



*YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!*

# LEVITICUS

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(BIBLE INTERPRETATION)

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# INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS

## I. Special Introduction to Leviticus

- A. I do not believe that every book in the OT is Messianic. Leviticus is not an allegorical or typological study of Christ. Remember, a proper interpretation must be based on
1. the original author's intent as it related to his day
  2. a NT use or application of Leviticus; Jesus does use Leviticus (i.e., Lev. 19:18) as the place "the second great commandment is given" (cf. Matt. 22:39; also note 19:19).

He also, at times when speaking to Jews, mentioned the legal procedures of the Mosaic law (i.e., Matt. 8:4 referring to Lev. 13:49; 14). However, the specific procedures and tabernacle structure are not Messianic. It must be acknowledged, however, that the sacrificial system as a whole foreshadows Jesus' substitutionary death (i.e., Isaiah 53; John 1:29; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21).

- B. The legal and sacrificial elements of Leviticus 1-7 are repetitious. Therefore, I will approach the exegesis as follows:
1. a detailed outline of the sacrificial procedure (see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East at Lev. 1:3)
  2. a list of Special Topics that relate to Leviticus 1-7
  3. brief verse-by-verse exegetical notes
    - a. lexical
    - b. MSS difficulties
    - c. Special Topics

## II. Name of the Book

- A. In the Hebrew Text (MT) it is the first word of the book, "and He (YHWH) called."
- B. The Talmud (Mishnah) called it "the law of the Priests."
- C. From the LXX translation it is "Levitical Book."
- D. The Latin Vulgate of Jerome entitled it "Leviticus."

## III. CANONIZATION

- A. It is part of the first section of the Hebrew Canon called "The Torah" or "teachings" or "Law."
- B. The section is known as the Pentateuch (five scrolls) in the LXX.
- C. It is sometimes called "The Five Books of Moses" in English.
- D. It includes a continuous account by Moses from creation through Moses' life, Genesis – Deuteronomy.

## IV. GENRE – The book is mostly legislation, except for the historical narrative of chapters 8-10.

- V. AUTHORSHIP – Leviticus 1:1 sets the often repeated pattern (35 times) “YHWH said to Moses.” See the detailed discussion in the Genesis outline. See Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b.
- VI. DATE – Compare Exod. 40:2, 17 with Num. 1:1. This shows that it was given to Moses by God in the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year after the Exodus. See the detailed discussion in the book of Exodus outline at [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org)
- VII. SOURCES OF CORROBORATING THE HISTORICAL SETTING – See Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance at Lev. 1:3.
- VIII. LITERARY UNITS (context)
- A. BRIEF OUTLINE:
1. Chapters 1-16 – How to approach a Holy God?
  2. Chapters 17-26 – How does one continue in communion with a Holy God?
- B. The author’s own use of an introduction formula, “And the Lord spoke unto Moses (or Aaron) saying. . .”
1. This may imply that this revelatory material was given orally over a period of time.
  2. The places this formula occurs: Lev. 1:1-3:17; 4:1-5:13; 5:14-19; 5:20-26; 6:1-11; 6:12-16; 6:17-7:21; 7:22-38; 8:1-10:20; 11:1-47; 12:1-8; 13:1-59; 14:1-32; 14:33-57; 15:1-33; 16:1-34; 17:1-16; 18:1-3; 19:1-37; 20:1-27; 21:1-24; 22:1-16; 22:17-25; 22:26-33; 23:1-8; 23:9-22; 23:26-32; 23:33-44; 24:1-23; 25:1-26:46; 27:1-34;
- C. EXPANDED OUTLINE:
1. Removal of Uncleaness, Leviticus 1-16
    - a. Laws of Sacrifice, Lev. 1:1-7:38 (see Special Topic at Lev. 1:3)
      - (1) Burnt offering, Lev. 1:3-17 & 6:8-13
      - (2) Meal offering, Lev. 2:1-17 & 6:14-23
      - (3) Peace offering, Lev. 3:1-17; 7:33 & 7:11-21
      - (4) Sin offering, Lev. 4:1; 5:13 & 6:24-30
      - (5) Guilt offering, Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10
        - (a) Unintentional sin against YHWH’s covenant, Lev. 4:1-35; 5:14-19
        - (b) Intentional sin against a covenant partner, Lev. 5:1-13; 6:1-7  
(Lev. 1:1-6:7 for people; chapters 6:8-7:36 for priests)
    - b. Consecration of Priests, Lev. 8:1-10:20
      - (1) Preparation for anointing, Lev. 8:1-5
      - (2) Washing, clothing, and anointing, Lev. 8:6-13
      - (3) Anointing sacrifice, Lev. 8:14-32
      - (4) Moses gives Aaron instructions, Lev. 9:1-7
      - (5) Aaron and sons begin, Lev. 9:8-21
      - (6) Aaron blesses the people and YHWH
      - (7) The sin of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:1-3
      - (8) Their fate and removal, Lev. 10:4-7
      - (9) Abstinance from wine while on duty, Lev. 10:8-11
      - (10) Priest’s part of sacrifices, Lev. 10:12-20

- c. The Clean and Unclean, Leviticus 11-15
    - (1) Animals, Leviticus 11 (cf. Deut. 14:6-20)
    - (2) Childbirth, Leviticus 12
    - (3) Skin diseases, Leviticus 13-14
      - (a) In man, Lev. 13:1-46
      - (b) In clothes, Lev. 13:47-59
      - (c) Purification, Lev. 14:1-32
      - (d) In houses, Lev. 14:33-53
      - (e) Summary, Lev. 14:54
    - (4) Purification from bodily discharges (men and women), Leviticus 15
  - d. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), an annual day of cleansing, Leviticus 16 (this seems to be the climax of chapters 1-16)
    - (1) Priestly preparation, Lev. 16:1-4
    - (2) Sin offering for the High Priest, Lev. 16:5-10
    - (3) The ritual, Lev. 16:23-28
    - (4) The annual enactment, Lev. 16:29-34
2. Restoration of Holiness and Fellowship with God, Leviticus 17-26
- a. The Sacrificial Blood, Lev. 17:1-16
  - b. The religious and moral standards, Lev. 18:1-20:27
    - (1) Incest
    - (2) Sexual sins
    - (3) Punishments, Leviticus 20
  - c. The Holiness of Priests, Lev. 21:1-22:33
  - d. The Holiness of annual feast days, Lev. 23:1-24:23
    - (1) Sabbath, Lev. 23:1-3
    - (2) Passover and Unleavened Bread, Lev. 23:5-8
    - (3) First-fruits, Lev. 23:9-14
    - (4) Harvest, Lev. 23:15-24
    - (5) Pentecost, Lev. 23:23-25
    - (6) Day of Atonement, Lev. 23:26-32 (only fast day)
    - (7) Tabernacles (Booths), Lev. 23:33-43
  - e. Special Years, Lev. 25:1-55
    - (1) Sabbatical, Lev. 25:2-7
    - (2) Jubilee, Lev. 25:8-55
      - (a) Observance, Lev. 25:8-12
      - (b) Effects, Lev. 25:13-34
      - (c) Each covenant individual's worth and freedom, Lev. 25:35-55
  - f. Covenant Blessing and Cursing, Lev. 26:1-46
3. Appendix (vows), Lev. 27:1-34
- a. Persons, Lev. 27:1-8
  - b. Animals, Lev. 27:9-13
  - c. Residences, Lev. 27:14-15
  - d. Land, Lev. 27:16-25
  - e. Firstlings, Lev. 27:26-27
  - f. Devoted thing, Lev. 27:28-39
  - g. Tithe, Lev. 27:30-34

## IX. MAIN TRUTHS

- A. The book of Leviticus is concerned with the legal basis for the civil and religious life of the nation of Israel and the role of the priesthood. It gives guidance for the use of the Tabernacle described in Exodus 25-40.
- B. It describes how a sinful man can approach a holy God and also how he maintains fellowship. “Holiness” is the key to the book (cf. Lev. 11:44 [Matt. 5:48]). See Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c.
- C. Wonder of wonders, God desires that His sinful covenant people return to fellowship with Him and He has provided a way, the sacrificial system.
- D. YHWH’s character is revealed:
  - 1. In providing a sacrificial system, cf. Leviticus 1-7 (Grace)
  - 2. In historical acts, cf. Leviticus 8-10 (Justice)
  - 3. In His continuing presence with the people (Faithfulness)
- E. Jesus used Lev. 19:18 as the second of two great commandments that summarize the Law (cf. Matt. 22:36-39; Mark 12:28-31). Jesus knew Leviticus but He quoted Deuteronomy much more often. See Special Topic: Paul’s View of the Mosaic Law at Lev. 5:17-19 and Special Topic: Mosaic Law and the Christian at Lev. Lev. 18:19.

# LEVITICUS 1

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Law of Burnt Offerings	The Burnt Offering	Burnt Offerings	Sacrifices Burnt Whole	The Burnt Offerings
1:1-9	1:1-2	1:1-2	1:1-2a 1:2b-9	1:1-2
	1:3-9	1:3-9		1:3-9
1:10-13	1:10-13	1:10-13	1:10-13	1:10-13
1:14-17	1:14-17	1:14-17	1:14-17	1:14-17

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter deals with the voluntary offering of an individual to ensure or restore favor with YHWH.
- B. There are several types of the whole burnt offerings (holocaust). Probably they represent different socio-economic levels.
  1. the bull (herd), Lev. 1:1-9
  2. the male sheep or goat (flock), Lev. 1:10-13
  3. the bird, Lev. 1:14-17
- C. My favorite commentator on these OT ritual texts is Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, particularly for sacrifices at pp. 415-454.  
I also enjoy the discussion on “offerings and sacrifices” in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 996-1021.
- D. There seems to be some variety of procedures but this may be attributed to the assumed knowledge of the receivers and the brevity of the writer (i.e., laying on of hands on each type of animal, a set ritual pronouncement by the officiating priest).  
There is obviously a distinction where the animal was killed.

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1-9

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock. <sup>3</sup>If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD <sup>4</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. <sup>5</sup>He shall slay the young bull before the LORD and Aaron’s sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup>He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it

into its pieces. <sup>7</sup>The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. <sup>8</sup>Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. <sup>9</sup>Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.”

**1:1 “the LORD”** The all capitals LORD is the modern English translation way of reflecting YHWH, the covenant name for Israel's Deity. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NAMES FOR DEITY

### A. *El* (BDB 42, KB 48)

1. The original meaning of the generic ancient term for deity is uncertain, though many scholars believe it comes from the Akkadian root, “to be strong” or “to be powerful” (cf. Gen. 17:1; Num. 23:19; Deut. 7:21; Ps. 50:1).
2. In the Canaanite pantheon the high god is *El* (Ras Shamra texts), called “the Father of the gods” and “Lord of heaven.”
3. In the Bible *El* is often compounded with other terms. These combinations became a way to characterize God.
  - a. *El-Elyon* (“God Most High,” BDB 42 & 751 II), Gen. 14:18-22; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 14:14
  - b. *El-Roi* (“God who sees” or “God who reveals Himself,” BDB 42 & 909), Gen. 16:13
  - c. *El-Shaddai* (“God Almighty” or “God of all compassion” or “God of the mountain,” BDB 42 & 994), Gen. 17:1; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25; Exod. 6:3
  - d. *El-Olam* (“the Everlasting God,” BDB 42 & 761), Gen. 21:33. This term is theologically linked to God's promise to David, 2 Sam. 7:13,16
  - e. *El-Berit* (“God of the Covenant,” BDB 42 & 136), Jdgs. 9:46
4. *El* is equated with
  - a. YHWH in Num. 23:8; Ps. 16:1-2; 85:8; Isa. 42:5
  - b. *Elohim* in Gen. 46:3; Job 5:8, “I am *El*, the *Elohim* of your father”
  - c. *Shaddai* in Gen. 49:25; Num. 24:4,16
  - d. “jealousy” in Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15
  - e. “mercy” in Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:31
  - f. “great and awesome” in Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4
  - g. “knowledge” in 1 Sam. 2:3
  - h. “my strong refuge” in 2 Sam. 22:33
  - i. “my avenger” in 2 Sam. 22:48
  - j. “holy one” in Isa. 5:16
  - k. “might” in Isa. 10:21
  - l. “my salvation” in Isa. 12:2
  - m. “great and powerful” in Jer. 32:18
  - n. “retribution” in Jer. 51:56
5. A combination of all the major OT names for God is found in Joshua 22:22 (*El, Elohim, YHWH*, series repeated).

B. *Elyon* (BDB 751, KB 832)

1. Its basic meaning is “high,” “exalted,” or “lifted up” (cf. Gen. 40:17; 1 Kgs. 9:8; 2 Kgs. 18:17; Neh. 3:25; Jer. 20:2; 36:10; Ps. 18:13).
2. It is used in a parallel sense to several other names/titles of God.
  - a. *Elohim* – Ps. 47:1-2; 73:11; 107:11
  - b. YHWH – Gen. 14:22; 2 Sam. 22:14
  - c. *El-Shaddai* – Ps. 91:1,9
  - d. *El* – Num. 24:16
  - e. *Elah* – used often in Daniel 2-6 and Ezra 4-7, linked with *illair* (Aramaic for “High God”) in Dan. 3:26; 4:2; 5:18,21
3. It is often used by non-Israelites.
  - a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
  - b. Balaam, Num. 24:15
  - c. Moses, speaking of the nations in Deut. 32:8
  - d. Luke’s Gospel in the NT, writing to Gentiles, also uses the Greek equivalent *Hupsistos* (cf. 1:32,35,76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17)

C. *Elohim* (PLURAL), *Eloah* (SINGULAR), used primarily in poetry (BDB 43, KB 52)

1. This term is not found outside the Old Testament.
2. This word can designate the God of Israel or the gods of the nations (cf. Exod. 3:6; 20:3). Abraham’s family was polytheistic (cf. Jos. 24:2).
3. It can refer to Israeli judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6).
4. The term *elohim* is also used of other spiritual beings (angels, the demonic) as in Deut. 32:8 (LXX); Ps. 8:5; Job 1:6; 38:7.
5. In the Bible it is the first title/name for Deity (cf. Gen. 1:1). It is used exclusively until Gen. 2:4, where it is combined with YHWH. It basically (theologically) refers to God as creator, sustainer, and provider of all life on this planet (cf. Psalm 104).

It is synonymous with *El* (cf. Deut. 32:15-19). It can also parallel YHWH as Psalm 14 (*Elohim*, vv. 1,2,5; YHWH, vv. 2,6; even *Adon*, v. 4).
6. Although PLURAL and used of other gods, this term often designates the God of Israel, but usually it has the SINGULAR VERB to denote the monotheistic usage (see Special Topic: Monotheism).
7. It is strange that a common name for the monotheistic God of Israel is PLURAL! Although there is no certainty, here are the theories.
  - a. Hebrew has many PLURALS, often used for emphasis. Closely related to this is the later Hebrew grammatical feature called “the plural of majesty,” where the PLURAL is used to magnify a concept.
  - b. This may refer to the angelic council, with whom God meets in heaven and who does His bidding (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:19-23; Job 1:6; Ps. 82:1; 89:5,7).
  - c. It is even possible this reflects the NT revelation of the one God in three persons. In Gen. 1:1 God creates; Gen. 1:2 the Spirit broods, and from the NT Jesus is God the Father’s agent in creation (cf. John 1:3,10; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2; 2:10).



D. *El Shaddai*

The title “God Almighty” is *El Shaddai*. The etymology of this term (BDB 994) is uncertain. The rabbis say that it means “self-sufficiency.” The LXX and the Vulgate follow this understanding by translating it “God (*El*) Almighty.” Apparently this was the patriarchal name for God (cf. Exod. 6:3). It is used six times in Genesis and thirty-one times in Job. Albright asserted that it is from an Akkadian root that can mean mountain or rock (cf. Ps. 18:1, 2). If the term implies, “God of the mountain” as the true meaning, then it must reflect Canaanite mythology (cf. Isa. 14:13; Ezek. 28:2) or Babylonian religion (i.e., ziggurats being raised on human-built mountains, cf. Genesis 10) on which to worship their gods. Whatever the original intent, as early as Exodus 19-20 the focus will change to the God of Mt. Sinai (cf. Jdgs. 5:5).

E. YHWH (BDB 217, KB 394)

1. This is the name which reflects deity as the covenant-making God; God as savior, redeemer! Humans break covenants, but God is loyal to His word, promise, covenant (cf. Psalm 103).

This name is first mentioned in combination with *Elohim* in Gen. 2:4. There are not two creation accounts in Genesis 1-2, but two emphases: (1) God as the creator of the universe (the physical) and (2) God as the special creator of humanity. Genesis 2:4-3:24 begins the special revelation about the privileged position and purpose of mankind, as well as the problem of sin and rebellion associated with the unique position.

2. In Gen. 4:26 it is said “*men* began to call upon the name of the LORD” (YHWH). However, Exod. 6:3 implies that early covenant people (the Patriarchs and their families) knew God only as *El-Shaddai*. The name YHWH is explained only one time in Exod. 3:13-16, esp. v. 14. However, the writings of Moses often interpret words by popular word plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 17:5; 27:36; 29:13-35). There have been several theories as to the meaning of this name (taken from IDB, vol. 2, pp. 409-11).
  - a. from an Arabic root, “to show fervent love”
  - b. from an Arabic root “to blow” (YHWH as storm God)
  - c. from a Ugaritic (Canaanite) root “to speak”
  - d. following a Phoenician inscription, a CAUSATIVE PARTICIPLE meaning “the One who sustains,” or “the One who establishes”
  - e. from the Hebrew *Qal* form “the One who is,” or “the One who is present” (in FUTURE TENSE, “the One who will be”)
  - f. from the Hebrew *Hiphil* form “the One who causes to be”
  - g. from the Hebrew root “to live” (e.g., Gen. 3:21), meaning “the ever-living, only-living One”
  - h. from the context of Exod. 3:13-16 a play on the IMPERFECT form used in a PERFECT TENSE, “I shall continue to be what I used to be” or “I shall continue to be what I have always been” (cf. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Old Testament*, p. 67). The full name YHWH is often expressed in abbreviation or possibly an original form.
    - (1) *Yah* (e.g., Hallelu - yah, BDB 219, cf. Exod. 15:2; 17:16; Ps. 89:8; 104:35)
    - (2) *Yahu* (“iah” ending of names, e.g., Isaiah)
    - (3) *Yo* (“Jo” beginning of names, e.g., Joshua or Joel)
3. In later Judaism this covenant name became so holy (the tetragrammaton) that Jews were afraid to say it lest they break the command of Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; 6:13. So they substituted the Hebrew term for “owner,” “master,” “husband,” “lord”—*adon* or *adonai* (my

lord). When they came to YHWH in their reading of OT texts they pronounced “lord.” This is why YHWH is written LORD in English translations.

4. As with *El*, YHWH is often combined with other terms to emphasize certain characteristics of the Covenant God of Israel. While there are many possible combination terms, here are some.
  - a. YHWH – *Yireh* (YHWH will provide, BDB 217 & 906), Gen. 22:14
  - b. YHWH – *Rophekha* (YHWH is your healer, BDB 217 & 950, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 15:26
  - c. YHWH – *Nissi* (YHWH is my banner, BDB 217 & 651), Exod. 17:15
  - d. YHWH – *Meqaddishkem* (YHWH the One who sanctifies you, BDB 217 & 872, *Piel* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 31:13
  - e. YHWH – *Shalom* (YHWH is Peace, BDB 217 & 1022), Jdgs. 6:24
  - f. YHWH – *Sabaoth* (YHWH of hosts, BDB 217 & 878), 1 Sam. 1:3,11; 4:4; 15:2; often in the Prophets
  - g. YHWH – *Ro’I* (YHWH is my shepherd, BDB 217 & 944, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Ps. 23:1
  - h. YHWH – *Sidqenu* (YHWH is our righteousness, BDB 217 & 841), Jer. 23:6
  - i. YHWH – *Shammah* (YHWH is there, BDB 217 & 1027), Ezek. 48:35

▣ **“to Moses”** YHWH revealed Himself directly and verbally to Moses. See Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: MOSES’ AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH**

- A. The Bible itself does not name the author (as is true of many OT books). Genesis has no “I” sections like Ezra, Nehemiah, or “we” sections like Acts.
- B. Jewish tradition
  1. Ancient Jewish writers say Moses wrote it
    - a. Ben Sirah’s *Ecclesiasticus*, 24:23, written about 185 B.C.
    - b. The *Baba Bathra* 14b, a part of the Talmud which gives traditional authorship of OT books
    - c. Philo of Alexandria, Egypt, a Jewish philosopher, living about 20 B.C. to A.D. 42
    - d. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, living about A.D. 37-70
  2. YHWH reveals truth to Moses
    - a. Moses is said to have written for the people
      - (1) Exodus 17:14
      - (2) Exodus 24:4, 7
      - (3) Exodus 34:27, 28
      - (4) Numbers 33:2
      - (5) Deuteronomy 31:9, 22, 24-26
    - b. God is said to have spoken through Moses to the people
      - (1) Deuteronomy 5:4-5, 22
      - (2) Deuteronomy 6:1

- (3) Deuteronomy 10:1
    - c. Moses is said to have spoken the words of the Torah to the people
      - (1) Deuteronomy 1:1, 3
      - (2) Deuteronomy 5:1
      - (3) Deuteronomy 27:1
      - (4) Deuteronomy 29:2
      - (5) Deuteronomy 31:1, 30
      - (6) Deuteronomy 32:44
      - (7) Deuteronomy 33:1
  - 3. OT authors attribute it to Moses
    - a. Joshua 8:31
    - b. 2 Kings 14:6
    - c. Ezra 6:18
    - d. Nehemiah 8:1; 13:1-2
    - e. 2 Chronicles 25:4; 34:12; 35:12
    - f. Daniel 9:11
    - g. Malachi 4:4
- C. Christian tradition
- 1. Jesus attributes quotes from the Torah to Moses
    - a. Matthew 8:4; 19:8
    - b. Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26
    - c. Luke 5:14; 16:31; 20:37; 24:27, 44
    - d. John 5:46-47; 7:19, 23
  - 2. Other NT authors attribute quotes from the Torah to Moses
    - a. Luke 2:22
    - b. Acts 3:22; 13:39; 15:1, 15-21; 26:22; 28:23
    - c. Romans 10:5, 19
    - d. 1 Corinthians 9:9
    - e. 2 Corinthians 3:15
    - f. Hebrews 10:28
    - g. Revelation 15:3
  - 3. Most early Church Fathers accepted Mosaic authorship. However, Ireneaus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian all had questions about Moses' relationship to the current canonical form of Genesis (cf. D. 2. on page 3).
- D. Modern Scholarship
- 1. There have obviously been some editorial additions to the Torah (seemingly to make the ancient work more understandable to contemporary readers, which was a characteristic of Egyptian scribes):
    - a. Genesis 12:6; 13:7; 14:14; 21:34; 32:32; 36:31; 47:11
    - b. Exodus 11:3; 16:36

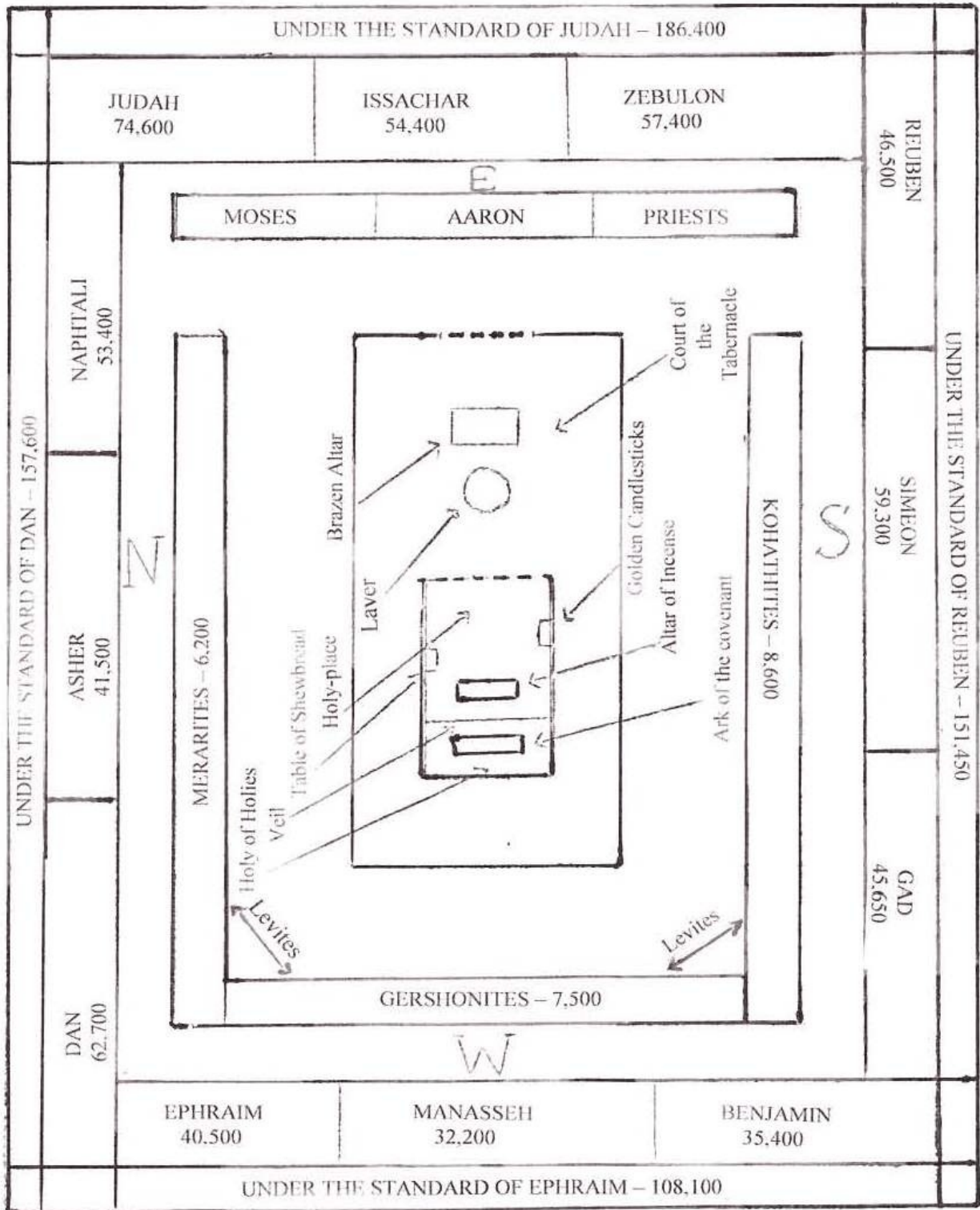
- c. Numbers 12:3; 13:22; 15:22-23; 21:14-15; 32:33ff
  - d. Deuteronomy 3:14; 34:6
2. Ancient scribes were highly trained and educated. Their techniques, however, differed from country to country:
    - a. In Mesopotamia, they were careful not to change anything, and even checked their works for accuracy. Here is an ancient Sumerian scribal footnote from about 1400 B.C.: “the work is complete from beginning to end, has been copied, revised, compared, and verified sign by sign.”
    - b. In Egypt they freely revised ancient texts to update them for contemporary readers. The scribes at Qumran (i.e., Dead Sea Scrolls) followed this approach.
  3. Scholars of the 19th century theorized that the Torah is a composite document from many sources over an extended period of time (Graf-Wellhausen). This theory was based on:
    - a. the different names for God
    - b. apparent doublets in the text
    - c. the literary form of the accounts
    - d. the theology of the accounts
  4. Supposed sources and dates
    - a. J source (use of YHWH from southern Israel) – 950 B.C.
    - b. E source (use of Elohim from northern Israel) – 850 B.C.
    - c. JE combined – 750 B.C.
    - d. D source – 621 B.C. (The Book of the Law, 2 Kgs. 22:8, discovered during Josiah’s reform while remodeling the Temple was supposedly the book of Deuteronomy, written by an unknown priest of Josiah’s time to support his reform.)
    - e. P source (priestly rewrite of OT, especially ritual and procedure) – 400 B.C.
  5. There have obviously been editorial additions to the Torah. The Jews assert that it was
    - a. The High Priest (or another of his family) at the time of the writing
    - b. Jeremiah the Prophet
    - c. Ezra the Scribe – IV Esdras says he rewrote it because the originals were destroyed in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.
  6. However, the J. E. D. P. theory says more about our modern literary theories and categories than evidence from the Torah (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 495-541 and *Tyndale’s Commentaries*, “Leviticus,” pp. 15-25).
  7. Characteristics of Hebrew Literature
    - a. Doublets, like Genesis 1 & 2, are common in Hebrew. Usually a general description is given, followed by a specific account. This may have been a way to accent truths or help oral memory.
    - b. The ancient rabbis said the two most common names for God have theological significance:
      - (1) YHWH – the Covenant name for deity as He relates to Israel as Savior and Redeemer (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 103).
      - (2) *Elohim* – deity as Creator, Provider, and Sustainer of all life on earth (cf. Ps. 19:1-6; 104).

- c. It is common in non-biblical near eastern literature for a variety of styles and vocabulary to occur in unified literary works (cf. R. K. Harrison, pp. 522-526).
- 8. There is an emerging theory that there were scribes (in different parts of Israel) working on different parts of the Pentateuch at the same time under the direction of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam. 10:25). This theory was first proposed by E. Robertson's *The Old Testament Problem*.
- E. The evidence from ancient Near Eastern literature implies that Moses used written cuneiform documents or Mesopotamian style (patriarchal) oral traditions to write Genesis. This in no way means to imply a lessening of inspiration, but is an attempt to explain the literary phenomenon of the book of Genesis (cf. P. J. Wiseman's *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*). Beginning in Genesis 37, a marked Egyptian influence of style, form and vocabulary seems to indicate Moses used either literary productions or oral traditions from the Israelites' days in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. Moses' formal education was entirely Egyptian! The exact literary formation of the Pentateuch is uncertain. I believe that Moses is the compiler and author of the vast majority of the Pentateuch, though he may have used scribes and/or written and oral (patriarchal) traditions. His writings have been updated by later scribes. The historicity and trustworthiness of these first few books of the OT have been illustrated by modern archaeology.

▣ **“the tent of meeting”** See Special Topic: The Tabernacle (see chart on next page).

This verse connects directly to Exod. 40:34-35. Leviticus is the “how to” manual for the new tabernacle.

Diagram showing the arrangement of Israel and the Tabernacle



Total Fighting Men - 603,550

1:2 “Israel” See Special Topic: Israel (the name).

**SPECIAL TOPIC: ISRAEL (the name)**

- I. Surprisingly the Name’s meaning is uncertain (BDB 975, KB 442).
  - A. *El* Persists
  - B. Let *El* Persist (JUSSIVE)
  - C. *El* Preserves
  - D. Let *El* Contend
  - E. *El* Strives
  - F. He who strives with God (word play, Gen. 32:28)
  - G. Reliable (IDB, vol. 2, p. 765)
  - H. Successful
  - I. Happy
- II. Usages in the OT
  - A. Jacob’s name (supplanter, heel grabber, BDB 784, KB 872, cf. Gen. 25:26) is changed after wrestling with the spiritual personage at the river Jabbok (cf. Gen. 32:22-32; Exod. 32:13). Often the meanings of Hebrew names are sound plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 32:28). “Israel” becomes his assigned name (e.g., Gen. 35:10).
  - B. It came to be used as a collective name for all of Jacob’s twelve sons (e.g., Gen. 32:32; 49:16; Exod. 1:7; 4:22; 28:11; Deut. 3:18; 10:6).
  - C. It came to designate the nation formed by the twelve tribes before the exodus (cf. Gen. 47:27; Exod. 4:22; 5:2) and after (cf. Deut. 1:1; 18:6; 33:10).
  - D. After the united monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon the tribes split under Rehoboam (cf. 1 Kings 12).
    1. the distinction starts even before the official split (e.g., 2 Sam. 3:10; 5:5; 20:1; 24:9; 1 Kgs. 1:35; 4:20)
    2. designates the northern tribes until the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 17).
  - E. Used of Judah in a few places (e.g., Isaiah 1; Micah 1:15-16).
  - F. After the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles it became again the collective name for all of Jacob’s descendants living in Palestine (e.g., Isa. 17:7,9; Jer. 2:4; 50:17,19).
  - G. Used of laity in contradistinction from priests (cf. 1 Chr. 9:2; Ezra 10:25; Neh. 11:3).

1:3 “burnt offerings” This must have been the most ancient kind of sacrifice for it is mentioned several times in the OT (cf. Gen. 8:20,22; Jdgs. 6:19-21; 11:31; 13:19-21; 1 Sam. 6:15; 7:9; 1 Kgs. 18:21-40). It seems to symbolize complete dedication because everything was burned on the altar of sacrifice. See Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: SACRIFICIAL SYSTEMS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST**

(These notes are part of my OT Survey notes. Also note the chart in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1020-1021.)

- I. Ritual laws in Mesopotamia
  - A. Sacrifice was primarily a meal offered to a god. The altar was the table of the god where the meal was placed. Beside the altar was the incense brazier which was to attract the god’s attention. There was no ritual implication in the blood. The sword bearer cut the throat of the animal. The

food was shared between the gods, the priest-king, and the attendants. The offerer received nothing.

- B. There was no expiatory sacrifice.
- C. Sickness or pain was punishment from the gods. An animal was brought and destroyed; this acted as a substitute for the offerer.
- D. Israel's ritual was different and distinct. It seems to have originated in a person giving back to God part of the results of his labor for necessary food (cf. Gen. 4:1-4; 8:20-22).

## II. Ritual laws in Canaan (very similar to Israel's)

### A. Sources

- 1. biblical accounts
- 2. Phoenician literature
- 3. Ras Shamra Tablets from Ugarit concerning Canaanite deities and mythology from about 1400 B.C.

B. Israel's and Canaan's sacrifices are very much alike. However, there is no emphasis placed on the blood of the victim in Canaanite sacrifices.

## III. Ritual Laws in Egypt

A. Sacrifices were offered but not emphasized.

B. The sacrifice was not important but the attitude of the sacrificer was.

C. Sacrifices were made to stop the wrath of the gods.

D. The offerer hoped for deliverance or forgiveness.

## IV. Israel's Sacrificial System – Israel's sacrifices were closer to Canaan's although not necessarily related to them at all.

### A. Descriptive Phrases

- 1. Sacrifice was a spontaneous expression of mankind's need for God.
- 2. The OT laws which regulate sacrifice cannot be said to initiate sacrifice (cf. Gen. 7:8; 8:20).
- 3. Sacrifice was an offering (animal or vegetable).
- 4. Must be an offering that was wholly or partially destroyed upon an altar in homage to God.
- 5. The altar was the place of sacrifice and symbolized the divine presence.
- 6. Sacrifice was an act of external worship (a prayer which was acted out).
- 7. The definition of sacrifice is "acted prayers" or "ritualized prayers." The significance of ritual and our cultural bias against it is revealed in Gordon J. Wenham (Tyndale, *Numbers*, p. 25-39). Leviticus and Numbers both contain large amounts of this type of material, which shows its importance to Moses and Israel.

### B. Sacrifice Involved

#### 1. Gifts to God

- a. involve acknowledgment that all of the earth is the Lord's
- b. all that a person has, he owes to God
- c. therefore, it is right that people bring tribute to God
- d. it was a special kind of tribute or gift. It was something that the man needed to sustain his own existence. It was more than just giving something, it was something he needed. It was giving a part of himself to God.
- e. by destroying the gift it cannot be reclaimed



- f. a burnt offering becomes invisible and goes up to God's realm
- g. earlier altars were erected in places where God appeared. The altar came to be looked upon as a holy place, therefore, the offering was brought there.
- 2. Expressing consecration of one's entire life to God
  - a. The burnt offering was one of three voluntary sacrifices.
  - b. The entire animal was burnt to express to God deep-felt homage.
  - c. This was a very expressive gift to God.
- 3. Fellowship with God
  - a. communion aspect of sacrifice
  - b. an example would be the peace offering which symbolized God and man in fellowship
  - c. sacrifice was made to obtain or regain this fellowship
- 4. Expiation of sin
  - a. when man sinned he had to ask God to restore the relationship (covenant) which man had broken
  - b. there was no communal meal with the sin offering because of the broken relationship
  - c. the significance of blood
    - (1) placed on altar for man
    - (1) placed on veil for priest
    - (2) placed on mercy seat for High Priest and the nation (Leviticus 16)
  - d. there were two types of sin offerings. The second is called the guilt offering or trespass offering. In it the offender was to restore to his fellow Israelite that which was taken or damaged, along with the animal sacrifice.
  - e. there was no sacrifice for premeditated or intentional sin, Lev. 4:2, 22, 27; 5:15-18; 22:14

#### V. Procedures from Leviticus for the Different Sacrifices

##### A. Leviticus 1, burnt offering

- 1. Introductory Formula, "The Lord spoke to Moses," Lev. 1:1-2; 4:1; 5:14; 6:1,19; 7:22, 28
  - a. From the herd or flock
  - b. "When," Lev. 1:2, shows that this was not mandatory but voluntary
- 2. Burnt Offering, Lev. 1:3-17 (6:8-13)
  - a. Altar
    - (1) the brazen altar, also called altar of burnt offering, altar by door of Tabernacle, or altar of shittim wood, covered with bronze (cf. Exodus 27)
    - (2) this distinguished it from the incense altar (golden altar) in the Holy Place (cf. Exodus 30)
    - (3) coals from brazen altar were taken to incense altar
    - (4) brazen altar was right in the middle of the entrance of the Tabernacle
    - (5) altar had horns which were its most sacred part; the blood was applied to the horns (cf. Exod. 30:10)
    - (6) The horns were possibly for:
      - (a) symbol of hands to hold up the offering
      - (b) symbol of strength or prevailing power (Deut. 33:17; 2 Sam. 22:3.)

