the rest of the harvest which was to come. The New Testament uses the firstfruits offering as a metaphor in many places, Romans 8:23 / Romans 11:16 / Romans 16:5 / 1 Corinthians 15:20 / 1 Corinthians 15:23 / 1 Corinthians 16:15.

It was to be brought before the priest at the tabernacle, Leviticus 23:10. On the first day of the week, he would take the sheaf and wave it before the Lord, Leviticus 23:11.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the wave offering.

‘The offering, which was waved, Leviticus 7:30, was most likely a small sheaf of barley, the grain which is first ripe. The first fruits of the wheat harvest were offered seven weeks later in the loaves of Pentecost.’

Accompanying the sheaf would be the offering of a lamb and a grain offering with a libation of wine, Leviticus 23:12-13 / Exodus 29:40.

Meyrick, in his commentary, says the following concerning the drink offering.

‘This verse, Leviticus 23:13, and Leviticus 23:18 / Leviticus 23:37 are the only mentions of a drink-offering in Leviticus.’

The First day of the week, the first fruit sheaf, a sacrificed lamb, flour mixed with oil and wine. Israel mustn’t eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day they bring this offering to God, Leviticus 23:14. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever they live, Leviticus 23:14.

This is a picture of the resurrection of Christ. He is our Firstfruits. His resurrection is a promise of our resurrection, which is to follow, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 / Romans 8:29.

Because of that, we have a continuing observance, it is an observance of bread and wine. It remembers the sacrificed Lamb, and it looks forward to the day when the firstfruits will be joined by the rest of the harvest.

THE FESTIVAL OF WEEKS

‘From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings—a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. On that same day, you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.’ Leviticus 23:15-22

The next observance was to take place fifty days after the first Sabbath of the week of unleavened bread, that is, Pentecost, Leviticus 23:15. It would also take place on the first day of the week, Leviticus 23:16.

The date of the Feast of Weeks varied from late May to early June of each year. The purpose of this feast was to commemorate the completion of the grain harvest. Several offerings were to be made on this day, a grain offering of two loaves of bread, but these loaves were to be baked with leaven Leviticus 23:16-17.

A burnt offering of seven lambs of the first year, a bull, two rams, Leviticus 23:18 / Numbers 28:27-30. Note the drink offering is also to be made, Leviticus 23:18 / Leviticus 23:13 / Leviticus 23:37 / Exodus 29:40.

A sin-offering of a male goat, a peace offering of two male lambs, **Leviticus 25:19**. The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits, and they are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest, **Leviticus 23:20**.

The feast of weeks is the feast of harvest, whilst the feast of firstfruits begins at the start of the harvest, the feast of weeks begins at the end of the harvest. This feast was a time of celebration as they thanked God for providing the harvest in the first place.

Israel was to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work, **Leviticus 23:21 / Leviticus 23:7-8 / Leviticus 23:25 / Leviticus 23:35-36**, and this was to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever they live, **Leviticus 25:21**.

Notice again that God always takes care of the poor, and anyone travelling through the land was to leave the grain which stood in the corners of the fields for those people, **Leviticus 25:22 / Leviticus 19:9-10**. However, if anyone who was poor received any food, they had to do work in return for that food.

The day of Pentecost is important for Christians as this is the day the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, **Acts 2:1-4**. It was also the day the church was established when Peter preached the first Gospel message, **Acts 2:14-41**. The only other times the day is mentioned in the New Testament are in **Acts 20:16** and **1 Corinthians 16:8**.

THE FESTIVAL OF TRUMPETS

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.’ The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month, you are to have a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work but present a food offering to the LORD.’ **Leviticus 23:23-25**

On the Jewish calendar, it is Erev Rosh Hashanah, the eve of Rosh Hashanah. In the evening at sundown, the Jewish Holy Day of Rosh Hashanah begins, marking the start of a new year.

Rosh Hashanah is a two-day celebration which begins on the first day of the Jewish month known as Tishri. On this day, the people of Old Testament Israel turned aside from their work and gathered for a full day of sacrifice and worship, **Leviticus 23:23-24 / Numbers 29:1-6**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is no mention of trumpets in the Hebrew text of the Law in connection with the day. However, there is no reason to doubt the tradition that the day was distinguished by a general blowing of trumpets throughout the land, and that the kind of trumpet generally used for the purpose was the curved horn of an animal or a cornet of metal, such as was used at Sinai, **Exodus 19:16**, and on the Day of Jubilee, **Leviticus 25:9**. It must have differed in this respect from the ordinary festival of the New moon when the long straight trumpet of the temple alone was blown, **Numbers 10:2 / Exodus 25:23**.’

Once again, we are reminded that they can work, but no regular work was to be done, **Leviticus 23:25 / Leviticus 23:21 / Leviticus 23:7-8 / Leviticus 23:35-36**. The seventh month was important because it also included two major holy days, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles.

The blasting of trumpets, or shofar, announced the commencement of this special month. According to the Mosaic Law, the first month of the Israelite calendar is Nisan in the spring, **Exodus 12:2**.

However, in post-exilic Judaism, the first day of the seventh month, Tishri, has become Rosh Hashanah, ‘New Year’. To look at it another way, the first day of Nisan begins the religious New Year, and Rosh Hashanah starts the civil New Year. Rosh Hashanah is marked by the sounding of the shofar, a hollowed-out ram’s horn.

Although not taught in Scripture, Jews believe that on Rosh Hashanah, God sits in judgment of the whole universe. Like sheep passing before a shepherd, who decides which ones will live and which ones will be slaughtered.

On this Day of Judgment, God evaluates the merits of people and nations. He rules which nations will have plenty and which will lack, which will have war, and which will know peace.

The judgment on Rosh Hashanah does not decide a person’s eternal destiny; it is for judgment concerning earthly matters. Jews believe that the judgment handed down on that day, with its subsequent recording in the Book of Life, decides a person’s fate in this life for the coming year.

In Israel, there is the Jerusalem Archaeological Park, which is located in the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. You can climb up the original steps of the two-thousand-year-old Hulda Gates that led to the Temple Mount during the Second Temple period.

Three hundred feet north of the corner is the part of the Western Wall where locals and tourists pray. Here at this corner lies a reminder of something Jesus predicted thirty-seven years before the temple’s destruction.

ARCHAEOLOGY POINTS TO PROPHECY

The southwest corner of the Temple Mount is filled in with the rubble of the Second Temple’s destruction by the mighty Roman legions in A.D. 70. You can see a thirty-three-foot-wide first-century street that was laid with thick stone slabs. Jesus predicted this destruction on His last visit to the Temple, **Matthew 24:1-2**.

In A.D. 70, four Roman legions surrounded Jerusalem and began to slowly squeeze the life out of the Jewish stronghold. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus claimed that Titus, the Roman general, did not want to destroy the Temple. Archaeologists have removed most of the rubble, but they left one pile of stones just as they found them. The street is still depressed from the force of the impact.

TO THE PLACE OF TRUMPETING

One of the reasons people like to return to this corner of the Temple Mount is because of one particular stone that lies on the street far below where it originally stood. Shaped as a corner piece, the stone bears the Hebrew inscription: ‘To the place of trumpeting.’

Flavius Josephus, the Jewish priest and historian, spoke about the very place where this stone used to stand.

Josephus records the following.

‘This is ‘where one of the priests stood of course, and gave a signal beforehand, with a trumpet, at the beginning of every seventh day, in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when the day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to go to work again’.’ War 4:582

This stone was at the pinnacle of the Temple Mount at the southwestern corner of the Temple. It was the place where priests would overlook Jerusalem as they blew trumpets to announce the Sabbath and the start of festival days. It was from here that Rosh Hashanah was announced.

Before it was sounded in those days, **Psalm 47**, it was recited seven times. God originally intended the trumpets to call His people together in preparation for the fall festival of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, where the Lord would forgive sins on the basis of shed blood, **Psalm 81:3**.

The blowing of the trumpets was a plea to God to remember Israel, **Numbers 10:10**. At His return, Jesus ‘will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God,’ **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

Sometimes in Jerusalem today, you can hear a shofar echo across the city. I think of the Lord’s promise of His return when He calls His people to Himself, **1 Corinthians 15:50-52** / **1 Thessalonians 4:16**.