- (c) later, anyone who grabbed the horns of the altar was safe until his case was decided by the court (1 Kgs. 1:50-51; 2:28)
- b. The Offering
  - (1) bullock without blemish which was mentioned first because of its importance and cost, Lev. 1:3
  - (2) male goat or sheep, Lev. 1:10
  - (3) turtle doves or young pigeons, Lev. 1:14 (provision for the poor)
- c. Place of Burnt Offering was at the door of the Tent of Meeting
- d. Laying on of the Hands – this was only for the bulls, not for goats, sheep or birds, Lev. 1:4
  - (1) the offerer did this himself (not the priest)
  - (2) many feel it was a symbolic action of the transferring of guilt
  - (3) some believe it meant that
    - (a) this animal comes from this particular individual
    - (b) the sacrifice was to be presented in the offerer’s name
    - (c) the fruit of this sacrifice belongs to the one who placed his hands on the animal
- e. Slaughtering
  - (1) bull – “before the Lord” by the man making the sacrifice. The offerer had to kill, skin, and cut up the animal. The priest’s role (except in case of public sacrifices) began when the man brought the animal to the altar.
  - (2) sheep or goat, Lev. 1:11 – “on north side of altar before the Lord.” This designated a specific place for these lesser animals.
  - (3) bird – The priest killed and offered this sacrifice. The offerer had to remove the bird’s crop.
- f. Handling of the Blood
  - (1) animals
    - (a) The priest threw blood against the altar, and sprinkled it round about the altar.
    - (b) The life of the animal was in the blood (cf. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11). Life already belonged to God, therefore, the blood represented no part of the gift of the man.
    - (c) The bird’s blood was drained on the side of the altar and not consumed in fire.
- g. Handling of the Flesh
  - (1) bull, Lev. 1:6
    - (a) The offerer skinned the offering; the priest could keep the skin (cf. Lev. 7:8)
    - (b) The offerer cut it into pieces
    - (c) The priest placed the offering on the altar in an arrangement as it was when alive
    - (d) The legs and entrails were washed with water from the laver
    - (e) The priest burned the whole animal on altar

3. Occasion of Burnt Offerings
    - a. Feast of Tabernacles, Booths
    - b. Day of Atonement
    - c. Feast of Weeks, First Fruits, or Pentecost
    - d. Feast of Trumpets
    - e. Wave Sheaf (Leviticus 23)
    - f. Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover
    - g. Beginning of months, New Moon
    - h. Sabbath
  4. Significance of Burnt Offering
    - a. A gift to God
    - b. Seen as the most valuable kind of sacrifice
    - c. It seems to deal with the concept of sin in general or thanksgiving
    - d. Most perfect representation of sacrificial idea
    - e. Symbolic offering of one's life
    - f. Represents complete consecration of the life of an individual to the service of God
    - g. Graded value of offering
      - (1) bull
      - (2) sheep – goat
      - (3) birds
    - h. This shows that anyone conscious of spiritual need could approach God. God made provision for all men.
  5. Special Instructions for Priest, Lev. 6:8-12
    - a. Burnt offering remained all night on hearth of the altar
    - b. Fire was to be kept burning continually under a burnt offering
    - c. Instructions involving the Priest's dress
    - d. Instructions involving the removal of the ashes
- B. Leviticus 2:1-16 (6:14-23), grain offering
1. Introduction
    - a. This chapter deals with the grain offering
    - b. Grain offering was from the root meaning "gift." It became a technical term for non-animal, or vegetable gifts.
    - c. After the Exile the grain offering appears as a supplement to the burnt offering and peace offering and the rabbis say it could be offered alone by the very poor.
    - d. Salt covenant was also mentioned in Num. 18:19 and 2 Chr. 13:5. Salt was the opposite of leaven. It was used as a symbol of the covenant of God because it was non-corruptible and lasting.
  2. The Grain Offering involved one's labor being given to God.
    - a. It was a gift to God from the daily food of the people.
    - b. It was generally a supplement (especially in post-exile days) to the burnt or peace offering.

- c. Sacrifice was God's provision for the priest. Only a small part was burnt as a memorial of the whole.
  - d. The word "memorial" describes the offered portion, or that part which brings the whole before the Lord.
  - e. New Testament concept of the Lord's Supper as "memorial" expresses this Old Testament concept.
  - f. The distinction between the terms "holy" and "most holy" are:
    - (1) "holy" – priest and family could eat it at any clean place
    - (2) "most holy" – could only be eaten by the priests and in the court of the Tent of Meeting
3. Types
- a. Unbaked flour (for the rich), Lev. 2:1-3
  - b. Baked loaves or cake, Lev. 2:4-11
  - c. Green ears of corn or wheat (for the poor), Lev. 2:12-16
    - (1) Unbaked flour was the highest offering. It was the very best of wheat flour.
    - (2) Baked cakes
      - (a) oil was an ingredient
      - (b) prepared in oven, Lev. 2:4.
      - (c) on a baking iron, Lev. 2:5.
      - (d) in an earthen frying pan, Lev. 2:7.
    - (3) Green ears of corn or wheat
      - (a) must be parched
      - (b) broken into coarse grits
      - (c) arranged like a meal set before guests.
4. Ingredients
- a. Fine flour corresponded to an animal without blemish
  - b. Oil was a symbol of prosperity and, therefore, a symbol of God's presence
    - (1) used for food, sacrificing, medicine, and anointing
    - (2) possibly use of oil was to replace offering of oil
  - c. Frankincense was from India or Arabia
    - (1) seen as a very pure thing with a wonderful fragrance
    - (2) symbolized prayer and praise
  - d. Salt
    - (1) life-giving as well as preserving qualities
    - (2) possibly more for table fellowship than for preserving
  - e. Elements excluded
    - (1) Leaven excluded, Lev. 2:11
      - (a) possibly because of fermentation
      - (b) leaven associated with corruption
      - (c) could be offered with first fruits and to priest

- (2) Honey excluded
        - (a) syrup was from fruit not honey bee
        - (b) possibly because of its use in Canaanite ritual
  - 5. Ritual of Offering
    - a. It was brought to the priest. He handled the whole ceremony (Lev. 2:2, 9,16).
    - b. Part of the offering was to be eaten by priest in the sanctuary. It was most holy.
  - 6. Significance
    - a. Present from inferior to superior
    - b. Burning of a portion of it represented the consecration of a portion of one's labor to God
    - c. Apparent meaning
      - (1) Burnt offering – consecration of one's life
      - (2) Meal offering – dedication of one's daily labor
  - 7. Special Instructions for Grain Offering, Lev. 6:14-23
    - a. Offering in front of altar
    - b. Labor offered the gift to God, but in reality it supported the priesthood
- C. Leviticus 3:1-17 (7:13-34), Peace Offering
- 1. Introduction
    - a. Why
      - (1) communion offering
      - (2) covenant sacrifice
      - (3) corporate offering
      - (4) concluding sacrifice
    - b. It expressed thankfulness to God because of fellowship with God, family, and friends.
    - c. It was usually the final act in a series of sacrifices in which reconciliation had been established.
    - d. The burnt offering expressed the costliness of obedience, while the peace offering expressed the joy and happiness of fellowship with God.
    - e. Male or female but without blemish
    - f. Varieties of offering
      - (1) from herd; male or female
      - (2) the distinction that was made between the sheep and the goat was because of the fat of the tail of the sheep
        - (a) lamb of flock – male or female
        - (b) goat of flock – male or female
  - 2. Ritual
    - a. Presentation of offering
      - (1) Laid hands on offering
      - (2) Killed it at door of the Tent of meeting
      - (3) Identification of sacrifice was the same as the burnt offering
      - (4) Sprinkling of blood around altar

- (5) Burning of choice parts on altar to God
        - (a) fat (sheep-fatty tail) symbolized prosperity
        - (b) kidneys, lobe of liver symbolized the seat of the will and emotions
        - (c) fatty portions placed on offerer's burnt offering or on morning lamb offering
      - b. Thanksgiving offering included (Lev. 7:11-14)
        - (1) unleavened cake mixed with oil
        - (2) unleavened wafers spread with oil
        - (3) fine flour mixed with oil
  - 3. Priest's Portion, Lev. 7:28-34
    - a. Breast belonged to priest as a wave offering
    - b. Waving involves the placing of the offering upon the offerer's hands and the priest's hands. It showed the offering offered by the offerer to God, and then its reception back by the priest.
    - c. Right thigh belonged to officiating priest
    - d. Heave offering was lifted to God and received back by the priest
  - 4. Offerer's Portion, Lev. 7:15-18
    - a. A Thanksgiving Offering shall be eaten on day of giving, Lev. 7:15
    - b. A Votive (vow) or Freewill Offering shall be eaten on day of offering or on the next day, Lev. 7:16
    - c. This portion was all that was not given to God and by God to the priest
    - d. God symbolically eats with the offerer and his family and friends in this offering
    - e. This offering stresses that fellowship relationships have been restored
- D. Leviticus 4:1-5:13 (6:24-30), sin offering
- 1. Introduction
    - a. This is the first offering in which atonement was the dominant element.
    - b. This sacrifice re-establishes the covenant between man and God. It restores fellowship.
    - c. This offering involves:
      - (1) Sins of ignorance
      - (2) Sins of inadvertence
      - (3) Sins of passion
      - (4) Sins of omission
      - (5) It did not atone for sins committed intentionally in haughty rebellion against God. There was no sacrifice for intentional, high handed, premeditated sin (cf. Num. 15:27-31).
  - 2. Meaning
    - a. This offering expiated the guilt and punishment for sins.
    - b. This involved grace on God's part and faith on man's part.
    - c. No sacrifice achieves anything by mere ritual offering. It was the offerer's faith behind the act.

- d. Yet, sacrifice was more than the mere expression of the offerer. It did something for him. It re-established the relationship with God.
  - e. Ritual was a God-given means of restitution, not a substitute for personal faith.
  - f. God hates any religious action without accompanying faith, Isa. 1:10-20; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8.
3. Ritual
- a. For the High Priest, Lev. 4:3-12
    - (1) High priest – anointed priest
      - (a) Sin, in leading people wrongly
      - (b) Sin, in a personal nature
      - (c) The high priest, being the spiritual representative of the community; if he sins, all sinned in him. This was the Jewish understanding of corporality (cf. Joshua 7; Romans 5:12ff).
    - (2) Procedures
      - (a) The High Priest brought a young bullock without blemish to altar
      - (b) He laid hands on its head
      - (c) The High Priest slaughtered animal
      - (d) The High Priest sprinkled the blood before the veil 7 times
        - i. this cleansed the Tabernacle
        - ii. symbolically opened the way to God
        - iii. blood placed on horns of incense altar
        - iv. remaining blood poured out at base of altar of burnt offering
      - (e) He placed all the fat on the altar to be burned
      - (f) All the rest of the animal will be taken outside the camp to a clean place, Lev. 4:12, where the ashes are poured out from altar. There, the remainder of the animal is burned.
  - b. For the Nation, Lev. 4:13-21
    - (1) They sinned when commands of the law were not met, Lev. 4:13-21
    - (2) Procedures
      - (a) The Elders brought a young bullock without blemish to altar
      - (b) The Elders laid hands on head
      - (c) The Elders slaughtered the animal
      - (d) The High Priest sprinkled the blood before veil 7 times
        - i. this cleansed Tabernacle
        - ii. symbolically opened the way to God
        - iii. blood placed on horns of incense altar
        - iv. rest poured out at base of altar of sacrifice
      - (e) All of it offered on the altar
      - (f) All the rest of the animal was taken outside the camp to a clean place, Lev. 4:12, where the ashes were poured out from the altar. There the remainder of the animal was burned.

- c. For leader, Lev. 4:22-26
  - (1) Leader (ruler), Lev. 4:22-26
    - (a) Leader of tribe
    - (b) Responsible person in community
    - (c) Elder
  - (2) Procedures
    - (a) The leader brought a male goat (old, shaggy goat) to altar.
    - (b) The leader laid hands on its head.
    - (c) The leader slaughtered the animal.
    - (d) A High Priest placed blood on horns of altar of burnt offering—the rest of blood poured out at base of altar of sacrifice.
    - (e) All fat is burned on the altar.
    - (f) Priests ate the rest of the flesh.
- d. For individual, Lev. 4:27-35
  - (1) For individual – when he learned he had sinned he was to make this offering
  - (2) Procedures
    - (a) The individual brought a female goat or female lamb.
    - (b) The individual laid hands on its head.
    - (c) The individual slaughtered the animal.
    - (d) A priest placed blood on horns of altar of sacrifice—rest poured out at base of altar.
    - (e) All fat placed on altar and burned.
    - (f) Priests ate the rest of the flesh.
- e. Special cases involving the sin offering, Lev. 5:1-13 (These seem to involve intentional sin against a covenant partner)
  - (1) If a witness doesn't come forward and testify (failure to give information), Lev. 5:1
  - (2) Touching unclean animal, Lev. 5:2
  - (3) Touching unclean human, Lev. 5:3
  - (4) Speaking thoughtlessly with an oath, Lev. 5:4
  - (5) Offering for the above sins:
    - (a) Female goat or sheep
    - (b) Two turtledoves or two pigeons
    - (c) 1/10 ephah of fine flour
- f. Sin offering ritual, Lev. 6:24-30
  - (1) Priest could eat what was left.
  - (2) If blood got on clothes, clothes must be washed.
  - (3) If blood got on earthen vessel, vessel was broken.
  - (4) If blood got on brass vessel, vessel was washed.
  - (5) If burnt offering's blood was brought into Holy Place, then the flesh must be burnt and not eaten by priest.



- g. Significance of the sin offering
  - (1) There is no offering for premeditated sin—only for inadvertent sin or sins of ignorance, Lev. 5:15, 18.
  - (2) What does forgiveness involve:
    - (a) Man’s part is faith
    - (b) God’s part is mercy
- E. Leviticus 5:14-19, guilt or trespass offering
  - 1. Introduction
    - a. While the Sin Offering dealt with sin committed, the Guilt Offering had to do with the damage that was done to a covenant partner and what restitution was possible.
    - b. The sin and trespass offerings were very similar.
    - c. The rights of the individual were expressed in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).
      - (1) home
      - (2) accumulation of good
      - (3) life
    - d. This offering emphasizes the harm done to a brother in sinning, and the restitution of the cost of that which was damaged plus 1/5 more.
  - 2. Sins Requiring an Offering
    - a. Against God or that which belongs to Him
      - (1) first fruits
      - (2) firstborn, Lev. 5:14-16
      - (3) tithe
      - (4) offering given incorrectly
      - (5) gifts of inferior value
    - b. “If a person sins and does any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty, and shall bear his punishment.”
- F. Ancient sacrifices were offered to
  - 1. appease an angry deity
  - 2. feed a deity
  - 3. communicate with a deity
  - 4. praise a deity
  - 5. foster a sense of forgiveness or reconciliation

▣ **“without defect”** This had to be an animal that reflected its breed. The defects spoken of are defined more clearly in Lev. 22:18-25. The animal seems to have the purpose of replacing humans as a substitute for the death penalty of sin (cf. Gen. 3:3; Ezek. 18:4,20; Rom. 6:23). This involved man laying his hands on the animal’s head (cf. Lev. 1:4; see Special Topic: Laying on of Hands at Lev. 1:3b). The unblemished animal symbolized innocence or sinlessness. The burnt offering symbolized the remission of sin in general, while the sin and guilt offerings, explained in later chapters, will deal with specific sins. See Special Topic: Without Defect below.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: LAYING ON OF HANDS IN THE BIBLE**

This gesture of personal involvement is used in several different ways in the Bible.

1. oath taking (i.e., hand under thigh, cf. Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29)
2. passing on the family leadership (cf. Gen. 48:14,17,18)
3. identifying with the death of a sacrificial animal as a substitute
  - a. priests (cf. Exod. 29:10,15,19; Lev. 16:21; Num. 8:12)
  - b. laypersons (cf. Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8; 4:4,15,24; 2 Chr. 29:23)
4. setting persons aside to serve God in a special task or ministry (cf. Num. 8:10; 27:18,23; Deut. 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6)
5. participating in the judicial stoning of a sinner (cf. Lev. 24:14)
6. the hand on one's mouth denotes silence or acquiescence (cf. Jdgs. 18:19; Job 21:5; 29:9; 40:4; Micah 7:16)
7. the hand on one's own head means sorrow/grief (2 Sam. 13:19)
8. receiving a blessing for health, happiness, and godliness (cf. Matt. 19:13,15; Mark 10:16)
9. relating to physical healing (cf. Matt. 8:3; 9:18,20; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:17; 28:8)
10. receiving the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 8:17-19; 9:17; 19:6, note Deut. 34:9)

There is a surprising lack of uniformity in the passages that have been historically used to support the ecclesiastical installation of leaders (i.e., ordination, see Special Topic: Ordination).

1. In Acts 6:6 it is the Apostles who lay hands on the seven for local ministry.
2. In Acts 13:3 it is the prophets and teachers who lay hands on Barnabas and Paul for missionary service.
3. In 1 Tim. 4:14 it is the local elders who were involved in Timothy's initial call and installation.
4. In 2 Tim. 1:6 it is Paul who lays hands on Timothy.

This diversity and ambiguity illustrate the lack of organization in the first century church. The early church was much more dynamic and regularly used the spiritual gifts of believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12 and 14). The NT is simply not written to advocate or delineate a governmental model (see the variety in Acts 15) or ordination procedure. Church organizational traditions are necessary but not biblical. The godliness of the leadership is far more important than the form of the leadership (i.e., polity).

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: WITHOUT DEFECT**

Sacrificial animals had to be healthy representatives of their breed. They could not have any physical defect, including

1. mis-colored
2. blind
3. sick
4. lame
5. any deformity

See the guidelines in Lev. 22:18-25 and Deut. 15:21. Malachi 1:6-8 shows the kind of abuse that occurred. The animal was a gift of one's best to YHWH.

This perfect example of a breed symbolized innocence and wholeness, which was in contrast to the offerer. Therefore, the animal became a substitute (i.e., the soul that sins, it will surely die, cf. Ezek. 18:4,20). The perfect substitute will be Jesus (cf. Isaiah 53; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21).

**1:3-6,16 “he shall offer it. . .he shall offer it”** The offerer was intimately involved with the presenting of the sacrifice.

1. He had to bring it to the door of the tent of meeting.
2. He had to give it to the priest.
3. He had to lay his hands on its head.
4. He had to kill it himself.
5. He had to skin it.
6. He had to cut it in pieces.

We also learn from Lev. 1:16 that if a man could not bring a larger animal sacrifice that, as a provision for the poor, he could bring a bird. The officiating priest in this case handled most of the ritual except the removal of the bird’s crop.

**1:3c “a male”** The text does not state why a male. Possibly

1. male animals were more expensive
2. a herd does not need numerous males
3. it had more strength and vigor; it would have been an animal prized by its owner (and culture); only the peace offering allowed a male or female animal (i.e., Lev. 3:1,6)

▣ **“that he may be accepted before the LORD”** The NOUN “accepted” (BDB 953) has two connotations.

1. YHWH’s favor – Deut. 33:16; Ps. 5:13; 89:18; 106:4; Pro. 8:35; 12:2; 18:22; Isa. 60:1
2. YHWH’s approval of an offered sacrifice (i.e., Gen. 4:4)
  - a. of the offerer(s) himself – Exod. 28:38; Lev. 1:3; 19:5; 22:20; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 6:20
  - b. of the sacrifice itself – Lev. 1:4; 22:21,29
3. YHWH’s acceptance – of a faithful follower’s words and thoughts – Ps. 19:15

This context is not about forgiveness of sin (Lev. 4:1-5:13), but a freewill offering to assure YHWH’s favor. It was important to the offerer to feel/know YHWH’s acceptance of their gift (Qorban; lit. “that which is brought near”). Any Israelite, male or female, could bring an offering at any time. This was separate and distinct from regular corporate offerings. Here, the individual was actively involved in the choosing, slaying, and preparing the animal.

**1:4 “He shall lay his hand on the head”** Sometimes one hand is laid on the animal (i.e., the individual, cf. Lev. 1:4) and sometimes both hands (i.e., Aaron in Exod. 29:10,15 and the High Priest on the Day of Atonement in Lev. 16:21). There seems to be no theological significance intended.

The Hebrew term here is much stronger than “lay”; it is the word for “press” or “lean heavily against” (BDB 701, KB 259, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*, cf. Lev. 3:2,8,13; 4:4,15,22,24; 16:21). Here, this seems to involve an identification of the out-of-favor offerer with the innocent animal. This relationship is clear when one compares Num. 8:10, where the same procedure is used to set the Levites apart as representatives of the whole congregation.

In Exod. 29:10, it is the officiating priest who lay his hands on the sacrifice, but this is a special offering at the consecration of Aaron and his sons and not a regular procedure of an individual’s sacrifice.

In 2 Chr. 35:11 the priests are said to have slaughtered the animals, but this also was a coronation service for the king which involved a large number of animals (cf. 2 Chr. 35:7-9)

▣ **“it may be accepted”** This is the VERB form (BDB 953, KB 1280, *Niphal* PERFECT with *waw*) of the NOUN used in Lev. 1:3.

▣ **“to make atonement”** This VERB (BDB 497, KB 493, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) is used many times in Leviticus and Numbers. Its basic meaning is “to cover” or “to erase,” but is used in metaphorical extension to veil sins from YHWH’s eyes (used 16 times in Leviticus 16, the day of covering). See Special Topic: Atonement and Special Topic: Mercy Seat.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ATONEMENT**

The Hebrew root (BDB 497, KB 493) combines several OT images.

1. the holiness of God which is offended by human rebellion
2. the cost of rebellion is death (cf. Ezek. 18:4,20)
3. the life of a sacrificial animal substituted for the death penalty of sinful human beings

The basic meaning of the root is “to cover,” which may best be illustrated by the “Day of Atonement” or “Day of Covering” (i.e., Leviticus 16). YHWH dwelt between the wings of the *Cherubim* on the ark of the covenant. Inside the gold box were the laws given to Moses by YHWH on Mt. Sinai. As the High Priest sprinkled blood on the lid of the ark, it symbolically obscured God’s eyes from the Law.

The perfect and eternal blood of the covenant (see the NT book of Hebrews) was the innocent blood of Jesus (cf. John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The NT term “propitiation” also relates to the lid of the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant. For extra information see the following Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant
2. Special Topic: *Cherubim*
3. Special Topic: Mercy Seat

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: MERCY SEAT**

This refers to the golden lid of the wooden box called “the ark of the covenant” (cf. Exod. 25:17-22; 37:6-9). It was a special place for “covering” sins (i.e., Leviticus 16). The symbolism seems to be

1. YHWH dwelt between the wings of the two angelic creatures (the rabbis said this was His footstool, cf. 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7)
2. the ark contained the “ten words” (decalog)
3. the high priest, on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16), went into the Holy of Holies twice to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, once for his own sin and once for the non-premeditated sins of the nation as a whole (cf. Heb. 9:7)

For the NT usage of this platform for forgiveness, I have included my notes from Rom. 3:25:

**NASB** “as a propitiation in His blood”

**NKJV** “to be a propitiation by His blood”

**NRSV** “as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood”

**TEV** “so that by his blood he should become the means by which people’s sins are forgiven”

**NJB** “to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation”

In the Greco-Roman world this word carried the concept of a restoration of fellowship with an estranged deity by means of a price being paid. However, it is not used in this sense in the Septuagint. It

was used in the Septuagint and in Heb. 9:5 to translate “mercy seat” (cf. Exod. 25:21-22; Lev. 16:12-15), which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant located in the Holy of Holies, the place where atonement was procured on behalf of the nation on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16). Obviously Paul is using sacrificial metaphors from Israel’s sacrificial system (i.e., Leviticus 1-7). These metaphors (i.e., propitiation, ransom, sacrifice) are understood only in connection with the OT oracles of God. Paul then must explain their relevance to all mankind. YHWH revealed Himself to Abraham/Israel to reveal Himself to all; all are in His image; all have rebelled; all can be saved through faith in Christ (Jewish Messiah).

This term must be dealt with in a way that does not lessen God’s revulsion to sin, but affirms His positive, redemptive attitude toward sinners. A good discussion is found in James Stewart’s *A Man in Christ*, pp. 214-224. One way to accomplish this is to translate the term so that it reflects God’s work in Christ; “a propitiatory sacrifice”; or “with propitiatory power.”

“**In His blood**” is an Hebraic way of referring to the substitutionary sacrifice of the innocent lamb of God (cf. John 1:29). To fully understand this concept Leviticus 1-7 is crucial, as well as the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. Blood refers to a sinless life given on behalf of the guilty (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12). One died for all (cf. 5:12-21)!

“**through faith**” Here again is the mechanism (cf. Lev. 1:17; 3:22,25,26,27,28,30) for anyone’s and everyone’s personal benefit available in Jesus’ substitutionary death.

This phrase is omitted in the ancient uncial manuscript A from the 5th century (also the Greek text used by Chrysostom) and a 12th century uncial MS (2127). It is included in all other ancient Greek manuscripts. Some have the DEFINITE ARTICLE (cf. MSS P<sup>40</sup>, B, C<sup>3</sup>, D<sup>3</sup>) with “faith” and some do not (cf. MSS C\*, D\*, F, G), however, this does not affect the meaning. The UBS<sup>3</sup> rates its inclusion as B (almost certain).

“**to demonstrate His righteousness**” God must be true to His character and His word (cf. Mal. 3:6). In the OT the soul that sins must die (cf. Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4,20). God said He would not acquit the guilty (cf. Exod. 23:7). God’s love for fallen mankind is so great He was willing to become a man, fulfill the Law, and die in fallen humanity’s place (cf. Rom. 5:12-21). God’s love and justice meet in Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:26).

**1:5 “before the LORD”** This refers to the open space between the entrance to the tabernacle (Lev. 1:3) and the altar of sacrifice (cf. Lev. 17:4-5). This is where the bulls were slain (“from the herd”).

The animals from the “flock” (i.e., sheep and goats) were slain on the north side of the altar in a separate place (cf. Lev. 1:11).

▣ **“shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar”** Later on the sin offering (i.e., Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-36) will emphasize the place the blood is to be put in the procedure, but for the burnt offering the focus is on the flesh, not the blood. See Special Topic: The Blood.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: BLOOD**

In the OT blood (BDB 196) denotes the life (cf. Lev. 17:11,14; Gen. 9:4; Deut. 12:23). This life, both animal and human, is a gift from God and belongs to God.

The AB, vol. 1, p. 761, notes that “blood” and “life” are poetical parallels in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Akkadian.

In the Mosaic sacrificial system sin required a life (cf. Ezek. 18:4,20). God graciously allowed the substitute of an innocent animal’s life to atone for the sin of a human. Ultimately the blood that will atone for human rebellion is Jesus, the Messiah’s blood/death (cf. Isaiah 15; Mark 10:45; 14:24; John 1:29; Rom. 3:25; 15:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:2,19; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9). An innocent life was given on behalf of the guilty (i.e., Hebrew corporality, cf. Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

▣ **“sprinkle”** This VERB (BDB 284, KB 283, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*) basically means “to toss” or “to scatter.” It is used of

1. the covenant inauguration, Exod. 24:6,8
2. the consecration of the altar and Aaron, Exod. 29:16,20; Lev. 8:19
3. to symbolize the animal’s life (as all life) belongs to YHWH, therefore, its blood was sprinkled on the altar of sacrifice
  - a. whole burnt offering – Lev. 1:5,11; 9:12
  - b. peace offering – Lev. 3:2,8,13; 9:18; 17:6
  - c. special ritual for animals killed in the field – Lev. 17:6
  - d. guilt offering – Lev. 7:2,14

There is a second VERB (BDB 633 I, KB 683) which basically means “cause to spurt,” which is used in parallel in Exod. 29:16,20,21.

- a. sin offering has a more elaborate procedure using the blood – Lev. 4:3-12,17
- b. guilt offering – Lev. 5:9
- c. consecration of Aaron and his sons – Lev. 8:11,30
- d. cleansing of a leper – Lev. 14:7,16,27,51
- e. ritual of the Day of Atonement – Lev. 16:14,15,19
- f. water with ashes of the red heifer for cleansing – Num. 19:4,18,21
- g. the Suffering Servant of Isa. 52:13-53:12, esp. 52:15a

Sprinkling was a symbol of cleansing and purifying.

**1:6 “skin”** We learn from Lev. 7:8 that the skin belonged to the priest.

**1:7 “altar”** We learn from Exod. 27:1-8 that this refers to the large, bronze, sacrificial altar which appeared prominently in front of the main gate of the tabernacle. See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ALTAR OF SACRIFICE**

This was the place of sacrifice for the tabernacle. It was an acacia wood structure overlaid with bronze (cf. Exod. 27:1-2). It was a square, 5 cubits (about 18" x 5"; see Special Topic: Cubit) by 3 cubits tall. It had its own utensils (cf. Exod. 27:3) and was portable (cf. Exod. 27:6-7).

The special feature of this altar was its four horns, probably mimicking animal horns, which were a symbol of power for the Israelites. The blood of the animal was drawn out and part of it smeared on these horns, possibly a symbol of lifting the sacrifice to God.

Like all of the tabernacle furniture, this altar was expanded in Solomon’s temple (cf. 1 Kings 6). For specific procedures see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the ANE at Lev. 1:1b.

**1:8 “shall arrange the pieces”** From rabbinic tradition the pieces of the animal were arranged on the altar similarly to its living form.

▣

NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA, REB,

LXX

“the suet”

NKJV, TEV,

NJB, Peshitta

“the fat”

This Hebrew NOUN (BDB 804) occurs only in Lev. 1:8,12; 8:20, where it denotes “fat.” But the exact nature or location in the body of the animal is unspecified. Some think

1. fat close to the head
2. fat on the internal organs

Fat was a sign of the health and exceptional nature of the animal. Fat, like blood, uniquely belonged to YHWH, the giver of life and health.

**1:9 “its legs he shall wash with water”** This involved the washing away of any excretions that may have spilled out during the killing of the animal. From the context it is assumed that the water would be found at the laver, which is to the left of the sacrificial altar as one entered the tabernacle. See Special Topic: Laver and Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: LAVER**

This was a large, bronze bowl set in the court of the tabernacle for priests to do ceremonial washings (cf. Exod. 30:20-21; Num. 8:7). It is described in Exod. 30:17-21; 38:8. Its placement was between the tabernacle’s tent/shrine and the altar of sacrifice (cf. Exod. 40:7,30).

The Laver of the Tabernacle was made more elaborate by the builders of Solomon’s temple. It is called “the sea of cast metal” in 1 Kgs. 7:39. It is described in 1 Kgs. 7:44. One wonders if 1 Kgs. 7:38 is also referring to the Laver.

▣ **“a soothing aroma to the LORD”** This is a metaphor for the acceptance of the sacrifice by God. It does not have the implication that it was food for God, as some of the ANE customs imply (note the imagery of Lev. 3:11 and Num. 28:2). This phrase is first found in Gen. 6:5. There is possibly a spiritual allusion to this in Eph. 5:2 and Phil. 4:18. See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: A SOOTHING AROMA (BDB 926 and 629)**

This is sacrificial imagery for an accepted sacrifice (cf. Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18,25,41; Lev. 1:9,13,17). This imagery does not mean to communicate that the sacrifice was seen as “feeding” YHWH. This was the general view of sacrifice in the ANE.

1. Gilgamesh Epic – 11:159-161
2. see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East
3. in Ezekiel the terminology is used of pagan sacrifices (cf. Ezek. 6:13; 16:19; 20:28), but in Ezek. 20:41 it becomes a future idiom of YHWH’s work through the Messianic temple.

As the sacrifice burned it turned into smoke and ascended. It left the physical realm and entered the spiritual realm. YHWH was pleased with appropriate sacrifice (i.e., Gen. 4:4-5), which denoted

1. a faithful attitude
2. an appropriate gift
3. acknowledged procedures

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:10-13**

<sup>10</sup>“**But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect.** <sup>11</sup>**He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD and Aaron’s sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar.** <sup>12</sup>**He shall then cut it into**

**its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. <sup>13</sup>The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.’”**

**1:11 “northward”** This NOUN (BDB 860) originally referred to Mt. Saphon, where the Canaanite pantheon dwelt. The word can also refer to compass directions. As one faced east (i.e., the rising of the sun, the entrance of the tabernacle), the left hand pointed north, the right hand south.

The “north” became an idiom for invasion and trouble (i.e., both Assyria and Babylon attacked from the north).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:14-17**

**<sup>14</sup>“But if his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from the turtledoves or from young pigeons. <sup>15</sup>The priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head and offer it up in smoke on the altar; and its blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar. <sup>16</sup>He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward, to the place of the ashes. <sup>17</sup>Then he shall tear it by its wings, *but* shall not sever *it*. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the wood which is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.’”**

**1:14 “the turtledoves or from young pigeons”** It is significant that through the entire discussion of sacrifices (Leviticus 1-7), God makes provision for all people to come to Him. Therefore, in every type of sacrifice there is provided a lesser offering for the poor to bring. The reason for two different types of birds is because the turtledoves were migratory and were not available year round.

**1:16 “crop”** This term (BDB 597) is found only here in the OT. It was the food pouch just below the head in the front where the food is stored for a brief period.

The JPSOA suggests it be translated “its crop with its contents” (following Targum Onkelos), but the Jewish Study Bible (p. 208) suggests it should be translated “its feathers and its excrement.”

The MT and LXX have “its crop with its feathers.”

▣ **“eastward”** The entrance of the tabernacle faced “east,” so the ashes were put as far away as possible from the altar of sacrifice on the left side toward the front barrier of the tabernacle fence.

**1:17 “shall not sever *it*”** This seems to follow Gen. 15:10.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of the completely burnt offerings?
2. Why is the procedure different?
3. Why were there three options?
4. What does the phrase “a soothing aroma” mean?
5. List the things the offerer had to do with the animal he/she brought to the tabernacle?

# LEVITICUS 2

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
2:1-3	2:1-3	2:1-3	2:1-3	2:1-3
2:4-10	2:4-10	2:4-10	2:4 2:5-6 2:7-10	2:4 2:5-6 2:7 2:8-10
2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-16	2:11-16
2:14-16	2:14-16	2:14-16		

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, p. 126, has a good outline of the different items mentioned in this chapter.
  1. "of fine meal," Lev. 2:1-3
  2. "from the oven," Lev. 2:4
  3. "from the griddle," Lev. 2:5-6
  4. "from the boiler," Lev. 2:9-11
  5. "of first fruits" (of grains), Lev. 2:14-16
- B. Remember, this is an individual Israelite (male or female) freewill offering to gain or restore "favor" with YHWH.
- C. It is possible that the offering of cereal, spoken of in this chapter, represented the daily life of the people given to YHWH. He was the author of life.
- D. It is also possible the offering was meant to provide, even those too poor to offer a bird, a chance to approach YHWH (i.e., Jewish Study Bible, p. 208).
- E. For further instructions about the priest's role in this offering, see Lev. 6:14-23; 7:9-10.

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

##### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>"Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. <sup>2</sup>He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer *it* up in smoke *as* its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the LORD by fire."

**2:1 “Now when anyone. . .”** Just like Lev. 1:2, this phrase implies “any person,” male or female, who desired the restoration of “favor” (see note at Lev. 1:3) with YHWH, could bring an offering to the Tabernacle. See Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

Remember, the first three chapters of Leviticus are about individual, freewill offerings for the purpose, not of forgiveness, but for gaining or restoring favor.

▣ **“grain offering”** The word (BDB 585) could refer to

1. gift, tribute, offerings (non-cultic texts)
2. grain/cereal offering (Pentateuch and Ezekiel)
3. in 1 Sam. 2:17; 2 Chr. 32:23; Mal. 2:13 it refers to any type of sacrificial offering

The King James translation has “meat offering,” but in 1611 A.D. the word meant “food” in general.

This grain offering was usually accompanied by other sacrifices.

1. the burnt offering, Num. 15:1-4; 28:3-6
2. the peace offering, Num. 6:17; Lev. 9:4
3. the sin offering, Num. 6:14,15

Also, the rabbis assume that in the case of the very poor, there could be a grain offering by itself but this is simply speculation. This offering seems to have provided needed variety in the diet of the priests. See Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East, V. B at Lev. 1:3.

**2:2 “handful of fine flour”** Only a handful of this was offered on the altar of sacrifice (see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7); the rest became the property of the priests to eat in the Tabernacle area (i.e., “a thing most holy,” Lev. 2:3).

The term “fine flour” (BDB 701) refers to wheat flour. Other grain flour, like barley, was considered less valuable or desirable.

▣ **“frankincense”** This is a resin from certain plants. It was one of the four constituents of the holy incense (cf. Exod. 30:34). See Special Topic: Frankincense.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: FRANKINCENSE**

Like myrrh, frankincense (BDB 526, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 750-757) was made from sweet-smelling tree sap from Arabia (cf. Jer. 6:20). It was used for several purposes.

1. cereal sacrifice, Lev. 2:1; 6:14-18
2. sin sacrifice, Lev. 5:11
3. holy incense, Exod. 30: 34-38; 1 Chr. 9:29
4. put on the table of showbread along with the twelve loaves, Lev. 24:7
5. personal perfume, Song of Songs 3:6; 4:6,14

See UBS, *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pp. 121-122.

▣ **“its memorial portion”** This NOUN (BDB 272, cf. Lev. 2:9,16; 5:12; 6:15) refers to the small portion of the offering burned on the altar. The rest belonged to the priest (cf. Lev. 2:3,10).