I consider the grace that the shofar’s call represents, urging worshippers to come before the Lord who forgives sins on the basis of sacrifice, **Leviticus 16:29-30**. We know that the ultimate sacrifice was God’s own Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. Do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. Those who do not deny themselves on that day must be cut off from their people. I will destroy from among their people anyone who does any work on that day. You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. It is a day of sabbath rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening, you are to observe your sabbath.’ **Leviticus 23:26-32**

We have already seen the Day of Atonement at length in **Leviticus 16**. This was the day on which the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the nation.

Back in **Leviticus 16**, emphasis was placed upon the duties of the high priest on the Day of Atonement, **Leviticus 16:29-34**, but in **Leviticus 23:26-32**, the emphasis is placed upon what the Israelites had to do on the Day of Atonement. On the Jewish calendar, in the evening at sundown begins the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘On this day, ‘eating, drinking, washing, anointing with oils, putting on sandals, and marital intercourse are forbidden.’ Mishnah, Yoma 8:1.’

It was different from all of the other festival times in that this was a day of denying themselves, which means fasting and a day they were to present a food offering to the LORD, **Leviticus 23:26-27**. Because they were to fast, it tells us that this wasn’t a day of celebration, it was a day in which they had to reflect upon their sinfulness.

Like on the Sabbath, no work is to be done, and special holiday candles are lit before sundown. In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement took place on the tenth day of the month of Tishri, **Leviticus 23:26-28**.

This was not a pilgrimage festival, and so large crowds did not gather at the Jerusalem Temple. It was such a serious task that the people were warned that those who refused to practice the Day of Atonement would perish, **Leviticus 23:29-30**.

They weren't permitted to work and this is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever they live, **Leviticus 23:31**. It was a day of sabbath rest for them, and they must deny yourselves, **Leviticus 23:32**. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening they are to observe their sabbath, **Leviticus 23:32**.

THE OLD TESTAMENT RITUAL

While the nation was fasting and praying, a remarkably complicated sacrificial ceremony was taking place in the temple, **Leviticus 23:1-28**.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘The high priest, the chief officiant, had been set aside for seven days to ensure his ritual purity, Yoma 1:1.’

Then, after a ceremonial bath, for ritual purity, he dressed in simple white linen robes, setting aside his usual exquisite high priestly attire, to begin sacrificing a bull for himself and the priesthood, **Leviticus 16:3-6**.

Once this was completed, he took live coals in a censer from the altar of sacrifice along with two handfuls of incense and carried them into the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, inside the temple, a place forbidden to all but him, **Leviticus 16:11-14**.

After this, the high priest repeated the process, this time sacrificing a male goat for the sins of the people, **Leviticus 16:15-19**. The high priest took a second live goat, laid his hands on its head, and would ‘confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel,’ **Leviticus 16:20-22**. This goat, also known as ‘the scapegoat’, **Leviticus 16:8-10 / Leviticus 16:26**.

It was then driven out into the eastern wilderness to show that God had driven Israel's sins away. You need to remember that throughout this day, while the high priest was doing his work, all the people of Israel were fasting and praying, participating thoughtfully in the work of atonement transpiring in the temple.

This ceremony remained unchanged in the time of Jesus, with but a few exceptions. Only the stone, ‘foundation stone’, on which the ark rested remained.

And so the priest rested the incense censer and sprinkled the blood on this stone. Today, over this very stone, stands the Muslim holy place known as the Dome of the Rock. Two goats were brought to the high priest for inspection before the ceremonies on the Day of Atonement, **Leviticus 16:7-10**.

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘These two goats were to be equal in ‘appearance, height, and value’, Yoma 6:1. The High Priest shook a box that held two lots, or stones, in it, Yoma 4:1-2.’

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘During the ceremonies, the scapegoat was presented to the high priest, and he laid his hands over the animal and prayed, Yoma 6:2.’

The Jewish Mishnah says the following.

‘Select non-priestly men then drove the goat over the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem and deep into the wilderness of Judea. When the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness, the crowd assembled at the Temple and then cried out, ‘Bear our sins and be gone! Bear our sins and be gone!’, Yoma 6:4.’

Two observations about this ceremony.

1. Though this solemn ceremony was repeated for nearly fifteen hundred years, from the time of Moses till the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, all of the blood of those bulls and goats put together could not forgive a single sin; they only withheld the judgment of God for another year.
2. If the high priest who performed this ceremony was still alive the following year, he got to perform the ceremony all over again, and when he died, his descendants would carry out the same services till they died.

THE NEW COVENANT

Imagine being a new Jewish Christian living in Jerusalem around A.D.45, about fifteen years after the ministry and death of Jesus. The rich ceremonies of the Temple were continuing, and on the Day of Atonement, you and your family wonder if you should participate.

Jewish Christians in the early days of the church were wondering if they should return to their ancient sacrificial festivals. The book of Hebrews was penned to warn Jewish Christians not to lapse back into Judaism as if such ceremonies and festivals would provide more assured salvation.

In **Hebrews 9-10**, we find a full description of the temple ceremonies and a remarkable critique. Jesus is our High Priest, **Hebrews 9:11-13**. Hebrews contrasts the ongoing, and futile, efforts of the High Priests, who annually bring the blood of bulls and goats into the inner sanctuary, with Jesus, who brought His own blood into a heavenly sanctuary, the true house of God.

Because the content of His sacrifice was superior and the venue of its offering superior, Jesus has ‘obtained eternal redemption’ for us, **Hebrews 9:24-26**. Why look to the Day of Atonement in Jerusalem when Jesus has accomplished an eternal work that makes all earthly works obsolete? **Hebrews 8:6**.

These Jewish Christians were also being persecuted for their failure to abide by religious custom, **Hebrews 10:32-39**. One day at Calvary outweighed the hundreds of complex sacrifices on Yom Kippur that had been going on for centuries.

THE FEAST OF BOOTHS

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days, present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work. (‘These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings to the LORD—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD’s Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.) ‘So, beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest. On the first day, you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows, and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ So, Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed festivals of the LORD.’ Leviticus 23:33-44

At sundown, the Jewish festival of Sukkot will begin, the feast of tabernacles, Leviticus 23:33-34. This was the last of the festivals; Purim and Hanukkah would be added much later.

Once again, Israel wasn't permitted to do any regular work, Leviticus 23:35-36 / Leviticus 23:25 / Leviticus 23:21 / Leviticus 23:7-8, and for seven days they are to present food offerings, and on the eighth day they are to hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD, Leviticus 23:35-36.

By October, the harvest season came to an end when grapes, olives, pomegranates, figs, and dates were gathered in. The feast was officially scheduled for the fifteenth day of the Jewish month of Tishrei, five days after the Day of Atonement, and it lasted for seven days.

These are the LORD's appointed festivals, which they are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings, which include burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day, Leviticus 23:37 / Leviticus 23:18 / Leviticus 23:13 / Exodus 29:40.

These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD's Sabbaths and in addition to their gifts and whatever they have vowed and all the freewill offerings they give, Leviticus 23:38.

Beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after they had gathered the crops of the land, Leviticus 23:39 / Revelation 14:15-16, they are to celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days, with the first day being a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also being a day of sabbath rest, Leviticus 23:39.

Just like the Passover and feast of unleavened bread, this feast lasted for eight days, Leviticus 23:39 / Numbers 29:12-38 / Deuteronomy 16:13-15 / Deuteronomy 31:10-13 / Ezra 3:4 / Nehemiah 8:18.

On the first day, they are to take branches from luxuriant trees, palms, willows, and other leafy trees and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days, Leviticus 23:40.

The lulav is a palm branch, one of the four species used during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, along with the etrog, myrtle, and willow branches. When bound together, the lulav, myrtle, and willow branches are commonly referred to as 'the lulav', Leviticus 23:40.

This was a feast of thanksgiving for everything God had provided for them. They are to celebrate this as a festival for seven days each year, and this is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Celebrate it in the seventh month, Leviticus 23:41.

For an entire week, the people were to live in booths, Leviticus 23:42-43; in other words, they were to camp out. The reason for camping out was to remind them of their wilderness wanderings.

According to the law, all Jews were to live in booths or huts during the celebration. These were outdoor shelters made from wild branches of olive, myrtle, palm, and other leaf trees, Leviticus 23:42-43 / Leviticus 23:40 / Nehemiah 8:15. A booth or tabernacle was a temporary dwelling.

Since this was the formal end of the harvest year, it was a time of celebration. The people joined parades of pilgrims at the temple, and as they marched holding the lulav, they sang the Hallel Psalms, Psalms 113-118.

Ceremonies around the temple were extensive, and celebrations were full. Sacrifice was another way they praised God during this feast. But agriculture was not the only interest at Sukkoth or any of the other festivals. The Passover tells the story of Israel fleeing Egypt. Pentecost reminds them of their coming to Mount Sinai to receive the covenant.

Tabernacles reminded them of the forty years in the wilderness, when they lived in the desert, they worshipped God at His tabernacle and built shelters for themselves as well, Leviticus 23:42-43.

They were to remember that God will take care of their every need, just like He did in the wilderness wandering, Exodus 15:22-27 / Exodus 16:35 / Deuteronomy 8:4 / Deuteronomy 29:5. The weather in Palestine was suited to this at this time of the year.

The heat of summer had passed, and the early rains were still a month away. Moses now announces to the Israelites the appointed festivals of the LORD, Leviticus 23:44.

You will notice that the Day of Atonement wasn't a day of celebration; it was a day to reflect upon their sin, but here, that day is followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the most joyous of occasions for Israel. We could say that joy always follows repentance over sin.

For Christians today, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are reminded that atonement was made for us at the cross, and the eating of the Supper is to be a time of celebration for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, **1 Corinthians 11:24-25**.

WATER AND LIGHT AT TABERNACLES

We can easily imagine Jesus as a young man travelling to Jerusalem every autumn with countless families from Galilee, making a long caravan. And there in Jerusalem, He joined in the festivities, waving His lulav, and dancing and singing in the courtyards of the temple.

He had the Hallel Psalms memorised and could sing them with ease. To have a fully Jewish life, Jesus certainly must have experienced these Jewish festivals as we have described.

THE WATER CEREMONY

Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles witnessed a water ceremony in which a procession of priests descended to the south border of the city to the Gihon Spring, which flowed into the Pool of Siloam. There, a priest filled a golden pitcher as a choir chanted, **Isaiah 12:3**.

When the procession arrived at the temple, the priest climbed the altar steps and poured the water onto the altar while the crowd circled him and continued singing.

THE LIGHT CEREMONY

People in the ancient world observed the length of days carefully, charting the solstices as well as the fall and spring equinoxes. The Mishnah tractate Sukkah provides lavish descriptions of the light ceremonies and explains that whoever has not seen these things has never seen a wonder in his or her life!

JESUS AND TABERNACLES

We possess only one record of Jesus visiting Jerusalem at Tabernacles, **John 7-9**. On His previous visit to Jerusalem, the leaders there threatened His life after He healed a paraplegic man on the Sabbath, **John 5:18**.

Now the coming festival made those same leaders look for Him when they saw the other members of Jesus' family, **John 7:11-13 / John 7:25**. Sometime during the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, as Jesus was teaching in the Temple, He was interrogated by these same religious leaders.

How could Jesus teach with authority when He did not have the appropriate schooling? **John 7:15**. The authorities wanted to know where He came from, **John 7:40-41**. Jesus was clear that He would eventually depart Jerusalem and that where He was going, none of them would be able to follow, **John 7:33-34 / John 7:37 / John 7:40**.

Then on that same day, or maybe it was at night, He said something else. Jesus stood up and said, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life,’ **John 8:12**. Here in the great light ceremony of the year, Jesus makes the astounding claim to be the light of the world.

THE FINAL DAY OF TABERNACLES

One of the most memorable events in the life of our Lord took place on the morning of Hoshana Rabbah, which is the story of the woman caught in adultery, **John 8:2-11**.

Hoshana Rabbah was the final and most important day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Every day during the feast, there was a water ceremony, **Isaiah 12:3**. The crowd would shake their lulavs and sing the Hallel Psalms, **Psalms 113-118**. Rabbah means ‘great’ and Hoshana, Hosanna, means ‘God save us please!’ This was also a prayer for salvation from sin, for Hoshana Rabbah was understood by the Jews to be the absolutely final chance to have one’s sins for the year forgiven. Though Hoshana Rabbah was not mentioned by name in the Old Testament, it is mentioned in the New Testament, **John 7:37-38**.

On Hoshana Rabbah, in the midst of this water pouring, trumpet blasting, palm waving, psalm chanting, and joy on the part of people seeking forgiveness, and in the presence of all twenty-four divisions of the priesthood, that Jesus cried out in the temple courts and spoke, **John 7:37-38 / Jeremiah 2:13**.

THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

Numerous problems accompany the charge made at the temple by the scribes and Pharisees on Hoshana Rabbah. We must ask if the woman is married or betrothed to another man. A woman who is sexually unfaithful to her fiancé was to be stoned to death along with her lover, **John 8:5 / Deuteronomy 22:23-24**.

Unfaithful wives were likewise killed, **Leviticus 20:10 / Deuteronomy 22:22**. But the Law did not indicate the method of death. The Mishnah, which was oral law in Jesus’ day, specified that unfaithful fiancés should be stoned, but wives strangled, **Sanhedrin 7:2**.

In **John 8**, it is the last day for these scribes and Pharisees to have their sins forgiven, and Jesus says, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first,’ **John 8:7**. What did Jesus write on the ground? It is impossible to know what Jesus wrote in the dust, **John 8:6 / John 8:8**.

Most believe that He began to write in Hebrew some verses from the Law that would shape His response to the dilemma. Two passages talk about God being the source of ‘living water.’

The first in the passage we have already read, **Jeremiah 2:13**. Please note the context of the second time Jeremiah uses the phrase ‘living waters’, **Jeremiah 17:9-10 / Jeremiah 17:13**.

Because Jesus must have been sitting and the woman standing, He now raises Himself up and speaks to her for the first time, **John 8:10**. His questions do not imply that the woman is innocent since, in **John 8:11**, He warns her to cease a sinful life that has been her habit. Jesus’ final words do not imply her innocence but reflect His power to forgive sin.

The portrait of the woman in this story is powerful. Our Lord's implied judgment on her accusers and His mercy mixed with exhortation sets her free in a manner she never expected. And what Jesus did for this sinful woman, He can do for you as well.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a helpful reminder that thanksgiving is an important part of our daily lives. A thoughtful person knows that the capacities and opportunities we enjoy often should be credited less to ourselves and more to God. Tabernacles says, bring samples of what God has given you to the temple and with them in hand, wrapped in your personal lulav, thank Him.

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION

'The LORD said to Moses, 'Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. Outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be tended continually. 'Take the finest flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah for each loaf. Arrange them in two stacks, six in each stack, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. By each stack, put some pure incense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be a food offering presented to the LORD. This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD.' Leviticus 24:1-9

ORDINANCES OF LIGHT AND BREAD

God tells Moses to command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light, Leviticus 24:1-2. These were the lamps which gave light for the tabernacle, Exodus 25:31-40 / Exodus 27:20-21 / Hebrews 9:2. It was always to be burning, Leviticus 24:2, which signified that God's work never ceased, Zechariah 4 / Revelation 1:12-20.

Outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps from evening till morning, continually, Leviticus 24:3.

This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, Leviticus 24:3. The lamps on the pure gold lampstand, Exodus 25:31-40, must be tended continually, Leviticus 24:4.

Twelve cakes of bread are to be set upon the table within the tabernacle, Leviticus 24:5 / Exodus 25:23-30. This was food for the priests. Each cake represented the offering of a tribe.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'In the service of the temple, the preparation and arrangement of the cakes was committed to the Levites, 1 Chronicles 9:32 / 1 Chronicles 23:29 / 2 Chronicles 13:11.'

They are to be arranged in two stacks, six in each stack, on the table of pure gold before the LORD, Leviticus 24:6. The pure gold table would be the showbread table, Exodus 25:23-30.

By each stack some pure incense, that is, frankincense, is to be sprinkled upon these loaves, which signified a memorial before the Lord, Leviticus 24:7 / Leviticus 2:2.

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The frankincense was burned at the end of each week (instead of the loaves) in order that Aaron’s sons might feast on the loaves, as we do memorially of Christ’s death and second coming in the Lord’s Supper.’

This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant, Leviticus 24:8 / Exodus 25:23-30 / Numbers 4:7.

Meyrick, in his commentary, says the following concerning how the loaves each sabbath were replaced by the fresh loaves.

‘Four priests went in, two to take off, two to put on; they faced each other two and two. Those with the new loaves stood on the north side, those who took off the old on the south side. They acted in unison so that there were always loaves on the table.’

Edgar, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was a weekly offering, definitely and emphatically prescribed in the Old Testament. This is exactly what Paul urged on the Corinthians: ‘Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by in store, as God has prospered him!’ 1 Corinthians 16:2.’