▣ **“a soothing aroma”** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

**2:3 “a thing most holy, of the offerings to the LORD by fire”** That which was offered to the Lord by fire on the altar became “most holy” and had to be eaten by the priests only in the tabernacle area. That which was called “holy” could be shared with the priest’s family in a clean place.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:4-10**

**4**“Now when you bring an offering of a grain offering baked in an oven, *it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil.* **5**If your offering is a grain offering *made on the griddle, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil;* **6**you shall break it into bits and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. **7**Now if your offering is a grain offering *made in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.* **8**When you bring in the grain offering which is made of these things to the LORD, it shall be presented to the priest and he shall bring it to the altar. **9**The priest then shall take up from the grain offering its memorial portion, and shall offer *it up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.* **10**The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: **a thing most holy of the offerings to the Lord by fire.”**

**2:4 “baked”** See Special Topic: Baking Bread.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: BAKING BREAD**

- I. Flat stone
    - A. build fire on stone
    - B. remove coals
    - C. place dough on hot stone and replace ashes
    - D. when done remove ashes, Isa. 44:19; 1 Kgs. 19:6
  - II. Bake on griddle
    - A. made of clay or iron
    - B. fire made in pit and griddle over pit
    - C. dough made into flat cakes, Lev. 2:5,7; 6:20-21; 1 Chr. 23:29; 9:31; Ezek. 4:3
  - III. Oven
    - A. Type 1
      - 1. shaped like an overturned, earthen jar
      - 2. fire lit the night before
      - 3. ashes removed and dough baked on stones lining the bottom
    - B. Type 2
      - 1. cylinder-shaped
      - 2. fire placed inside
      - 3. remove fire, use inside or outside surface to bake dough, Lev. 2:4
- Bread was made of wheat (rich) or barley (poor)

▣ **“unleavened cakes”** We must be careful not to assume that leaven is always a symbol of sin. In Leviticus it is used along with the first fruits in Lev. 23:17-30, and it is included in some of the offerings for the priests, Lev. 7:11-13. Notice how the offering was to be prepared.

- 1. baked in an oven
- 2. unleavened cakes

3. of fine (wheat) flour
4. mixed with
  - a. olive oil
  - b. spread with olive oil

See Special Topic: Leaven.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: LEAVEN**

The term “leaven” (Hebrew, *חמץ*, BDB 329, KB 329; Greek, *zumē*) is used in two senses in both the OT and the NT:

1. a sense of corruption and, therefore, a symbol of evil
  - a. Exod. 12:15,19; 13:3,7; 23:18; 34:25; Lev. 2:11; 6:17; Deut. 16:3-4
  - b. Matt. 16:6,11-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; Gal. 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:6-8
2. a sense of permeation and, therefore, imagery of influence, not a symbol of evil
  - a. Lev. 7:13; 23:17; Amos 4:5
  - b. Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21

Only context can determine the meaning of this word (which is true of all words!).

On the subject of unleavened bread, the Israelites could not wait until morning for the bread to rise. This detail of the exodus night gave rise to the Exodus’ Passover feast being combined with an agricultural feast (cf. Exod. 12:15-20; 23:14-17; 34:18).

Leaven was regularly used in sacrificial items (cf. Lev. 7:13; 23:17), but became a symbol of sin and rebellion. The fermentation was viewed in this symbolic sense as Israel’s opportunity on an individual basis to examine their lives for any hint of rebellion or disobedience to YHWH. As the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) functioned on a national level, the Feast of Unleavened Bread functioned on an individual or family level.

This annual required feast, combined with the Passover feast, kept the gracious deliverance of YHWH ever before the minds and hearts of His people. As grace and promise provided deliverance from Egypt, so Israel depended on these unchanging divine characteristics to save her as the years went by (cf. Exod. 13:8,14; Deut. 4:9; 6:2,7,20-21).



**NASB, NRSV,**

**NJB, JPSOA “spread”**

**NKJV “anointed”**

**TEV “brushed”**

**REB “smeared”**

**Peshitta “mixed”**

This VERB (BDB 602, KB 643, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE PLURAL) has two usages.

1. secular – to smear
2. sacred – to anoint

The related NOUN (BDB 603) can mean ointment or consecrated portion.

**2:5**

**NASB, NRSV,**

**TEV, NJB,**

**JPSOA, REB “a griddle”**

NKJV  
LXX

“pan”  
“frying-pan”

This is a rare word (BDB 290). It is used only in Lev. 2:5; 6:14; 7:9; 1 Chr. 23:29. In 1 Chr. 23:20 it is translated “baked in a pan,” but here it seems to refer to a flat, metal, griddle plate.

**2:9 “a soothing aroma”** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:11-13**

**<sup>11</sup>“No grain offering, which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>12</sup>As an offering of first fruits you shall bring them to the LORD, but they shall not ascend for a soothing aroma on the altar. <sup>13</sup>Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.”**

**2:11-13 “leaven...honey”** It is uncertain why leaven and honey were excluded from this particular offering. Some have assumed that

1. because of their fermentation qualities, they were excluded
2. because it involved something that was alive (i.e., bacteria)
3. because they were involved in Canaanite sacrifices (Maimonides)

It cannot be because they were simply seen as “unclean” because honey was used in a sacrifice in 2 Chr. 31:5 and leaven was used in several sacrifices (cf. Exod. 23:16,17; Lev. 7:13; 23:17,18).

**2:12 “first fruits”** This refers to the first ripened fruits which were offered to YHWH (cf. Exod. 23:16,19; Lev. 23:10-11; Num. 15:18-20; Deut. 18:4-5; 26:1-11) but not burned. These offerings symbolized His ownership of the entire crop (as the tithe and Sabbath).

**2:13 “Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering”** The concept of a salt covenant is very ancient (cf. Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5; Ezek. 43:24). Salt symbolized permanence and purity. It was a necessity of life. It was a symbol of friendship between peoples. Exactly which of these symbolic designations is referred to in this account is uncertain. See Special Topic: Salt and Special Topic: Covenant.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: SALT**

- used in preparing food (Job 6:6)
- used in preserving fish, meat, and pickling
- used as an antiseptic (rubbed on babies, Ezek. 16:4)
- used in sacrifices
  - a. sacred incense (Exod. 30:35)
  - b. shewbread
  - c. animal offerings (Ezek. 43:24)
  - d. meal offering (Lev. 2:13)
- used as covenant
  - a. unbreakable
  - b. in perpetuity

- c. Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5; Lev. 2:13
- used as a symbol of Christians
  - a. Matt. 5:13 (positive)
  - b. Matt. 5:13 (negative)

## SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

The OT term *berith* (BDB 136, BDB 157), “covenant,” is not easy to define. There is no matching VERB in Hebrew. All attempts to derive an etymological or cognate definition have proved unconvincing. Possibly the best guess is “to cut” (BDB 144), denoting the animal sacrifice that accompanied covenants (cf. Gen. 15:10,17). However, the obvious centrality of the concept has forced scholars to examine the word’s usage in an attempt to determine its functional meaning.

Covenant is the means by which the one true God (see Special Topic: Monotheism) deals with His human creation. The concept of covenant, treaty, or agreement is crucial in understanding the biblical revelation. The tension between God’s sovereignty and human free-will is clearly seen in the concept of covenant. Some covenants are based exclusively on God’s character and actions.

1. creation itself (cf. Genesis 1-2)
2. the preservation and promise to Noah (cf. Genesis 6-9)
3. the call of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12)
4. the covenant with Abraham (cf. Genesis 15)

However, the very nature of covenant demands a response.

1. by faith Adam must obey God and not eat of the tree in the midst of Eden
2. by faith Noah must build a huge boat far from water and gather the animals
3. by faith Abraham must leave his family, follow God, and believe in future descendants
4. by faith Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai and received specific guidelines for religious and social life with promises of blessings and cursings (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-28)

This same tension involving God’s relationship to humanity is addressed in the “new covenant” (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Heb. 7:22; 8:6,8,13; 9:15; 12:24). The tension can be clearly seen in comparing Ezek. 18:31 with Ezek. 36:27-38 (YHWH’s action). Is the covenant based on God’s gracious actions or a mandated human response? This is the burning issue between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The goals of both are the same: (1) the restoration of fellowship with YHWH lost in Genesis 3 and (2) the establishment of a righteous people who reflect God’s character.

The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 solves the tension by removing human performance as the means of attaining acceptance. God’s law becomes an internal desire instead of an external legal code. The goal of a godly, righteous people remains the same, but the methodology changes. Fallen mankind proved themselves inadequate to be God’s reflected image. The problem was not God’s covenant, but human sinfulness and weakness (cf. Genesis 3; Romans 7; Galatians 3).

The same tension between OT unconditional and conditional covenants remains in the NT. Salvation is absolutely free in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it requires repentance and faith (both initially and continually; see Special Topic: Believe in the NT). Jesus calls His new relationship with believers “a new covenant” (cf. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). It is both a legal pronouncement (forensic) and a call to Christlikeness (cf. Matt. 5:48; Rom. 8:29-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 4:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3,7; 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:15), an indicative statement of acceptance (Romans 4) and an imperative call to holiness (Matt. 5:48)! Believers are not saved by their performance, but unto obedience

(cf. Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Cor.3:5-6). Godly living becomes the evidence of salvation, not the means of salvation (i.e., James and 1 John). However, eternal life has observable characteristics! This tension is clearly seen in warnings in the NT (see Special Topic: Apostasy).

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:14-16**

**<sup>14</sup>“Also if you bring a grain offering of early ripened things to the LORD, you shall bring fresh heads of grain roasted in the fire, grits of new growth, for the grain offering of your early ripened things. <sup>15</sup>You shall then put oil on it and lay incense on it; it is a grain offering. <sup>16</sup>The priest shall offer up in smoke its memorial portion, part of its grits and its oil with all its incense as an offering by fire to the LORD.”**

#### **2:14,16**

<b>NASB, JPSOA</b>	<b>“grits”</b>
<b>NKJV</b>	<b>“green heads”</b>
<b>NRSV</b>	<b>“coarse new grain”</b>
<b>NJB</b>	<b>“bread”</b>
<b>REB</b>	<b>“crushed meal”</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>“crushed bits”</b>
<b>LXX</b>	<b>“pounded”</b>
<b>Peshitta</b>	<b>“beaten out”</b>

The term (BDB 176) is found only in Lev. 2:14,16 (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 898).

1. in Arabic the root means “to pound,” “to grind coarse”
2. in Aramaic it means “to crush”

In this context it seems to denote ripened or nearly ripened heads of grain that have been crushed into a coarse meal (i.e., not fine flour).

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why would a person bring a cereal/grain offering?
2. How is the term “first fruits” related to a grain offering?
3. Is leaven always a sign/symbol of evil?
4. Why was all the grain offering not burned like the animals in Leviticus 1-3?



# LEVITICUS 3

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Law of the Peace Offering	The Peace Offering	Offerings of Well-Being	Fellowship Offerings	The Communion Sacrifice
3:1-11	3:1-5 3:6-11	3:1-5 3:6-11	3:1-5 3:6-11	3:1-5 3:6 3:7-11
3:12-17	3:12-17	3:12-16a 2:16b-4:2	3:12-17	2:12-16a 3:16b-17

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This offering (i.e., Lev. 3:1) is the most common of all ANE types of sacrifice.
- B. This chapter describes the freewill offering of individuals who seek communion with God, symbolized by a sacred meal.
- C. The chapter specifies these types of animal sacrifice (male or female).
  1. from the herd, Lev. 3:1-5
  2. from the flock (sheep), Lev. 3:6-11
  3. from the flock (goats), Lev. 3:12-16
 and a final summary statement in Lev. 3:17.

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-11

<sup>1</sup>“Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD. <sup>2</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar. <sup>3</sup>From the sacrifice of the peace offerings he shall present an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, <sup>4</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>5</sup>Then Aaron’s sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. <sup>6</sup>But if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD is from the flock, he shall offer it, male or female, without defect. <sup>7</sup>If he is going to offer a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, <sup>8</sup>and he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it before the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. <sup>9</sup>From the sacrifice of peace offerings he shall bring as an offering by fire to the LORD, its fat, the entire fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the

**entrails,<sup>10</sup> and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>11</sup>Then the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire to the LORD.”**

**3:1 “peace offerings”** There were three kinds of peace offerings.

1. the thank offering (Lev. 7:11-15; 22:24-30)
2. the vow offering (Lev. 7:16-18; 22:21-25)
3. the freewill offering (Lev. 7:16-18; 22:21-25)

The peace offering symbolizes a fellowship meal with Deity. Because the burnt offering, grain offering, and peace offering were all voluntary, they showed the attitude of a human heart toward God. God symbolically ate with the offerer (cf. Lev. 7:11-18), which denoted his/her acceptance. See Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East, V. C. at Lev. 1:3

The NOUN “peace offering” (BDB 1023) is from a root with several meanings. Note the following translations.

<b>NASB, NKJV, Peshitta</b>	“peace offering”
<b>NRSV, JPSOA</b>	“well being”
<b>TEV, NIV</b>	“fellowship offering”
<b>NJB, Ronald deVaux</b>	“common sacrifice”
<b>NJB, REB</b>	“shared offering”
<b>LXX</b>	“deliverance”
Josephus ( <i>Antiq.</i> 3.9.2)	“thank offering”

The root, שָׁלוֹם, can mean

1. NOUN – be complete or sound (BDB 1022)
2. VERB – completeness, soundness, welfare, peace
3. NOUN – sacrifice for alliance or sacrifice for friendship (BDB 1023)
4. VERB – be in covenant of peace
5. ADJECTIVE – complete, safe, at peace (BDB 1023 I)
6. NOUN – recompense (BDB 1024)

See Special Topic: Peace (OT) and Special Topic: Peace (NT)

Because of the basic meaning of the root (i.e., complete), some scholars suggest it denotes a concluding sacrifice after other offerings (Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 76-77) from Ugaritic root.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: PEACE (*shalom*) [OT]**

The Hebrew term *shalom* (BDB 1022, KB 1532) is common in Semitic cognates.

- A. Akkadian
  1. to be unharmed
  2. to stay well
  3. to be in good condition
- B. Ugaritic (Canaanite)
  1. to be unharmed
  2. to be healthy
- C. Arabic
  1. to be healthy
  2. to be in a happy situation

- D. Aramaic
  1. to be complete
  2. to come to an end/completion
  3. conclude a peace
  4. stay unharmed
- E. Hebrew connotations
  1. completeness
  2. soundness
  3. welfare
  4. peace

Today the term *shalom* is a Hebrew greeting and farewell statement. It still denotes the absence of evil and the presence of good (i.e., contentment with life). It denotes a mental state of security and satisfaction. Notice how the OT speaks of a “covenant of peace” (cf. Num. 25:12; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; also note Gen. 26:29,31; Jos. 9:15). It must be pursued (cf. Ps. 34:14; Rom. 14:19). AB, vol. 5, p. 206, says, “Peace,” “truth,” and “justice” are parallel Hebrew concepts (cf. Zech. 8:16-19). YHWH is called “LORD of Peace” (cf. Jdgs. 6:24; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23). The Messiah will be called “the Prince of Peace” (cf. Isa. 9:5). There will be a new day when peace, truth, and justice will be a reality in human experience (cf. Isa. 60:17; 66:12,22). The “very good” of Gen. 1:31 is again a possibility, yea, a promise (i.e., “a new heaven and a new earth”).

### SPECIAL TOPIC: PEACE (*eirēnē*) [NT]

This Greek term referred to the absence of conflict but in the LXX it came to denote an inner peace with God and with one’s fellow man (i.e., Luke 2:14; 10:6). The NT, like the OT, uses it as a greeting, “Peace to you” (i.e., Luke 10:5; John 20:19,21,26; Rom. 1:7; Gal. 1:3) or “farewell, go in peace” (cf. Mark 5:34; Luke 2:29; 7:50; 8:48; James 2:16).

This term was used for “binding together relationships that were broken” (i.e., Rom. 5:10-11). There are three theological ways the NT speaks of peace:

1. an objective aspect, our peace with God through Christ (cf. Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20)
2. a subjective aspect, our being right with God (cf. John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7)
3. that God has united into one new body, through Christ, both believing Jew and Gentile (cf. Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 3:15). Once we have peace with God, it must issue in peace with others! The vertical must become the horizontal.

Newman and Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, p. 92, has a good comment about “peace.”

“Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the term peace has a wide range of meaning. Basically it describes the total well-being of a person’s life; it was even adopted among the Jews as a formula of greeting (*shalom*). This term had such a profound meaning that it could also be used by the Jews as a description of the Messianic salvation. Because of this fact, there are times when it is used almost synonymously with the term rendered ‘to be in a right relation with God.’ Here the term appears to be used as a description of the harmonious relation established between man and God on the basis of God’s having put man right with himself” (p. 92).

▣ **“male or female”** In the burnt offering of Leviticus 1 it had to be a male but here, either.

▣ “without defect” See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Lev. 1:3b.

▣ “before the LORD” From Lev. 1:3 it is specified that this phrase means at the “door of the Tabernacle.” YHWH dwelt with His people over the ark of the covenant (see Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant) in the Holy of Holies (see Special Topic: Tabernacle chart at Lev. 1:1c).

For “LORD” see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D. at Lev. 1:1

## SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

- I. Its place and purpose
  - A. the place where YHWH dwelt (i.e., His footstool, cf. 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7; Isa. 66:1) with His people, between the wings of the *cherubim* (see Special Topic: *Cherubim*) on the ark of the covenant.
  - B. the place of forgiveness of sin (i.e., the mercy seat), for all peoples (cf. Israel, Leviticus 16 and 1 Kgs. 8:27-30; foreigners, 8:41,43,60)
- II. Its contents
  - A. rabbinical tradition
    1. the two tablets of stone on which YHWH wrote the decalog (cf. Exod. 31:18; 32:15-16)
    2. the two silver columns which hold the tablets (no biblical references)
    3. the fragments of the original two tablets which were broken by Moses because of Israel’s (Aaron) making and worshiping the golden calf (cf. Exod. 32:19; Deut. 9:17; 10:2)
    4. a copy of the entire Torah (cf. Exod. 25:16)
    5. the names of God (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:29) developed in *Kabalah*, Jewish mysticism
  - B. biblical references as to the contents (it is uncertain if these refer to things inside the ark or beside it)
    1. a jar of manna (cf. Exod. 16:31-36)
    2. Aaron’s rod that budded (cf. Num. 17:4,10; Heb. 9:4)
    3. the guilt offerings of the Philistines (5 golden mice and golden hemorrhoids, cf. 1 Sam. 6:3-4,8)
    4. a copy of the Decalog (cf. Deut. 10:4-5; 31:26)
  - C. at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple in 1 Kings 8 the Ark is said to have only contained the two tablets of stone (i.e., the Ten Words, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:9)
- III. Its possible location
  - A. historical options
    1. taken to Egypt by Shishak (935-914 B.C.) when he invaded Judah in the fifth year (926 B.C.) of Rehoboam’s (son of Solomon) reign (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:25-26; 2 Chr. 12:9)
    2. taken to Egypt (Zoan, Tanis, Avaris—different names for the delta capital of Seti I) by Pharaoh Necco II, who also exiled the Davidic seed Jehoahaz (Josiah’s son) in 597 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:31-35; 2 Chr. 36:1-4)
    3. taken to Babylon to the temple of Marduk by Nebuchadnezzar II when Zedekiah was exiled (586 B.C.) and the Temple burned (cf. 2 Kgs. 25:9,13-17; 2 Chr. 36:18)
  - B. Jewish traditions
    1. hidden on Mt. Nebo/Pisgah by Jeremiah before the fall of Jerusalem (2 Macc. 2:4-5)
    2. the apocryphal book of II Baruch says an angel hid it

3. hidden by unknown means, but will be returned by Elijah just before the Messiah comes (cf. Mal. 4:5)
4. hidden on Mt. Gerizim (Shechem) where the Samaritans built their temple to YHWH
5. buried under the Temple (i.e., Mt. Moriah) before Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem

**3:2 “lay his hand on the head”** See note at Lev. 1:4.

▣ **“sprinkle”** See full note at Lev. 1:5.

▣ **“the altar”** See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7.

**3:3-4 “the fat”** See full note at Lev. 1:8.

**3:5 “a soothing aroma”** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

**3:6** Note the distinction between

1. the herd of Lev. 3:1 (i.e., bull or cow)
2. the flock of Lev. 3:6 (i.e., sheep or goat)

▣ **“without defect”** See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Lev. 1:3b.

**3:8 “lay his hand on the head”** See full note at Lev. 1:4.

▣ **“sprinkle”** See full note at Lev. 1:5.

**3:9 “the entire fat tail”** The sheep of Palestine store their fat in their tails instead of on their intestines. They are called “fat-tailed sheep.” This fat was a symbol of the health and vigor of the animal that was reserved for God (as was the blood).

**3:11 “as food”** This was the ANE view of sacrifice (see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East at Lev. 1:3), but for Israel it is imagery (i.e., Ps. 50:7-15). The sacrifices were seen as

1. a way to gain or restore favor (Leviticus 1-3)
2. a way to deal with sin (Leviticus 4-5)

They are called “food” (cf. Lev. 3:11,16; Num. 28:2) and “the Bread of God” (Lev. 21:6,8,17; 22:25). The “soothing aroma” is also idiomatic for YHWH’s acceptance of the persons and their offerings, not food (i.e., Gen. 8:21-22). The concept of “food” in Israel was because the peace offering involved a fellowship meal involving

1. the offerer
2. the officiating priest
3. YHWH (cf. Lev. 7:11-18; 19:5-8; 22:21-30)

The LXX even changes “as food” in Lev. 3:11,16, to “an odor of fragrance,” showing that the translator saw it as symbolic.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:12-17**

<sup>12</sup>“Moreover, if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD, <sup>13</sup>and he shall lay his hand on its head and slay it before the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. <sup>14</sup>From it he shall present his offering as an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, <sup>15</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>16</sup>The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar *as food*, an offering by fire for a soothing aroma; all fat is the LORD’s. <sup>17</sup>It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.”

**3:12-16** The ritual procedures for an animal from the flock parallels the ritual for animals from the herd.

**3:17 “It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations”** This is a recurrent phrase in the book of Leviticus. It may be the author’s way of dividing his book (cf. Lev. 7:36; 10:9; 16:29,34; 17:7; 23:14,21, 31,41; 24:3). Be careful of reading the English definition of “perpetual” into the OT. See Special Topic: Forever (*’olam*).

**SPECIAL TOPIC: FOREVER (*’olam*)**

The etymology of the Hebrew term *’olam*, מְלִוּעַ (BDB 761, KB 798) is uncertain (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 345). It is used in several senses (usually determined by context). The following are only selected examples.

1. ancient things
  - a. peoples, Gen. 6:4; 1 Sam. 27:8; Jer. 5:15; 28:8
  - b. places, Isa. 58:12; 61:4
  - c. God, Ps. 93:2; Pro. 8:23; Isa. 63:16
  - d. things, Gen. 49:26; Job 22:15; Ps. 24:7,9; Isa. 46:9
  - e. time, Deut. 32:7; Isa. 51:9; 63:9,11
2. future time
  - a. one’s life, Exod. 21:6; Deut. 15:17; 1 Sam. 1:22; 27:12
  - b. hyperbole respect for a king, 1 Kgs. 1:31; Ps. 61:7; Neh. 2:3
  - c. continuous existence
    - (1) earth, Ps. 78:69; 104:5; Eccl. 1:4
    - (2) heavens, Ps. 148:5
  - d. existence of God
    - (1) Gen. 21:33
    - (2) Exod. 15:18
    - (3) Deut. 32:40
    - (4) Ps. 93:2
    - (5) Isa. 40:28
    - (6) Jer. 10:10
    - (7) Dan. 12:7
  - e. the covenant
    - (1) Gen. 9:12,16; 17:7,13,19

- (2) Exod. 31:16
- (3) Lev. 24:8
- (4) Num. 18:19
- (5) 2 Sam. 23:5
- (6) Ps. 105:10
- (7) Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8
- (8) Jer. 32:40; 50:5
- f. special covenant with David
  - (1) 2 Sam. 7:13,16,25,29; 22:51; 23:5
  - (2) 1 Kgs. 2:33,45; 9:5
  - (3) 2 Chr. 13:5
  - (4) Ps. 18:50; 89:4,28,36,37
  - (5) Isa. 9:7; 55:3
- g. God's Messiah
  - (1) Ps. 45:2; 72:17; 89:35-36; 110:4
  - (2) Isa. 9:6
- h. God's laws
  - (1) Exod. 29:28; 30:21
  - (2) Lev. 6:18,22; 7:34; 10:15; 24:9
  - (3) Num. 18:8,11,19
  - (4) Ps. 119:89,160
- i. God's promises
  - (1) 2 Sam. 7:13,16,25; 22:51
  - (2) 1 Kgs. 9:5
  - (3) Ps. 18:50
  - (4) Isa. 40:8
- j. Abraham's descendants and the Promised Land
  - (1) Gen. 13:15; 17:19; 48:4
  - (2) Exod. 32:13
  - (3) 1 Chr. 16:17
- k. covenantal feasts
  - (1) Exod. 12:14,17,24
  - (2) Lev. 23:14,21,41
  - (3) Num. 10:8
- l. eternity, everlasting
  - (1) 1 Kgs. 8:13
  - (2) Ps. 61:7-8; 77:8; 90:2; 103:17; 145:13
  - (3) Isa. 26:4; 45:17
  - (4) Dan. 9:24
- m. what the Psalms say believers will do forever
  - (1) give thanks, Ps. 30:12; 79:13
  - (2) abide in His presence, Ps. 41:12; 61:4,7

- (3) trust in His mercy, Ps. 52:8
- (4) praise the LORD, Ps. 52:9
- (5) sing praises, Ps. 61:8; 89:1
- (6) declare His justice, Ps. 75:7-9
- (7) glorify His name, Ps. 86:12; 145:2
- (8) bless His name, Ps. 145:1
- n. used in Isaiah to describe the new age
  - (1) everlasting covenant, Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8
  - (2) YHWH an everlasting Rock, Isa. 26:4
  - (3) everlasting joy, Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 61:7
  - (4) the Everlasting God, Isa. 40:28
  - (5) an everlasting salvation, Isa. 45:17
  - (6) everlasting lovingkindness (*Hesed*), Isa. 54:8
  - (7) everlasting sign, Isa. 55:13
  - (8) an everlasting name, Isa. 56:5; 63:12,16
  - (9) an everlasting light, Isa. 60:19,20

A negative-oriented use related to the eternal punishment of the wicked is found in Isa. 33:14, “an everlasting burning.” Isaiah often uses “fire” to describe God’s wrath (cf. Isa. 9:18,19; 10:16; 47:14), but only in Isa. 33:14 is it described as “everlasting.”

- 3. both backward and forward in time (“from everlasting to everlasting”)
  - a. Ps. 41:13 (praise to God)
  - b. Ps. 90:2 (God Himself)
  - c. Ps. 103:17 (the lovingkindness of the LORD)

Remember, context determines the extent of the term’s meaning. The everlasting covenants and promises are conditional (i.e., Jeremiah 7; see Special Topic: Covenant). Be careful of reading your modern view of time or your NT systematic theology into every OT usage of this very fluid word. Remember, the NT universalized OT promises (see Special Topic: OT Predictions of the Future vs. NT Predictions).

▣ **“you shall not eat any fat or any blood”** The fat was excluded because it represents health and vigor which belongs to God; the blood was excluded because the life was in the blood and the life belongs to God (cf. Gen. 9:4-7; Lev. 7:23,26).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does the term “peace offering” imply?
2. How is it unique in what happens to the flesh of the sacrificial animal?
3. Why is the fat on the intestines and internal organs given to God?
4. Why is the injunction (i.e., consume no fat or blood) of Lev. 3:17 not repeated other places?



# LEVITICUS 4

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Law of Sin Offerings	The Sin Offerings	The Sin Offering (4:1-5:13)	Offerings for Unintentional Sin	The Sacrifice for Sin: a. of the High Priest
4:1-12	4:1-12	4:1-2	4:1-2	4:1 4:2-7
		4:3-12	4:3-12	4:8-10 4:11-12
4:13-21	4:13-21	4:13-21	4:13-21	b. of the Community of Israel 4:13-15 4:16-18 4:19-20 4:21
4:22-26	4:22-26	4:22-26	4:22-26	c. of a Leader of the Community 4:22-26
4:27-31	4:27-31	4:27-31	4:27-31	d. of a Private Individual 4:27-31
4:32-35	4:32-35	4:32-35	4:32-35	4:32-35

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. As for atonement theology, the sin offering is crucial to a NT understanding of the work of Christ (cf. Isaiah 53; Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- B. Notice how the chapter deals with a sin offering for different levels of people in Israeli society.
1. the High Priest, Lev. 4:3-12
  2. the nation as a whole, Lev. 4:13-21 (cf. Leviticus 16)
  3. the tribal leaders, Lev. 4:23-26 (i.e., “elders,” see Special Topic: Elder at Lev. 8:3)
  4. individual Israelites, Lev. 4:27-35
- C. This sin offering denotes the major purpose of the sacrificial system, which was to restore fellowship between a sinful human being and his/her Maker.  
All humans have sinned (cf. Genesis 3; 6:5, 11-12, 13; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:12-14, 17, 18, 19, 21; Gal. 3:22), therefore, all need to be restored and forgiven!

- D. Notice that the introductory phrase, “then the LORD spoke to Moses” (see note at Lev. 1:1) is repeated:
1. Lev. 1:1 (Lev. 1:1-3:17 is a literary unit)
  2. Lev. 4:1 (Lev. 4:1-5:13 is a literary unit)
  3. Lev. 6:1 (Lev. 6:1-7:38)
- which shows the three main divisions of the rituals for both
1. types of offerings
  2. responsibilities for the ritual shared by offerer and priest
- E. Leviticus 4:1-5:13 forms a literary unit dealing with atonement for sins. A good outline is found in Wenham’s *Leviticus Commentary* (NICOT), p. 87.
1. Lev. 4:1-35 – inadvertent sins
  2. Lev. 5:1-13 – sins of omission
  3. Lev. 5:14-19 – inadvertent sins
  4. Lev. 6:1-7 – deliberate sin

### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:1-12

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, <sup>3</sup>if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. <sup>4</sup>He shall bring the bull to the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull and slay the bull before the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Then the anointed priest is to take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting, <sup>6</sup>and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. <sup>7</sup>The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the LORD in the tent of meeting; and all the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup>He shall remove from it all the fat of the bull of the sin offering: the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat which is on the entrails, <sup>9</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys <sup>10</sup>(just as it is removed from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings), and the priest is to offer them up in smoke on the altar of burnt offering. <sup>11</sup>But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, <sup>12</sup>that is, all *the rest of* the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.”

#### 4:2

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, NIV “sins intentionally”

TEV “without intending to”

NJB, REB “inadvertently”

JPSOA, ASV “unwittingly”

Peshitta, KJV “unwillingly”

Targum Onkelos “by neglect”

This word “unintentionally” (BDB 993) shows a significant aspect of the ancient covenant. What follows is a discussion of the sin offerings, the guilt offering (see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East V. D. and E. at Lev. 1:3). To some extent the sins that are involved in the guilt offerings are intentional sins. However, generally it was understood that if a person wilfully rebelled against YHWH’s covenant, there was no sacrifice available for him (cf. Num. 15:27; Lev. 5:15; Ps. 51:16-17). See Special Topic: Unintentional Sins.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: UNINTENTIONAL SINS (OT)**

#### **I. Note from Joshua 20:3**

The entire sacrificial system was geared toward those who sinned out of ignorance or passion. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 94, states,

“The concept of ‘unintentionally’ or ‘inadvertently’ (Lev. 4:2) is both strategic and problematic (cf. Jos. 4:13,22,27; 5:15,18; 22:14; Num. 15:22,24-29). Because of it some scholars have concluded that the sin offering only treated inadvertent sin, that is, sins that were committed by mistake or sins which were done not knowing that the particular act was sinful (see Milgrom, 1991, 228-29). However, the word ‘unintentionally’ means basically ‘in error’ (the vb. means to commit an error, go astray). Although it can also mean that the error was unintentional or inadvertent (see e.g., Num. 35:11,15,22-23; Jos. 20:3,9), this is not necessarily the case (see 1 Sam. 26:21; Eccl. 5:6).”

There was no sacrifice for high-handed, defiant, premeditated, or known sin (e.g., Ps. 51:17). This concept of intentionality (BDB 993) is referred to in Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15; 22:14; Num. 4:42; 15:27-31; and 19:4.

This is a good place to point out that the commandment “You shall not murder” (cf. Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17) does not mean “kill” (KJV), but do not commit “non-legal, premeditated murder” (BDB 953, cf. Exod. 21:12-14). There was legal premeditated killing.

1. blood avenger
2. holy war
3. judicial sentences

#### **II. Note from Deut. 4:42 – “unintentionally”**

The negated term (BDB 395, KB 228) refers to the accidental death of a fellow Israelite accidentally, without premeditation or prejudice. We would call it manslaughter.

The lack of evil motive is the key element. It becomes the theological heart of the sacrificial system. Any sin committed intentionally had no sacrifice available (cf. Exod. 21:12-14; Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15-18; 22:14; Num. 15:27,30; Deut. 17:12-13; Josh. 20:1-6). Even the national sacrifice by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) did not cover premeditated sin (cf. Ps. 51:14-17)! Are you not glad we are under the NT sacrifice of Jesus?!

▣ **“a person”** This is the term *nephesh* (BDB 659, cf. Lev. 4:2,27; 5:1,2,4,15,17,21), which denotes a person or living animal. See full note online at Ezek. 18:4.

▣ **“commanded”** This term (BDB 846) is one of several words used to describe YHWH’s covenant requirements. See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: TERMS FOR GOD’S REVELATION (USING DEUTERONOMY AND PSALMS)

- I. “Statutes,” BDB 349, “an enactment, decree, or ordinance”
- A. Masculine, קָטָה, KB 346 – Deut. 4:1,5,6,8,14,40,45; 5:1; 6:1,24; 7:11; 11:32; 16:12; 17:19; 26:17; 27:10; Ps. 2:7; 50:16; 81:4; 99:7; 105:10,45; 148:6
- B. Feminine, הִקָּה, KB 347 – Deut. 6:2; 8:11; 10:13; 11:1; 28:15,45; 30:10,16; Ps. 89:31; 119:5,8,12,16,23, 26,33, 48,54,64,68,71,80,83,112, 124, 135, 145,155,171,
- II. “Law,” BDB 435, KB 1710, “instruction”
- Deut. 1:5; 4:44; 17:11,18,19; 27:3,8,26; 28:58,61; 29:21,29; 30:10; 31:9; Ps. 1:2; 19:7; 78:10; 94:12; 105:45; 119:1,18,29,34,44,51,53,55,61,70,72,77,85,92,97, 109,113,126,136,142,150,153,163,165,174
- III. “Testimonies,” BDB 730, KB 790, “divine laws”
- A. PLURAL, הִדָּע – Deut. 4:45; 6:17,20; Ps. 25:10; 78:56; 93:5; 99:7; 119:22,24,46,59,79,95,119, 125, 138,146,152,167,168
- B. תִּדְע or תִּדְעוּ – Ps. 19:7; 78:5; 81:5; 119:2,14,31,36,88,99,111,129,144,157
- IV. “Precepts,” BDB 824, KB 959, “a charge”
- Ps. 19:8; 103:18; 111:7; 119:4,15,27, 40,45, 56,63,69, 78,87, 93, 94,100,104,110, 128,134,141,159,168,173
- V. “Commandments,” BDB 846, KB 622
- Deut. 4:2,40; 5:29; 6:1,2,17,25; 8:1,2,11; 10:13; 11:13; 15:5; 26:13, 17; 30:11,16; Ps. 19:8; 119:6,10,19,21,32,35,47,48,60, 66,73,86,96,98,115,127,131,143,151, 166,176
- VI. “Judgments/ordinances,” BDB 1048, KB651, “rulings” or “justice”
- Deut. 1:17; 4:1,5,8,14,45; 7:12; 16:18; 30:16; 33:10,21; Ps. 10:5; 18:22; 19:19; 48:11; 89:30; 97:8; 105:5,7; 119:7,13,20, 30, 39,43,52,62,75,84,102,106,120,137, 149,156,160,164; 147:19; 149:9
- VII. “His ways,” BDB 202, KB 231, YHWH’s guidelines for His people’s lifestyle
- Deut. 8:6; 10:12; 11:22,28; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16; 32:4; Ps. 119:3, 5,37,59
- VIII. “His words”
- A. BDB 182, KB 211 – Deut. 4:10,12,36; 9:10; 10:4; Ps. 119:9,16, 17,25, 28,42,43, 49,57,65,74,81,89, 101,105,107, 114,130,139,147,160,161,169
- B. BDB 57, KB 67
1. “word” – Deut. 33:9; Ps. 119:11,67,103,162,170,172
2. “promise” – Ps. 119:38,41,50,58,76,82,116,133,140,148,154
3. “command” – Ps. 119:158

All of these refer to God’s special revelation of Himself to Israel. They are basically synonymous. See Special Topic: Inspiration.

▣ **“commits any of them”** This broad statement is repeated in Deut. 27:26 and Gal. 3:10. Perfect obedience is required but is impossible for fallen humanity (see Special Topic: The Fall and Special Topic: Keep).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FALL in the NT**

**(Genesis 3; see exegetical notes online in the commentary of Genesis)**

The Fall affected all mankind is clearly expressed by Paul in Rom. 5:12-21.

Paul develops his theology of the sinfulness of all humanity in the book of Romans. The first point of “the good news” of the gospel is the bad news of human need! Paul develops this from Rom. 1:18-3:18 (the summary conclusion is Rom. 3:19-31). Romans describes the lostness, sinfulness, and need of all human beings.

1. immoral pagans
2. moral pagans
3. Jews

Everyone is responsible to God because of

1. natural revelation, Rom. 1:18-23
2. internal moral witness, Rom. 2:14-16

One of the most horrible recurrent phrases in Romans 1-3 is “God gave them over. . .” (cf. Rom. 1:24,26,28; Eph. 4:17-19). A shocking litany of OT texts is quoted in Rom. 3:9-18! Humans are in deep trouble, need, and rebellion! One does not need a “savior” until one recognizes his/her need!