The twelve cakes of bread are to be set upon the table within the tabernacle; this was food for Aaron and his sons because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD, Leviticus 24:9 / Leviticus 2:3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It could have been only by a stretch of the law that Ahimelech gave a portion of the showbread to David and his men, on the ground that they were free from ceremonial defilement, 1 Samuel 21:4-6 / Matthew 12:4.’

THE HOLINESS OF GOD’S NAME

‘Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out among the Israelites, and a fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so, they brought him to Moses. (His mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri the Danite.) They put him in custody until the will of the LORD should be made clear to them. Then the LORD said to Moses: ‘Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. Say to the Israelites: ‘Anyone who curses their God will be held responsible; anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name, they are to be put to death. ‘Anyone who takes the life of a human being is to be put to death. Anyone who takes the life of someone’s animal must make restitution—life for life. Anyone who injures their neighbour is to be injured in the same manner: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury. Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death. You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the LORD your God.’ Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him. The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.’ Leviticus 24:10-23

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The reason for the injection at this point of the story of the blasphemer probably came about from the fact that the occasion for this law arose while Moses was giving instructions about the oil and the fine flour.’

The son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, Leviticus 24:10 / Exodus 12:38, went out among the sons of Israel and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp, Leviticus 24:10. The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed, Leviticus 24:10 / Matthew 9:3. So, they brought him to Moses, Leviticus 24:10.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following concerning blasphemy.

'The Jews interpreted this blasphemy as a flippant use of the name Yahweh. The desire to avoid using the name of Yahweh in vain led them to omit the name 'Yahweh' from their vocabulary completely. They substituted 'the Name' in its place in conversation and in composition.'

We are told that the son's mother is called Shelomith, and she was the daughter of Dibri the Danite, Leviticus 24:11. The trouble started with a mixed marriage, which was later forbidden in Deuteronomy 7:3-4 / Nehemiah 13:25 / 2 Corinthians 6:14.

This was not to be the last time that the 'mixed multitude' would be the cause of trouble in the camp, Numbers 11. Since this was the first time this kind of incident had happened, the man was placed in custody until Moses could go before the Lord for advice, Leviticus 24:12.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The offender may already have been pronounced guilty by the rulers, Exodus 18:21-22, and the case was referred to Moses in order that the punishment might be awarded by the divine decree. No law had as yet been enacted against blasphemy except by implication, Exodus 21:17 / Exodus 22:28.'

We don't know what actually happened or took place between this young man and an Israelite. The source of the altercation is not important, but what is important is what God told Moses to do.

God tells Moses to take the blasphemer outside the camp, and everyone who actually heard him blaspheme is to lay their hands on his head, Deuteronomy 21:6 / Matthew 27:24, and the entire assembly is to stone him, Leviticus 24:13-14 / Leviticus 20:2.

There are various ways in which a person was stoned to death, the most common way in Bible times, especially for adultery, was a hole was first dug, and then the person was placed in the hole with their arms at their side, then they were partially buried up to their shoulders, or breasts if it was a woman.

Next, the charges were read out, and the stoning began. It was actually an organised and court-sanctioned affair. The size of the stones was usually ones that could be held and thrown by one hand, John 8:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The commonest form of capital punishment. It was probably preferred as being the one in which the execution was the act of the whole congregation.'

God says anyone who curses their God will be held responsible, Leviticus 24:15. Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD, Exodus 6:3, is to be put to death, regardless of if they are a foreigner or native-born, Leviticus 24:16. It was the responsibility of the entire congregation to carry out the sentence so that no one person would be the executioner, Leviticus 24:16.

God continues and says anyone who takes the life of a human being is to be put to death, Leviticus 24:17. Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal must make restitution, life for life, Leviticus 24:18.

Anyone who injures their neighbour is to be injured in the same manner, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury, Leviticus 24:19-20.

In other words, the punishment must fit the crime, Exodus 21:23-25 / Deuteronomy 19:21 / Matthew 5:38-42. The death penalty wouldn't be given to anyone who told a lie, but the death penalty would be given to anyone who

voluntarily murdered someone, Numbers 35:16. If someone voluntarily took the life of someone, they had their right to life taken from them.

Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death, Leviticus 24:21. The seriousness of the punishment demonstrates the seriousness of the sin, which applies to both Israel as a nation and any stranger, Leviticus 24:22 / Leviticus 16:29.

Moses speaks to the Israelites, and they did as God commanded; they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him, Leviticus 24:23, and for the moment, the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses, Leviticus 24:23 / Hebrews 10:28-31.

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION

Just as the Israelites were to rest each seventh day, so also, they were to observe every seventh year, they were also to observe the seventh week and the seventh month.

The seventh cycle of sabbatical years was to be a most special year. On the Day of Atonement, the seventh month, of the seventh cycle of sabbatical years, the Year of Jubilee was to be ushered in. This was to be a time of great rejoicing.

The fasting of the Day of Atonement was over, sins had been proclaimed forgiven, and now there was to be a time of rest which was to last an entire year. In addition to the rest, all debts were to be wiped out, slaves were to be freed, and all land was to revert to its original owners. Israel learns that the land didn't belong to the people; it was the Lord's land.

THE SABBATH YEAR

‘The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land, I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. For six years, sow your fields, and for six years, prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.’ Leviticus 25:1-7

The Israelites were allowed to work the land for six years, but on the seventh year, the Sabbath Year they were to rest, Exodus 23:10-11 / Deuteronomy 31:10 / 2 Kings 10:29 / Nehemiah 10:31.

This was also the year that you released any personal slave, Exodus 21:2, and the time to forget all debts from one Israelite to another, Deuteronomy 15:1-3. This was also the year the Law was read publicly at the feast of tabernacles, Deuteronomy 31:2.

If they obeyed God, there would be no poor among them, Deuteronomy 15:4-6; if there were poor people, they were to be generous towards them, Deuteronomy 7:11.

Here we read that these verses aren't speaking about the Israelites getting some rest, but giving a chance for the land to rest from being harvested. Doing this would help the land to recover and go on to produce more harvests the following year.

God tells Moses at Mount Sinai to speak to Israel and tell them that when they enter the land God is going to give them, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD, Leviticus 25:1-2 / Exodus 23:11 / Numbers 10:11-12. For six years they may sow their fields, and for six years they may prune their vineyards and gather their crops, Leviticus 25:3. However, in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD, Leviticus 25:4 / Leviticus 23:3.

They weren't permitted to sow their fields or prune their vineyards, Leviticus 25:4. They were not to gather the fruit in their vineyards, but they must leave it for the poor, Leviticus 19:10.

There was a law concerning gleaning, any forgotten sheaf was to be left for the needy, Deuteronomy 24:19. They were to harvest their olive trees and vineyards only once and thus leave the corners of the field for the poor, Leviticus 19:9. They weren't permitted to reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of their untended vines because the land is to have a year of rest, Leviticus 25:5.

Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for them, their male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among them, as well as for their livestock and the wild animals in their land, and so, whatever the land produces may be eaten, Leviticus 25:6-7 / Exodus 23:11.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

‘Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement, sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself, or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. ‘In this Year of Jubilee, everyone is to return to their own property. ‘If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God. ‘Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. You may ask, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?’ I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.’ Leviticus 25:8-22

A SABBATH FOR THE LAND

The Year of Jubilee was practised every fifty years, Leviticus 25:8. It was commenced by the trumpet sounding on the seventh day of atonement, which was the tenth day of the seventh month, Leviticus 25:9 / Exodus 19:13 / Exodus 19:16 / Exodus 19:19 / Exodus 20:18.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The voice of the Jubilee horns, twice in every century, proclaimed the equitable and beneficent social order appointed for the people; they sounded that acceptable year of Yahweh which was to bring comfort to all that mourned, in which the slavery of sin was to be abolished, and the true liberty of God’s children was to be proclaimed, [Luke 2:25](#) / [Isaiah 61:2](#) / [Luke 4:19](#) / [Acts 3:21](#) / [Romans 8:19-23](#) / [1 Peter 1:3-4](#).’

Israel is to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants, [Leviticus 25:10](#). It is to be a jubilee for them, and each of them is to return to their family property and to their own clan, [Leviticus 25:10](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The meaning of this was that every Israelite was to be returned to the ancestral lands which belonged to his forebearers.’

The fiftieth year is to be a jubilee for them, but they weren’t permitted to sow or reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines, [Leviticus 25:11](#). The reason for this is that it is a jubilee and is to be holy for them, and they are only permitted to eat what is taken directly from the fields, [Leviticus 25:12](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The land was to be divided by lot among the families of the Israelites when the possession of it was obtained, [Numbers 26:52-56](#) / [Numbers 33:54](#), etc. At the end of every seventh sabbatical cycle of years, in the year of Jubilee, each field or estate that might have been alienated was to be restored to the family to which it had been originally allotted.’

We can imagine the joy the Israelites had during this period, as everyone who owned anything was returned to the original owner, [Leviticus 25:13](#). If they sell land to any of their own people or buy land from them, they weren’t permitted to take advantage of each other, [Leviticus 25:14](#) / [Leviticus 25:17](#).

They are to buy from their own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee and they are to sell to them on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops, [Leviticus 25:15](#).

When the years are many, they are to increase the price, and when the years are few, they are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to them is the number of crops, [Leviticus 25:16](#).

In other words, the land was to be valued before the year of Jubilee according to the crops that it would produce, not according to any inflationary value or location in reference to a city. However, they weren’t permitted to take advantage of each other, [Leviticus 25:14](#), but fear God, [Leviticus 25:17](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Leviticus 25:13-17](#).

‘These verses simply meant that buying or selling land applied only to the proportionate number of crops before the sabbatical year. The most that could be sold would be 49 crops, and after that the land with its increase reverted to the possessor whose rights were considered unalienable.’

Israel is commanded to follow God’s decrees and be careful to obey His laws, and they will live safely in the land, [Leviticus 25:18](#). If they do this, then the land will yield its fruit, and they will eat their fill and live there in safety, [Leviticus 25:18-19](#) / [Leviticus 26:5](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:10](#).

Notice if they ask what they will eat in the seventh year if they do not plant or harvest our crops? [Leviticus 25:20](#), then God would provide the food during the period of the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year, [Leviticus 25:21](#).

While they plant during the eighth year, they will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in, [Leviticus 25:22](#).

As I mentioned earlier, this is all about giving a chance for the land to rest from being harvested. Doing this would help the land to recover and go on to produce more harvests the following year.

THE REDEMPTION OF PROPERTY

‘The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers. Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land. ‘If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold. If, however, there is no one to redeem it for them, but later on they prosper and acquire sufficient means to redeem it themselves, they are to determine the value for the years since they sold it and refund the balance to the one to whom they sold it; they can then go back to their own property. But if they do not acquire the means to repay, what was sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and they can then go back to their property. ‘Anyone who sells a house in a walled city retains the right of redemption a full year after its sale. During that time, the seller may redeem it. If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to the buyer and the buyer’s descendants. It is not to be returned in the Jubilee. But houses in villages without walls around them are to be considered as belonging to the open country. They can be redeemed, and they are to be returned in the Jubilee. ‘The Levites always have the right to redeem their houses in the Levitical towns, which they possess. So, the property of the Levites is redeemable—that is, a house sold in any town they hold—and is to be returned in the Jubilee, because the houses in the towns of the Levites are their property among the Israelites. But the pastureland belonging to their towns must not be sold; it is their permanent possession. If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.’ Leviticus 25:23-38

The land must not be sold permanently, because it belonged to God; He was the One who had given the land in the first place, Leviticus 25:23.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As God in a miraculous manner gave them possession of this land, they were therefore to consider themselves merely as tenants to him; and on this ground, he, as the great landholder or lord of the soil, prescribes to them all the conditions on which they shall hold it. This one circumstance was peculiarly favourable to their advancement in religion, in righteousness, and true holiness; for feeling that they had nothing which they could call their own upon earth, they must frequently, by this, be put in mind of the necessity of having a permanent dwelling in the heavenly inheritance, and of that preparation without which it could not be possessed.’

Throughout the land that they hold as a possession, they must provide for the redemption of the land, Leviticus 25:24. He blessed them with portions of the land, but if the land had to be sold to cover the debt, then during the year of Jubilee, it was to be restored to the family to whom God had given it.

If one of their fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold, Leviticus 25:25.

However, if there is no one to redeem it for them, but later on they prosper and acquire sufficient means to redeem it themselves, they are to determine the value for the years since they sold it and refund the balance to the one to whom they sold it; they can then go back to their own property, Leviticus 25:26-27. If a man was poor who had to sell his land, it was to be returned to him during this year, and they can then go back to their property, Leviticus 25:28.

It appears that a different law applied to possessions within the city walls. Anyone who sells a house in a walled city retains the right of redemption a full year after its sale, and during that time the seller may redeem it, Leviticus 25:29.

If the house was sold, the original owner had one year to buy it back, but if he didn’t, then it remained with the new owner indefinitely, Leviticus 25:30.

They weren’t allowed to enter the borrower’s house for a pledge; it had to be brought out to him, Deuteronomy 24:10. But houses in villages without walls around them are to be considered as belonging to the open country, and so they can be redeemed, and they are to be returned in the Jubilee, Leviticus 25:31.

Dwellings in cities could be sold permanently except for the possessions of the Levites. If a house was sold by the Levites, it could be redeemed at any time, Leviticus 25:32.

There was no one-year restriction placed on the Levites for buying back their houses within the walled cities.

However, during the year of Jubilee, the house would be returned to the Levite who had sold it, Leviticus 25:32-33 / Leviticus 27:16-25. The fields of the Levites that were attached to the cities could not be sold, Leviticus 25:34.

If any of their fellow Israelites became poor and were unable to support themselves, they were to help them as they would a foreigner and stranger, so they could continue to live among them, Leviticus 25:35. They were to be just in their dealings with the foreigner, orphan, and widow, Deuteronomy 24:17.

There was a law concerning pledges; a cloak that was given as a pledge was to be returned to the owner before sunset, Exodus 22:26-27 / Deuteronomy 24:12-13. They could not take a handmill or an upper millstone as a pledge, Deuteronomy 24:6.

There was a law against extortion; they were to help the poor by not charging any interest or gain on what was given to them. In other words, when food was given, no excess food was to be returned for gain, Leviticus 25:36-37 / Exodus 22:25; however, interest was charged to foreigners, Deuteronomy 23:19-20.

Remember, Israel was poor in Egypt; they were brought out of Egyptian slavery and given a land of milk and honey. God say He wants Israel to do for the poor as He did for them, Leviticus 25:38.

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Jubilee law was a guarantee that no Jew would ever again be reduced to the type of slavery that oppressed Israel in Egypt.’

It was a year of rest, and it was a year when all debts were cancelled, and all slaves were set free. The reason behind this was to prevent perpetual slavery of the poor and to prevent the accumulation of land by the rich.

THE REDEMPTION OF SLAVES

‘If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God. ‘Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly. ‘If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner’s clan, they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: An uncle or a cousin, or any blood relative in their clan, may redeem them. Or if they prosper, they may redeem themselves. They and their buyer are to count the time from the year they sold themselves up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for their release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired worker for that number of years. If many years remain, they must pay for their redemption a larger share of the price paid for them. If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, they are to compute that and pay for their redemption accordingly. They are to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly. ‘Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ Leviticus 25:39-55

If a man is to sell himself because of poverty, he was to be considered a hired man, not a slave, Leviticus 25:39-40 / Exodus 21:1-6 / Jeremiah 34:8-17; he was to be released at the year of jubilee, Leviticus 25:40-41.

It's clear that God was reinforcing the respect for human life and human freedom. Because the Israelites are God's servants, whom He brought out of Egypt, they mustn't be sold as slaves, Leviticus 25:42. The master was not to rule over them with severity, Leviticus 25:43 / Leviticus 25:46.

The Hebrew male slaves had rights. He worked for six years and then was freed on the seventh year with possessions from his master's flock, threshing floor and wine vat, Exodus 21:2 / Deuteronomy 15:12-18.

If the slave did not want to leave, then the master was to take him to the door and pierce his ear; the slave was then to serve him forever, Exodus 21:5-6 / Deuteronomy 15:16-17.

The Hebrew female slaves had rights too, a female sold by her father was not free to go like the male slave, Exodus 21:7. If the master had taken her to himself and she was found to be displeasing to him, then she could be redeemed, Exodus 21:8. He could not sell her to a foreign people after this act, Exodus 21:8.

If he took another woman besides her, he was still to give her, her legal rights, Exodus 21:10. If he did not give her what belonged to her, she was allowed to go free, Exodus 21:11.