Romans 5:12-21 is a discussion of Jesus as the second Adam (cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49; Phil. 2:6-8). It gives emphasis to the theological concept of both individual sin and corporate guilt. Paul’s development of mankind’s (and creation’s, cf. Rom. 8:18-23) fall in Adam was unique and different from the rabbis while his view of corporality was very much in line with rabbinical teaching. It showed Paul’s ability under inspiration to use, or supplement, the truths he was taught during his training in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3).

The doctrine of original sin from Genesis 3 and Paul was developed by Augustine and Calvin. It asserts that humans are born sinful. Often Psalm 51:5; 58:3; and Job 15:14; 25:4 are used as OT proof-texts. The alternate theological position that humans are morally and spiritually responsible for their own choices and destiny was developed first by the rabbis and then in the church by Pelagius and Arminius. There is some evidence for their view in Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15; and Jonah 4:11; John 9:41; 15:22,24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 4:15. The thrust of this theological position would be that children are innocent until an age of moral responsibility (for the rabbis this was 13 years old for boys and 12 years old for girls).

There is a mediating position in which both an innate evil propensity and an age of moral responsibility are both true! Evil is not only corporate, but a developing evil of self and sin (life apart from God). The wickedness of humanity is not the issue (cf. Gen. 6:5, 11-12, 13; Rom. 3:9-18, 23), but the when, at birth or later in life?

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: KEEP (taken from Dr. Utley’s notes on Deut. 5:10)**

It is a characteristic of Deuteronomy to link obedience to YHWH’s covenant to love for YHWH (cf. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6,16,20).

YHWH’s love is not capricious, but clearly defined. He shows no partiality. His initiating covenant love is maintained by covenant obedience.

“Keep” (BDB 1036, KB 1581) is the key concept in this chapter (cf. Deut. 5:1,10,12,29,32 and many more times in Deuteronomy). The OT was based on the grace of YHWH and human obedience/performance. YHWH wanted to show human inability to respond appropriately (cf. Galatians 3). The NT (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38) is based on God’s gracious initiation and redemption in Christ. Believers are still destined to be righteous (cf. Eph. 1:14; 2:10), but they have been accepted and forgiven by grace through faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). Now they obey/perform out of a sense of gratitude and family love (i.e., “those who love Me”). The goal is the same, a righteous (Christlike) people, but the mechanism has changed from human performance to Christ’s performance (cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Another Hebrew root used in Deut. 6:4, “hear” (BDB 1033, KB 1581), also means “hear so as to do/obey.” Obedience is the evidence that faithful followers are faithful followers. Note Jesus’ words in Luke 6:46! One of the saddest passages in Isaiah describes Israel’s inability to obey (cf. Isa. 6:9-13)! Also note Jesus’ words in Matt. 7:21-23,24-27!

**4:3-35** The best way to discuss this section is to see a brief outline.

1. for the sins of the High Priest, Lev. 4:3-12
2. for the sins of the nation, Lev. 4:13-21
3. for the sins of a tribal leader, Lev. 4:22-26
4. for the sins of an individual, Lev. 4:27-35

In the first two the blood was placed in the Holy Place and sprinkled before the veil, but in the last two it was simply dealt with at the altar of sacrifice.

**4:3 “the anointed priests”** This refers

1. to the officiating priest at the tabernacle at the time of the sin offering
2. here, specifically to the High Priest

See Special Topic: Anointing in the Bible.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: “ANOINTING” IN THE BIBLE (Hebrew VERB, BDB 602, KB 643 I; NOUN, BDB 603)**

- A. Used for beautification (BDB 691 I, cf. Deut. 28:40; Ruth 3:3; 2 Sam. 12:20; 14:2; 2 Chr. 28:15; Dan. 10:3; Mic. 6:15)
- B. Used for guests (BDB 206, cf. Ps. 23:5; Luke 7:38,46; John 11:2)
- C. Used for healing (BDB 602, cf. Isa. 61:1; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; James 5:14) [used in hygienic sense in Ezek. 16:9]
- D. Used in preparation for burial (cf. Mark 16:1; John 12:3,7; 19:39-40; note 2 Chr. 16:14, but without the VERB “anoint”)
- E. Used in a religious sense (of an object, BDB 602, cf. Gen. 31:13 [a pillar]; Exod. 29:36 [the altar]; Exod. 30:26; 40:9-16; Lev. 8:10-13; Num. 7:1 [the tabernacle])
- F. Used for installing leaders
  1. Priests
    - a. Aaron (Exod. 28:41; 29:7; 30:30)
    - b. Aaron’s sons (Exod. 40:15; Lev. 7:36)
    - c. standard phrase or title (Num. 3:3; Lev. 16:32)
  2. Kings
    - a. by God (cf. 1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 12:7; 2 Kgs. 9:3,6,12; Ps. 45:7; 89:20)
    - b. by the prophets (cf. 1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 15:1,17; 16:3,12-13; 1 Kgs. 1:45; 19:15-16)

- c. by priests (cf. 1 Kgs. 1:34,39; 2 Kgs. 11:12)
- d. by the elders (cf. Jdgs. 9:8,15; 2 Sam. 2:7; 5:3; 2 Kgs. 23:30)
- e. of Jesus as Messianic king (cf. Ps. 2:2; Luke 4:18 [Isa. 61:1]; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb. 1:9 [Ps. 45:7])
- f. Jesus' followers (cf. 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20,27 [*chrisma*])
- 3. possibly of prophets (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:16; Isa. 61:1)
- 4. unbelieving instruments of divine deliverance
  - a. Cyrus (cf. Isa. 45:1)
  - b. King of Tyre (cf. Ezek. 28:14, where he uses Garden of Eden metaphors)
- 5. term or title "Messiah" means "an Anointed One" (BDB 603, cf. Ps. 2:2; 89:38; 132:10)

Acts 10:38 is a verse where all three persons of the Godhead are involved in anointing. Jesus was anointed (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). The concept is widened to include all believers (cf. 1 John 2:27). The Anointed One has become the anointed ones! This may be parallel to Antichrist and antichrists (cf. 1 John 2:18). The OT symbolic act of physical anointing with oil (cf. Exod. 29:7; 30:25; 37:29) relates to those who were called and equipped by God for a special task (i.e., prophets, priests, and kings). The word "Christ" is a translation of the Hebrew term "the anointed one" or Messiah.

▣ **"so as to bring guilt on the people"** The actions of leaders affect everyone in the society.

**4:4 "the bull"** Not only is there delineation between the different types of leaders in the community, but also the expense of the sacrificial animal involved. It moves from a bull for the High Priest of the congregation to a goat, a ram, or a lamb.

▣ **"lay his hand on the head"** See full note at Lev. 1:4.

▣ **"before the LORD"** See full note at Lev. 1:5.

▣ The NASB Study Bible, p. 138, has a good comment here.

"Three principles of atonement are found in this verse: (1) substitution ('bring the bull'); (2) identification ('lay his hand on the head'); and (3) the death of the substitute ('slay the bull')."

**4:5 "the tent of meeting"** See Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

**4:6** This is a new ritual act, at a new place (the inner veil).

Since the sin of the High Priest affected the covenantal system at its core, blood atonement had to be made close to the ark. There are several curtains in the tabernacle.

1. the outer rim of the larger enclosure
2. the covering of the inner shrine tent
3. the divider of the inner shrine tent into
  - a. the holy place (i.e., the outer rectangle)
  - b. the Holy of Holies (where the ark rested, cf. Exod. 26:31-35; 40:21,26; see Special Topic: Tabernacle at Lev. 1:1c)

The text is not specific as to which veil (#3) is intended. I assume it was the inner veil (cf. Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

Notice that for the first two kinds of sin offerings (High Priest and the whole nation) the blood is placed by the High Priest's finger seven times (see Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture) before the inner

veil (cf. Lev. 4:6,17), but on the next two (tribal leaders and individuals) the blood is placed on the horns of the altar of sacrifice (see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7).

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: SYMBOLIC NUMBERS IN SCRIPTURE**

- A. Certain numbers functioned both as numerals and symbols.
1. One – God (e.g., Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:4-6)
  2. Four – the whole earth (i.e., four corners, four winds, e.g., Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27; Rev. 7:1)
  3. Six – human imperfection (one less than 7, e.g., Rev. 13:18)
  4. Seven – divine perfection (the seven days of creation). Notice the symbolic usages in Revelation:
    - a. seven candlesticks, Rev. 1:12,20; 2:1
    - b. seven stars, Rev. 1:16,20; 2:1
    - c. seven churches, Rev. 1:20
    - d. seven spirits of God, Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
    - e. seven lamps, Rev. 4:5
    - f. seven seals, Rev. 5:1,5
    - g. seven horns and seven eyes, Rev. 5:6
    - h. seven angels, Rev. 8:2,6; 15:1,6,7,8; 16:1; 17:1
    - i. seven trumpets, Rev. 8:2,6
    - j. seven thunders, Rev. 10:3,4
    - k. seven thousand, Rev. 11:13
    - l. seven heads, Rev. 13:1; 17:3,7,9
    - m. seven plagues, Rev. 15:1,6,8; 21:9
    - n. seven bowls, Rev. 15:7; 21:9
    - o. seven kings, Rev. 17:10
  5. Ten – completeness
    - a. use in Gospels
      - (1) Matt. 20:24; 25:1,28
      - (2) Mark 10:41
      - (3) Luke 14:31; 15:8; 17:12,17; 19:13,16,17,24,25
    - b. use in Revelation
      - (1) Rev. 2:10, ten days of tribulation
      - (2) Rev. 12:3; 17:3,7,12,16, ten horns
      - (3) Rev. 13:1, ten crowns
    - c. multiples of 10 in Revelation
      - (1) 144,000 = 12x12x1000, cf. Rev. 7:4; 14:1,3
      - (2) 1,000 = 10x10x10, cf. Rev. 20:2,3,6
  6. Twelve – human organization
    - a. twelve sons of Jacob (i.e., twelve tribes of Israel, Gen. 35:22; 49:28)
    - b. twelve pillars, Exod. 24:4



- c. twelve stones on breastplate of High Priest, Exod. 28:21; 39:14
  - d. twelve loaves, for table in Holy Place (symbolic of God’s provision for the twelve tribes), Lev. 24:5; Exod. 25:30
  - e. twelve spies, Deut. 1:23
  - f. twelve rock carriers, Jos. 3:22; 4:2,3,4,8,9,20
  - g. twelve apostles, Matt. 10:1
  - h. use in Revelation
    - (1) twelve thousand sealed, Rev. 7:5-8
    - (2) twelve stars, Rev. 12:1
    - (3) twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes, Rev. 21:12
    - (4) twelve foundation stones, names of the twelve apostles, Rev. 21:14
    - (5) New Jerusalem was twelve thousand stadia squared, Rev. 21:16
    - (6) twelve gates made of twelve pearls, Rev. 21:21
    - (7) tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit, Rev. 22:2
7. Forty – number for time
- a. sometimes literal (exodus and wilderness wanderings, e.g., Exod. 16:35); Deut. 2:7; 8:2
  - b. can be literal or symbolic
    - (1) flood, Gen. 7:4,17; 8:6
    - (2) Moses on Mt. Sinai, Exod. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9,11,18,25
    - (3) divisions of Moses life:
      - (a) forty years in Egypt
      - (b) forty years in the desert
      - (c) forty years leading Israel
    - (4) Jesus fasted forty days, Matt. 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2
  - c. Note (by means of a Concordance) the number of times this number appears in time designation in the Bible!
8. Seventy – round number for people
- a. Israel, Exod. 1:5
  - b. seventy elders, Exod. 24:1,9
  - c. eschatological, Dan. 9:2,24
  - d. mission team, Luke 10:1,17
  - e. forgiveness (70x7), Matt. 18:22
- B. Good references
- 1. John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*
  - 2. D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*

▣ **“sprinkle”** See note at Lev. 1:5 on the procedure, but this is a different VERB (BDB 633, KB 683, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*, cf. Exod. 29:21; Lev. 4:6,17; 5:9; 6:27; 16:14,15,19).

**4:7 “the altar of fragrant incense”** This was the altar in the Holy Place before the veil (cf. Lev. 4:18). It is described in detail in Exod. 30:1-10. There is some confusion of which “horns” on which “altar” the blood was placed by the finger of the High Priest.

1. the incense altar, Lev. 4:7,18 (see Special Topic: Altar of Incense, below)
2. the altar of sacrifice, Lev. 4:25,30,34 (see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7)

Number 1 suggests that the smoke of the blood (see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b) rose up to YHWH. Number 2 suggests that the blood covered the sin of the person by substitution.

The remainder of the blood (which represented life) was poured out at the base of the altar of sacrifice (cf. Lev. 4:7,18,25,30,34; 5:9; 8:15; 9:9; Exod. 29:12).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ALTAR OF INCENSE**

This was an altar-shaped piece of furniture where incense was placed in large quantities on the Day of Atonement to produce thick smoke which concealed YHWH's presence over the ark. Our author seems to place it inside the Holy of Holies. This has caused commentators to take this phrase to refer to a "censer" because this is how the Septuagint translates this term (cf. Lev. 16:12; 2 Chr. 26:19; Ezek. 8:11; IV Mac. 7:11). However, Philo and Josephus use the same Greek word for the incense altar. In the OT the altar is closely identified with the Holy of Holies (cf. Exod.30:1-10, 37; but especially 1 Kgs. 6:22).

Coals were taken from the great sacrificial altar at the door of the tabernacle and placed on this small stand. Incense was then placed on the coals to produce a large amount of smoke. This wonderful smelling smoke obscured the high priest's eyes from seeing YHWH, who dwelt over the ark of the covenant between the wings of the cherubim, in the Holy of Holies.

**4:12 "a clean place outside the camp"** There are two ritual aspects here.

1. The ashes of the sin offering, holy to God (Lev. 4:11), are to be burned in a "clean place" because they are holy.
2. "Outside the camp" reflects the concept of the offering bearing sin away (i.e., one of the goats of Leviticus 16 driven out into the desert to die).

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:13-21**

<sup>13</sup>“Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty; <sup>14</sup>when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a bull of the herd for a sin offering and bring it before the tent of meeting. <sup>15</sup>Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be slain before the LORD. <sup>16</sup>Then the anointed priest is to bring some of the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting; <sup>17</sup>and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. <sup>18</sup>He shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before the LORD in the tent of meeting; and all the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>19</sup>He shall remove all its fat from it and offer it up in smoke on the altar. <sup>20</sup>He shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. <sup>21</sup>Then he is to bring out the bull to *a place* outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.”

**4:13 "the matter escapes the notice of the assembly"** Because of this unusual phrase many believe that Lev. 4:13-21 possibly refers to some sin by an elected or representative body, such as elders of Israel, or

later, the Sanhedrin. This may be the best understanding of this clause. It is interesting to note that one leader affected the whole community.

The rituals of Lev. 4:13-21 are separate and distinct from Leviticus 16.

**4:15 “the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head”** This is similar to what the High Priest did for the whole congregation on the Day of Atonement, described in Leviticus 16. Here, though, it is a specific sin of a leader(s) who needs to be atoned. See Special Topic: Laying on of Hands at Lev. 1:3b.

**4:18** Notice the blood (see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b) is put both

1. on the veil before the ark
2. on the horns of the altar of sacrifice, which was the symbol of its power to atone

**4:20 “shall make atonement”** This VERB appears at Lev. 4:20,26,31,35. See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:22-26**

<sup>22</sup>“When a leader sins and unintentionally does any one of all the things which the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, and he becomes guilty, <sup>23</sup>if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect. <sup>24</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the male goat and slay it in the place where they slay the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a sin offering. <sup>25</sup>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 *the rest of* its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. <sup>26</sup>All its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as *in the case of* the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he will be forgiven.”

**4:22 “sins and unintentionally does any one of all the things which the LORD his God has commanded not to be done”** See note at Lev. 4:1.

**4:23 “if his sin which he has committed is made known to him”** Faithful covenant followers are responsible only for what the Law, the Spirit, and other faithful followers make them aware of (cf. Lev. 4:14,28; Ps. 19:7-11,12-14).

The MT starts Lev. 4:23 with a CONJUNCTION (BDB 14) “or.” The NET Bible, p. 221, assumes this denotes two possible scenarios.

1. a leader sins unintentionally, Lev. 4:22
2. a leader’s sin becomes known publically, Lev. 4:23

This same construction is in Lev. 4:27-28. The same thought is found in Lev. 4:13-14.

**4:26 “make atonement”** This VERB (BDB 497, KB 493, *Piel* PERFECT with *waw*) appears in Lev. 4:20, 26,31,35. It is assumed in the previous sin ritual but not stated (see Jewish Study Bible, p. 214). For a full word study on this crucial sacrificial term, see Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:27-31**

<sup>27</sup>“Now if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty, <sup>28</sup>if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin

which he has committed. <sup>29</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. <sup>30</sup>The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all *the rest of* its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. <sup>31</sup>Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat was removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.”

**4:27-31,32-35** The ritual is repeated for all the sin offerings, except for where the blood is places. See notes at Lev. 4:1-2.

**4:27 “the common people”** This is literally “the people of the land” (BDB 766 I CONSTRUCT BDB 75). This can refer to (see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 70-72)

1. common people
2. wealthy landowners

Here, #1 fits best.

**4:31 “a soothing aroma”** This is the only occurrence of this phrase (see Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b) in connection with the sin offerings. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 214, says it “is indeed out of place; many scholars believe it to be a scribal error.” See Special Topic: Textual Criticism.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: TEXTUAL CRITICISM

This subject will be dealt with in such a way as to explain the textual notes found in this commentary. The following outline will be utilized

- I. The textual sources of our English Bible
  - A. Old Testament
  - B. New Testament
- II. Brief explanation of the problems and theories of “lower criticism” also called “textual criticism.”
- III. Suggested sources for further reading

### I. The textual sources of our English Bible

#### A. Old Testament

1. Masoretic text (MT) – The Hebrew consonantal text was set by Rabbi Aquiba in A.D. 100. The vowel points, accents, marginal notes, punctuation and apparatus points were added starting in the sixth century A.D. and were finished in the ninth century A.D. It was done by a family of Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes. The textual form they used was the same as the one in the Mishnah, Talmud, Targums, Peshitta, and Vulgate.
2. Septuagint (LXX) – Tradition says the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) was produced by 70 Jewish scholars in 70 days for the Alexandria library under the sponsorship of King Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.) The translation was supposedly requested by a Jewish leader living in Alexandria. This tradition comes from “Letter of Aristeas.” The LXX frequently was based on a differing Hebrew textual tradition from the text of Rabbi Aquiba (MT).

3. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) – The Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the Roman B.C. period (200 B.C. to A.D. 70) by a sect of Jewish separatists called the “Essenes.” The Hebrew manuscripts, found in several sites around the Dead Sea, show a somewhat different Hebrew textual family behind both the MT and the LXX.
4. Some specific examples of how the comparison of these texts have helped interpreters understand the Old Testament.
  - a. The LXX has helped translators and scholars understand the MT
    - (1) the LXX of Isa. 52:14, “As many shall be amazed at him.”
    - (2) the MT of Isa. 52:14, “Just as many were astonished over you.”
    - (3) in Isa. 52:15 the pronoun distinction of the LXX is confirmed
      - (a) LXX, “so will many nations marvel at him”
      - (b) MT, “so he sprinkles many nations”
  - b. The DSS have helped translators and scholars understand the MT
    - (1) the DSS of Isa. 21:8, “then the seer cried, Upon a watchtower I stand. . .”
    - (2) the MT of Isa. 21:8, “and I cried, a lion! My Lord, I always stand on the watch tower by day”
  - c. Both the LXX and DSS have helped clarify Isa. 53:11
    - (1) LXX & DSS, “after the travail of his soul he will see light, he will be satisfied”
    - (2) MT, “he shall see. . .of the travail of his soul, He shall be satisfied”

#### B. New Testament

1. Over 5,300 manuscripts of all or parts of the Greek New Testament are extant. About 85 are written on papyri and 268 are manuscripts written in all capital letters (uncials). Later, about the ninth century A.D., a running script (minuscule) was developed. The Greek manuscripts in written form number about 2,700. We also have about 2,100 copies of lists of Scripture texts used in worship that we call lectionaries.
2. About 85 Greek manuscripts containing parts of the New Testament written on papyrus are housed in museums. Some are dated from the second century A.D., but most are from the third and fourth centuries A.D. None of these MSS contain the whole New Testament. Just because these are the oldest copies of the New Testament does not automatically mean they have fewer variants. Many of these were copied rapidly for a local use. Care was not exercised in the process. Therefore, they contain many variants.
3. Codex Sinaiticus, known by the Hebrew letter א (*aleph*) or (01), found at St. Catherine’s monastery on Mt. Sinai by Tischendorf. It dates from the fourth century A.D. and contains both the LXX of the OT and the Greek NT. It is of “the Alexandrian Text” type.
4. Codex Alexandrinus, known as “A” or (02), a fifth century Greek manuscript which was found in Alexandria, Egypt.
5. Codex Vaticanus, known as “B” or (03), found in the Vatican’s library in Rome and dates from the middle of the fourth century A.D. It contains both LXX of the Old Testament and Greek New Testament. It is of “the Alexandrian Text” type.
6. Codex Ephraemi, known as “C” or (04), a fifth century Greek manuscript which was partially destroyed.
7. Codex Bezae, known as “D” or (05), a fifth or sixth century Greek manuscript. It is the chief representative of what is called “The Western Text.” It contains many additions and was the main Greek witness for the King James translation.

8. The NT MSS can be grouped into three, possibly four, families that share certain characteristics.
  - a. Alexandrian text from Egypt
    - (1) P<sup>75</sup>, P<sup>66</sup> (about A.D. 200), which record the Gospels
    - (2) P<sup>46</sup> (about A.D. 225), which records Paul's letters
    - (3) P<sup>72</sup> (about A.D. 225-250), which records Peter and Jude
    - (4) Codex B, called Vaticanus (about A.D. 325), which includes the whole OT and NT
    - (5) Origen quotes from this text type
    - (6) other MSS which show this text type are  $\aleph$ , C, L, W, 33
  - b. Western text from North Africa
    - (1) quotes from North African church fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, and the Old Latin translation
    - (2) quotes from Irenaeus
    - (3) quotes from Tatian and Old Syriac translation
    - (4) Codex D "Bezae" follow this text type
  - c. Eastern Byzantine text from Constantinople
    - (1) this text type is reflected in over 80% of the 5,300 MSS
    - (2) quoted by Antioch of Syria's church fathers, Cappadoceans, Chrysostom, and Therodoret
    - (3) Codex A, in the Gospels only
    - (4) Codex E (eighth century) for full NT
  - d. the fourth possible type is "Caesarean" from Palestine
    - (1) it is primarily seen only in Mark
    - (2) some witnesses to it are P<sup>45</sup> and W

## II. The problems and theories of "lower criticism" or "textual criticism."

### A. How the variants occurred

1. inadvertent or accidental (vast majority of occurrences)
  - a. slip of the eye in hand copying which reads the second instance of two similar words and thereby omits all of the words in between (homoioteleuton)
    - (1) slip of the eye in omitting a double letter word or phrase (haplography)
    - (2) slip of the mind in repeating a phrase or line of a Greek text (dittography)
  - b. slip of the ear in copying by oral dictation where a misspelling occurs (itacism). Often the misspelling implies or spells a similar-sounding Greek word.
  - c. the earliest Greek texts had no chapter or verse divisions, little or no punctuation and no division between words. It is possible to divide the letters in different places forming different words.
2. intentional
  - a. changes were made to improve the grammatical form of the text copied
  - b. changes were made to bring the text into conformity with other biblical texts (harmonization of parallels)

- c. changes were made by combining two or more variant readings into one long combined text (conflation)
- d. changes were made to correct a perceived problem in the text (cf. 1 Cor. 11:27 and 1 John 5:7-8)
- e. some additional information as to the historical setting or proper interpretation of the text was placed in the margin by one scribe but placed into the text by a second scribe (cf. John 5:4)

B. The basic tenets of textual criticism (logical guidelines for determining the original reading of a text when variants exist)

- 1. the most awkward or grammatically unusual text is probably the original
- 2. the shortest text is probably the original
- 3. the older text is given more weight because of its historical proximity to the original, everything else being equal
- 4. MSS that are geographically diverse usually have the original reading
- 5. doctrinally weaker texts, especially those relating to major theological discussions of the period of manuscript changes, like the Trinity in 1 John 5:7-8, are to be preferred.
- 6. the text that can best explain the origin of the other variants
- 7. two quotes that help show the balance in these troubling variants

a. J. Harold Greenlee's book, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, "No Christian doctrine hangs upon a debatable text; and the student of the NT must beware of wanting his text to be more orthodox or doctrinally stronger than is the inspired original" (p. 68).

b. W. A. Criswell told Greg Garrison of *The Birmingham News* that he (Criswell) doesn't believe every word in the Bible is inspired, "at least not every word that has been given to the modern public by centuries of translators." Criswell said:

"I very much am a believer in the textual criticism. As such, I think, the last half of the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mark is heresy: it's not inspired, it's just concocted...When you compare those manuscripts way back yonder, there was no such thing as that conclusion of the Book of Mark. Somebody added it. . ."

The patriarch of the SBC inerrantists also claimed that "interpolation" is also evident in John 5, the account of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda. And he discusses the two different accounts of the suicide of Judas (cf. Matt. 27 and Acts 1): "It's just a different view of the suicide," Criswell said. "If it is in the Bible, there is an explanation for it. And the two accounts of the suicide of Judas are in the Bible." Criswell added, "Textual criticism is a wonderful science in itself. It is not ephemeral, it's not impertinent. It's dynamic and central. . ."

III. Manuscript problems (textual criticism). Suggested sources for further reading

- A. *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, by R.H. Harrison
- B. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* by Bruce M. Metzger
- C. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, by J. H Greenlee

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:32-35**

<sup>32</sup>“But if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring it, a female without defect. <sup>33</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they slay the burnt offering. <sup>34</sup>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 all *the rest of* its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. <sup>35</sup>Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

**4:35** Notice how the text states that the ritual procedure for offering the “sin offering” is the same as the “peace offering.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What part of the sin offerings was burnt on the altar?
2. What part was eaten by the priests?
3. How is the sacrifice for the nation in Lev. 4:13-21 different or the same with Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement?
4. Why was the blood of the first two groups taken into the holy place but not the last two?
5. Explain what “unintentional” means.
6. Why is there no specific mention of a sin offering for the poor who could not afford a lamb?



# LEVITICUS 5:1-6:7

(MT 5:1-26)

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Law of the Guilt Offerings	The Trespass Offering	The Sin Offering (4:1-5:13)	Cases Requiring Sin Offerings	Some Cases of Sacrifice for Sin
5:1-6	5:1-10	5:1-6	5:1 5:2 5:3 5:4 5:5-6	5:1 5:2 5:3 5:4 5:5-6 Sins of Private Individuals
5:7-10		5:7-10	5:7-10	5:7-10
	Offerings with Restitution	The Guilt Offering (5:14-6:7)	Repayment Offerings (5:14-6:7)	The Sacrifice of Reparation
5:14-16	5:14-16	5:14-16	5:14-16	5:14 5:15-16
5:17-19	5:17-19	5:17-19	5:17-6:7	5:17-19
Guilt Offering				
6:1-7	6:1-7	6:1-7	6:1-7	5:20 5:21 5:22 5:23-26

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Summary of what happened to the offerings.
  1. all of the animal burned on the altar, Leviticus 1
  2. small part of the grain/cereal offering burned on the altar; remaining used for priests' food, Leviticus 2
  3. all internal fat and blood given to YHWH but some meat given to
    - a. priest
    - b. offerer
    - c. symbolically to YHWH, Leviticus 3
  4. all internal fat and blood given to YHWH but large portion of meat given to the priests, Leviticus 4-5

- B. Brief outline of this literary unit (i.e., Lev. 5:1-6:7)
1. witness who refuses to testify, Lev. 5:1,5; 6:5
  2. touching an unclean thing, Lev. 5:3,5
  3. rash oath/vow, Lev. 5:4-5
  4. fraud/theft, Lev. 6:2-4
- C. Distinction between intentional and unintentional sin
1. unintentional sins against YHWH, Lev. 4:1-35; 5:14-19
  2. intentional sins against a covenant brother, Lev. 5:1-13; 6:1-7
- For definition of “unintentional” see full note at Lev. 4:2 and Special Topic: Unintentional Sins at Lev. 4:2.
- D. Since the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 by Titus, it has been impossible to perform the rituals of sacrifice. The rabbis have had to interpret them in symbolic, allegorical, or typological ways. These rituals are simply historical information!

### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-6

**<sup>1</sup>“Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to *testify* when he is a witness, whether he has seen or *otherwise* known, if he does not tell *it*, then he will bear his guilt. <sup>2</sup>Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. <sup>3</sup>Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever *sort* his uncleanness *may* be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty. <sup>4</sup>Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty in one of these. <sup>5</sup>So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. <sup>6</sup>He shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin.”**

**5:1** It was crucial in a society which was meant to reflect YHWH’s character to an unbelieving world that fairness, honesty, and transparency be demonstrated between covenant partners.

Leviticus 5:1, 5 and 6:4 all deal with public, legal testimony.

If a person lied in court he/she was held responsible for the crime they lied or were silent about. If it was a death penalty case, then they were put to death (cf. Deut. 19:16-21). If it was a property case, they must make restitution “plus.”



NASB, NRSV	“a public adjuration”
NKJV, LXX	“the utterance of an oath”
TEV	“officially summoned”
NJB	“the formal adjuration”
JPSOA	“a public imprecation”
REB	“a solemn adjuration”
Peshitta	“a voice of swearing”

This phrase (BDB 876 CONSTRUCT BDB 46) may imply

1. a witness heard something (i.e., Pro. 29:24)
2. a judge pronounced a curse on the one who does not come forward and testify (cf. Num. 5:21)
3. the LXX may refer to an idolatrous oath (Targum Neofiti)

**5:2 “any unclean thing”** In this context it refers to an “unclean” animal (cf. Leviticus 11; Deut. 14:8), but it could refer to a dead human body (cf. Lev. 5:3; Num. 6:6-12; 19:11-16). This was a way to show the pollution caused by “unclean things.” The book of Leviticus is about “purity,” which was so important in the Mosaic covenant. Their preoccupation with “ceremonial” impurity/uncleanness is surprising to modern, western people.

**5:3 “and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty”** Notice it is the knowledge (not the unclean thing itself) that makes “guilty” or “unclean.” the human conscience is the key (cf. Lev. 5:4)!

**5:4** Humans are responsible for what they say! See Special Topic: Human Speech.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: HUMAN SPEECH**

### **I. OPENING THOUGHTS FROM PROVERBS**

- A. Language is part of the image of God in mankind (i.e., creation is spoken into existence and God talks to His human creation). It is a vital part of our personhood.
- B. Human speech enables us to communicate to others how we feel about life. Therefore, it reveals who we really are (Pro. 18:2; 4:23,20-27). Speech is the acid test of the person (Pro. 23:7).
- C. We are social creatures. We are concerned with acceptance and affirmation. We need it from God and from our fellow humans. Words have the power to meet these needs in both positive (Pro. 17:10) and negative (Pro. 12:18) ways.
- D. There is tremendous power in human speech (Pro. 18:20-21)—power to bless and heal (Pro. 10:11,21) and power to curse and destroy (Pro. 11:9).
- E. We reap what we sow in this area (Pro. 12:14).

### **II. PRINCIPLES FROM PROVERBS**

- A. The negative and destructive potential of human speech
  1. the words of evil men (1:11-19; 10:6; 11:9,11; 12:2-6)
  2. the words of the adulteress (5:2-5; 6:24-35; 7:5ff; 9:13-18; 22:14)
  3. the words of the liar (6:12-15,19; 10:18; 12:17-19,22; 14:5,25; 17:4; 19:5,9,28; 21:28; 24:28; 25:18; 26:23-28)
  4. the words of the fool (10:10,14; 14:3; 15:14; 18:6-8)
  5. the words of false witnesses (6:19; 12:17; 19:5,9,28; 21:28; 24:28; 25:18)
  6. the words of a gossip (6:14,19; 11:13; 16:27-28; 20:19; 25:23; 26:20)
  7. the words too quickly spoken (6:1-5; 12:18; 20:25; 29:20)
  8. the words of flattery (29:5)
  9. too many words (10:14,19,23; 11:13; 13:3,16; 14:23; 15:2; 17:27-28; 18:2; 21:23; 29:20)
  10. perverted words (17:20; 19:1)
- B. the positive, healing and edifying potential of human speech
  1. the words of the righteous (10:11,20-21,31-32; 12:14; 13:2; 15:23; 16:13; 18:20)

2. the words of the discerning (10:13; 11:12)
3. the words of knowledge (15:1,4,7,8; 20:15)
4. the words of healing (15:4)
5. the words of a gentle answer (15:1,4,18,23; 16:1; 25:15)
6. the words of a pleasant answer (12:25; 15:26,30; 16:24)
7. the words of the law (22:17-21)

### III. THE OT PATTERN CONTINUES IN THE NT

- A. Human speech enables us to communicate to others how we feel about life; therefore, it reveals who we really are (Matt. 12:33-37; 15:1-20; Mark 7:2-23).
- B. We are social creatures. We are concerned with acceptance and affirmation. We need it from God and from our fellow man. Words have the power to meet these needs in both positive (2 Tim. 3:15-17) and negative (James 3:2-12) ways.
- C. There is tremendous power in human speech; power to bless (Eph. 4:29) and power to curse (James 3:9). We are responsible for what we say (Matt. 12:36-37; James 3:2-12).
- D. We will be judged by our words (Matt. 12:33-37; Luke 6:39-45) as well as our deeds (Matt. 25:31-46). We reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7).

**5:5 “he shall confess”** This VERB (BDB 392, KB 389, *Hithpael* PERFECT; the *Hiphil* stem means “to praise”; NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 405-408) has two primary connotations.

1. confess sin – Lev. 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:7; Ezra 10:1; Neh. 1:6; 9:2-3; Dan. 9:20
2. thanksgiving – 2 Chr. 30:22; Ezra 10:11 (possibly)

This is similar to the NT usage. See Special Topic: Confession/Profession. Notice that the human acknowledgment of sin is crucial to restoration (i.e., 1 John 1:9).

### SPECIAL TOPIC: CONFESSION/PROFESSION

- A. There are two forms of the same Greek root used for “confession” or “profession,” *homologeō* and *exomologeō*. The compound term is from *homo*, the same; *legō*, to speak; or *ex*, out of. The basic meaning is to say the same thing, to agree with. The Greek PREPOSITION, *ex*, added implies a public declaration.
- B. The English translations of this word group are
  1. praise
  2. agree
  3. declare (cf. Matt. 7:23)
  4. profess
  5. confess (cf. Heb. 4:14; 10:23)
- C. This word group had two seemingly opposite usages
  1. to praise (God)
  2. to admit sin

These may have developed from mankind’s sense of the holiness of God and its own sinfulness. To acknowledge one truth is to acknowledge both.
- D. The NT usages of the word group are
  1. to promise (cf. Matt. 14:7; Acts 7:17)
  2. to agree or consent to something (cf. John 1:20; Luke 22:6; Acts 24:14; Heb. 11:13)

3. to praise (cf. Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; Rom. 14:11; 15:9; Heb. 13:15)
4. to assent to
  - a. a person (cf. Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; John 9:22; 12:42; Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:11; 1 John 2:23; Rev. 3:5)
  - b. a truth (cf. Acts 23:8; 1 John 4:2)
5. to make a public declaration of (legal sense developed into religious affirmation, cf. Acts 24:14; 1 Tim. 6:13)
  - a. without admission of guilt (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 10:23)
  - b. with an admission of guilt (cf. Matt. 3:6; Acts 19:18; Heb. 4:14; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)

**5:6** Notice the offering of the offending Israelite is called both

1. guilt offering (see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 557-565)
2. sin offering (see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 335-338)

▣ **“shall make atonement”** See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:7-10**

<sup>7</sup>“But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. <sup>8</sup>He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first that which is for the sin offering and shall nip its head at the front of its neck, but he shall not sever it. <sup>9</sup>He shall also sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar: it is a sin offering. <sup>10</sup>The second he shall then prepare as a burnt offering according to the ordinance. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it will be forgiven him.”

**5:7** Notice again the uniqueness of the Mosaic code in the ANE, which provides for the poor (cf. Lev. 5:12-13) the two birds. They are used for two different rituals.

1. burnt offering to restore “favor”
2. sin offering to cover/forgive the sin

It is assumed all burnt offerings were accompanied by another offering of some type (i.e., Lev. 5:7; 12:8; 14:30-31; 15:15).

An additional option is made for the very poor (Lev. 5:12-13). YHWH cares for the poor and powerless! It is surprising that grain/cereal is accepted as a sin offering, which normally requires the death of an animal. Here the gracious character of YHWH supercedes even normal ritual.

**5:9 “sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar”**

1. sprinkle – BDB 633 I, KB 683, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*; see full note at Lev. 1:5
2. the blood – see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b
3. the altar – see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7

**5:10 “and it will be forgiven him”** This is the goal of the sacrificial system. Fellowship between YHWH and His people is restored.

This VERB (BDB 699, KB 757, *Niphal* PERFECT) is repeated often (cf. Lev. 4:20,26,31,35; 5:10,13,16,18; 6:7).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:11-13**

<sup>11</sup>“But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then for his offering for that which he has sinned, he shall bring the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it or place incense on it, for it is a sin offering. <sup>12</sup>He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as its memorial portion and offer *it* up in smoke on the altar, with the offerings of the LORD by fire: it is a sin offering. <sup>13</sup>So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he has committed from one of these, and it will be forgiven him; then *the rest shall become the priest’s, like the grain offering.*”

**5:11** If the grain/cereal offering is used as a “sin offering” for the very poor, it must not have either oil or incense on it, but a memorial portion is burned and the rest goes to the priest.

**5:12 “memorial portion”** See full note at Lev. 2:2 and NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 1100-1106.