If the master gave the female slave to his son as a wife, he was then to treat her as a daughter, Exodus 21:9. A female slave was to be freed in the seventh year with possessions from the master's flock, threshing floor, and wine vat, Deuteronomy 15:12-18.

The permanent slave had rights too; they could not take Israelites as permanent slaves, though one may have been so by choice, Exodus 21:5-6 / Deuteronomy 15:16-17. Permanent slaves were to come from strangers, Leviticus 25:44-46.

The foreign slaves had rights; if he was beaten to death, the master was to be punished, Exodus 21:20-21. If the slave survived the beating for a day or two, then no vengeance was taken on the master, Exodus 21:21. If some physical injury was done, such as the loss of an eye or tooth, he was allowed to go free, Exodus 21:26-27.

Foreign slaves could be slaves forever, even passed on to the next generation, Leviticus 25:44-46. If he had brought his wife with him, she was to leave with him, but if the master had given him a wife and he had children, the wife and the children stayed with the master, Exodus 21:3-4. An escaped slave could not be returned to his master, Deuteronomy 23:15-16.

The Hebrew slave who belonged to a foreigner had redemptive rights, Leviticus 25:47-49 / Leviticus 16:29 / Exodus 20:10. He could be redeemed by a relative, Leviticus 25:48-49, or he could redeem himself, Leviticus 25:49.

The redemption price was to be determined by nearness to the years of Jubilee, Leviticus 25:50-52; he was not to be ruled over with severity, Leviticus 25:53. If he was not redeemed, he was freed in the year of Jubilee, Leviticus 25:54-55. If an Israelite slave was to be redeemed, the price was to be based on the nearness to the year of Jubilee.

Wenham, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God redeemed his people from Egyptian slavery to become his servants. It is unfitting, therefore, that an Israelite should be sold into slavery, especially to a foreigner. The jubilee was a guarantee that no Israelites should continue in slavery.’

CHAPTER 26

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the Lord sets forth the results of both discipline and obedience. Obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings cursing. The result of this blessing of obedience would be that Israel would enjoy the blessings of the covenant relationship, [Exodus 23:20-33](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:1-68](#).

REWARD FOR OBEDIENCE

‘Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God. ‘Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD. ‘If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. Your threshing will continue until grape harvest, and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land. ‘I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you. ‘I will look on you with favour and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. You will still be eating last year’s harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.’

Leviticus 26:1-13

If the Israelites were to be obedient to God and His laws, they must stay clear of idolatry, [Leviticus 26:1](#) / [Exodus 20:4](#) / [1 Corinthians 8:4](#).

Meyrick, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This expression to bow down unto (or toward) a pillar forbade, not only worshipping a pillar (or image), but also worshipping in the presence of it.’

For someone to make an idol, they usually begin with their imagination, they carve the image into what they think their god looks like, [Jeremiah 10:3](#) / [Jeremiah 14:22](#).

Idolatry always leads people away from God, and so, as Leviticus begins by addressing Israel’s leaders and priests, here God ends by telling them, that these same leaders have got the responsibility of preventing Israel from creating gods out of their own imagination.

As we have read on numerous occasions in this book, God reminds them to observe His Sabbaths and have reverence for His sanctuary, [Leviticus 26:2](#). Notice that God mentioned Sabbaths, plural.

LeTorah, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Of all the laws of the Torah, what makes the law of the Sabbatical Year so important that its violation is named as the cause of Israel’s exile? This is true because the Sabbatical Year was to teach that the whole world belongs to God. If man defies God by not observing the Sabbatical Year, he thereby regards himself as the sole proprietor of the land (or whatever he owns).’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As ‘the book of the covenant’, [Exodus 20:22-33](#), concludes with promises and warnings, [Exodus 23:20-33](#), so does this collection of laws contained in the Book of Leviticus.’

Notice, as we go through this chapter, how many times God says, ‘I will’. The ‘I wills’ are all dependent on their obeying God and keeping his commands. God tells them that if they are obedient to Him and His laws, then He will

richly bless the land with rain, [Leviticus 26:3-5](#) / [Deuteronomy 11:14](#) / [Jeremiah 5:24](#) / [Joel 2:23](#) / [Hosea 6:3](#) / [James 5:7](#), and crops, [Amos 9:13](#).

He will also ensure that the land will provide much food, not only for the here and now but for the future, [Joel 2:19](#) / [Job 11:18](#). In other words, God was not only looking after them, but He was also providing hope for the future. God is going to give them peace in the land, they will lie down and no one will make them afraid and God Himself will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through their country, [Leviticus 26:6](#). They will pursue their enemies, and they will fall by the sword, [Leviticus 26:7](#). Five of them will chase a hundred, and a hundred of them will chase ten thousand, and their enemies will fall by the sword, [Leviticus 26:8](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:30](#) / [Isaiah 30:17](#).

God will look on them with favour and make them fruitful and increase their numbers, and He will keep His covenant with them, [Leviticus 26:9](#) / [Genesis 17:4-8](#) / [Nehemiah 9:23](#). They will still be eating last year's harvest when they will have to move it out to make room for the new, [Leviticus 26:10](#).

God will put His dwelling place among them, [2 Corinthians 6:16-18](#) / [2 Corinthians 7:1](#), and He will not abhor them, [Leviticus 26:11](#). God will walk among them, [John 1:14](#), and be their God, and they will be His people, [Leviticus 26:12](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These words were quoted by the apostle Paul, [2 Corinthians 6:16](#), as a ground of the holiness required of God's people.’

It was God who brought them out of Egypt so that they would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians. It was God who broke the bars of their yoke and enabled them to walk with heads held high, [Leviticus 26:13](#).

Micklem, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The bars (bands in the KJV) of a yoke are the wooden pieces coming down from the yoke on each side of the animal's head and fastened with thongs.’

Whilst the Israelites were in Egypt, they were surrounded by idolatry as the Egyptians worshipped almost everything which moved. They would have seen how much the Egyptians relied on their gods to provide for their needs and to provide protection.

God wants Israel to understand that He is the only one who will provide for their needs and totally protect them. If they remain faithful to God, He will meet their every need and protect them in every way.

PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE

‘But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you. ‘If, after all this, you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. Your strength will be spent in vain because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of your land yield their fruit. ‘If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted. ‘If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword on you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you

will be given into enemy hands. When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied. 'If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I myself will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it. 'As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them. They will stumble over one another as though fleeing from the sword, even though no one is pursuing them. So, you will not be able to stand before your enemies. You will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you. Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also, because of their ancestors' sins, they will waste away.' Leviticus 26:14-39

If Israel remains faithful to God, God will bless them and protect them; however, if they become disobedient, then they will be punished, Leviticus 26:14-16. In other words, Israel can't have their cake and eat it; it can't live however they wish and still expect God to bless it and protect it.

As you read through these verses, I'm sure you will have noticed the word 'if'. This is the word which sets the terms and conditions. 'If' they remain faithful, all will be well, 'if' they become disobedient, then there will be consequences to pay for their disobedience, 1 John 1:6-10.

God tells them that if they are disobedient, they will be rebuked, then they will be judged, and then they will be destroyed and cut off from the land. If they are disobedient, then a series of afflictions will follow: there will be sicknesses, Leviticus 26:16, famines, Leviticus 26:16 / Leviticus 26:26, wars and oppression by their enemies, Leviticus 26:17.

If, after all this, they still won't listen to God, He will punish them for their sins seven times over, Leviticus 26:18. Notice the phrase seven times over is a common theme in this section, Leviticus 26:18 / Leviticus 26:21 / Leviticus 26:23-24 / Leviticus 26:27-28.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The sabbatical number is here proverbially used to remind the people of the covenant, Genesis 4:15 / Genesis 4:24 / Psalms 119:164 / Proverbs 24:16 / Luke 17:4.'

God will break down their stubborn pride and make the sky above them like iron and the ground beneath them like bronze, Leviticus 26:19. Their strength will be spent in vain, because their soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of their land yield their fruit, Leviticus 26:20 / Deuteronomy 11:17 / Deuteronomy 28:18 / Ezekiel 33:28 / Ezekiel 36:34-35.

If they are disobedient, then more afflictions will come upon them. God will multiply their afflictions seven times over, as their sins deserve, Leviticus 26:21 / Leviticus 26:18 / Leviticus 26:27-28 / Leviticus 26:23-24.

God will send wild animals against them, and they will rob them of their children, destroy their cattle and make them so few in number that their roads will be deserted, Leviticus 26:22 / Deuteronomy 32:24 / 2 Kings 17:25 / Ezekiel 5:17 / Ezekiel 14:15 / Judges 5:6-7 / Isaiah 33:8.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'God fulfilled these threatening's at different times. He sent fiery serpents among them, Numbers 21:6, lions, 2 Kings 17:25, bears, 2 Kings 2:24, and threatened them with total desolation, so that their land should be overrun with wild beasts, Ezekiel 5:17.'

If they still refuse God's correction and continue to be hostile toward Him, then God Himself will be hostile toward them and will afflict them for their sins seven times over, Leviticus 26:23-24 / Leviticus 26:18 / Leviticus 26:21 / Leviticus 26:27-28 / Jeremiah 2:30.

God will the sword on them to avenge the breaking of the covenant and when they withdraw into their cities, God will send a plague among them, and they will be given into enemy hands, Leviticus 26:25.

When God cuts off their supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake their bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight, they will eat, but they will not be satisfied, Leviticus 26:26 / Leviticus 26:16 / 2 Kings 6:25 / Jeremiah 14:18 / Lamentations 4:9 / Ezekiel 5:12 / Hosea 4:10 / Micah 6:14 / Haggai 1:6.

If, after all of this, they continue to disobey God and continue to be hostile toward Him, then in anger, God will be hostile toward them, and God Himself will punish them for their sins seven times over, Leviticus 26:27-28 / Leviticus 26:18 / Leviticus 26:21 / Leviticus 26:23-24. God says they will eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, Leviticus 26:29 / Jeremiah 19:9.

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The cannibalism of Leviticus 26:29 was experienced in Israel no less than three times:

1. In the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings 6:29 / Lamentations 4:10.
2. In the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.
3. In the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.’

He will destroy their high places, cut down their incense altars and pile their dead bodies on the lifeless forms of their idols, and He will abhor them, Leviticus 26:30 / 2 Chronicles 34:4.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is no doubt that the word here denotes elevated spots dedicated to false worship, Deuteronomy 12:2, and especially, it would seem, to that of Baal, Numbers 22:41 / Joshua 13:17. Such spots were, however, employed and approved for the worship of Yahweh, not only before the building of the temple, but afterward, Judges 6:25-26 / Judges 13:16-23 / 1 Samuel 7:10 / 1 Samuel 16:5 / 1 Kings 3:2 / 1 Kings 18:30 / 2 Kings 12:3 / 1 Chronicles 21:26, etc.).’

God will turn their cities into ruins and lay waste their sanctuaries, Psalms 68:35 / Psalms 74:7, and He will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings, Leviticus 26:31 / Leviticus 1:9.

God Himself will lay waste the land, so that their enemies who live there will be appalled, Leviticus 26:32. He will scatter Israel among the nations and will draw out His sword and pursue them and their land will be laid waste, and their cities will lie in ruins, Leviticus 26:33.

Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and Israel is taken captive in the country of your enemies, Leviticus 26:34. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths they lived in it, Leviticus 26:35 / 2 Chronicles 36:20-21.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘From Saul to the Babylonish captivity are numbered about four hundred and ninety years, during which period there were seventy Sabbaths of years; for 7, multiplied by 70, make 490. Now the Babylonish captivity lasted seventy years, and during that time the land of Israel rested. Therefore, the land rested just as many years in the Babylonish captivity, as it should have rested Sabbaths if the Jews had observed the laws relative to the Sabbaths of the land.’

As for those of them who are left, God will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight, Leviticus 26:36. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them, Leviticus 26:36-37.

They won't be able to stand before their enemies, Leviticus 26:37. They will perish among the nations and the land of their enemies will devour them, Leviticus 26:38 / Numbers 13:32 / Ezekiel 36:13.

Those of them who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins and also because of their ancestors' sins they will waste away, Leviticus 26:39.

'But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors—their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees. Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the LORD their God. But for their sake, I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD.' These are the decrees, the laws, and the regulations that the LORD established at Mount Sinai between himself and the Israelites through Moses.' Leviticus 26:40-46

God is so patient and so merciful with His people; He never punishes anyone without telling them first why they are being punished. He always provides a way out for His people in order that they may return to God and enjoy the blessings which come from Him.

If all the sicknesses, Leviticus 26:16, famines, Leviticus 26:16 / Leviticus 26:26, wars and oppression by their enemies, Leviticus 26:17, plagues, Leviticus 26:21, pestilence, Leviticus 26:25, devastation, Leviticus 26:30-33. And the terror of their enemies and captivity, Leviticus 26:33, brought Israel to their knees and humbled them, 2 Chronicles 7:14 / James 4:10. If all these things brought about a confession of sin from Israel, Leviticus 26:40-41, then God would restore them again.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning uncircumcised hearts, Leviticus 26:41.

'The outward sign of the covenant might be preserved, but the answering grace in the heart would be wanting, Acts 7:51 / Romans 2:28-29 / Jeremiah 6:10 / Jeremiah 9:26 / Colossians 2:11.'

God will remember His covenant with Jacob, Genesis 35:1-20, Isaac, Genesis 17:19-21 / Genesis 26:1-5, and Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3 / Genesis 12:7, and He will remember the land, Leviticus 26:42.

For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them and Israel will pay for their sins because they rejected God's laws and abhorred God's decrees, Leviticus 26:43.

Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, God won't reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking His covenant with them because He is the LORD their God, Leviticus 26:44.

But for their sake, God will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom He brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God, Leviticus 26:45.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'All of the blessings promised through Moses and the prophets to repentant and restored Israel find their full accomplishment in the Spiritual Israel, which is the Church of Jesus Christ, the only Israel that God now has.'

These are the decrees, the laws, and the regulations that the LORD established at Mount Sinai between Himself and the Israelites through Moses, Leviticus 26:46.

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate a person to the LORD by giving the equivalent value, set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel; for a female, set her value at thirty shekels; for a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels; for a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels of silver and that of a female at three shekels of silver; for a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels and of a female at ten shekels. If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, the person being dedicated is to be presented to the priest, who will set the value according to what the one making the vow can afford. ‘If what they vowed is an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD, such an animal given to the LORD becomes holy.

They must not exchange it or substitute a good one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one; if they should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy. If what they vowed is a ceremonially unclean animal—one that is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD—the animal must be presented to the priest, who will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, that is what it will be. If the owner wishes to redeem the animal, a fifth must be added to its value. ‘If anyone dedicates their house as something holy to the LORD, the priest will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, so it will remain. If the one who dedicates their house wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the house will again become theirs.’ Leviticus 27:1-15

VOWS AND TITHES

Unlike today where some people don’t take vows seriously, God has always been serious when it comes to making any vow, especially any vow which was made to Him, Matthew 5:37.

Here we find God describing a vow which was made outside of the law, a vow in relation to making an offering to the Lord, Leviticus 27:1-2 / Leviticus 26:46 / 1 Samuel 1:11 / Judges 11:30-31.

These vows were not forced on people; they were to be taken voluntarily, Deuteronomy 23:21-23. However, because the vow was made to God, this made the vow binding.

Kellogg, in his commentary, says the following.

‘What has preceded in Leviticus has concerned religious duties which were obligatory upon all Israelites, but the regulations of this chapter, on the contrary, have to do with special vows which were not obligatory, but voluntary, Deuteronomy 23:22.’

Notice how God speaks of the value of the offering, the value was gauged by the age and sex of the offering, and the value was gauged in reference to the Year of Jubilee, Leviticus 27:2 / Leviticus 25:8-22.

A person could redeem a vow for a person, fifty shekels of silver for a twenty to sixty-year-old male, Leviticus 27:3. Thirty shekels of silver for a twenty to sixty-year-old female, Leviticus 27:4. Twenty shekels of silver for a five to twenty-year-old male, Leviticus 27:5.

Ten shekels of silver for a five to twenty-year-old male, Leviticus 27:5. Five shekels for a one month to five-year male, Leviticus 27:6. Three shekels for a one month to five-year-old female, Leviticus 27:6. Fifteen shekels for a male over sixty years old, Leviticus 27:7.

Ten shekels for a female over sixty years old, if the person is poor then the priest can make an estimate that would be within the person’s ability to pay, Leviticus 27:8. Once again, we see God caring for the poor in society, if a person was poor then the priest would give the valuation of the offering.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

Leviticus 27:8 allowed the priest to reduce the price of redemption for those unable to pay the full price. The mention of the priest here also shows that these calculations of value were the responsibility of the priesthood, despite the fact, Leviticus 27:1, of the instructions being given to ‘the children of Israel.’ This mention of ‘the ability of him that vowed’ is a vital factor even today in the matter of Christian giving, 1 Corinthians 16:2.’