**5:13 “*the rest shall become the priest’s, like the grain offering*”** See Leviticus 2.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:14-16**

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>15</sup>“If a person acts unfaithfully and sins unintentionally against the LORD’s holy things, then he shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD; a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation in silver by shekels, in *terms of* the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. <sup>16</sup>He shall make restitution for that which he has sinned against the holy thing, and shall add to it a fifth part of it and give it to the priest. The priest shall then make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and it will be forgiven him.”

**5:15 “acts unfaithfully”** This is a VERB and NOUN from the same root (BDB 591, KB 612, cf. Lev. 6:2).

▣ **“the LORD’s holy things”** This is a “catch all” summary statement (cf. Lev. 4:2), which refers to all the commands of the Mosaic covenant (see Lev. 5:17).

Notice the violation is characterized by

1. unfaithfully – lit. “commits a breach of faith” (BDB 591, KB 612, *Qal* IMPERFECT)
2. unintentionally – see full note at Lev. 4:2; see Special Topic: Unintentional Sins at Lev. 4:2

The Jewish Study Bible, p. 216, suggests that this refers to an abuse of the Tabernacle and the gifts/offerings made to it, but this seems out of context here. The abuse spoken of would have been done by priests. They are not discussed in detail until Lev. 6:8-7:38.

▣ **“shekels”** See Special Topic: Ancient Near East Weights and Volumes.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WEIGHTS AND VOLUMES (METROLOGY)**

The weights and measurements used in commerce were crucial in ancient agricultural economy. The Bible urges the Jews to be fair in their dealings with one another (cf. Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:13-16; Pro. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10). The real problems were not only honesty, but the non-standardized terms and systems used in Palestine. It seems that there were two sets of weights; a “light” and a “heavy” of each amount (see *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4, p. 831). Also the decimal system (base of 10) of Egypt had been combined with the sexagesimal (base of 6) of Mesopotamia.

Many of the “sizes” and “amounts” used were based on human body parts, animal loads, and farmer’s containers, none of which were standardized. Therefore, the charts are only estimations and are tentative. The easiest way to show weights and measures is on a relational chart.

I. Volume terms used most often

A. Dry measures

1. Homer (BDB 330, possibly a “donkey-load,” BDB 331), e.g., Lev. 27:16; Hosea 3:2
2. Letekh (or letech, BDB 547, possibly alluded to in Hosea 3:2)
3. Ephah (BDB 35), e.g., Exod. 16:36; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:10-11,13,24
4. Se’ah (BDB 684), e.g., Gen. 18:6; 1 Sam. 25:18; 1 Kgs. 18:32; 2 Kgs. 7:1,16,18
5. Omer (BDB 771 II, possibly “a sheaf” [a row of fallen grain], BDB 771 I), e.g., Exod. 16:16,22,36; Lev. 23:10-15
6. ‘Issaron (BDB 798, “a tenth part” of ephah), e.g., Exod. 29:40; Lev. 14:21; Num. 15:4; 28:5,13
7. Qav (or Kab, BDB 866), cf. 2 Kgs. 6:25

B. Liquid Measures

1. Kor (BDB 499), e.g., Ezek. 45:14 (can be dry measure, cf. 2 Chr. 2:10; 27:5)
2. Bath (BDB 144 II), e.g., 1 Kgs. 7:26,38; 2 Chr. 2:10; 4:5; Isa. 5:10; Ezek. 45:10-11,14
3. Hin (BDB 228), e.g., Exod. 29:40; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:24
4. Log (BDB 528), cf. Lev. 14:10,12,15,21,24

C. Chart (taken from Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, p. 201 and *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16, p. 379)

homer (dry) = kor (liquid or dry)	1					
ephah (dry) = bath (liquid)	10	1				
se’ah (dry)	30	3	1			
hin (liquid)	60	6	2	1		
omer/issaron (dry)	100	10	-	-	1	
qav/kab (dry)	180	18	6	3	-	1
log (liquid)	720	72	24	12	-	41

II. Weight terms used most often

A. The three most common weights are the talent, the shekel, and the gerah.

1. The largest weight in the OT is the talent. From Exod. 38:25-26 we learn that one talent equals 3,000 shekels (i.e., “round weight,” BDB 503).
2. The term shekel (BDB 1053, “weight”) is used so often that it is assumed, but not stated in the text. There are several values of shekel mentioned in the OT.
  - a. “commercial standard” (NASB of Gen. 23:16)
  - b. “the shekel of the sanctuary” (NASB of Exod. 30:13)
  - c. “by the king’s weight” (NASB of 2 Sam. 14:26), also called “royal weight” in the Elephantine papyri.
3. The gerah (BDB 176 II) is valued at 20 per shekel (cf. Exod. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; 18:16; Ezek. 45:12). These ratios vary from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Israel followed the evaluation most common in Canaan (Ugarit)

4. The mina (BDB 584) is valued at either 50 or 60 shekels. This term is found mostly in later OT books (i.e., Ezek. 45:12; Ezra 2:69; Neh. 7:71-72). Ezekiel used the 60 to 1 ratio, while Canaan used the 50 to 1 ratio.
5. The beka (BDB 132, “half a shekel,” cf. Gen. 24:22) is used only twice in the OT (cf. Gen. 24:22; Exod. 38:26) and is valued at one-half a shekel. Its name means “to divide.”

B. Chart

1. Based on Pentateuch

talent	1				
mina	60	1			
shekel	3,000	50	1		
beka	6,000	100	2	1	
gerah	60,000	1,000	20	10	1

2. Based on Ezekiel

talent	1				
mina	60	1			
shekel	3,600	60	1		
beka	7,200	120	2	1	
gerah	72,000	1,200	20	10	1

**5:16 “shall make restitution”** This VERB (BDB 1022, KB 1521, *Piel* IMPERFECT) is from the root meaning “be complete” or “be sound.” Here, it is used of restoring that which was damaged by paying a price. Forgiveness from YHWH involved the offended covenant brother being compensated.

This same root is the source of *Shalom*. See Special Topic: Peace (OT) at Lev. 3:1. YHWH wants peace, fairness, and restoration of fellowship among His people.

▣ **“shall add”** This is a JUSSIVE form. It is repeated in Lev. 6:5. Forgiveness from YHWH involved restoration and added compensation (i.e., a “fifth part”).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:17-19**

<sup>17</sup>“Now if a person sins and does any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment. <sup>18</sup>He is then to bring to the priest a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his error in which he sinned unintentionally and did not know it, and it will be forgiven him. <sup>19</sup>It is a guilt offering; he was certainly guilty before the LORD.”

**5:17-19** The Jewish Study Bible, p. 217, asserts that

“The case is unclear. The circumstances are almost identical to those requiring the ‘*hata’t*’ in ch. 4, the only difference being the words ‘without knowing it’ in v. 17, repeated in v. 18.”

It should be stated that the procedures we have in the Pentateuch were developed over time and are not precise on all matters. The first hearers would have understood the unexpressed rituals and expectations. For me as a NT believer, the details for an obsolete temple are for historical information only (see Special Topic: Paul’s View of the Mosaic Law). For me, the NT texts which trump this Mosaic information are:



1. Matt. 5:21-48
2. Mark 7:18-23
3. Acts 15:6-29
4. Galatians 3
5. The book of Hebrews

### SPECIAL TOPIC: PAUL'S VIEWS OF THE MOSAIC LAW

It is good and is from God (cf. Rom. 7:12,16).

- A. It is not the way to righteousness and acceptance by God (it can even be a curse, cf. Galatians. 3). See Special Topic: Mosaic Law and the Christian.
- B. It is still God's will for believers because it is God's self-revelation (Paul often quotes the OT to convict and/or encourage believers).
- C. Believers are informed by the OT (cf. Rom. 4:23-24; 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6,11), but not saved by the OT (cf. Acts 15; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews). It functions in sanctification but not in justification.
- D. It functions in the new covenant to:
  1. show sinfulness (cf. Gal. 3:15-29)
  2. guide redeemed mankind in society
  3. inform Christian ethical decisions

It is this theological spectrum related to the Law, from cursing (cf. Gal. 3:10-13) and passing away to blessing and permanency that causes the problem in trying to understand Paul's view of the Mosaic Law. In *A Man in Christ*, James Stewart shows Paul's paradoxical thinking and writing:

“You would normally expect a man who was setting himself to construct a system of thought and doctrine to fix as rigidly as possible the meanings of the terms he employed. You would expect him to aim at precision in the phraseology of his leading ideas. You would demand that a word, once used by your writer in a particular sense, should bear that sense throughout. But to look for this from Paul is to be disappointed. Much of his phraseology is fluid, not rigid. . . ‘The law is holy’ he writes, ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man’ (cf. Rom. 7:12,22) but it is clearly another aspect of *nomos* that makes him say elsewhere, ‘Christ had redeemed us from the curse of the law (cf. Gal. 3:13)’ (p. 26).

**5:19 “he was certainly guilty before the LORD”** This is an intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a PERFECT VERB of the same root).

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-7

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, <sup>3</sup>or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; <sup>4</sup>then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, <sup>5</sup>or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering. <sup>6</sup>Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation,**

**for a guilt offering, <sup>7</sup>and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt.”**

**6:2** Notice a sin against a covenant brother is a sin against the covenant Deity!

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is Lev. 5:1 referring to?
2. In the Mosaic covenant is there a distinction between ceremonial guilt and sinful guilt?
3. In this chapter on sin offerings, how does YHWH make special provisions for the poor and very poor?
4. What kind of sins are being discussed in Lev. 5:15?
5. What does “make restitution” in Lev. 5:16 mean?
6. Explain Lev. 5:17 in your own words.

# LEVITICUS 6:8-30

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
			Repayment Offerings (5:14-6:7)	
The Priest's Part in the Offerings	The Law of Burnt Offerings	Instructions to Priests Concerning Sacrifices (6:8-7:38)	Sacrifice Burnt Whole	Priesthood and Sacrifice (6:1-7:6)
6:8-13	6:8-13	8:8-13	6:8-13	a. the burnt offering 6:1 6:2 6:3-4 6:5-6
				b. the cereal offering 6:7-11 6:12
6:14-18	The Law of Grain Offerings 6:14-18	6:14-18	Grain Offerings 6:14-18	6:13-15a 6:15b-16
6:19-23	6:19-23	6:19-23	6:19-23	c. the sacrifice for sin 6:17-18a 6:18b
6:24-30	The Law of the Sin Offering 6:24-30	6:24-30	Sin Offering 6:24-30	6:19-23 d. the Sacrifice of reparation 7:1-6

READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:8-13**

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law for the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself *shall remain* on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. <sup>10</sup>The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. <sup>11</sup>Then he shall take off

**his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. <sup>12</sup>The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not go out, but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay out the burnt offering on it, and offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it. <sup>13</sup>Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out.”**

**6:8 “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying”** In the MT this is Lev. 6:1. There are three Special Topics related to this recurrent phrase.

1. Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1
2. Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b
3. Special Topic: Inspiration

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: INSPIRATION**

This is the faith assertion that God was actively involved by His Spirit in recording His acts, promises and will for mankind. It is “the” divine self-disclosure! This disclosure is called “revelation.” Its recording for future generations is called “inspiration.”

The only use of the word “inspiration” in the Bible is in 2 Tim. 3:16, and is literally, “God exhaled.” Notice “Scripture” in the NT always refers to the OT (i.e., 2 Tim. 2:15 refers to Timothy’s Jewish upbringing). Notice the purpose of Scripture is twofold.

1. wisdom that leads to salvation, 2 Tim. 2:15
2. training in righteousness, 2 Tim. 2:16

Notice how John 5:39; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, and 1 Pet. 1:10-12 see the OT as pointing toward Christ. Jesus Himself asserts this in Luke 24:25-27! The Spirit led OT writers (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20-21). The Church accepted the canon (see Special Topic: Canon) of the OT. They saw it as fully inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19). However, they also realized the NT, which contains Jesus’ words and deeds, was ultimate revelation (cf. Matt. 5:21-48; Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus is the full, final, and complete revelation of YHWH (cf. John 1:1-5,14; Col. 1:15-16). He fulfills the OT promise of Messiah (i.e., Matt. 26:31,56; Mark 14:27,49; Luke 20:17; John 12:14-16; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24-36; Acts 1:16; 3:18,21-26; 4:25-28).

The Spirit must open the mind and heart before one can understand (cf. Acts 8:34-35; 13:27). The Spirit led biblical writers to express in human words, idioms, and illustrations, the truths of God’s self-disclosure in Jesus (cf. John 14:26; 15:26-27; 1 Cor. 2:10-11,13-16).

A good, brief discussion is in Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 224-245.

Also a good discussion on the literary process from an “oral-based” society to written documents is John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture* (2013).

**6:9 “Command Aaron and his sons”** This is an IMPERATIVE (BDB 845, KB 1010, *Piel*), which denotes the perpetual procedures related to how to handle the “burnt offerings.”

Leviticus 6-7 contain guidelines for the priests related to the sacrifices of Leviticus 1-5.

1. the voluntary offerings – Leviticus 1-3
2. the mandatory offerings – Leviticus 4-5

▣ **“the law”** There are several words used to describe YHWH’s revelation. See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ **“the burnt offerings”** This section (Lev. 6:8-13) is not primarily dealing with the “continual” (burnt offering every morning and evening, cf. Exod. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-8), but with the voluntary, individual offerings of Leviticus 1.

▣ **“on the hearth”** This Hebrew word (BDB 429) occurs only here in the OT. BDB suggests it refers to the metal plate or grill on the top of the altar of sacrifice where the burnt offerings were placed.

In Ezek. 43:15,16, this same place is called “altar hearth” (BDB 72), but this is a different word. However, this may refer to the same place.

**6:10-11 “linen robe”** See Special Topic: Linen and Special Topic: Garments of the High Priest.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: LINEN**

- used to show purity (tabernacle)
- used by High Priest
- used by angels
  - a. Ezek. 9:2,3,11; 10:2,6,7; Rev. 15:6
  - b. Dan. 10:5,6; 12:6,7
- used of risen Jesus, Rev. 1:13-15
- used figuratively of the Church, Rev. 19:8
- used for armies of heaven, Rev. 19:14

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: GARMENTS OF HIGH PRIEST**

- I. Tunic
  - A. undercoat of fine white linen
  - B. length of tunic was to the ground, sleeves long and tied with sash
  - C. white symbolized purity
- II. Ephod (see Special Topic: Ephod)
  - A. made of blue cloth with gold wire, interwoven also with purple and scarlet thread (same colors as veil in the Holy of Holies)
  - B. lower border of pomegranates and golden bells (bells were so that the other priests could hear him coming on Day of Atonement)
  - C. fastened at the shoulder by 2 onyx stones engraved with the 12 tribes of Israel (six of each)
  - D. called “the golden garment”
- III. Band of Ephod (girdle)
  - A. same color and material as Ephod
  - B. bound around the waist
- IV. Breastplate (Exodus 28; 29, see Special Topic: Breastplate of the High Priest at Lev. 8:8)
  - A. square 8" or 9" set with 12 stones (4 rows of 3, cf. Exod. 28:17-20)
  - B. attached by golden chain attached to onyx stones at the shoulders
  - C. same colors and material as Ephod
  - D. names of 12 tribes, one on each stone
  - E. inner pouch containing Urim and Thummin (Exod. 28:30)

- V. Urim and Thummim (see Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Lev. 8:8b)
  - A. placed on the breastplate
  - B. also called Lights and Perfections
  - C. identity unknown
- VI. Turban (miter, Exod. 28:36-39)
  - A. engraved on gold strip in front, “Holiness to the LORD”
  - B. fastened with blue cord
  - C. called “golden crown”

See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3.7.1-6

**6:10 “ashes”** This term (BDB 206, cf. Lev. 1:16; 4:12; 1 Kgs. 13:3,5; Jer. 31:40) refers to the “greasy ashes” (TEV) which were ashes of

1. the wood
2. the meat and bone
3. internal fatty parts
4. small amounts of grain/cereal offerings

**6:13** This is a recurrent command (i.e., Lev. 6:9,12,13). Although lighting fires was prohibited on the Sabbath, there were two exceptions.

1. the altar of sacrifice
2. the lamp in the holy place (see Special Topic: Lampstand)

### SPECIAL TOPIC: LAMPSTAND

This (“menorah,” BDB 633, KB 600) is a sacred object for providing light in the Holy Place (cf. Exod. 25:37; 27:20-21). It is described in Exod. 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

1. made of gold
2. six branches on a central shaft, three on each side
3. at the top of each branch three cups, shaped like almond blossoms with a bulb and flower
4. at the top of the central shaft are four cups, like #3
5. all parts were made of one piece of hammered gold (one talent, cf. Exod. 25:39)
6. the exact pattern was revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai (cf. Exod. 25:40)
7. the pattern in Exodus is part of the vision of Zechariah in Zech. 4:1-6; this seems to reflect the post-exilic, second temple

Solomon changed it into ten separate lampstands (cf. 1 Kgs. 7:49; 2 Chr. 4:7) in his temple.

One wonders if the menorah is somehow connected to the concept of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” from Gen. 2:17, which was supposed to give light/knowledge (cf. Gen. 3:5).

It is possible that John’s presentation of Jesus as “the light of the world” in John 8:12 is related to this concept. I have included my notes from John.

John 8:12 “I am the Light” John 6, 7, and 8 seem to be related to the “wilderness wanderings” period of Israel’s history, the source of the metaphors that Jesus uses of Himself.

- A. John 6 uses “manna” and “the bread of life.”
- B. John 7 uses “water” and “living water.”

C. John 8 uses “light” and “shekinah glory.”

This metaphor of light is repeated throughout John (cf. John 1:4-5, 8-9; 3:19-21; 9:5; 12:46).

There has been some debate as to exactly what this refers.

1. the ancient fear of darkness
2. a title for God in the OT (cf. Ps. 27:1; Isa. 62:20; 1 John 1:5)
3. the background of the Feast of the Tabernacles, lighting of the candelabra in the Court of the Women
4. an allusion to the shekinah cloud of glory in the wilderness wandering period that symbolized the presence of God
5. the Messianic titles in the OT (cf. Isa. 42:6, 49:6; Luke 2:32)

The rabbis also used “light” as a title for the Messiah. The lighting of the huge lamps in the Court of the Women during the Feast of Tabernacle is the obvious setting for Jesus’ statement. The Messianic implications of light and the special references in John 1:4,8 coincide with the ceremony in the Temple for Jesus to continue to reveal His true origin.

This is one of the seven “I am” statements in John (followed by a PREDICATE)

1. I am the Bread of life (John 6:35,41,46,51)
2. I am the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9: 5; cf. 1:4,9; 12:46)
3. I am the door of the sheepfold (John 10:7,9)
4. I am the good shepherd (John 10:11,14)
5. I am the resurrection, and the life (John 11:25)
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
7. I am the true vine (John 15:1,5)

These unique statements, found only in John, point toward the person of Jesus. John focuses on these personal aspects of salvation. We must trust Him!

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:14-18**

**<sup>14</sup>“Now this is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall present it before the LORD in front of the altar. <sup>15</sup>Then one of them shall lift up from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and all the incense that is on the grain offering, and he shall offer it up in smoke on the altar, a soothing aroma, as its memorial offering to the LORD. <sup>16</sup>What is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; they are to eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. <sup>17</sup>It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their share from My offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. <sup>18</sup>Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations, from the offerings by fire to the LORD. Whoever touches them will become consecrated.”**

**6:15 “shall lift up”** This VERB (BDB 926, KB 1202, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*) denotes a sacred ritual. The portion lifted up was a “memorial offering” to YHWH. Lifting it up symbolized YHWH as being in heaven. Related Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Frankincense at Lev. 2:2b
2. Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b
3. Special Topic: The Heavens and the Third Heaven

For “memorial portion,” see full note at Lev. 2:2.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: HEAVEN AND THE THIRD HEAVEN

In the OT the term “heaven” is usually PLURAL (i.e., *shamayim*, BDB 1029, KB 1559). The Hebrew term means “height.” God dwells on high. This concept reflects the holiness and transcendence of God.

In Gen. 1:1 the PLURAL, “heavens and earth” has been viewed as God creating (1) the atmosphere above this planet or (2) a way of referring to all of reality (i.e., spiritual and physical). From this basic understanding other texts were cited as referring to levels of heaven: “heaven of heavens” (cf. Ps. 68:33) or “heaven and the heaven of heavens” (cf. Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 148:4). The rabbis surmised that there might be

1. two heavens (i.e., R. Judah, Hagigah 12b)
2. three heavens (Test. Levi 2-3; Ascen. of Isaiah 6-7; Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 114:1)
3. five heavens (III Baruch)
4. seven heavens (R. Simonb. Lakish; Ascen. of Isa. 9:7)
5. ten heavens (II Enoch 20:3b; 22:1)

All of these were meant to show God’s separation from physical creation and/or His transcendence. The most common number of heavens in rabbinical Judaism was seven. A. Cohen, *Everyman’s Talmud* (p. 30), says this was connected to the astronomical spheres, but I think it refers to seven being the perfect number (i.e., days of creation with seven representing God’s rest in Gen. 2:2).

Paul, in 2 Cor. 12:2, mentions the “third” heaven (Greek *ouranos*) as a way of identifying God’s personal, majestic presence. Paul had a personal encounter with God!

▣ **“memorial offering”** See full note at Lev. 2:4 and NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 1105, #18.

**6:16 “Aaron and his sons are to eat”** The priests received their sustenance from the sacrifices of the people (none from the burnt offerings).

▣ **“holy place”** See Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

**6:17 “not be baked with leaven”** See Special Topic: Baking Bread at Lev. 2:4 and Special Topic: Leaven at Lev. 2:4b.

▣ **“most holy”** The offerings called “most holy” are

1. grain offerings – Lev. 2:3,10
2. sin offerings – Lev. 6:25,29
3. guilt offerings – Lev. 6:17; 7:1

They must be eaten only by priests in the court of the Tabernacle.

**6:18 “Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it”** This particular sacrifice was for the priests themselves. There are other places where other families could also eat of the sacrifice (cf. Lev. 10:14; 22:12-13). One wonders if Lev. 7:30-34 is also implied.

▣ **“a permanent ordinance”** This is literally “throughout our generations” (cf. Lev. 3:17; 6:18; 7:34,36; 10:9,15; 16:29,31,34). The Israelite concept of time–eternity is expressed well in the connotations of the word *‘olam* (see Lev. 6:22). See Special Topic: Forever (*‘olam*) at Lev. 3:17.



▣ **“Whoever touches them shall become consecrated”** Ceremonial purity was very important in Israelite society. Remember that touching the dead body of an unclean animal or human being made one unclean (cf. Lev. 9:2-6), but here if one touches what has been dedicated to YHWH, then that person becomes “holy.” This made it/them be consecrated for YHWH’s use (cf. Lev. 6:27). This meant it could no longer be used in normal life (cf. Lev. 6:27-28). Remember, “holiness” has to do with ceremonial purity, not morality. See Special Topic: Holy.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: HOLY**

- I. The Old Testament (illustrated mostly from Isaiah)
  - A. The etymology of the term *kadosh* (BDB 872, KB 1072) is uncertain, possibly Canaanite (i.e., Ugaritic). It is possible that part of the root (i.e., *kd*) means “to divide.” This is the source of the popular definition “separated (from Canaanite culture, cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19) for God’s use.”
  - B. It relates to God’s presence in things, places, times, and persons. It is not used in Genesis, but becomes common in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.
  - C. In the Prophetic literature (esp. Isaiah and Hosea) the personal element previously present, but not emphasized, comes to the fore (see Special Topic: The Holy One). It becomes a way of designating the essence of God (cf. Isa. 6:3). God is holy. His name representing His character is Holy. His people who are to reveal His character to a needy world are holy (if they obey the covenant in faith).

Holiness is a central theme in Isaiah.

1.  $\Psi\text{קד}$ , ADJECTIVE, BDB 872, “holy,” “sacred,” used of
  - a. God, Isa. 5:16; 6:3 (thrice; see Special Topic: The Holy One)
  - b. His name, Isa. 40:25; 49:7; 57:15
  - c. His abode, Isa. 57:15
  - d. His Sabbath, Isa. 58:13
2.  $\Psi\text{קד}$ , VERB, BDB 872, “to be set apart,” “consecrated”
  - a. God’s character, Isa. 5:16; 29:23
  - b. God, Isa. 8:13; 65:5
  - c. God’s angels, Isa. 13:3
  - d. God’s name, Isa. 29:23
  - e. festival, Isa. 30:29
  - f. consecrated humans, Isa. 66:17
3.  $\Psi\text{קד}$ , NOUN, BDB 871, “apartness,” “sacredness”
  - a. holy seed, Isa. 6:13
  - b. holy mountain, Isa. 11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11,25; 66:20
  - c. set apart, Isa. 23:18
  - d. way of holiness, Isa. 35:8
  - e. sanctuary, Isa. 43:28; 62:9; 64:11
  - f. holy city, Isa. 48:2; 52:1
  - g. holy One, Isa. 49:7 (see Special Topic: The Holy One)
  - h. holy arm, Isa. 52:10
  - i. Holy day, Isa. 58:13

- j. holy people, Isa. 62:12
- k. Holy Spirit, Isa. 63:10,11
- l. God's throne, Isa. 63:15
- m. holy place, Isa. 63:18
- n. holy cities, Isa. 64:10

D. God's mercy and love are inseparable from the theological concepts of covenants, justice, and essential character. Herein is the tension in God toward an unholy, fallen, rebellious humanity. There is a very interesting article on the relationship between God as "merciful" and God as "holy" in Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 112-113.

## II. The New Testament

- A. The writers of the NT (except Luke) were Hebrew thinkers, but were writing in Koine Greek. The NT church used the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint. It is the Greek translation of the OT, not Classical Greek literature, thought, or religion, that controls their vocabulary.
- B. Jesus is holy because He is of God and like God (cf. Luke 1:35; 4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27,30; Rev. 3:7). He is the Holy and Righteous One (cf. Acts 3:14; 22:14). Jesus is holy because He is sinless (cf. John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5).
- C. Because God is holy (cf. John 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:8; 6:10), His children are to be holy (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16). Because Jesus is holy, His followers are to be holy (cf. Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:15). Christians are saved to serve in Christlikeness (holiness).

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:19-23

<sup>19</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>20</sup>“This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to the LORD on the day when he is anointed; the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. <sup>21</sup>It shall be prepared with oil on a griddle. When it is well stirred, you shall bring it. You shall present the grain offering in baked pieces as a soothing aroma to the LORD. <sup>22</sup>The anointed priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to the LORD. <sup>23</sup>So every grain offering of the priest shall be burned entirely. It shall not be eaten.”

**6:19-23** These are special instructions for the initial anointing day of every priest. It was an ordination ritual.

#### Notice

1. it was prepared and offered by the priest himself
2. it was a grain offering, split between the morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice (cf. Num. 28:3-8, called “the continual”)
3. it was offered up by the new priest himself on the altar
4. none of it was eaten, all was totally burned on the altar

**6:20 “anointed”** See Special Topic: Anointing in the Bible at Lev. 4:3.

▣ **“ephah”** See Special Topic: Ancient Near East Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

#### 6:21

NASB, NKJV,

Peshitta “in baked pieces”

NRSV “well soaked”

**TEV, REB** “crumbled”  
**NJB (6:14)** “in several pieces”  
**JPSOA** “baked slices”  
**LXX** “of pieces”

The Hebrew term (MT form, BDB 1074; possible root, KB 991) means to break up or smash (KB), therefore, possibly “crumble into small pieces” (Lev. 2:6; 6:21).

There are two Hebrew terms, BDB 1074 and BDB 837 in this verse (MT 6:14) that are uncertain in meaning, relating to grain offerings (see AB, pp. 399-400; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1042).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:24-30**

**<sup>24</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>25</sup>“Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the LORD; it is most holy. <sup>26</sup>The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. <sup>27</sup>Anyone who touches its flesh will become consecrated; and when any of its blood splashes on a garment, in a holy place you shall wash what was splashed on. <sup>28</sup>Also the earthenware vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken; and if it was boiled in a bronze vessel, then it shall be scoured and rinsed in water. <sup>29</sup>Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. <sup>30</sup>But no sin offering of which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.”**

**6:27 “you shall wash”** This may refer to the person (MT) or to the garment (LXX, Peshitta, Targum, Vulgate).

It was crucial that Israel’s worship be pure and distinct from Canaanite worship.

1. the sacrifice
2. the place
3. the person
4. his clothing
5. his food

The key thought in Leviticus is “holiness” or “purity.” YHWH is holy and pure, so must His worship and His people be!

**6:30** This is a summary statement.

1. no sin offering where the blood is brought into the tent of meeting may be eaten; see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b
2. the sin offering where the blood is brought into the holy place can be eaten; see Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c
3. the blood is to make atonement (see Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c)
4. this special offering must be completely burned

Most “sin offerings” were allowed to be eaten by priests (cf. Lev. 6:29).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was the fire on the altar of sacrifice never allowed to go out? What did they do about this as they traveled?
2. List the types of sacrifices that
  - a. all Israel could eat
  - b. only priests in the Tabernacle area could eat
  - c. the families of the priests could eat
3. How can these sacrifices be called “a permanent ordinance” yet the temple will be destroyed?
4. How is “the continual” different from the offerings in Leviticus 1-7?
5. How is “most holy” different from “holy”?

# LEVITICUS 7

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
The Priest's Part in the Offerings	The Law of the Trespass Offering	Instructions to Priests Concerning Sacrifices (6:8-7:38)	Repayment Offerings	
7:1-10	7:1-10	7:1-6 7:7-10	7:1-6 7:7-10	
	The Law of Peace Offerings		Fellowship Offerings	
7:11-14	7:11-14	7:11-18	7:11-15	
7:15-18	7:15-18		7:16-19a	
7:19-21	7:19-21	7:19-21	7:19b-21	
	Fat and Blood May Not Be Eaten			
7:22-27	7:22-27	7:22-27	7:22-27	
	The Portion of Aaron and His Sons			
7:28-34	7:28-34	7:28-36	7:28-36	
7:35-36	7:35-36			
7:37-38	7:37-38	7:37-38	7:37-38	

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Exactly when the different rituals were brought together is uncertain. Surely many of them came from the exodus period (Lev. 7:38) but others from later periods. See *The Interpreters Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 40-41.
- B. There are two different terms translated "sacrifice" that need to be distinguished.
  1. term used for all animal/blood offerings given to YHWH (BDB 256)
  2. term for the act of "slaying" the animal (BDB 1006)
 Both are translated "sacrifice" in English.
- C. Leviticus 6-7 clarifies the information of chapters 1-5.
  1. wholly burnt offering – *'ola* (BDB 750, cf. Lev. 1:3-17; 6:8-13; 7:8)
  2. grain/cereal offering – *minha* (BDB 585, cf. Lev. 2:1-16; 6:14-23; 7:9-10)
  3. peace offering – *shelem* (BDB 1023, cf. Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-34)
  4. sin offering – *hatta't* (BDB 308, cf. Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30)
  5. guilt offering – *'asam* (BDB 79, cf. Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7)

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1-10

<sup>1</sup>“Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy. <sup>2</sup>In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. <sup>3</sup>Then he shall offer from it all its fat: the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, <sup>4</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>5</sup>The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a guilt offering. <sup>6</sup>Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. <sup>7</sup>The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. <sup>8</sup>Also the priest who presents any man’s burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented. <sup>9</sup>Likewise, every grain offering that is baked in the oven and everything prepared in a pan or on a griddle shall belong to the priest who presents it. <sup>10</sup>Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.

**7:1-10** This paragraph gives more information related to the guilt offering of Lev. 5:14-19.

**7:1 “the law”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ **“it is most holy”** The SINGULAR NOUN (BDB 871) is constructed with the PLURAL form plus the ADJECTIVE “most” (BDB 214). See full note at Lev. 6:17 and Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c.

**7:2 “sprinkle”** See full note at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **“blood”** See Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b.

▣ **“the altar”** See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7.

**7:3 “fat tail”** The sheep and goats mentioned were desert animals that stored water and nutrients in their fat tails. This is similar to the camel’s hump.

**7:4 “kidneys. . .liver”** Their inner organs were viewed by Israelites as the seat of the emotions, or possibly, morality (cf. Ps. 26:2; Jer. 11:20; 12:2; 17:10; 20:12).

▣

NASB, NRSV,

NJB, JPSOA,

REB

“the loins”

NKJV, Peshitta

“the flanks”

NET

“sinews”

LXX

“thighs”

The MT has כסל (BDB 492, KB 489), which has been understood in several senses.

1. BDB

a. loins

b. stupidity

c. confidence

2. KB
  - a. loins
  - b. side
  - c. euphemism for genitals
3. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 680
  - a. sinews
  - b. tendons
  - c. not loins

This term outside the Bible occurs mostly in Akkadian medical texts. Its only occurrences outside Leviticus (cf. Lev. 3:4,10,14; 4:9; 7:14) in the OT are Job 15:27; Ps. 38:7.

**7:5 “LORD”** See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1.

**7:7-8** The officiating priest of the guilt and sin offerings shall have

1. the meat to eat, Lev. 7:7
2. the skin, Lev. 7:8

**7:7 “makes atonement”** See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**7:9-10** There were several ways the grain offering could be prepared.

1. natural (just as it is)
2. baked in the oven (see Special Topic: Baking Bread at Lev. 2:4)
3. cooked in a pan
4. cooked on a griddle

The priest offers a small “memorial portion” and receives the rest as food.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:11-14**

<sup>11</sup>“Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD. <sup>12</sup>If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes *of well* stirred fine flour mixed with oil. <sup>13</sup>With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. <sup>14</sup>Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings.

**7:11-21** These three paragraphs (NASB) give more information about the peace offering (cf. Lev. 3:1-17).

**7:11-14** These are instructions for the priest on how to perform the “peace offering” (Leviticus 3).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:15-18**

<sup>15</sup>“Now *as for* the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. <sup>16</sup>But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; <sup>17</sup>but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. <sup>18</sup>So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should *ever* be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, *and* it will not be reckoned to his *benefit*. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his *own* iniquity.

**7:15-18** These are instructions about how the meat of the peace offering is to be eaten.

1. by whom
2. time

It is difficult to know if the specific regulations about food was because

1. of hygienic/health reasons (see R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale Commentaries*, p. 78)
2. of restrictions on Israelites from Canaanite sacrificial rituals

I think #2 fits best.

**7:16** There are two types of sacrifices.

1. votive – related to a vow
2. freewill – related to thanking God for His blessing or restoration into His favor

**7:18 “should ever be eaten”** The NASB adds the italicized word “ever” to indicate an intensified Hebrew grammatical feature (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 37, KB 46). This same feature is also in Lev. 7:24, “must certainly not eat it.”

**7:18-21** There are serious consequences for not obeying YHWH’s instructions.

1. Lev. 7:18 – third day meat is unacceptable and offensive to YHWH. One who eats it shall bear his iniquity.
2. Lev. 7:20 – eating a sacrifice in a ceremonially unclean state causes a divinely sent death (i.e., lit. “shall be cut off from his people,” Lev. 7:21,25,27; 17:4,9; 18:29; 19:8; 20:17-18; 22:3)
3. Lev. 7:21 – eating food classified as “unclean” (Leviticus 11) is called “detestable thing” (BDB 1054), which may refer
  - a. to an unclean animal (cf. Lev. 11:10,11,12,13,20,23,41,42)
  - b. possibly to a pagan sacrifice denoting idolatry

**7:18**

**NASB** “reckoned”

**NKJV, Peshitta** “imputed”

**NRSV, TEV,  
LXX** “credited”

**NJB** “no credit”

**JPSOA** “not count”

**REB** “counted to his credit”

This is the VERB (BDB 362, KB ??, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) which has such powerful theological significance in Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6 and Ps. 106:30-31. Its basic meaning is to count or reckon something to another. Here, if a person does not abide by God’s guidelines, then the sacrifice is

1. not accepted
2. not reckoned
3. an offensive thing
4. the person bears his own iniquity

▣

**NASB, JPSOA** “an offensive thing”

**NKJV, NRSV,  
Peshitta** “an abomination”

**TEV** “unclean”

**NJB** “as rotten meat”



<b>REB</b>	<b>“tainted”</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>“spoiled”</b>
<b>LXX</b>	<b>“a defilement”</b>

The MT has the word לִגְגֵּם (BDB 803, KB 909), which seems to be a technical ritual term for “spoiled” or “unclean animal flesh.”

1. Lev. 7:18; 19:7 – a peace offering remaining into the third day
2. Isa. 65:4 – broth from an unclean meat
3. Ezek. 4:14 – referring to any type of unclean or improperly prepared meat

These are the only occurrences of the word in the OT.

▣ **“shall bear his own iniquity”** This is theologically parallel to “be cut off from his people.”

This VERB (BDB 669, KB 724) has two distinct meanings in a given context (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 162).

1. If it refers to God’s actions, it denotes “remove/forgive iniquity” (cf. Exod. 34:7; Num. 14:18; Ps. 32:5; 85:2; Isa. 33:24; Hos 14:2; Mic. 7:18).
2. If it refers to a human person’s actions, it denotes that he/she bears his own punishment (cf. Exod. 28:43; Lev. 5:1,17; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; Num. 5:31; 18:1,23), which involved divine punishment, probably death.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:19-21**

<sup>19</sup>“Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for *other* flesh, anyone who is clean may eat *such* flesh. <sup>20</sup>But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. <sup>21</sup>When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.”

**7:21**

<b>NASB</b>	<b>“detestable thing”</b>
<b>NKJV</b>	<b>“abominable unclean thing”</b>
<b>NRSV, JPSOA</b>	<b>“any unclean creature”</b>
<b>NJB</b>	<b>“any foul thing”</b>
<b>REB</b>	<b>“swarming creature”</b>
<b>Peshitta</b>	<b>“creeping thing”</b>

The JPSOA has a footnote about this problem:

“Heb. *sheges*, lit. ‘Abomination’; several MSS and ancient versions read *sheres*, ‘swarming things’” (cf. Lev. 5:2).