Making a vow offering of an animal meant that the animal had become holy, Leviticus 27:9. We see that if someone vowed to give an animal for an offering, they couldn’t change their mind and offer money instead; an animal must be given.

They can’t exchange it or substitute a good one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one, but if they should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy, Leviticus 27:10.

If the animal that was given in a vow was unclean, then the priest could value it and sell it, Leviticus 27:11-12. If the owner wanted to redeem the animal, then they could, for the price of the valuation, plus one-fifth the value of the animal, Leviticus 27:13. The same rule applied to houses that were offered to the Lord, Leviticus 27:14-15.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Leviticus 27:14-15.

‘This law relates to houses in the country, Leviticus 25:31, which were under the same general law as the land itself, with a right of redemption for the inheritor until the next Jubilee, Leviticus 27:17-19. For houses in walled towns, the right of redemption lasted for only one year, Leviticus 25:29.’

Clements, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These laws highlighted the need for caution and seriousness in making vows and promises to God. Rash promises may afterward be regretted, and Israel’s law did not permit the man who had made a hasty promise to forget it and do nothing about it. We may well pause to consider how many promises we have made to God and have not fulfilled.’

The Nazarite vow can be found in Numbers 6:1-21. This basically meant they had to dedicate themselves to the Lord. That person had to abstain from all products of the grapevine; no razor was to pass over their head. They weren’t allowed to go near a dead person, but if someone suddenly died in their presence, they were to shave their head on the day they became unclean on the seventh day.

On the eighth day, they were to offer two turtle doves or two young pigeons as a sin offering and a burnt offering at the doorway of the tabernacle. If they were to offer a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering, they could then dedicate themselves to the Lord once more as a Nazarite.

What they had to do at the completion of their vow was to sacrifice a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering. They were to sacrifice at the door of the tabernacle a one-year-old male lamb.

For a sin offering, they were to offer a one-year-old ewe lamb; for a peace offering, they were to sacrifice one ram. They were also to offer a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with a meal and drink offering.

Then they were to shave their hair off and burn it in the fire of the peace offering. The priest was to take their portion, and the person who had the vow couldn’t drink wine.

The vow of the women can be found in Numbers 30:1-16. If a man-made a vow unto the Lord, he was obligated to fulfil it. However, if a daughter makes a vow and her father hears it and says nothing concerning it, then the vow stands and is to be fulfilled. If she makes a vow and her father hears it and forbids it, then she is not under obligation to fulfil it.

If a married woman makes a vow and her husband hears it and says nothing concerning it, then the vow stands and is to be fulfilled. If she makes a vow and her husband hears it and forbids it, then she is not under obligation to fulfil it.

If a widow or divorced woman makes a vow, their vows would be binding upon them to fulfil. If they make a vow in their husband's house and their husband hears it and says nothing concerning it, then the vow stands and is to be fulfilled. If they make a vow in her husband's house and their husband hears it and forbids it, then they are not under obligation to fulfil it.

'If anyone dedicates to the LORD part of their family land, its value is to be set according to the amount of seed required for it—fifty shekels of silver to a homer of barley seed. If they dedicate a field during the Year of Jubilee, the value that has been set remains. But if they dedicate a field after the Jubilee, the priest will determine the value according to the number of years that remain until the next Year of Jubilee, and its set value will be reduced. If the one who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the field will again become theirs. If, however, they do not redeem the field, or if they have sold it to someone else, it can never be redeemed.

When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will become holy, like a field devoted to the LORD; it will become priestly property. 'If anyone dedicates to the LORD a field they have bought, which is not part of their family land, the priest will determine its value up to the Year of Jubilee, and the owner must pay its value on that day as something holy to the LORD. In the Year of Jubilee, the field will revert to the person from whom it was bought, the one whose land it was. Every value is to be set according to the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel.'

Leviticus 27:16-25

The land was very precious to Israel, and so, anyone who owned a piece of land could offer it to the Lord. This all depended upon whether a person inherited the land or bought the land in the first place. The value of the land was based on how much seed was necessary to sow the land, Leviticus 27:16 / Exodus 16:16 / Exodus 38:24.

Remember, the value of the land was given before the Year of Jubilee, and any land which was inherited could be bought back for the value of the land, plus one-fifth of the value, Leviticus 27:17-19.

If the land was not bought back, then it became the permanent property of the priests, Leviticus 27:20-21. If anyone dedicated any property that they had bought, then after the valuation, this land could go back to the original owner in the Jubilee, but only if the valuation was paid to the priests for the land, Leviticus 27:22-25 / Leviticus 25:23-34 / Exodus 30:13 / Exodus 38:24.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following about the sanctuary shekel, Leviticus 27:25 / Exodus 38:24.

'A standard shekel; the standard being kept in the sanctuary to try and regulate all the weights in the land by, Genesis 20:16 / Genesis 23:15.'

'No one, however, may dedicate the firstborn of an animal, since the firstborn already belongs to the LORD; whether an ox or a sheep, it is the LORD's. If it is one of the unclean animals, it may be bought back at its set value, adding a fifth of the value to it. If it is not redeemed, it is to be sold at its set value. 'But nothing that a person owns and devotes to the LORD—whether a human being or an animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. 'No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; they are to be put to death.

'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.' These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.' Leviticus 27:26-34

The firstborn of the animals wasn't permitted to be given to the Lord, because they already belonged to God, Leviticus 27:26 / Exodus 13:2 / Exodus 34:19. However, if the firstborn animal was unclean, this could be valued and redeemed for the valuation price plus one-fifth of the value, Leviticus 27:27. If it wasn't brought back then it had to be sold, Leviticus 27:27. The reason for this is because the priests weren't permitted to own any unclean animals.

Notice if anything was devoted to God, it wasn't to be sold. This is because it was totally given to God and couldn't be redeemed because everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD, Leviticus 27:28. In this case, whatever it was

which was devoted to God was to be totally destroyed, and the reason was to prevent anyone from using it for themselves.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Leviticus 27:28.

‘This passage does not permit human sacrifices. Man is elsewhere clearly recognised as one of the creatures which were not to be offered in sacrifice, Exodus 13:13 / Exodus 34:20 / Numbers 18:15.’

No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed, and they are to be put to death, Leviticus 27:29. A tithe of the land, the herd, or the flock could be redeemed if the valuation, plus one-fifth, was paid, Leviticus 27:30-31 / Genesis 14:20 / Deuteronomy 14:22 / Deuteronomy 14:28.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This tithe was a commonly recognised obligation to God, and for this reason it was not part of the Mosaic Law, Genesis 14:20 / Genesis 28:22. This was one of two tithes the Israelites had to pay, Deuteronomy 14:22-27, the other being the tithe they paid every three years to support the poor, Deuteronomy 14:28-29. Probably Moses included the directions concerning it in this section of Leviticus because this tithe was a gift to God.’

The reference to ‘every tenth passing under the shepherd’s rod’, Leviticus 27:32, simply means that this is what the shepherds did; he gave a tithe whenever an animal was received by him.

Coleman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Leviticus 27:32 refers to the custom of counting animals by making them pass in a single file out of an enclosure and marking each tenth animal by a rod dipped in colouring material.’

Notice also that the shepherd couldn’t be selective when choosing the animal; he couldn’t just pick out the good ones whilst ignoring the bad ones. If a substitution is to be made, then both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed, Leviticus 27:33. These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites, Leviticus 27:34.

Something important we need to note about giving is that it was a sacrifice, and it was personal. If I lived in a posh house and offered that house to the Lord, I shouldn’t expect to live in it any longer or enjoy the benefits of owning that house anymore. In the same manner, the Israelites couldn’t give the Lord a field and expect to continue to use it for their own gain.

CONCLUSION

Leviticus teaches God’s people how they are to approach Him and live pleasing in His sight. Its central command is to ‘be holy’, Leviticus 19:2. We cannot approach God in any way we like; we must approach Him on His terms and under His conditions.

This has been the message of Leviticus: God is going to dwell with Israel, He will be their God, and they will be His people. This covenant relationship continues even today; it is a relationship which is found in the church. We have entered into the promise, which was initially given to Israel, 2 Corinthians 6:16.