The USB has שִׁקֵּעַ, “abomination” but suggests שִׂרְעַע, “reptile,” which it gives a “C” rating (i.e., considerable doubt). The NEB and REB follow this suggestion. It is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and Targum Onkelos.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:22-27**

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall not eat any fat *from* an ox, a sheep or a goat. <sup>24</sup>Also the fat of *an animal* which dies and the fat of an animal torn *by* beasts may be put to any other use, but you must certainly not eat it. <sup>25</sup>For whoever eats the fat of the animal from which an offering by fire is offered to the LORD, even the person who eats shall

**be cut off from his people. <sup>26</sup>You are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. <sup>27</sup>Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.”**

**7:22** See Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b.

**7:23-27** Israelites were forbidden to eat

1. the fat of animals
  - a. from sacrifices
  - b. found dead
  - c. torn by beasts
2. the blood

Both of these belong to YHWH. They symbolize life and vitality, both of which are gifts from YHWH (cf. Lev. 17:11). If one eats these they are “cut off from his people.”

1. excommunicated (driven out of the camp)
2. forfeits his/her life (by divine agency and may include the whole family)

**7:24** “**but you must certainly not eat it**” This is an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root (BDB 37, KB 46, cf. Lev. 7:21), which denotes intensity.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:28-34**

**<sup>28</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>29</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the LORD shall bring his offering to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. <sup>30</sup>His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the LORD. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>31</sup>The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. <sup>32</sup>You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. <sup>33</sup>The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as *his* portion. <sup>34</sup>For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as *their* due forever from the sons of Israel.”**

**7:28-34** These are further instructions about the peace offering.

1. the responsibility of the offerer, Lev. 7:29-30
2. the priest’s part of the sacrifice, Lev. 7:31-34

**7:30** “**presented as a wave offering**” This is literally “waved as a wave offering” (BDB 631-632). There has been disagreement on how the piece of meat (or other sacrifice) was “waved” (cf. Exod. 29:24).

1. “up and back,” meaning first given to God (i.e., “elevated,” NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 335-337), then His giving it back (Egyptian wall reliefs)
2. “side to side,” possibly drawing special attention to the gift (rabbinical interpretation, Jewish Study Bible, p. 221)

It is possible that the “heave” offering of Lev. 7:14 and the “wave” offering of 7:30 are separate rituals. I think they are the same. See

1. Robert Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the OT*, p. 203, who suggests that
  - a. wave offering (*tenuphah*, BDB 631, KB 682) was “shaking to and fro”
  - b. heave offering (*terumah*, BDB 632) was “elevated”

2. S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the OT*, pp. 100-105, suggests that the usage of the word in Exod. 25:2 demonstrates it may come from another Semitic root meaning “additional gift,” meaning an added sacrifice
3. Milgrom, quoted in NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 65, thinks the two words denoted different ritual acts
  - a. *tenuphah*, BDB 631, KB 682, always occurs in the Tabernacle (i.e., “before the LORD”)
  - b. *terumah*, BDB 632, is said to be “to the LORD” but never “before the LORD”

**7:32** The “breast” (i.e., front half of sacrifice without the shoulders) was given to all male priests but the “thigh” (i.e., the right back leg) was given exclusively to the officiating priest. It was the choice part of the sacrificial animal.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:35-36**

<sup>35</sup>“This is that which is consecrated to Aaron and that which is consecrated to his sons from the offerings by fire to the LORD, in that day when he presented them to serve as priests to the LORD. <sup>36</sup>These the LORD had commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel in the day that He anointed them. It is *their* due forever throughout their generations.”

**7:35**

**NASB** “that which is consecrated”  
**NKJV** “the consecrated portion”  
**NRSV, REB,**  
**NET** “the portion allotted”  
**TEV** “part of the food offered”  
**NJB** “the food burnt”  
**JPSOA** “prerequisites”  
**LXX** “the anointing”  
**Peshitta** “the portion of the anointing”

The MT has a form of the root for “anoint” (BDB 603). The JPSOA’s footnote has “lit. ‘anointment,’ i.e. accruing from anointment.” KB (KB 644) suggests it comes from another root related to Akkadian “measure,” thereby denoting “the share” or “the allotment” of a priest (cf. Num. 18:8).

Therefore, this could refer to

1. the priest’s initial anointing
2. the priest’s portion from the sacrifice he performed

**7:36** Notice that two phrases/words which denote an ongoing ritual/ordinance occur together.

1. “forever,” BDB 761; cf. Lev. 3:17; 6:18,22; 7:34,35; 10:9,15; 16:29,31,34; 17:7; 23:14,21,31,41; 24:7,8,9; 25:32,34,46); see Special Topic: Forever (*‘olam*) at Lev. 3:17
2. “throughout their generations,” cf. Lev. 3:17; 6:11; 7:36; 10:9; 17:7; 21:17; 22:3; 23:14, 21,31,41,45; 24:3; 25:30

Be careful of importing the English sense of eternity into these terms/phrases. Context, context, context!

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:37-38**

<sup>37</sup>“This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings, <sup>38</sup>which the LORD commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai.”

7:37-38 This is a summary statement concluding chapters 1-7.

7:37

NASB, TEV,

REB “the ordination offering”

NKJV “the consecrations”

NRSV, JPSOA “the offering of ordination”

NJB “investiture sacrifice”

Peshitta “the consecration”

The MT has a root (BDB 571) which denotes

1. the setting/placing of jewels in a setting – Exod. 23:7; 35:9,27
2. the initial offering of the installation of priests to their office and duties – Lev. 7:37; 8:22,29,33; Exod. 29:22,25,27,31

This refers to Lev. 6:19-23.

7:38 “at Mount Sinai” See Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai.

#### SPECIAL TOPIC: LOCATION OF MT. SINAI

- A. If Moses was speaking literally and not figuratively of the three day journey he requested of Pharaoh (Exod. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27), that was not a long enough time to get to the traditional site in the southern Sinai peninsula. Therefore, some scholars place the mountain near the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea (see video on History Channel, “The Exodus Decoded”).
- B. The traditional site called “Jebel Musa,” in the Wilderness of Sin, has several things in its favor:
  1. A large plain before the mountain
  2. Deut. 1:2 says it was an eleven day journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea
  3. The term “Sinai” (BDB 696, KB 751) is a non-Hebrew term. It may be linked to the Wilderness of *Sin*, which refers to a small desert bush. The Hebrew name for the mountain is Horeb (wilderness, BDB 352, cf. Exod. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6).
  4. Mt. Sinai has been the traditional site since the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is in the “land of Midian” which included a large area of the Sinai peninsula and Arabia.
  5. It seems that archaeology has confirmed the location of some of the cities mentioned in the Exodus account (*Elim, Dophkah, Rephidim*) as being on the western side of the Sinai Peninsula.
- C. The Jews were never interested in the geographical location of Mt. Sinai. They believed that God gave them the Law and fulfilled His promise from Gen. 15:12-21. “Where” was not the issue and they did not intend to return to this site (i.e., no annual pilgrimage).
- D. The traditional site of Mt. Sinai was not established until *Pilgrimage of Silvia*, written about A.D. 385-8 (cf. F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, p. 151).
- E. There is much speculation today on a new possible location across the Gulf of Aqaba in Arabia. It is claimed
  1. that the land of Midian was always exclusively in Arabia
  2. that in Gal. 4:25 Paul states it was in Arabia
  3. that satellite mapping has revealed an ancient road leading from Egypt across the Sinai peninsula with a raised, rocky ledge, which crosses the Gulf of Aqaba
  4. that the top of the highest peak in this area is blackened (cf. Exod. 19:16,18)

It must be restated that we simply do not know the location!

The other name used in the OT for the place YHWH gave His “Ten Words” was “Horeb” (BDB 352, KB 350, cf. Exod. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut. 1:2,6,19; 4:10,15; 5:2; 9:8; 18:16; 29:1; 1 Kgs. 8:9; 19:8; 2 Chr. 5:10; Ps. 106:19; Mal. 4:4). This root may be related to the same three Hebrew consonants that mean “waste,” “desolation,” or “ruin” (BDB 352, KB 349). It seems that “Horeb” referred to a range of mountains and “Sinai” to one of its peaks.

▣ **“the wilderness of Sinai”** See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE WILDERNESSES OF THE EXODUS**

- A. Wilderness of Shur – in northeast Egypt (e.g., Exod. 15:22)
- B. Wilderness of Paran – central Sinai Peninsula (e.g., Gen. 21:21; Num. 10:12; 12:16; 13:3,26)
- C. Wilderness of Sin – southern Sinai Peninsula (e.g., Exod. 16:1; 17:1; Num. 33:11,12, also called “wilderness of Sinai,” e.g., Exod. 19:1,2; Num. 1:1,19; 3:4; 9:1,5)
- D. Wilderness of Zin – southern Canaan (e.g., Num. 13:21; 20:1; 27:14; 33:36; 34:3; Deut. 32:51)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What makes an offering “most holy”?
2. Why do the fat and blood belong exclusively to YHWH?
3. Explain Lev. 7:18 in your own words.
4. What made an animal “clean” or “unclean”?
5. What does the phrase “cut off from his people” imply?
6. What is the difference between a “wave offering” in Lev. 7:30 and a “wave offering” in 7:34?

# LEVITICUS 8

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons	Aaron and His Sons Consecrated	Investiture and Induction of Priests (8:1-10:20)  The Ordination of the Priests	The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons	Consecration Rites
8:1-5	8:1-5	8:1-5	8:1-3 8:4-5	8:1-3 8:4-5
8:6-9	8:6-9	8:6-9	8:6-9	8:6 8:7-9
8:10-13	8:10-13	8:10-13	8:10-13	8:10-12 8:13
8:14-17	8:14-17	8:14-17	8:14-17	8:14-17
8:18-21	8:18-21	8:18-21	8:18-21	8:18-21
8:22-29	8:22-29	8:22-29	8:22-29	8:22-29
8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30
8:31-36	8:31-36	8:31-36	8:31-36	8:31-36

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. The Tabernacle and its furnishings were completed at the end of the book of Exodus. However, it did not begin functioning until the very specific guidelines were established, which are found in the book of Leviticus.
- B. After the golden calf experience of Exodus 2, Aaron is not addressed by God. Even at the dedicatory sacrifices of the new Tabernacle it was Moses who officiated. At the beginning of Leviticus 8, God instructs Moses to describe to Aaron his new functions as High Priest.
- C. As Leviticus 1-7 describes the procedures of sacrifice in detail (see Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance), Leviticus 8-9 describes the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (cf. Exodus 29; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 346-348).  
The Jewish Study Bible, p. 222, #26, lists the different procedures involved in the consecration of the priesthood.
  1. special bath, Lev. 8:6
  2. investiture – special clothing, Lev. 8:7-9,13
  3. invocation – burnt and cereal offerings, Lev. 8:18-21
  4. consecration – one ram’s blood applied, Lev. 8:22-24a
  5. filling of hands – wave offering, Lev. 8:26-29 and meal, 8:31

6. anointment – applying special oil, Lev. 8:12,20
7. specific time of separation (i.e., seven days), Lev. 8:31-36

D. Leviticus 10 is the tragic example of procedures that were not fully followed. It was a warning to both Aaron and his sons and to the people of Israel that God’s regulations and laws were to be fulfilled completely.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-5

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread, <sup>3</sup>and assemble all the congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting.” <sup>4</sup>So Moses did just as the LORD commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, <sup>5</sup>Moses said to the congregation, “This is the thing which the Lord has commanded to do.”

**8:1** See Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b.

**8:2-3** This chapter starts out with two commands from YHWH to Moses.

1. take, Lev. 8:2 – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. assemble, Lev. 8:3 – BDB 874, KB 1078, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

**8:2 “Take Aaron and his sons with him”** Moses and Aaron were of the tribe of Levi. The Levites would become the special servants of the Tabernacle. In Exodus 13, the redemption of the firstborn is described. All of the firstborn of both cattle and men belonged to God. This was a symbolic way, like the Sabbath and the tithe, of saying that all days belong to God, all income belongs to God, and all children belong to God. The Levites took the official place of this firstborn child in ministry (cf. Num. 3:12; 8:16). Out of the Levites as a whole came one family who would become the priests—this was the family of Aaron. Rashi says that the events of this chapter occurred seven days before the final erection of the Tabernacle in Exodus. However, because of Aaron’s sin, I think there may have been a period of time when the tabernacle stood empty.

▣ **“the garments and the anointing oil”** The directions for making these items are given in great detail in the book of Exodus. For a description of the garments, see Exodus 18; for a description of the anointing oil, see Exod. 30:22-33. See Special Topic: Garments of the High Priest at Lev. 6:10-11.

▣ **“the anointing oil”** See Exod. 30:23-25.

▣ **“and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread”** This dedicatory sacrifice is also discussed in detail in Exodus 29. Even though Aaron would be the High Priest, he needed a sin offering (cf. Lev. 4:1-13) for himself and his sons.

**8:3 “and assemble all the congregation to the doorway of the tent of meeting”** Many Hebrew scholars say that because of the large number of people involved this probably refers to the elected or delegated representatives of the people (i.e., elders, cf. Num. 7:2; Lev. 9:1; Special Topic: Elder).

For “congregation” see Special Topic: Church (*ekklesia*).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: ELDER

### I. OT Usage

- A. used of the angels of God who made up the angelic council (BDB 278, KB 278, cf. Isa. 24:23). This same terminology is used of the angelic creatures of Revelation (cf. Rev. 4:4,10; 5:5,6,8,11,14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4).
- B. used of tribal leaders in the OT (cf. Exod. 3:16; Num. 11:16). Later in the NT this term is applied to a group of leaders from Jerusalem who made up the high court of the Jews, the Sanhedrin (cf. Matt. 21:23; 26:57). In Jesus' day this seventy-member body was controlled by a corrupt priesthood (i.e. not Aaron's line, but purchased from the Roman overlords).

### II. NT Usage

- A. used of the local leaders of a NT church. It was one of three synonymous terms (pastor, overseer, and elder, cf. Titus 1:5,7; Acts 20:17,28). Peter and John use it to include themselves in the leadership group (cf. 1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).
- B. there is a play on the term elder (*presbuteros*) in 1 Pet. 1:1, 5. The term is apparently used as a title of leadership (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1) and a designation of age (cf. 1 Pet. 1:5). The use of this term is surprising considering that it is basically the Jewish tribal designation of leadership, while "bishop" or "overseer" (*episcopos*) was the Greek city-state designation for leadership. 1 Peter uses Jewish terms to address Gentile believers.

Peter calls himself a "fellow elder," the term *presbuteros* plus the PREPOSITION *syn*, which implies "joint participation with." Peter does not assert his Apostolic authority (cf. 2 John 1, where another Apostle calls himself "elder"), but admonishes (i.e., "I exhort," a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE) the local leaders to act and live appropriately in the light of

1. Christ's example
2. nearness of His return

The early churches did not have paid positions of leadership, but recognized the God-given gifts of ministry and leadership within each local church. This affirmation of giftedness had to be balanced with the cultural reverence for "aged-wisdom," especially among the Jewish believing community. Therefore, Peter addresses both types of leadership.

Also notice that "elders" is PLURAL. This may refer to (1) a number of house church leaders (cf. Acts 20:17) or (2) the different spiritual gifts among a body of leaders (cf. Eph. 4:11), which clearly states that ministry belongs to all believers. This is parallel to the concept of "a kingdom of priests" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5,9).

- C. used of older men in the church, not necessarily the leadership (cf. 1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:2).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: CHURCH (*ekklesia*)

This Greek term, *ekklesia*, is from two words, "out of" and "called." This word had secular use (i.e., a citizen's call to a meeting, cf. Acts 19:32,39,41) and because of the Septuagint's use of this term for "congregation" of Israel (*Qahal*, BDB 874, KB 1078, cf. Num. 16:3; 20:4; Deut. 31:30), a religious use. The early church saw themselves as a continuation of the OT people of God. They were the new Israel (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6), the fulfillment of God's worldwide mission (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; see Special Topic: YHWH Eternal Redemptive Plan).

This term is used in several senses in the Gospels and Acts.

1. secular town meeting, Acts 19:32,39,41



2. universal people of God in Christ, Matt. 16:18 and Ephesians
3. a local congregation of believers in Christ, Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11 (in these verses the church in Jerusalem); Acts 13:1; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon v. 2
4. the people of Israel collectively, Acts 7:38, in Stephen's sermon
5. the people of God in a region, Acts 8:3; Gal. 1:2 (Judah or Palestine)

The church is a gathered people, not a building. There were no church buildings for hundreds of years. In James (one of the earliest Christian books), the term "*synagōgē*" (the assembly). This VERB for the church occurs only in James (cf. James 2:2; 5:14).

**8:4-5** This comment is theologically significant in light of the disobedience of Aaron's oldest two sons in Leviticus 10. See Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:6-9**

**<sup>6</sup>Then Moses had Aaron and his sons come near and washed them with water. <sup>7</sup>He put the tunic on him and girded him with the sash, and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the artistic band of the ephod, with which he tied it to him. <sup>8</sup>He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup>He also placed the turban on his head, and on the turban, at its front, he placed the golden plate, the holy crown, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

**8:6 "and washed them with water"** In the OT, washing is seen as a symbol of the removal of sin. It was not so much for hygienic purposes as it was for ceremonial cleanliness. See note online at Titus 3:5; see Special Topic: Laver at Lev. 1:9 and Special Topic: Baptism.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: BAPTISM**

I. Baptism in Jewish life

A. Baptism was a common rite among Jews of the first and second century.

1. preparation for worship at the temple (i.e., cleansing rite)
2. the self baptism of proselytes

If someone from a Gentile background were to become a full child of Israel, he had to accomplish three tasks:

- a. circumcision, if male
- b. self-baptism by immersion, in the presence of three witnesses
- c. sacrifice in the Temple

In sectarian groups of first century Palestine, such as the Essenes, baptism was apparently a common, repeated experience. However, to mainline Judaism, John's baptism of repentance would have been humiliating for a natural child of Abraham to undergo a Gentile ritual.

B. Some OT precedents can be cited for ceremonial washing.

1. as a symbol of spiritual cleansing (cf. Isa. 1:16)
2. as a regular ritual performed by the priests (cf. Exod. 19:10; Leviticus 15)

It should be noted that all other baptisms in first century Jewish culture were self-administered. Only John's called for him to administer this rite.

## II. Baptism in the Church

### A. Theological Purposes of Baptism in the Church

1. forgiveness of sin – Acts 2:38; 22:16
2. reception of Holy Spirit – Acts 2:38 (Acts 10:44-48)
3. union with Christ – Gal. 3:26-27
4. membership in church – 1 Cor. 12:13
5. symbol of a spiritual turning – 1 Pet. 3:20-21
6. symbol of a spiritual death and resurrection – Rom. 6:1-5

### B. Its Significance

Baptism was the early church's opportunity for a person's public profession (or confession). It was/is not the mechanism for salvation, but the occasion of a verbal affirmation of faith. Remember the early church had no buildings and met in homes or often in secret places because of persecution.

Many commentators have asserted that 1 Peter is a baptismal sermon. Although this is possible, it is not the only option. It is true that Peter often uses baptism as a crucial act of faith (cf. Acts 2:38,41;10:47). However, it was/is not a sacramental event, but a faith event, symbolizing death, burial, and resurrection as the believer identifies with Christ's own experience (cf. Rom. 6:7-9; Col. 2:12). The act is symbolic, not sacramental; the act is the occasion of profession, not the mechanism of salvation.

## III. Baptism and Repentance in Acts 2:38

Curtis Vaughan, *Acts* has an interesting footnote on p. 28 related to Acts 2:38.

“The Greek word for ‘baptized’ is a third person imperative; the word for ‘repent,’ a second person imperative. This change from the more direct second person command to the less direct third person of ‘baptized’ implies that Peter's basic primary demand is for repentance.”

This follows the preaching emphasis of John the Baptist (cf. Matt. 3:2) and Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:17). Repentance seems to be a spiritual key and baptism is an outward expression of this spiritual change. The New Testament knew nothing of unbaptized believers! To the early church baptism was the public profession of faith. It is the occasion for the public confession of faith in Christ, not the mechanism for salvation! It needs to be remembered that baptism is not mentioned in Peter's second sermon, though repentance is (cf. Acts 3:19; Luke 24:17). Baptism was an example set by Jesus (cf. Matt. 3:13-18). Baptism was commanded by Jesus (cf. Matt. 28:19). The modern question of the necessity of baptism for salvation is not addressed in the New Testament; all believers are expected to be baptized. However, one must also guard against a sacramental mechanicalism! Salvation is a faith issue, not a right-place, right-words, right-ritual act issue!

**8:7-9 “he put the tunic”** The complete itemization of the High Priest's garments is also found in Exod. 28:4. For a complete discussion and description of each of these items refer to Exodus 28 and 29.

**8:8 “the breastplate”** See Special Topic: Breastplate of the High Priest.

### SPECIAL TOPIC: BREASTPLATE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

This decorative piece is first mentioned in Exod. 25:7, then 28:4, but described in detail in Exod. 28:15-30 and repeated in Exod. 39:8-21.

It functioned as a symbol of the preciousness of the twelve tribes to God. Their names were on the precious stones of the Breastplate, located over Aaron's heart, Exod. 28:29. It is called "the breastplate of judgment" (BDB 365 CONSTRUCT BDB 1048) in Exod. 28:15,29,30. This probably referred to the Urim and Thummim, as a way to discern God's will.

In design

1. same colors as ephod, Exod. 28:15
2. it folded into a double square – span (space from little finger tip to thumb tip with palm outstretched) by span, Exod. 28:16
3. four rows of three stones with the name of a tribe engraved on each, Exod. 28:17-21
4. had two gold chains that connected it to the shoulder stones of the High Priest's vest, Exod. 28:22-28
5. a pouch containing the Urim and Thummim was behind the breastplate and over the High Priest's heart, Exod. 28:30

One good example of this is the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), where he and he alone entered the Holy of Holies on behalf of corporate Israel's sin.

▣ **“the Urim and Thummim** These items were also discussed in Exod. 28:30; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 14:31. It was a mechanical way to know the will of YHWH. Whether it involved a set of stones with “Yes,” “No,” or “Uncertain,” written on them or a kind of alphabet arrangement or a black or white stone or small sticks is not certain. See Special Topic: Urim and Thummim.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: URIM AND THUMMIM**

These two words first appear in Exod. 28:30, where they refer to a physical means of determining the will of God for the nation, later Kings, through the High Priest (cf. Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65).

There has been no consensus about the Semitic roots from which they originate. Traditionally they are associated with

1. light – BDB 22, KB 25
2. perfection – BDB 1070, KB 1743

They were kept in a pouch behind the High Priest's breastplate. They probably were some type of lot oracle (i.e., stones engraved with “yes” or “no,” cf. LXX 1 Sam. 14:41).

**8:9 “the turban”** The turban and all of its accouterments are discussed in Exod. 28:36.



**NASB, NKJV,**

**NRSV, Peshitta** “the holy crown”

**NJB** “this was the symbol of Holy consecration”

**JPSOA, NET** “the holy diadem”

**REB** “the symbol of holy dedication”

**LXX** “the devoted holy object”

The MT has “crown of consecration” (BDB 634 CONSTRUCT BDB 871), which is a NOUN with two distinct connotations.

1. crown of the king – 2 Sam. 1:10; 2 Kgs. 11:12; 2 Chr. 23:11; Ps. 89:39; 132:18

2. part of the turban of the High Priest – Lev. 8:9; Exod. 29:6; 39:3

It is possible that it is “the golden plate” (or LXX, “flower”; NJB, “leaf,” BDB 847 I; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 785), which is designated as “holy” or “consecrated” to YHWH. In the OT, twice (i.e., Psalm 110; Zechariah 3-4) the leader from Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10) and Levi are seen as joint rulers.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:10-13**

<sup>10</sup>Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head and anointed him, to consecrate him. <sup>13</sup>Next Moses had Aaron’s sons come near and clothed them with tunics, and girded them with sashes and bound caps on them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**8:10-12** See Exod. 29:36,37; 30:23-33; Num. 7:1.

**8:10 “the tabernacle”** See Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

**8:11 “seven times”** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4 at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **“basin and its stand”** This refers to the container of water which was used for washing of the priests and the sacrifices. It was placed to the left of the altar of sacrifice between the door of the tent of meeting and the door of the Holy Place. Its stand is rather unique in that it was made of the metal-looking glasses which were taken from Egypt (cf. Exod. 38:8). See Special Topic: Laver at Lev. 1:9.

**8:12** See Psalm 133 and Exod. 29:7; 30:25,30.

**8:13**

NASB, TEV	“caps”
NKJV	“hats”
NRSV, NJB,	
REB, NET	“headdresses”
JPSOA, LXX	“turbans”
Peshitta	“mitres”

The MT has “head-gear of the common priest” (BDB 149, cf. Exod. 28:4; 29:9; 39:28; Lev. 8:13). It was less elaborate with no gold plate. Its shape is unknown but the root is related to “cup” or “bowl” (BDB 149).

1. cup – Genesis 44; Jer. 35:5

2. top of lampstand extensions (i.e., “cup”) – Exod. 25:31-34; 3:17-20

Josephus suggests a bell-shaped cap (*Antiq.* 3.7.3).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:14-17**

<sup>14</sup>Then he brought the bull of the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. <sup>15</sup>Next Moses slaughtered *it* and took the blood and with his finger put *some of it* around on the horns of the altar, and purified the altar. Then he poured out *the rest* of the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. <sup>16</sup>He also took all the fat that was on the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat; and Moses

**offered it up in smoke on the altar. <sup>17</sup>But the bull and its hide and its flesh and its refuse he burned in the fire outside the camp, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

**8:14 “laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering”** The term “laid” is a very intense Hebrew word which means, “lean heavily against” (cf. Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8; 4:4,15,24,28,33; 8:14,18,22). From all of the uses of this term in the Pentateuch, it seems to refer to the symbolic act of identifying the unblemished animal to be slain with the sinful man (cf. Gen. 2:17) in whose place it stood. Here, it stood for a whole category of people (i.e., the priests)

**8:15 “Next Moses slaughtered it and took the blood”** Notice that Moses is still acting as priest to Aaron (although the MT does not name him specifically and since usually the offerer in this cast, Aaron and his sons, kill and cut up the animal). It was an involved procedure to kill the animal, skin it, cut it up, collect its blood and place it in certain locations, put the fat of the intestines in a designated place, etc. See Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b.

▣ **“the horns of the altar”** The horns of the altar of sacrifice were the most holy part of the brazen altar (see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7). Archaeologists have found horns on the Canaanite altars of this same period. They are not sure of the exact meaning, but it has been speculated that it refers to (1) the lifting of a sacrifice to God or (2) a symbol of power.

▣ **“to make atonement for it”** Notice that the atonement is for the altar. This sounds rather ridiculous to modern culture but the Tabernacle and its furnishings somehow were affected by the sins of the people of God and had to be reconsecrated and cleansed from their sin.

The term “atonement” is a Hebrew word that is usually translated “to cover.” However, from further etymological discoveries some see it as meaning “to wipe clean” or “to cleanse” as a more proper translation. See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**8:16 “He also took all the fat that was on the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat”** The fat was a symbol of the life force and health of these unblemished animals. Therefore, the fat uniquely belonged to God as a symbol of the best of the animal. In a similar way the blood belonged to God as a symbol of the life of the animal (cf. Lev. 17:11).

**8:17**

**NASB “refuse”**

**NKJV, NJB,**

**REB “offal”**

**NRSV, JPSOA,**

**NET, LXX,**

**Peshitta “dung”**

**TEV**

**“intestines”**

The MT has BDB 831 I, KB 977 (cf. Exod. 29:14; Lev. 4:11; 8:17; 16:27; Num. 19:5), which can denote

1. the contents of the intestines
2. the contents of the stomach
3. dung, refuse

When an animal was offered to God the inner cavity had to be cleaned out. Part of this (i.e., fat and certain internal organs) was given to God on the altar and the rest burned and taken outside the camp. Malachi 2:3 shows how this imagery can be used in a judgment context.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:18-21**

<sup>18</sup>Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>19</sup>Moses slaughtered *it* and sprinkled the blood around on the altar. <sup>20</sup>When he had cut the ram into its pieces, Moses offered up the head and the pieces and the suet in smoke. <sup>21</sup>After he had washed the entrails and the legs with water, Moses offered up the whole ram in smoke on the altar. It was a burnt offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**8:18 “the ram of the burnt offering”** The burnt offering often followed the sin offering. As we learned from Leviticus 1-7, these sacrifices were often offered in a series. The burnt offering symbolized commitment to God after the sin offering removed any barriers between God and man.

**8:19 “sprinkled the blood”** See full note at Lev. 1:5; NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 1152-1154.

**8:21 “It was a burnt offering for a soothing aroma”** As the smoke ascended from the altar it symbolically went up to God. If the sacrifice was accepted, it was called a “soothing aroma.” It does not seem to imply that the sacrifice was food for God, as it did in other ANE sacrificial systems, but that God accepted the symbol of the sacrifice on behalf of the man. See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 543, has a good list of how “an offering by fire” (BDB 77) is used.

1. whole burnt offerings – Exod. 29:18; Lev. 1:9,13,17; 8:21
2. grain/cereal offerings – Lev. 23:13 (of memorial portion, Lev. 2:2,9,16; 6:17-18)
3. combination of #1 and #2 – Exod. 29:41; Lev. 6:20,23; Num. 28:3-8 (sacrifices often offered in a series)
4. fat parts of peace offerings – Lev. 3:3,5,9,11,14,16; 7:25
5. fat parts of guilt offerings – Lev. 7:5 (many of the procedures were done with each sacrifice, though not always specified)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:22-29**

<sup>22</sup>Then he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>23</sup>Moses slaughtered *it* and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron’s right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. <sup>24</sup>He also had Aaron’s sons come near; and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. Moses then sprinkled *the rest* of the blood around on the altar. <sup>25</sup>He took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the entrails, and the lobe of the liver and the two kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. <sup>26</sup>From the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake and one cake of bread *mixed with* oil and one wafer, and placed *them* on the portions of fat and on the right thigh. <sup>27</sup>He then put all *these* on the hands of Aaron and on the hands of his sons and presented them as a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>28</sup>Then Moses took them from their hands and offered them up in smoke on the altar with the burnt offering. They were an ordination offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Moses also took the breast and presented it for a wave offering before the LORD; it was Moses’ portion of the ram of ordination, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

**8:22 “the second ram, the ram of ordination”** This follows the stipulations given more fully in Exod. 29:20-21. One of the rams was for a special dedicatory offering.

**8:23-24 “put it on the lobe of Aaron’s right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot”** As the priest stood between man and God, it is uncertain if the anointing of the ear, the hand, and the foot stands for (1) the whole persons as he listens to God; (2) the whole person as he represents the people; or (3) as imagery for cleansing (cf. Lev. 14:14; possibly same image as Ezek. 43:20).

The right side of man would symbolize his power and organizational abilities. Therefore, it means that Aaron and his sons are completely dedicated to the tasks of being intermediaries between man and God.

**8:26 “took one unleavened cake and one cake of bread *mixed with oil* and one wafer”** This grain offering is also discussed in Leviticus 2 and it usually accompanied the other sacrifices. It was a way of providing more than just meat for the diet of the priest. Only a small portion of the grain was offered on the altar; the remainder was returned to the priest who was officiating to be eaten.

**8:27-29 “wave offering”** See notes at Lev. 7:30,34.

The wave offering is discussed somewhat in Lev. 7:21-24. We are uncertain about the exact difference between a wave and a heave offering. Some would say that (1) it was waved back and forth as a symbol of giving it to God and God giving it back to man or (2) it was waved from side to side. However, the exact meaning is uncertain (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 64-65).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:30**

**<sup>30</sup>So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:31-36**

**<sup>31</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, “Boil the flesh at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and eat it there together with the bread which is in the basket of the ordination offering, just as I commanded, saying, ‘Aaron and his sons shall eat it.’ <sup>32</sup>The remainder of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn in the fire. <sup>33</sup>You shall not go outside the doorway of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the day that the period of your ordination is fulfilled; for he will ordain you through seven days. <sup>34</sup>The LORD has commanded to do as has been done this day, to make atonement on your behalf. <sup>35</sup>At the doorway of the tent of meeting, moreover, you shall remain day and night for seven days and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you will not die, for so I have been commanded.” <sup>36</sup>Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things which the LORD had commanded through Moses.**

**8:31 “Aaron and his sons shall eat it”** The purpose of eating this meat symbolized a peace offering. In the sin offering a portion of the meat belonged to Moses, as he was the officiating priest. But this peace offering involved Aaron and his sons who, by eating it, showed that fellowship was restored and that God symbolically ate with them (cf. the peace offering in Leviticus 3).

**8:33 “you shall not go outside the doorway of the tent of meeting for seven days”** This period of time involved a series of sacrifices that were offered every day. Seven, the number of perfection, showed that the priests were completely ordained and cleansed by this extended period of dedicatory sacrifices. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture at Lev. 4:6.

**8:35 “that you may not die”** This seems to be a foreshadowing of the tragedy of Leviticus 10. To whom much is given, much is required. Those who knew and ministered to God were especially responsible for their knowledge and actions. See Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d.

**8:36 “Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things which the LORD had commanded through Moses”**

At this point Aaron would take over the officiating of the sacrifices. Leviticus 9 is a discussion of Aaron offering the sacrifices in the exact way as was described by Moses. It is interesting to note that at this point Aaron is still dealing only with the altar of sacrifice. No one at this point had entered the inner shrine of the Tabernacle.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Leviticus 8 set the literary stage for chapter 10?
2. Was the sin offering for
  - a. Aaron and his sons
  - b. the tabernacle and its various parts
  - c. both?
3. What was
  - a. ephod
  - b. Urim and Thummim
  - c. golden plate?
4. Why sprinkle seven times (Lev. 8:11)?
5. Why both a bull and 2 rams?
6. Explain Lev. 8:23 in your own words.
7. Explain the imagery of Lev. 8:27.
8. How does Lev. 8:35 relate to chapter 10?



# LEVITICUS 9

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Aaron Offers Sacrifices	The Priestly Ministry Begins	The commencement of Aaron's High Priesthood	Aaron Offers Sacrifices	The Priests Assume Their Functions
9:1-7	9:1-7	9:1-7	9:1-4 9:5-7	9:1-4 9:5-7
9:8-11	9:8-11	9:8-11	9:8-11	9:8-11
9:12-14	9:12-14	9:12-14	9:12-14	9:12-14
9:15-17	9:15-17	9:15-17	9:15-21	9:15-17
9:18-21	9:18-21	9:18-21		9:18-21
9:22-24	9:22-24	9:22-24	9:22-24	9:22-24

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Notice that there are two sacrificial procedures.
1. for the priests, Lev. 9:8 (v. 2)
  2. for the people, Lev. 9:15,18 (vv. 3-4)
- B. Notice the different types of sacrifices.
1. a bull calf, for a sin offering, Lev. 9:2
  2. a ram, for a burnt offering, Lev. 9:2
  3. a male goat, for a sin offering, Lev. 9:3
  4. a calf and a lamb (both one year old), for a burnt offering, Lev. 9:3
  5. an ox and a ram, for a peace offering, Lev. 9:4
  6. a grain offering, Lev. 9:4
- Usually sacrifices were offered in a series. Each of them representing a different purpose. See Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance.
- C. Both Leviticus 9 and 10 occur on the eighth day, the day when the Aaronic priesthood begins their service at the inner shrine.
- D. There is a similar ritual between
1. these first sacrifices for the priests and the people
  2. the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Now it came about on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; <sup>2</sup>and he said to Aaron, “Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, *both* without defect, and offer *them* before the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for a burnt offering, <sup>4</sup>and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.’” <sup>5</sup>So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole congregation came near and stood before the Lord. <sup>6</sup>Moses said, “This is the thing which the LORD has commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.” <sup>7</sup>Moses then said to Aaron, “Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as the LORD has commanded.”

**9:1 “on the eighth day”** This would be the culmination of the “seven days” of ordination mentioned in Leviticus 8 (i.e., Lev. 8:33,35).

▣ **“Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel”** Many assume that this is the group that is referred to in Lev. 8:1-3, but this is not certain (cf. Num. 7:2). See Special Topic: Aaron and His Sons and Special Topic: Elder at Lev. 8:3.

### SPECIAL TOPIC: Aaron and His Sons

Aaron, being the first High Priest of Israel, was to be succeeded by his oldest son. His sons are listed in Exod. 6:23.

1. Nadab – BDB 621, from Arabic root, “capable” or “fine,” KB 671
2. Abihu – BDB 4, KB 4, “he is father”
3. Eleazar – BDB 46, “God has helped”
4. Ithamar – BDB 16, KB 44, meaning unknown

The first two were part of a group of leaders who worshiped YHWH on Mt. Sinai “at a distance” (cf. Exod. 24:1). Later they were involved in either

1. drunkenness at the altar (cf. Lev. 10:8-11)
2. flagrant violations of YHWH’s altar procedures (cf. Lev. 10:1)

They were killed by YHWH (cf. Lev. 10:2). Aaron and his family were commanded by Moses not to grieve (cf. Lev. 10:6-7). They were replaced by Eleazar (cf. Num. 3:4; 20:25-29).

**9:2 “Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, *both* without defect, and offer them before the LORD”** This is the only place in all of the sacrificial regulations that a calf (BDB 722) is mentioned. The rabbis assume that this refers to a special sacrifice that Aaron needed to perform because of his sin of the golden calf in Exodus 32 (another use of BDB 722).

▣ **“without defect”** There are several Hebrew words which are used to describe an animal “blameless” or “without defect.” The symbolism is that the animal was not physically marred, and, therefore, it stood as

a representative of a sinless, innocent life. This symbolism is fulfilled as the sinless Jesus Christ bore our sins on Calvary (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Lev. 1:3b and Special Topic: Blameless, Innocent, Guiltless, Without Reproach.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: BLAMELESS, INNOCENT, GUILTLESS, WITHOUT REPROACH**

### A. Opening Statements

1. This concept theologically describes mankind's original state (i.e., Genesis 1, the Garden of Eden).
2. Sin and rebellion have decimated this condition of perfect fellowship (i.e., Genesis 3).
3. Humans (male and female) long for the restoration of fellowship with God because they are made in His image and likeness (i.e., Gen. 1:26-27).
4. God has dealt with sinful mankind in several ways
  - a. godly leaders (i.e., Abraham, Moses, Isaiah)
  - b. sacrificial system (i.e., Leviticus 1-7)
  - c. godly examples (i.e., Noah, Job)
5. Ultimately God provided the Messiah
  - a. as full revelation of Himself (cf. John 1:1-14; Col. 1:13-17; Heb. 1:2-3)
  - b. as the perfect sacrifice for sin (cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21)
6. Christians are made blameless
  - a. legally through Christ's imputed righteousness (cf. Romans 4-6)
  - b. progressively through the work of the Spirit
  - c. the goal of Christianity is Christlikeness (cf. Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:15), which in reality, is the restoration of the image of God lost in the fall of Adam and Eve.
7. Heaven is a restoration of the perfect fellowship of the Garden of Eden. Heaven is the New Jerusalem coming down out of God's presence (cf. Rev. 21:2) to a purified earth (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10). The Bible begins and ends on the same themes.
  - a. intimate, personal fellowship with God
  - b. in a garden setting (Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22)
  - c. by prophetic statement, the presence and companionship of animals (cf. Isa. 11:6-9)

### B. Old Testament

1. There are so many different Hebrew words that carry the concept of perfection, blamelessness, innocence that it would be hard to name and show all the intricate relationships.
2. The main terms carrying the concept of perfection, guiltlessness, or innocence (according to Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 94-99) are:
  - a. *shalom* (BDB1022)
  - b. *thamam* (BDB1070)
  - c. *calah* (BDB478)
3. The Septuagint (i.e., the Bible of the early church) translates these Hebrew concepts into Koine Greek terms used in the NT (see C. below).
4. The key concept is connected to the sacrificial system.
  - a. *amōmos* (cf. Exod. 29:1; Lev. 1:3,10; 3:1,6; Num. 6:14)

- b. *amiantos* and *aspilus* also have cultic connotations
- C. New Testament
  - 1. the legal concept
    - a. the Hebrew legal cultic connotation is translated by *amōmos* (cf. Eph. 5:27; Phil. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:19)
    - b. the Greek legal connotations (cf. 1 Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22)
  - 2. Christ is the sinless, blameless, innocent One (*amōmos*, cf. Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19)
  - 3. Christ's followers must emulate Him (*amōmos*, cf. Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22; 2 Pet. 3:14; Jude v. 24; Rev. 14:5)
  - 4. This concept is also used of church leaders
    - a. *aneglētos*, "without accusation" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6-7)
    - b. *anepileptos*, "above criticism" or "no handle for reproach" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:7; 6:14; Titus 2:8)
  - 5. The concept of "undefiled" (*amiantos*) is used of
    - a. Christ Himself (cf. Heb. 7:26)
    - b. the Christian's inheritance (cf. 1 Pet. 1:4)
  - 6. The concept of "wholeness" or "soundness" (*holoklēria*) (cf. Acts 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:23; James 1:4)
  - 7. The concept of "without fault," "guiltless innocence" is conveyed by *amemptos* (cf. Luke 1:6; Phil. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Thess. 2:10; 3:13; 5:23)
  - 8. The concept of "not subject to blame" is conveyed by *amōmētos* (cf. 2 Pet. 3:14)
  - 9. The concept of "spotless," "unblemished" is often used in passages that have one of the above terms also (cf. 1 Tim. 6:14; James 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2 Pet. 3:14)
- D. The number of words in Hebrew and Greek which convey this concept shows its importance. God has provided our need through Christ and now calls on us to be like Him.

Believers are positionally, forensically declared "right," "just," "blameless" by the work of Christ. Now believers are to possess their position. "Walk in the light as He is in the light" (cf. 1 John 1:7). "Walk worthy of the calling" (cf. Eph. 4:1,17; 5:2,15). Jesus has restored the image of God. Intimate fellowship is now possible, but remember God wants a people who reflect His character, as His Son did, to a lost world (i.e., the nations). We are called to nothing less than holiness (cf. Matt. 5:20,48; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:13-16). God's holiness, not only legally, but existentially!

▣ "before the LORD" This phrase means "at the Tabernacle."

For "LORD" see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1.

**9:3 "Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying"** There is both a sacrifice for Aaron and his sons (Lev. 9:8) and a sacrifice for the people (Lev. 9:15-18).

**9:4 "an ox and a ram for peace offerings. . .for today the LORD shall appear to you"** The peace offering was a ;symbolic way of depicting having fellowship with YHWH. On this occasion YHWH would physically manifest Himself, probably through the *Shekinah* cloud, as He had done at the final erection of the Tabernacle in Exod. 40:34-38; Num. 9:15-23. The people and the priests each had to be prepared before He would appear to them. This was a sign of YHWH's acceptance.

**9:5 “stood before the Lord”** In light of Lev. 9:24, what does this VERB (BDB 763, KB 840, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*) imply? The *Qal* stem (#1, d) is used to present oneself before

1. human leaders
  - a. Joseph – Gen. 43:15
  - b. Pharaoh – Exod. 9:10
  - c. Moses – Num. 27:2
  - d. Eleazar – Num. 27:21
2. YHWH
  - a. Gen. 18:22; 19:27
  - b. Lev. 9:5
  - c. Deut. 4:10; 10:8,10; 19:17

It, therefore (depending on the context), can reflect

1. respect
2. worship
3. service

**9:6 “that the glory of the LORD may appear to you”** The *Shekinah* cloud symbolized the presence God had over the Tabernacle in Exod. 30:34-38 (cf. Exod. 29:43,45; Lev. 9:22-23; Num. 9:15-23), Special Topic: Glory (*kabod*, OT).

### SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (OT)

#### I. Its basic meaning

There are over twenty Hebrew words translated “glory” (*doxa*) by the LXX, but the most significant is *kabod* (BDB 458-459, KB 455-458). Its basic meaning is that which is heavy. It was a commercial term used in transacting purchases (i.e., scales). It came to have a wide semantic field where the concept of heavy developed into the weight, worth of persons, places, and things.

#### II. Used of YHWH

- A. It became a way of describing YHWH’s personal presence. It combined His power, majesty (i.e., transcendence) with His personhood and presence in physical reality (immanence).
- B. It denoted YHWH in creation, cf. Ps. 19:1; 29:3,9; 104:31
- C. It was used of His theophanies connected to the formation of His covenant people. He is the “glory of Israel,” cf. 1 Sam. 15:29
  1. the exodus from Egypt, cf. Num. 14:22 (predicted in Gen. 15:12-21)
  2. in the special cloud of glory that led and accompanied the people, cf. Exod 16:7,10
  3. the giving of His law on Mt. Sinai, cf. Exod. 24:16,17
  4. His acts of provision and judgment during the wilderness wandering period
    - a. initial rebellion related to the report of the twelve spies, cf. Num. 14:9-10
    - b. Moses’ intercession on their behalf, cf. Num. 14:20-21
    - c. Korah’s rebellion, cf. Num. 16:19
    - d. crisis over no water, cf. Num. 26:6
- D. Moses’ request to see YHWH, cf. Exod. 33:18-23
- E. It was used of YHWH Himself (i.e., His essence)
  1. 1 Chr. 29:11
  2. Ps. 106:20; Jer. 2:11; Hos. 4:7; Rom. 1:23

3. Isa. 42:8; 43:7; 48:11; 58:8; 60:1-2,19 (Rev. 21:23; 22:5)
  4. Zech. 2:5,10
- F. It was used in connection to YHWH's presence at/in the
1. Tabernacle, cf. Exod. 16:7,10; 29:43; 40:34-35; Lev. 9:6,23
  2. Temple, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:11; 2 Chr. 5:14; 7:1-3; Isa. 6:3; Hag. 2:3,9
  3. Ark of the Covenant, cf. 1 Sam. 4:22; Ps. 63:2; 78:61
- G. It was used of YHWH's kingship, cf. 1 Chr. 29:12-13; Ps. 24:7-10; 45:3
- H. It was used of YHWH's ethical nature (i.e., righteousness), cf. Ps. 29:3; 97:6; Isa. 42:8; 48:11; 58:8; Hab. 2:14
- III. Used of humans and nations
- A. human
1. parallel to "soul" (i.e., *nephesh*), cf. Gen. 49:6; Ps. 16:9; 108:1
  2. wealth, cf. Gen. 31:1; Ps. 49:16,17; Isa. 10:3; 61:6; 66:11-12
  3. honor, cf. Gen. 45:13; Ps. 8:6; Hag. 2:7
  4. reputation, cf. Job 19:9; 29:20; Ps. 4:2; 49:17
  5. splendor, cf. 1 Chr. 29:12,28; 2 Chr. 17:5; 18:13; 32:27
- B. nations
1. Egypt, cf.
  2. Ephraim, cf. Hos. 9:11
  3. Samaria, cf. Hos. 10:5
- C. kings
1. Ahasuerus, cf. Esther 1:4
  2. Israel, cf. Ps. 21:6
  3. Antiochus IV, cf. Dan. 11:39
- D. national armies
1. Assyria, cf. Isa. 8:7
  2. Israel, cf. Isa. 17:4
  3. Kedar, cf. Isa. 21:16
- IV. Used in description of the last days (eschatology)
- A. YHWH will return to His new temple, cf. Ezek. 43:2,4,5; 44:4
- B. YHWH will bring the world to Himself, cf. Isa. 40:5; 59:19; 60:1-3; 66:18-19
- C. YHWH will bring the "new" Jerusalem, cf. Isa. 66:10; Zech. 12:7
- V. The purpose of creation is to glorify YHWH
- A. created for His glory, cf. Isa. 43:7
- B. glory is due Him, cf. 1 Chr. 16:29
- C. sing/praise His glory, cf. Ps. 66:2; 96:8; 115:1
- D. all we do we do unto Him, for His glory, cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 5:22; 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:12
- E. first statement of the Westminster Shorter Catechism

**9:7 "Moses then said to Aaron"** This verse has five IMPERATIVES.

1. come near – BDB 897, KB 1132, *Qal* (special usage for the priests who approach YHWH by service in the Tabernacle)
- 2.-3. offer – lit. "do"/"make" – BDB793, KB 889, *Qal* (only priests could do this)

4.-5. make atonement – lit. “cover” – BDB 497, KB 493, *Piel*, see Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c

Notice these are not Moses’ words, but YHWH’s (i.e., the last phrase).



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, TEV,

JPSOA, NET,

Peshitta “for the people”

NJB “your family”

REB “your household”

LXX “your house”

The UBS Text Project, p. 172, gives “and for the people” a “B” rating (some doubt). There are several places where “for his household” does appear in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 16:6,11,17,24).

When all of Lev. 9:7 is read, the NASB option is best.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:8-11**

**<sup>8</sup>So Aaron came near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin offering which was for himself. <sup>9</sup>Aaron’s sons presented the blood to him; and he dipped his finger in the blood and put *some* on the horns of the altar, and poured out *the rest of* the blood at the base of the altar. <sup>10</sup>The fat and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver of the sin offering, he then offered up in smoke on the altar just as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>11</sup>The flesh and the skin, however, he burned with fire outside the camp.**

**9:8 “sin offering. . .burnt offering. . .peace offering”** We learn from Leviticus 1-7 that these particular types of sacrifices were often offered in a series. Here, we have the series of the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering. This seems to symbolize the order:

1. the sin offering to restore relationship with God
2. the burnt offering to commit oneself to God
3. the peace offering, where God symbolically ate and fellowshiped with the offerer

This first series was for the priesthood.

**9:9 “and poured *the rest of* the blood at the base of the altar”** From Lev. 4:5-7, we understand that this blood should have been taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled before the veil but, as of this point, the priests, including Aaron, had not entered the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle and, therefore, all of these procedures were performed at the altar of sacrifice at the door of the Tabernacle.

**9:10** As the blood (see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b) represented “life,” the fat represented health and prosperity. Both were uniquely given to YHWH alone.

▣ “on the altar” See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:12-14**

**<sup>12</sup>Then he slaughtered the burnt offering; and Aaron’s sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. <sup>13</sup>They handed the burnt offering to him in pieces, with the head, and he offered *them* up in smoke on the altar. <sup>14</sup>He also washed the entrails and the legs, and offered *them* up in smoke with the burnt offering on the altar.**

**9:12 “sprinkled”** See note at Lev. 1:5.

**9:13** See notes at Leviticus 1:12-14.

**9:14 “wash”** This VERB (BDB 934, KB 1220) is used of several types of ceremonial purification.

1. Aaron’s sons
  - a. priests – Exod. 29:4; lev. 8:6; 16:4,24,26,28; Num. 19:7-8
  - b. Levites – Num. 8:7,21
2. clothes
  - a. priests – Lev. 6:27
  - b. Israelites
    - (1) touch an unclean thing – Leviticus 11; 14; 17; Numbers 19
    - (2) involved in leprosy of some kind – Leviticus 13-14
3. sacrifices – Lev. 1:9,,13,14

Cleansing could involved

1. sacrifice
2. fire
3. water
4. temporal (?) separation

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:15-17**

**<sup>15</sup>Then he presented the people’s offering, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people, and slaughtered it and offered it for sin, like the first. <sup>16</sup>He also presented the burnt offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. <sup>17</sup>Next he presented the grain offering, and filled his hand with some of it and offered *it* up in smoke on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.**

**9:17 “filled his hand with some of it and offered *it* up in smoke on the altar”** Only a small portion of the grain offering was offered on the altar and the rest became food for the priests. The rabbis say that it was three fingers tall, or one handful. Here is another example of a small part representing the whole. This is true of

1. the Sabbath representing all of life
2. the tithe representing all of our resources
3. the firstfruits representing all of our produce
4. the firstborn representing all of our children

▣ **“besides the burnt offering of the morning”** This could refer to

1. the regular morning and evening sacrifices, called “the continual” (cf. Exod. 29:38-42; see NET, p. 231, #21)
2. more probably from this context, the offerings for Aaron and his sons, mentioned in Lev. 9:8-14

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:18-21**

**<sup>18</sup>Then he slaughtered the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings which was for the people; and Aaron’s sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. <sup>19</sup>As for the portions of fat from the ox and from the ram, the fat tail, and the *fat* covering, and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver, <sup>20</sup>they now placed the portions of fat on the breasts; and he offered them up in smoke on the altar. <sup>21</sup>But the breasts and the right thigh Aaron presented as a wave offering before the LORD, just as Moses had commanded.**



**9:20 “they”** This seems to refer to the sons of Aaron, and not Aaron himself. NJB, following the LXX, has “he.”

**9:21** The priests received back some meat from the sin offerings for their food (cf. Lev. 7:30-34). The LXX and Targum of Jonathan specify that the initial command was from YHWH (Lev. 9:7).

▣ **“wave offering”** See note at Lev. 8:27,29.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:22-24**

**<sup>22</sup>Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. <sup>23</sup>Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. <sup>24</sup>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.**

**9:22** The act of lifting the hands can have several connotations.

1. oath taking – Gen. 14:22; Exod. 6:8; Num. 14:30; Ps. 106:26; Ezek. 20:5-6
2. blessing – Lev. 9:22; Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 134:2; 1 Tim. 2:8
3. rebellion – 2 Sam. 20:21 (“hand” as ANE symbol of power; see Special Topic: Hand)
4. prayer – Lam. 2:19; for YHWH to act – Ps. 10:12; 17:7
5. praise – Ps. 119:148

**SPECIAL TOPIC: HAND (ILLUSTRATED FROM EZEKIEL)**

The word “hand” (BDB 388, KB 386) has several connotations and usages.

1. literal (i.e., hand of a human)
  - a. symbol of the entire person, Ezek. 3:18; 18:8,17; 33:6,8
  - b. symbol of human weakness, Ezek. 7:17,27; 21:7; 22:14
  - c. symbol of foreign enemies, Ezek. 7:21; 11:9; 16:39; 21:31; 23:9,28; 28:10; 30:12; 34:27; 38:12; 39:23
  - d. literal hand, Ezek. 8:11; 12:7; 16:11; 37:17,19,20
  - e. symbol of false leaders’ power, Ezek. 13:21,22,23; 34:10
  - f. symbol of a nation, Ezek. 23:31,37,42,45; 25:14; 27:15; 28:9; 30:10,22,24,25; 31:11; 39:3
2. anthropomorphic of deity
  - a. YHWH’s giving of revelation, Ezek. 1:3; 3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1 (2:9 is other imagery of revelation – scroll on a hand)
  - b. YHWH’s power in judgment, Ezek. 6:14; 13:9; 14:9,13; 16:27; 20:33; 25:7,13,16; 35:3; 39:21
  - c. YHWH Himself (His personal Presence), Ezek. 20:22
  - d. YHWH’s power to deliver, Ezek. 20:34 (possibly key usage from Exodus, cf. 3:20; 4:17; 6:1; 7:19; 13:3)
3. anthropomorphic of Cherubim, Ezek. 1:8; 8:3; 10:7,8,12,21
4. anthropomorphic of destroying angels, Ezek. 9:1-2; 21:11
5. symbol of a pledge or oath, Ezek. 17:18; 20:5 (twice), 6,15,23,28; 36:7; 44:12; 47:14

6. symbol of joy, Ezek. 25:6
7. anthropomorphic of an angel, Ezek. 40:3,5; 47:3

▣ **“Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them”** The lifting of the hands and eyes toward heaven is the posture of Jewish prayer in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The exact content of Aaron’s blessing is uncertain. Many of us assume that the Aaronic blessing, found in Num. 6:22-27, may have been the core of the kind of blessing given here (note, “May His face shine upon you,” i.e., the appearance of the *Shekinah* cloud).

**9:23 “Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting”** This is the first time that they had entered the inner shrine. Notice that at this point, the glory of the Lord appeared to all of the people (cf. Exod. 14:19; 19:18).

**9:24 “Then the fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering”** It is obvious that the *Shekinah* cloud, which first appears in Exodus, was a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. The fire (the symbol of the presence of YHWH) came out from the cloud (or holy of holies) and totally consumed the offerings on the altar. It was God’s way of saying that He affirmed what they had done. We find this action several times in the Old Testament (cf. Num. 11:3; 16:35; Jdgs. 6:21; 1 Kgs. 18:38; 2 Chr. 7:1). This will be a foreshadowing of the tragedy that will occur in Leviticus 10.

▣ **“and fell on their faces”** This was a physical symbol of worship and subservience in the presence of Deity (i.e., a theophany, like Exodus 19).

The AB, p. 591, makes the point that “fell on their faces” may denote a kneeling, while “prostrate oneself” may refer to being flat on the ground (cf. Jos. 5:14; 1 Sam. 20:41; 2 Sam. 9:2; 14:22; Job 1:20; Ruth 2:10, where the two terms occur in a sequence).

▣ **“they shouted”** This VERB (BDB 943, KB 1247) is used of

1. joy – Job 38:7; Ps. 35:27; Isa. 12:6; 24:14; 35:6; 42:11; 44:23; 49:13; 54:1; Jer. 31:7; Zeph. 3:14
2. distress – Isa. 65:14; Lam. 2:19
3. here, of awe

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is “the glory of the LORD”?
2. Why was its appearance so theologically significant?
3. What does the “horns of the altar” (Lev. 9:9) signify?
4. Why is the Aaronic blessing of Num. 6:24-27 possibly part of the blessing here?
5. How does Lev. 9:24 introduce chapter 10?

# LEVITICUS 10

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
The Sin of Nadab and Abihu	The Profane Fire of Nadab and Abihu	The Fate of Nadab and Abihu	The Sin of Nadab and Abihu	Complementary Legislation
10:1-3 (3)	10:1-3 (3)	10:1-3 (3)	10:1-3	a. A Lesson in Exact Obedience 10:1-3 (3b)
10:4-7	10:4-7	10:4-7	10:4-5	b. Removal of Bodies 10:4-5
10:8-11	10:8-11	10:8-11	10:6-7 Rules for Priests	c. Rules for Priestly Mourning 10:6-7 d. Wine Forbidden
10:12-15	10:12-15	10:12-15	10:8-11	e. The Priests' Portion in Offerings 10:8 10:9-11
10:16-20	10:16-20	10:16-20	10:16-18 10:19-20	f. A Special Regulation Concerning Sacrifice for Sin 10:12-13 10:14-15

READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup>And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying,

‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy,  
And before all the people I will be honored.’”

So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

**10:1 “Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron”** These sons had accompanied Moses and Aaron to Mount Sinai (cf. Exod. 24:1). They had known the holiness of God, yet they disobeyed His commands. Apparently they were intoxicated (cf. Lev. 10:8-11).



NASB, TEV,

JPSOA “firepan”

NKJV, NRSV,

NJB, REB “censer”

The BDB (367, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 924) gives several usages of this root.

1. snuff-holder of gold – Exod. 25:88; 37:23; Num. 4:9
2. bronze fire-pans to be used at the altar of sacrifice – Exod. 27:3; 38:3
3. gold fire-pans – 1 Kgs. 7:50; 2 Kgs. 25:16; 2 Chr. 4:22; Jer. 52:19
4. censer – Lev. 10:1; 16:12; Num. 16:6,17,18; 17:2,3,4,11

The KB (KB 572) gives three usages.

1. scuttle for carrying burning coals or ashes – Exod. 27:3; 38:3; Lev. 10:1; 1 Kgs. 7:50; 2 Kgs. 25:15; 2 Chr. 4:22; Jer. 52:19
2. container for embers used for incense offering – Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:6,17,18; 17:2,4,11
3. small pan of gold – Exod. 25:38; 37:23; Num. 4:9,14

▣ **“took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them”** There has been much speculation about exactly what these young priests did that was inappropriate.

1. should have been unlit coals (Jewish Study Bible, p. 227)
2. they took coals from the wrong place
3. they usurped the place of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement
4. they put improper incense in their firepans (cf. Exod. 30:1-10)
5. they used the wrong firepans
6. because of Lev. 10:9 and later Jewish tradition, that they were intoxicated
7. it was not out of a motive of awe and respect
8. not at the appropriate time and method

We are not sure of the motives of these young men. It could have been possible that they wanted to worship God and were overcome with the presence of God in the *Shekinah* cloud, but it seems that because of Lev. 10:9-10 that there was a negative element in their attitudes and deeds. It specifically says that they offered “strange fire,” which would tend to confirm the interpretation that they took the coals from the wrong altar, possibly from the fire that was used to boil the meat mentioned in Lev. 8:31. Whatever the reason, God’s judgment fell on these two young priests for not following His explicit procedures.

**10:2 “fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD”** Whatever the motive, whatever the reason, the same fire that came out in Lev. 9:24 and consumed the offering is the exact same fire that came out and consumed (same VERB as Lev. 9:24) these young men (see Special Topic: Fire). This fire could have been

1. from the *Shekinah* cloud
2. from the inner shrine
3. from the altar of sacrifice.

Fire was one method of

1. cleansing
2. judgment

## SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRE (BDB 77, KB 92)

Fire has both positive and negative connotations in Scripture.

### A. Positive

1. warms (cf. Isa. 44:15; John 18:18)
2. lights (cf. Isa. 50:11; Matt. 25:1-13)
3. cooks (cf. Exod. 12:8; Isa. 44:15-16; John 21:9)
4. purifies (cf. Num. 31:22-23; Pro. 17:3; Isa. 1:25; 6:6-8; Jer. 6:29; Mal. 3:2-3)
5. God's holiness (cf. Gen. 15:17; Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Ezek. 1:27; Heb. 12:29)
6. God's leadership (cf. Exod. 13:21; Num. 14:14; 1 Kgs. 18:24)
7. God's empowering (cf. Acts 2:3)
8. God's protection (cf. Zech. 2:5)

### B. Negative

1. burns (cf. Jos. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Matt. 22:7)
2. destroys (cf. Gen. 19:24; Lev. 10:1-2)
3. anger (cf. Num. 21:28; Isa. 10:16; Zech. 12:6)
4. punishment (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Jos. 7:15)
5. false eschatological sign (cf. Rev. 13:13)

### C. God's anger against sin is often expressed in fire imagery

1. His anger burns (cf. Hos. 8:5; Zeph. 3:8)
2. He pours out fire (cf. Nah. 1:6)
3. eternal fire (cf. Jer. 15:14; 17:4; Matt. 25:41; Jude v. 7)
4. eschatological judgment (cf. Matt. 3:10; 5:22; 13:40; John 15:6; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2 Pet. 3:7-10; Rev. 8:7; 16:8; 20:14-15)

### D. Fire often appears in theophanies.

1. Gen. 15:17
2. Exod. 3:2
3. Exod. 19:18
4. Ps. 18:7-15; 29:7
5. Ezek. 1:4,27; 10:2
6. Heb. 1:7; 12:29

### E. Like so many metaphors in the Bible (i.e., leaven, lion) fire can be a blessing or a curse depending on the context.

**10:3 “Then Moses said to Aaron”** Moses immediately commanded (IMPERFECTS used as JUSSIVES) Aaron not to show any signs of mourning (see Special Topic: Grieving Rites; cf. Lev. 10:6). Any mourning rites that Aaron would have shown would have been seen as his consternation over God's justice. Moses ordered (two IMPERATIVES) some other relatives to remove the bodies (Lev. 10:4) and this would have made them ceremonially unclean and they would have had to remain outside the camp for a designated time. Moses assured Aaron that the congregation would grieve over his sons (cf. Lev. 10:6).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: GRIEVING RITES

The Israelites expressed sorrow for the death of a loved one and for personal repentance, as well as corporate crimes, in several ways:

1. tear outer robe, Gen. 37:29,34; 44:13; Jdgs. 11:35; 2 Sam. 1:11; 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Job 1:20
2. put on sackcloth, Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Jer. 48:37
3. take off shoes, 2 Sam. 15:30; Isa. 20:3
4. put hands on head, 2 Sam. 13:19; Jer. 2:37
5. put dust on head, Jos. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Neh. 9:1
6. sit on the ground, Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 26:16 (lie on the ground, 2 Sam. 12:16); Isa. 47:1
7. beat the breast, 1 Sam. 25:1; 2 Sam. 11:26; Nah. 2:7
8. cut the body, Deut. 14:1; Jer. 16:6; 48:37
9. fast, 2 Sam. 1:12; 12:16,21; 1 Kgs. 21:27; 1 Chr. 10:12; Neh. 1:4
10. chant a lament, 2 Sam. 1:17; 3:31; 2 Chr. 35:25
11. baldness (hair pulled out or shaved), Jer. 48:37
12. cut beards short, Jer. 48:37
13. cover head or face, 2 Sam. 15:30; 19:4

These were outward signs of inner feelings.

▣ Notice the two *Niphal* IMPERFECTS related to how YHWH was to be viewed/treated.

1. by the priests – YHWH will show Himself holy (i.e., His actions toward Aaron’s two oldest sons); see Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c
2. to the congregation – YHWH will be honored/glorified; see Special Topic: Glory (*kabod*, OT) at Lev. 9:6

The issue of worship is the unique character of Israel’s God. See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel’s God (OT).

## SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL’S GOD (OT)

1. Compassionate (BDB 933, KB 1216)
  - Exod. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; 2 Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
2. Gracious (BDB 337, KB 333) – Exod. 34:6; 2 Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
3. Slow to anger (BDB74 CONSTRUCT BDB 60)
  - Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
4. Abounding in steadfast love (BDB 912 I CONSTRUCT BDB 338)
  - Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
5. Faithful (or “truth,” BDB 54, KB 63; see Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness in the OT) – Exod. 34:6; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 86:15; Isa. 49:7; Jer. 42:5
6. Abundant forgiveness (BDB 699, KB 757) – Neh. 9:17
7. Did not forsake them (BDB 736 I, KB 806) – Neh. 9:17,31
8. Repents of evil (BDB 636, KB 688, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE + BDB 948, cf. Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2)

- |                                       |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 9. The great God (BDB 42, 152)        | – | Neh. 1:5; 9:32  |
| 10. Great and terrible (BDB 152, 431) | – | Neh. 1:5; 4:14; 9:32  |
| 11. Keeps covenant (BDB 1036, 136)    | – | Neh. 1:5; 9:32  |
| 12. Steadfast love (BDB 338)          | – | Neh. 1:5; 9:32 (see Special Topic: Lovingkindness [ <i>hesed</i> ]) |
- These all describe God's feelings toward His people, Israel. His character does not change (cf. Mal. 3:6); therefore, these also apply to all faithful followers (i.e., 2 Cor. 1:3).

▣ **“kept silent”** This VERB (BDB 198 I, KB 226, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*; NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 972) has three connotations.

1. be silent
2. be still (in speech and motion)
3. dumb struck (fear or awe, LXX)

It is hard to know which of these is intended (see Exod. 15:16; Job 29:21; 31:34; Ps. 4:4; 30:12; 31:18; 35:15; 37:7; 62:6; Isa. 23:2; Jer. 8:14; 48:2; Ezek. 24:17; Amos 5:13).

There is another possible root (BDB 199 II), which means “wail” or “lament” (cf. Isa. 23:2; NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 973).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:4-7**

<sup>4</sup>Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, “Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.”  
<sup>5</sup>So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. <sup>6</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the LORD has brought about. <sup>7</sup>You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the LORD's anointing oil is upon you.” So they did according to the word of Moses.

**10:4** Moses calls on some of his fellow Levites (i.e., tribe of Levi), who were his and Aaron's uncle's children (their cousins) to remove the burned bodies of Aaron's oldest two sons. They carried them outside the camp (cf. Lev. 4:12). Their presence polluted the Tabernacle.

This removal (i.e., touching dead bodies) would have made them ceremonially unclean. It is possible that the mentioning of “in their tunic” is meant to inform the reader that they did not touch the dead bodies themselves directly and were not considered “unclean.” Being “clean” or “unclean” was very important (cf. Lev. 10:10).

**10:6 “that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation”** This expresses the Hebrew concept of “corporality.” Examples:

1. Adam/Eve sinned and all humanity fell (cf. Rom. 5:12-21)
2. Achan sinned and the Israeli army lost a battle and some soldiers dies (Joshua 7)
3. David's sin with Bathsheba affected his entire family for generations
4. Jesus died as a substitute for all human sin (i.e., Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; Romans 5:12-21; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

**10:7** Aaron and his sons were set aside to uniquely “draw near” to YHWH in the service to the Tabernacle. This special office required special care.

## NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:8-11

<sup>8</sup>The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—<sup>10</sup>and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, <sup>11</sup>and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.”

**10:8 “The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying”** The rabbis say that this is the first time that Aaron is addressed directly by YHWH and the He was pleased with him because he did not grieve over the death of his sons.

**10:9 “Do not drink wine or strong drink”** Notice that this is not a prohibition (JUSSIVE) from wine entirely (cf. Deut. 14:26) but while on duty. This same type of instruction is given to the leaders of the church in 1 Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:2; 2:3. Wine is not excluded completely but an addition to wine, and certainly not at inappropriate times such as while ministering to the Lord. See Special Topic: Alcohol – Alcoholism.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

### I. Biblical Terms

#### A. Old Testament

1. *Yayin* – This is the general term for wine (BDB 406, KB 409), which is used 141 times. The etymology is uncertain because it is not from a Hebrew root. It always means fermented fruit juice, usually grape. Some typical passages are Gen. 9:21; Exod. 29:40; Num. 15:5,10.
2. *Tirosh* – This is “new wine” (BDB 440, KB 1727). Because of climatic conditions of the Near East, fermentation started as soon as six hours after extracting the juice. This term refers to wine in the process of fermenting. For some typical passages see Deut. 12:17; 18:4; Isa. 62:8-9; Hos. 4:11.
3. *Asis* – This is obviously alcoholic beverages (“sweet wine,” BDB 779, KB 860, e.g. Joel 1:5; Isa. 49:26).
4. *Sekar* – This is the term “strong drink” (BDB 1016, KB 1500). The Hebrew root is used in the term “drunk” or “drunkard.” It had something added to it to make it more intoxicating. It is parallel to *yayin* (cf. Pro. 20:1; 31:6; Isa. 28:7).

#### B. New Testament

1. *Oinos* – the Greek equivalent of *yayin*
2. *Neos oinos* (new wine) – the Greek equivalent of *tirosh* (cf. Mark 2:22).
3. *Gleuchos vinos* (sweet wine, *asis*) – wine in the early stages of fermentation (cf. Acts 2:13).

### II. Biblical Usage

#### A. Old Testament

1. Wine is a gift of God (Gen. 27:28; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; Hos. 2:8-9; Joel 2:19,24; Amos 9:13; Zech. 10:7).
2. Wine is a part of a sacrificial offering (Exod. 29:40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:7,10; 28:14; Deut. 14:26; Jdgs. 9:13).
3. Wine is used as medicine (2 Sam. 16:2; Pro. 31:6-7).



4. Wine can be a real problem (Noah – Gen. 9:21; Lot – Gen. 19:33,35; Nabal – 1 Sam. 25:36; Uriah – 2 Sam. 11:13; Amnon – 2 Sam. 13:28; Elah – 1 Kgs. 16:9; Benhadad – 1 Kgs. 20:12; Rulers – Amos 6:6; and Ladies – Amos 4).
5. Wine can be abused (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isa. 5:11,22; 19:14; 28:7-8; Hosea 4:11).
6. Wine was prohibited to certain groups (priests on duty, Lev. 10:9; Ezek. 44:21; Nazirites, Numbers 6; and rulers, Pro. 31:4-5; Isa. 56:11-12; Hosea 7:5).
7. Wine is used in an eschatological setting (Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18; Zech. 9:17).

#### B. Interbiblical

1. Wine in moderation is very helpful (Ecclesiasticus 31:27-33).
2. The rabbis say, “Wine is the greatest of all medicine, where wine is lacking, then drugs are needed.” (BB 58b).

#### C. New Testament

1. Jesus changed a large quantity of water into wine (John 2:1-11).
2. Jesus drank wine (Matt. 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34; 22:17ff).
3. Peter accused of drunkenness on “new wine” at Pentecost (Acts 2:13).
4. Wine can be used as medicine (Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; 1 Tim. 5:23).
5. Leaders are not to be abusers. This does not mean total abstainers (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7; 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:3).
6. Wine used in eschatological settings (Matthew 22:1ff; Rev. 19:9).
7. Drunkenness is deplored (Matt. 24:49; Luke 12:45; 21:34; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 13:13-14).

### III. Theological Insight

#### A. Dialectical tension

1. Wine is the gift of God.
2. Drunkenness is a major problem.
3. Believers in some cultures must limit their freedoms for the sake of the gospel (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; 1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14).

#### B. Tendency to go beyond given bounds

1. God is the source of all good things.
  - a. food – Mark 7:19; Luke 11:41; 1 Cor. 10:25-26
  - b. all things clean – Rom. 14:14,20; 1 Tim. 4:4
  - c. all things lawful – 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23
  - d. all things pure – Titus 1:15
2. Fallen mankind has abused all of God’s gifts by taking them beyond God-given bounds.

#### C. Abuse is in us, not in things. There is nothing evil in the physical creation (see B. 1 above).

### IV. First Century Jewish Culture and Fermentation

- A. Fermentation begins very soon, approximately 6 hours after the grape is crushed.
- B. Jewish tradition says that when a slight foam appeared on the surface (sign of fermentation), it is liable to the wine-tithe (*Ma aseroth* 1:7). It was called “new wine” or “sweet wine.”
- C. The primary violent fermentation was complete after one week.
- D. The secondary fermentation took about 40 days. At this state it is considered “aged wine” and could be offered on the altar (*Edhuyyoth* 6:1).

- E. Wine that had rested on its lees (old wine) was considered good, but had to be strained well before use.
- F. Wine was considered to be properly aged usually after one year of fermentation. Three years was the longest period of time that wine could be safely stored. It was called “old wine” and had to be diluted with water.
- G. Only in the last 100 years with a sterile environment and chemical additives has fermentation been postponed. The ancient world could not stop the natural process of fermentation.

V. Closing Statements

- A. Be sure your experience, theology, and biblical interpretation do not depreciate Jesus and first century Jewish/Christian culture! They were obviously not total-abstainers.
- B. I am not advocating the social use of alcohol. However, many have overstated the Bible’s position on this subject and now claim superior righteousness based on a cultural/denominational bias.
- C. For me, Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10 have provided insight and guidelines based on love and respect for fellow believers and the spread of the gospel in our culture, not personal freedom or judgmental criticism. If the Bible is the only source for faith and practice, then maybe we must all rethink this issue.
- D. If we push total abstinence as God’s will, what do we imply about Jesus, as well as those modern cultures that regularly use wine (e.g., Europe, Israel, Argentina)?

**10:10 “so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean”** Notice that the priest was to have certain responsibilities for (1) judging (i.e., Deut. 17:8-9) and (2) discerning of diseases. If he was intoxicated, his ability to make true judgments and discernment would be greatly hindered.

For modern people it is important to see the range of sacred – secular (see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1005-1006, #7).

1. everything was either holy or common
2. something could be common yet still it must be determined if it was clean (read all of rom. 14:1-15:13). Some people of faith are weak, even superstitious!

**10:11** Part of the job of the sons of Aaron was to be teachers of the people (i.e., Deut. 24:8). This task later fell to the local Levites.

Notice the phrase “all the statutes.” This is very similar to the Great Commission of Matt. 28:20. A faith relationship with God involves

1. repentance (see Special Topic: Repentance in the OT)
2. faith (see Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness in the OT)
3. obedience (see Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d)
4. worship (see Special Topic: Worship)
5. perseverance (see Special Topic: Perseverance)

For “statutes” see Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE (OT)**

This concept is crucial but difficult to define. Most of us have a definition which comes from our denominational affiliation. However, usually a “set” theological definition is imposed on several Hebrew (and Greek) words which do not specifically imply this “set” definition. It must be remembered that NT

authors (except Luke) were Hebrew thinkers using Koine Greek terms, so the place to start is the Hebrew terms themselves, of which there are primarily two.

1. *nacham* ( BDB 636, KB 688)
2. *shub* ( BDB 996, KB 1427)

The first, *nacham*, which originally seems to have meant “to draw a deep breath,” is used in several senses.

- a. “rest” or “comfort” (e.g., Gen. 5:29; 24:67; 27:42; 37:35; 38:12; 50:21; often used in names, cf. 2 Kgs. 15:14; 1 Chr. 4:19; Neh. 1:1; 7:7; Nahum 1:1)
- b. “grieved” (e.g., Gen. 6:6,7)
- c. “changed mind” (e.g., Exod. 13:17; 32:12,14; Num. 23:19; Job 42:5-6)
- d. “compassion” (e.g., Deut. 32:36)

Notice that all of these involve deep emotion! Here is the key: deep feelings that lead to action. This change of action is often directed at other persons, but also toward God. It is this change of attitude and action toward God that infuses this term with such theological significance. But here care must be exercised. God is said to “repent” (cf. Gen. 6:6,7; Exod. 32:14; Jdgs. 2:18; 1 Sam. 15:11,35; Ps. 106:45), but this does not result from sorrow over sin or error, but a literary way of showing God’s compassion and care (cf. Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 110:4; Jer. 4:27-28; Ezek. 24:14). Due punishment for sin and rebellion is forgiven if the sinner truly turns away from his/her/their sin and turns to God. It is a reorientation of life.

The second term, *shub*, means “to turn” (turn from, turn back, turn to). The VERB *shub* (BDB 996, KB 1427), basically means “to turn back” or “return.” It can be used of

1. turning from God, Num. 14:43; Jos. 22:16,18,23,29; Jdgs. 2:19; 8:33; 1 Sam. 15:11; 1 Kgs. 9:6; Jer. 3:19; 8:4
2. turning to God, 1 Kgs. 8:33,48; 2 Chr. 7:14; 15:4; 30:9; Ps. 51:13; 116:7; Isa. 6:10; 10:21,22; 31:6; Jer. 3:7,12,14,22; 4:1; 5:3; Hos. 3:5; 5:4; 6:1; 7:10,16; 11:5; 14:1,2; Amos 4:6,8,9,10,11 (notice esp. Jeremiah 7 and Amos 4)
3. YHWH initially telling Isaiah that Judah would not/could not repent (cf. Isa. 6:10), but not for the first time in the book, He calls on them to return to Him.

Repentance is not so much an emotion as it is an attitude toward God. It is a reorientation of life from self to Him. It denotes a willingness to change and be changed. It is not the complete cessation of sin, but a daily cessation of known rebellion! It is a reversal of the self-centered results of the Fall of Genesis 3. It denotes that the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27), though damaged, has been restored! Fellowship with God by fallen humans is possible again.

Repentance in the OT primarily means “change of action,” while “repentance” in the NT primarily means “change of mind” (see Special Topic: Repentance [NT]). Both of these are necessary for true biblical repentance. It is also necessary to realize that repentance is both an initial act and an ongoing process. The initial act can be seen in Mark 1:15; Acts 3:16 and 19; 20:21, while the ongoing process can be seen in 1 John 1:9; Revelation 2 and 3. Repentance is not an option (cf. Luke 13:3,5)!

If it is true that the two covenant requirements are “repentance” and “faith” (e.g., Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:4,15; 2:17; Luke 3:3,8; 5:32; 13:3,5; 15:7; 17:3), then *nacham* refers to the intense feelings of recognizing one’s sin and turning from it, while *shub* would refer to the turning from sin and then turning to God (one example of these two spiritual actions is Amos 4:6-11, “you have not returned to Me” [five times] and Amos 5:4,6,14, “seek Me. . . seek the Lord. . . seek good and not evil”).

The first great example of the power of repentance is David’s sin with Bathsheba (cf. 2 Samuel 12; Psalm 32,51). There were continuing consequences for David, his family, and Israel, but David was restored to fellowship with God! Even wicked Manasseh can repent and be forgiven (cf. 2 Chr. 33:12-13).

Both of these terms are used in parallel in Ps. 90:13. There must be a recognition of sin and a purposeful, personal turning from it, as well as a desire to seek God and His righteousness (cf. Isa. 1:16-20). Repentance has a cognitive aspect, a personal aspect, and a moral aspect. All three are required, both to start a new relationship with God and to maintain the new relationship. The deep emotion of regret turns into an abiding devotion to God and for God!

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: BELIEVE, TRUST, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### I. Opening Statement

It needs to be stated that the use of this theological concept, so crucial to the NT, is not as clearly defined in the OT. It is surely there, but demonstrated in key selected passages and persons.

The OT blends

- A. the individual and the community
- B. the personal encounter and covenant obedience

Faith is both personal encounter and daily lifestyle! It is easier to describe in a person than in a lexical form (i.e., word study). This personal aspect is best illustrated in

- A. Abraham and his seed
- B. David and Israel

These men met/encountered God and their lives were permanently changed (not perfect lives, but continuing faith). Testing revealed weaknesses and strengths of their faith encounter with God, but the intimate, trusting relationship continued through time! It was tested and refined, but it continued as evidenced by their devotion and lifestyle.

### II. Main root used

#### A. אָמַן (BDB 52)

##### 1. VERB

- a. *Qal* stem – to support, to nourish (i.e., 2 Kgs. 10:1,5; Esther 2:7, the non-theological usage)
- b. *Niphal* stem – to make sure or firm, to establish, to confirm, to be faithful or trustworthy
  - (1) of men, Isa. 8:2; 53:1; Jer. 40:14
  - (2) of things, Isa. 22:23
  - (3) of God, Deut. 7:9; Isa. 49:7; Jer. 42:5
- c. *Hiphil* stem – to stand firm, to believe, to trust
  - (1) Abraham believed God, Gen. 15:6
  - (2) the Israelites in Egypt believed, Exod. 4:31; 14:31 (negated in Deut. 1:32)
  - (3) Israelites believed YHWH spoke through Moses, Exod. 19:9; Ps. 106:12,24
  - (4) Ahaz did not trust in God, Isa 7:9
  - (5) whoever believes in it/him, Isa. 28:16
  - (6) believe truths about God, Isa. 43:10-12

##### 2. NOUN (MASCULINE) – faithfulness (i.e., Deut. 32:20; Isa. 25:1; 26:2)

##### 3. ADVERB – truly, verily, I agree, may it be so (cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 1 Kgs. 1:36; 1 Chr. 16:36; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 11:5; 28:6). This is the liturgical use of “amen” in the OT and NT.

- B. אָמָה (BDB 54) FEMININE NOUN, firmness, faithfulness, truth
  1. of men, Isa. 10:20; 42:3; 48:1
  2. of God, Exod. 34:6; Ps. 117:2; Isa. 38:18,19; 61:8
  3. of truth, Deut. 32:4; 1 Kgs. 22:16; Ps. 33:4; 98:3; 100:5; 119:30; Jer. 9:5; Zech. 8:16
- C. הַגִּוּמָה (BDB 53), firmness, steadfastness, fidelity
  1. of hands, Exod. 17:12
  2. of times, Isa. 33:6
  3. of humans, Jer. 5:3; 7:28; 9:2
  4. of God, Ps. 40:11; 88:11; 89:1,2,5,8; 119:138

### III. Paul's use of this OT concept

- A. Paul bases his new understanding of YHWH and the OT on his personal encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9; 22; 26).
- B. He found OT support for his new understanding in two key OT passages which use the root אָמָה.
  1. Gen. 15:6 – Abram's personal encounter initiated by God (Genesis 12) resulted in an obedient life of faith (Genesis 12-22). Paul alludes to this in Romans 4 and Galatians 3.
  2. Isa. 28:16 – those who believe in it (i.e., God's tested and firmly placed cornerstone) will never be
    - a. Rom. 9:33, "put to shame" or "be disappointed"
    - b. Rom. 10:11, same as above
  3. Hab. 2:4 – those who know the faithful God should live faithful lives (cf. Jer. 7:28). Paul uses this text in Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11 (also note Heb. 10:38).

### IV. Peter's use of the OT concept

- A. Peter combines
  1. Isa. 8:14 – 1 Pet. 2:8 (stumbling block)
  2. Isa. 28:16 – 1 Pet. 2:6 (cornerstone)
  3. Ps. 118:22 – 1 Pet 2:7 (rejected stone)
- B. He turns the unique language that describes Israel, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" from
  1. Deut. 10:15; Isa. 43:21
  2. Isa. 61:6; 66:21
  3. Exod. 19:6; Deut. 7:6
 and now uses it for the church's faith in Christ

### V. John's use of the concept

- A. Its NT usage
 

The term "believe" is from the Greek term *pisteuō*, which can also be translated "believe," "faith," or "trust." For example, the NOUN does not occur in the Gospel of John, but the VERB is used often. In John 2:23-25 there is uncertainty as to the genuineness of the crowd's commitment to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Other examples of this superficial use of the term "believe" are in John 8:31-59 and Acts 8:13, 18-24. True biblical faith is more than an initial response. It must be followed by a process of discipleship (cf. Matt. 13:20-22,31-32).
- B. Its use with PREPOSITIONS
  1. *eis* means "into." This unique construction emphasizes believers putting their trust/faith in Jesus

- a. into His name (John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 1 John 5:13)
- b. into Him (John 2:11; 3:15,18; 4:39; 6:40; 7:5,31,39,48; 8:30; 9:36; 10:42; 11:45, 48; 12:37,42; Matt. 18:6; Acts 10:43; Phil. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:8)
- c. into Me (John 6:35; 7:38; 11:25,26; 12:44,46; 14:1,12; 16:9; 17:20)
- d. into the Son (John 3:36; 9:35; 1 John 5:10)
- e. into Jesus (John 12:11; Acts 19:4; Gal. 2:16)
- f. into Light (John 12:36)
- g. into God (John 14:1)
2. *ev* means “in” as in John 3:15; Mark 1:15; Acts 5:14
3. *epi* means “in” or “upon,” as in Matt. 27:42; Acts 9:42; 11:17; 16:31; 22:19; Rom. 4:5, 24; 9:33; 10:11; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 2:6
4. the DATIVE CASE with no PREPOSITION as in Gal. 3:6; Acts 18:8; 27:25; 1 John 3:23; 5:10
5. *hoti*, which means “believe that,” gives content as to what to believe
  - a. Jesus is the Holy One of God (John 6:69)
  - b. Jesus is the I Am (John 8:24)
  - c. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him (John 10:38)
  - d. Jesus is the Messiah (John 11:27; 20:31)
  - e. Jesus is the Son of God (John 11:27; 20:31)
  - f. Jesus was sent by the Father (John 11:42; 17:8,21)
  - g. Jesus is one with the Father (John 14:10-11)
  - h. Jesus came from the Father (John 16:27,30)
  - i. Jesus identified Himself in the covenant name of the Father, “I Am” (John 8:24; 13:19)
  - j. We will live with Him (Rom. 6:8)
  - k. Jesus died and rose again (1 Thess. 4:14)

## VI. Conclusion

- A. Biblical faith is the human response to a divine word/promise. God always initiates (i.e., John 6:44,65), but part of this divine communication is the need for humans to respond.
  1. repentance
  2. faith/trust
  3. obedience
  4. perseverance
- B. Biblical faith is
  1. a personal relationship (initial faith)
  2. an affirmation of biblical truth (faith in God’s revelation, i.e., Scripture)
  3. an appropriate obedient response to it (daily faithfulness)

Biblical faith is not a ticket to heaven or an insurance policy. It is a personal relationship. This is the purpose of creation, humans being made in the image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) of God. The issue is “intimacy.” God desires fellowship, not a certain theological standing! But fellowship with a holy God demands that the children demonstrate the “family” characteristics (i.e., holiness, cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). The Fall (cf. Genesis 3) affected our ability to respond appropriately. Therefore, God acted on our behalf (cf. Ezek. 36:27-38), giving us a “new heart” and “new spirit,” which enables us through faith and repentance to fellowship with Him and obey Him!

All three are crucial. All three must be maintained. The goal is to know God (both Hebrew and Greek senses) and to reflect His character in our lives. The goal of faith is not heaven someday, but Christlikeness every day!

- C. Human faithfulness is the result (NT), not the basis (OT) for a relationship with God: human's faith in His faithfulness; human's trust in His trustworthiness. The heart of the NT view of salvation is that humans must respond initially and continually to the initiating grace and mercy of God, demonstrated in Christ. He has loved, He has sent, He has provided; we must respond in faith and faithfulness (cf. Eph. 2:8-9 and 10)!

The faithful God wants a faithful people to reveal Himself to a faithless world and bring them to personal faith in Him.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: WORSHIP

### I. Introduction

#### A. Some important questions

1. What is worship?
2. When and how did it begin?
3. What is its content?
4. Who participates?
5. Where and when is it done?

- B. These questions will form the outline for our study. It must be remembered that there is no definitive answer to these questions, but there are scriptural implications and historical developments.

### II. What is Worship?

- A. The English term comes from a Saxon term, "weorthscipe," which denoted someone to whom honor and respect were due.

#### B. The major OT terms are:

1. *'Abodah*, which is from a Hebrew root that means "to serve" or "to labor." It is usually translated "the service of God."
2. *Hishtawah*, which is from a Hebrew root that means "to bow" or "to prostrate oneself" (cf. Exod. 4:30).

#### C. The major NT terms follow the Hebrew terms.

1. For *'abodah* there is *latreia*, which is the state of a hired laborer or slave.
2. For *hishtawah* there is *proskuneo*, which means "to prostrate oneself," "to adore," or "to worship."

#### D. Notice that there are two areas which worship impacts.

1. our attitude of respect
2. our lifestyle actions

These two must go together or else major problems result (cf. Deut. 11:13).

### III. When and How Did it Begin?

- A. The OT does not specifically state the origins of worship, but there are several hints in Genesis.
1. God's institution of the Sabbath in Gen. 2:1-3 is later developed into the major weekly worship day. In Genesis it states that God set a precedent for mankind's rest and worship by His actions and attitudes toward this weekly time segment.
  2. God's killing of the animals to provide the fallen couple's clothes in order to endure their new fallen environment in Gen. 3:21. This seems to set the stage for the use of animals for mankind's needs, which will develop into the sacrificial system.
  3. Cain and Abel's sacrifice of Gen. 4:3ff seems to have been a regular occurrence, not a one-time event. This is not a disparaging passage on vegetable offerings or a prescription for animal sacrifice, but a vivid example of the need for a proper attitude toward God. It does show that somehow God communicated His acceptance and rejection of the sacrifice.
  4. The godly Messianic line of Seth is developed in Gen. 4:25ff. It mentions the covenant name of God, YHWH, in v. 26 in an apparent worship setting (this passage must be reconciled with Exod. 6:3).
  5. Noah states a distinction between clean and unclean animals in Gen. 7:2. This sets the stage for his sacrifices in Gen. 8:20-21. This implies that sacrifices were well established at an early period.
  6. Abraham was well acquainted with sacrifice, which is obvious from Gen. 12:7,8; 13:18; 22:9. It forms his response to God's presence and promises. Apparently his descendants continued this practice.
  7. The book of Job is in a patriarchal setting (i.e. 2000 B.C.). He was familiar with sacrifice as is seen in Job 1:5.
  8. The biblical material seems to clarify that sacrifice developed out of mankind's awe and respect for God and God's revealed procedures on how to express this.
    - a. Ten Commandments and Holiness Code
    - b. Tabernacle Cultus

### IV. What is its Content?

- A. It is obvious that mankind's attitude is the key in sacrifice (cf. Gen. 4:3ff). This personal element has always been a pillar in revealed biblical faith (cf. Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13; 30:6; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:15).
- B. However, mankind's reverent attitude was codified into ritual very early.
1. rites of purification (related to a sense of sin)
  2. rites of service (feasts, sacrifice, gifts, etc.)
  3. rites of personal worship (public and private prayers and praise)
- C. When we address the question of content it is important that we notice the three sources of revelation (cf. Jer. 18:18).
1. Moses and the cultus (priests)
  2. The sages of Wisdom Literature
  3. The prophets
- Each of these has added to our understanding of worship. Each focuses on a consistent and vital aspect of worship.
1. form (Exodus – Numbers)
  2. lifestyle (Ps. 40:1ff; Mic. 6:6-8)



3. motive (1 Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:22-26; Hos. 6:6)

- D. Jesus follows the OT pattern of worship. He never ridiculed the OT (cf. Matt. 5:17ff), but He did reject the Oral Tradition as it had developed by the first century.
- E. The early church continued with Judaism for a period (i.e. up to the rabbinical revival and reforms of A.D. 90) and then began to develop its own uniqueness, but generally on a synagogue pattern. The centrality of Jesus, His life, His teachings, His crucifixion and His resurrection took the place of the OT cultus. Preaching, baptism, and the Eucharist became focal acts. The Sabbath was replaced with the Lord's Day.

#### V. Who Participates?

- A. The patriarchal culture of the ancient near East sets the stage for man's leadership role in all areas of life, including religion.
- B. The Patriarch acted as priest to his family in both sacrifice and religious instruction (Job 1:5).
- C. For Israel the priest assumed the religious tasks in public, corporate worship setting, while the father retained this place in private worship settings. With the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) the Synagogue and the rabbis developed into a central position in training and worship. After the Temple's destruction in A.D. 70, rabbinical Judaism, which developed from Pharisees, became dominant.
- D. In the church setting the patriarchal pattern is preserved, but with the added emphasis on women's giftedness and equality (cf. 1 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 3:28; Acts 21:9; Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim. 3:11). This equality is seen in Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18. This equality is damaged by the rebellion of Gen. 3, but is restored through Christ.

Children have always been fellowshipped into the worship setting through their parents, however, the Bible is an adult oriented book.

#### VI. Where and When is Worship Done?

- A. In Genesis humanity reveres the places where they have met God. These sites become altars. After crossing of the Jordan several sites develop (Gilgal, Bethel, Shechem), but Jerusalem is chosen as the special dwelling place of God connected with the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Deut.).
- B. Agricultural times have always set the stage for humanity's gratitude to God for His provision. Other special sensed needs, such as forgiveness, developed into special cultic days (i.e., Lev. 16, Day of Atonement). Judaism developed set feast days—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (cf. Leviticus 23). It also allowed for special opportunities for individuals (cf. Ezekiel 18).
- C. The development of the synagogue provided structure to the concept of Sabbath worship. The church changed this to the Lord's Day (the first day of the week) apparently on Jesus' repeated pattern of appearing to them on Sunday evenings after the resurrection.
- D. At first the early church met daily (Acts 2:46), but apparently this was soon dropped for private worship during the week and corporate worship on Sundays.

#### VII. Conclusion

- 1. Worship of God is not something humans invented or instituted. Worship is a felt need.
- 2. Worship is a response to who God is and what He has done for us in Christ.
- 3. Worship involves the whole person. It is both form and attitude. It is both public and private. It is both scheduled and extemporaneous.
- 4. True worship is an outgrowth of a personal relationship.
- 5. The most helpful NT theological passage on worship is probably John 4:19-26.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: PERSEVERANCE

The biblical doctrines related to the Christian life are difficult to explain because they are presented in typically eastern, dialectical pairs (see Special Topic: Eastern Literature [biblical paradoxes]). These pairs seem contradictory, yet both poles are biblical. Western Christians have tended to choose one truth and ignore or depreciate the opposite truth. Some examples:

1. Is salvation an initial decision to trust Christ or a life-time commitment to discipleship?
2. Is salvation an election by means of grace from a sovereign God or a faith and repentant response on mankind's part to a divine offer?
3. Is salvation, once received, impossible to lose, or is there a need for continual diligence?

The issue of perseverance has been contentious throughout church history. The problem starts with seemingly conflicting passages of the NT:

1. texts on assurance
  - a. statements of Jesus in John's Gospel (John 6:37; 10:28-29)
  - b. statements of Paul (Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 1:13; 2:5,8-9; Phil. 1:6; 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18)
  - c. statements of Peter (1 Pet. 1:4-5)
2. texts on the need for perseverance
  - a. statements of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 10:22; 13:1-9,24-30; 24:13; Mark 13:13)
  - b. statements of Jesus in John's Gospel (John 8:31; 15:4-10)
  - c. statements of Paul (Rom. 11:22; 1 Cor. 15:2; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:6; 3:4; 5:4; 6:9; Phil. 2:12; 3:18-20; Col. 1:23; 2 Tim. 3:2)
  - d. statements of the author of Hebrews (2:1; 3:6,14; 4:14; 6:11)
  - e. statements of John (1 John 2:6; 2 John 9; Rev. 2:7,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7)

Biblical salvation issues from the love, mercy, and grace of a sovereign Triune God. No human can be saved without the initiation of the Spirit (cf. John 6:44,65). Deity comes first and sets the agenda, but demands that humans must respond in faith and repentance, both initially and continually. God works with mankind in a covenant relationship. There are privileges and responsibilities!

Salvation is offered to all humans. Jesus' death dealt with the sin problem of the fallen creation! God has provided a way and wants all those made in His image to respond to His love and provision in Jesus.

If you would like to read more on this subject see

1. Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth*, Eerdmans, 1981 (pp. 348-365)
2. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God*, Bethany Fellowship, 1969
3. Robert Shank, *Life in the Son*, Westcott, 1961

The Bible addresses two different problems in this area: (1) taking assurance as a license to live fruitless, selfish lives or (2) encouraging those who struggle with ministry and personal sin. The problem is that the wrong groups are taking the wrong message and building theological systems on limited biblical passages. Some Christians desperately need the message of assurance, while others need the stern warnings of perseverance! Which group are you in?

There is a historical theological controversy involving Augustine versus Pelagius and Calvin versus Arminius (semi-Pelagian). The issue involves the question of salvation: if one is truly saved, must he persevere in faith and fruitfulness?

The Calvinists line up behind those biblical texts that assert God's sovereignty and keeping-power (John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 John 5:13,18; 1 Pet. 1:3-5) and VERB TENSES like the PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLES of Eph. 2:5,8.

The Arminians line up behind those biblical texts that warn believers to "hold on," "hold out," or "continue" (Matt. 10:22; 24:9-13; Mark 13:13; John 15:4-6; 1 Cor. 15:2; Gal. 6:9; Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7). I personally do not believe that Hebrews 6 and 10 are applicable, but many Arminians use them as a warning against apostasy. The parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 and Mark 4 addresses the issue of apparent belief, as does John 8:31-59. As Calvinists quote the PERFECT TENSE VERBS used to describe salvation, the Arminians quote the PRESENT TENSE passages like 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15.

This is a perfect example of how theological systems abuse the proof-texting method of interpretation. Usually a guiding principle or chief text is used to construct a theological grid by which all other texts are viewed. Be careful of grids from any source. They come from western logic, not revelation. The Bible is an eastern book. It presents truth in tension-filled, seemingly paradoxical pairs. Christians are meant to affirm both and live within the tension. The NT presents both the security of the believer and the demand for continuing faith and godliness. Christianity is an initial response of repentance and faith followed by a continuing response of repentance and faith. Salvation is not a product (a ticket to heaven or a fire insurance policy), but a relationship. It is a decision and discipleship. It is described in the NT in all VERB TENSES:

AORIST (completed action), Acts 15:11; Rom. 8:24; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5

PERFECT (completed action with continuing results), Eph. 2:5,8

PRESENT (continuing action), 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15

FUTURE (future events or certain events), Rom. 5:8,10; 10:9; 1 Cor. 3:15; Phil. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:8-9; Heb. 1:14; 9:28

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:12-15**

**<sup>12</sup>Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering that is left over from the Lord's offerings by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. <sup>13</sup>You shall eat it, moreover, in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due out of the LORD'S offerings by fire; for thus I have been commanded. <sup>14</sup>The breast of the wave offering, however, and the thigh of the offering you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they have been given as your due and your sons' due out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel. <sup>15</sup>The thigh offered by lifting up and the breast offered by waving they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat, to present as a wave offering before the LORD; so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as the Lord has commanded."**

**10:12 "Take. . .eat"** These two imperatives mandate that the appropriate parts of the sin offering be eaten by the officiating priest. This is because the act symbolized forgiveness

1. to bear away the guilt of the congregation, Lev. 10:17
2. to make atonement for them before the Lord, Lev. 10:17

▣ **"most holy. . .holy"** there are several levels of "holiness."

1. the offerings
  - a. grain/cereal offerings
    - (1) memorial portion given to YHWH by fire
    - (2) rest for priests (cf. Lev. 2:3; 6:16-17; 10:12-13)

- b. peace offering
    - (1) certain parts to YHWH by fire
    - (2) most meat to
      - (a) offerer
      - (b) offerer's friends
      - (c) priests and their families
  - c. sin and guilt offering
    - (1) blood, fat, and some meat to YHWH by fire
    - (2) certain parts for priests in the holy place (cf. Lev. 6:25,26; 7:6; 10:17; 14:13)
  - d. some of the offerings for priest's family, Lev. 10:14; 22:11-13; Num. 18:11
2. the difference between what could be eaten and not eaten
    - a. none of the burnt offerings could be eaten, all given to YHWH by fire
    - b. sin offering, where part of the blood was taken from the altar of sacrifice into the inner shrine could not be eaten (cf. Lev. 6:30; 10:18)
  3. the offerings were a divine way to feed the priesthood (Lev. 10:13-14)

**10:13 “because it is your due”** All the other tribes, except for Levi, would receive a land allocation (i.e., Joshua 12-19), but the priests were to receive their “due” or livelihood from

1. the sacrifices (i.e., Lev. 10:14-15)
2. the Levitical cities and small garden plots surrounding them (i.e., Joshua 20-21)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:16-20**

**<sup>16</sup>But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up! So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, <sup>17</sup>“Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD. <sup>18</sup>Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded.” <sup>19</sup>But Aaron spoke to Moses, “Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the LORD?” <sup>20</sup>When Moses heard *that*, it seemed good in his sight.**

**10:16-20** Moses began to look (INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and PERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 205, KB 233) for part of the offering that the priests were to eat on this eighth day. However, he found that they had made a mistake and apparently burned that which was to have been eaten. Moses was very angry. Here, again, the procedures had not been followed correctly. Why were these sons spared when Nadab and Abihu were killed for not following procedures correctly? Apparently their motives and attitudes were innocent. Moses must have made an exception because there was no willful, rebellious intent. This implies that there was such intent in the actions of Nadab and Abihu.

**10:17 “He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD”** The priests as YHWH's earthly sacrificial agents (see notes in NET Bible, p. 233, #12). See Lev. 16:22 for this same concept of “bearing away” in one of the scapegoats. This is also seen in the Messiah's substitutionary death in Isa. 53:11-12 (cf. Mark 10:45; Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 5:21)!

For “make atonement” see Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**10:18** Moses reenforces the fact that YHWH's procedures must be followed exactly. This is communicated grammatically by the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB of the same root (BDB 37, KB 46), which is translated "you should have certainly eaten"! The priests must follow the divine procedures.

**10:19-20** Aaron expresses his desire to do this (Lev. 10:19) and Moses accepted his good motives and commitment (Lev. 10:20). See NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 703.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What did Nadab and Abihu do which resulted in their death by the Lord?
2. Why were Eleazer and Ithamar not killed when they also broke the procedures in Lev. 10:16-20?
3. Why could Aaron not mourn the death of his two oldest sons?
4. Explain the concept of Hebrew corporality found in Lev. 10:6.
5. How does Lev. 10:8-9 relate to Deut. 14:26?
6. How is Lev. 10:17 unique? How would you explain how priests "bear away" sin?
7. Why was Moses angry in Lev. 10:16?

# LEVITICUS 11

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Laws About Animals for Food	Food Permitted and Forbidden	Clean and Unclean Animals	Animals That May be Eaten	Clean and Unclean a. on land
11:1-8	11:1-8	11:1-2a 11:2b-8	11:1-8	11:1-2a 11:2b 11:3-8 b. in water
11:9-12	11:9-12	11:9-12	11:9-12	11:9a 11:9b-12
Avoid the Unclean				c. birds
11:13-19	11:13-19	11:13-19	11:13-19	11:13a 11:13b-19 d. winged insects
11:20-23	11:20-23 Unclean Animals	11:20-23	11:20-23	11:20-23 Contact with Unclean Animals
11:24-28	11:24-28	11:24-28	11:24-28	11:24-28 e. small ground animals
11:29-38	11:29-38	11:29-38	11:29-38	11:29-30 Further Rules on Contact with Things Unclean 11:31 11:32-28
11:39-40	11:39-40	11:39-40	11:39-40	11:39-40 The Religious Aspect
11:41-45	11:41-45	11:41-45	11:41-45	11:41-45 Conclusion
11:46-47	11:46-47	11:46-47	11:46-47	11:46-47

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. It is possible to see the literary unit running from chapters 11-16 (i.e., UBS *Handbook*, p. 199), which describes how to deal with that which is “unclean.” However, most scholars divide this into chapters 11-15 (Gordon J. Wenham), which deals with particular kinds of ceremonial uncleanness, and reserve chapter 16 for a unique unit on the Day of Atonement.

- B. The outline of this literary unit is”
1. clean and unclean animals, Leviticus 11 (see Deut. 14:3-21)
  2. the purification following human childbirth, Leviticus 12
  3. the testing and purification of skin diseases, Leviticus 13-14
    - a. in humans
    - b. in clothes
    - c. in houses
  4. the purification from bodily discharges, Leviticus 15
    - a. men
      - (1) temporary
      - (2) permanent
    - b. women
      - (1) temporary
      - (2) permanent
- C. The distinction between that which is “clean” and “unclean” goes back to the earliest parts of the Old Testament. In Gen. 7:2-3,8-9, Noah talks about clean and unclean animals, but the exact criteria about how to make the distinction is not given. It must be remembered that initially all animals, like all plants, were approved for food (cf. Gen. 9:3). Here, in Leviticus 11, which is also parallel in Deuteronomy 14, a new criteria is given for
1. domestic land animals, Lev. 11:2-8
  2. water animals, Lev. 11:9-12
  3. birds, Lev. 11:13-19
  4. winged insects, Lev. 11:20-23
  5. that which swarms will be found in two categories, Lev. 11:29-38 and 11:41-45
- D. What is the basis of the good laws? There have been several theories.
1. Israel had to be different from her pagan neighbors, particularly the Egyptians and the Canaanites (cf. Lev. 18:3). It is possible that the food regulations directly limited table fellowship between the two groups. See Special Topic: The Old Testament Food Laws.
  2. It was for health purposes because many of these excluded animals carried specific kinds of diseases (see book by S. I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases*).
  3. As God had limited certain types of food which He accepted on the altar, particularly from the herd, so humans should emulate God and limit their food to that which is from the herd.
  4. Some assume that there are possibly three distinct, but inter-related, reasons concerning:
    - a. the cultus of Israel was to exclude fellowship with non-Israelites
    - b. the health of Israel
    - c. the symbolic nature of the animals which were included or excluded
- E. All plants were considered “clean” and could be eaten (cf. Gen. 1:29), therefore, there are no “plant laws.” Animals flesh came to be accepted food for humans after the flood (Gen. 9:3).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE OT FOOD LAWS**

In my opinion, these food laws (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14) are not given primarily for health or hygienic reasons (i.e., Maimonides, *Guide* 3:48; *Kiddushin* 49b [Talmudic tractate]), but for theological reasons. Israelis are to have no contact with Canaanites (cf. Isa. 65:4; 66:3,17). Many of the regulations

given to Israel through Moses relate to Canaanite eating, socializing, and worshiping practices (e.g., Exod. 8:23).

On the question of “are these food laws binding or even helpful for NT believers,” I would say “No!” Here are my reasons:

1. Jesus rejected the food laws as a way to approach and please God, Mark 7:14-23 (surely the editorial comment by either Peter or John Mark in v. 19 is equally inspired)
2. This very question was the issue of the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, where it was decided that Gentiles did not have to follow OT cultic laws (cf. esp. v. 19). Acts 15:20 is not a food law, but a fellowship concession to believing Jews who may be in worshiping in Gentile churches.
3. Peter’s experience in Acts 10 in Joppa is not about food, but about the acceptability of all people, yet the Spirit used the food law’s irrelevance as the symbol to teach Peter!
4. Paul’s discussion of “weak” and “strong” believers cautions us not to force our personal interpretation, particularly of OT laws, on all other believers (cf. Rom. 14:1-15:13; 1 Corinthians 8-10).
5. Paul’s warnings about legalism and judgmentalism in relation to the Gnostic false teachers recorded in Col. 2:16-23 ought to be a warning to all believers in every age! Be careful of NT Phariseism!

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:1-8

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth. <sup>3</sup>Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, *and* chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof: the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; <sup>6</sup>the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; <sup>7</sup>and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. <sup>8</sup>You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.”

**11:1** Notice in the early parts of Leviticus YHWH spoke exclusively to Moses (i.e., Leviticus 1-9), but in Lev. 10:8, YHWH spoke directly to Aaron for the first time (i.e., about no grieving over his two sons’ deaths by YHWH’s fire). Here, YHWH speaks to them both.

These food laws are directly from YHWH. They are meant to

1. accentuate that which is clean and unclean
2. to emphasize ceremonial holiness
3. to keep the Israelites from table/worship fellowship with non-Israelites

**11:2** “These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth” This is further defined in Deut. 14:4-8. The order of the animals here reflects that of Gen. 1:20-30. The criteria for these land animals is given in Lev. 11:3.

1. they are to divide the hoof
2. they are to chew the cud



**11:6 “the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof”** 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 reason that the camel, the rock badger, the rabbit, and the pig are discussed is because they are “half-clean,” in the sense that they do one or the other of the criteria. Other animals are not mentioned because it is obvious that they do not fit.

The Jewish Study Bible, p. 229, adds an interesting note about the approved, large land animals. The domestic ones are part of the sacrificial system (cf. Deut. 14:4) and they can be eaten by

1. individual Israelites – peace offering
2. priests – sin, guilt, grain offerings

But, the animals discussed here are non-domestic animals which Israel can eat (cf. Deut. 14:5-6).

1. deer
2. gazelle
3. roebuck
4. wild goat
5. ibex
6. antelope
7. mountain sheep

**11:7 “pig”** The pig seems to be singled out as being especially inappropriate for food. This is somewhat unusual because the pig was used widely in the ancient Orient because it grew rapidly on foodstuff that other animals would not eat. One possibility is the presence of large numbers of pig bones found in Canaanite temples in Palestine (see R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus, Tyndale OT Series*, vol. 5, pp. 121-123). This would mean that the pig had some religious or cultus significance which excluded it. Others say that it was because of the pig’s hygienic problems, especially in a hot climate (see Introductory notes D.).

**11:8 “You shall not eat of their flesh or touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you”** There is something here of ceremonial uncleanness but also hygienic purposes. If there were a type of infection or possibility of infecting the whole community, then touching a dead animal would be a means of spreading that. Here is the same question, “Are these guidelines for hygienic or ceremonial purposes?” probably it is both.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:9-12**

<sup>9</sup>“**These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat.** <sup>10</sup>**But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you,** <sup>11</sup>**and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest.** <sup>12</sup>**Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.”**

**11:9 “These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales”** This refers to freshwater or sea water. This is also discussed in Deut. 14:9. Some would say that these criteria are based on the normal way that these animals move in their own environment; land animals, sea animals, insects, and swarming animals. But this is somewhat vague. We simply do not know why some animals are included and some excluded or why the criteria are given in this exact way.

**11:10 “detestable”** This is one root, דָּקַשׁ, with different vowel points. They both occur primarily in Leviticus 11 and Deut. 7:26 (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 243-246).

In the parallel passage of Deut. 14:3 a parallel word is used, “abomination,” see Special Topic: Abomination (OT). Remember this is not about ethics or morality but “holiness” and the ability to fellowship with a “holy” God (see Special Topic: Worship at Lev. 10:11 and Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c).

This has all passed away because

1. there is no more Jewish temple
2. Jesus directly changed the focus in Matt. 15:10-20 and Mark 7:19 (also note Acts 10; 15; Rom. 14:1-12; 1 Cor. 10:23-33; Col. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:4).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ABOMINATION (OT)**

The basic meaning is something “loathsome” or “repulsive.” It is an intentional violation of known boundaries.

“Abomination” (BDB 1072, KB 1702) can refer to several things:

1. things related to Egyptians:
  - a. they loathe eating with Hebrews, Gen. 43:32
  - b. they loathe shepherds, Gen. 46:34
  - c. they loathe Hebrew sacrifices, Exod. 8:26
2. things related to YHWH’s feelings toward Israel’s actions:
  - a. unclean food, Deut. 14:3-20
  - b. idols, Deut. 7:25; 27:15
  - c. pagan spiritists, Deut. 18:9,12
  - d. sacrificing (burning) children to *Molech*, Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:9,12; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 17:17-18; 21:6; Jer. 32:35
  - e. Canaanite idolatry, Deut. 13:14; 17:4; 20:17-18; 32:16; Isa. 44:19; Jer. 16:18; Ezek. 5:11; 6:9; 11:18,21; 14:6; 16:50; 18:12
  - f. sacrificing blemished animals, Deut. 17:1 (cf. Deut.15:19-23; Mal. 1:12-13)
  - g. sacrificing to idols, Jer. 44:4-5
  - h. remarrying a woman that you had previously divorced, Deut. 24:1-4
  - i. women wearing man’s clothes (possibly Canaanite worship), Deut. 22:5
  - j. money from cultic prostitution (Canaanite worship), Deut. 23:18
  - k. Israel’s idolatry, Jer. 2:7
  - l. homosexuality (possibly Canaanite worship), Lev. 18:22; 20:13
  - m. use of false weights, Deut. 25:15-16; Pro. 11:1; 20:23
  - n. food laws violated (possibly Canaanite worship), Deut. 14:3
3. Examples in Wisdom Literature:
  - a. Job 30:10 – Job to his society
  - b. Psalms 88:8 – psalmist to his acquaintances
  - c. Proverbs
    - (1) Pro. 3:32 – the crooked person
    - (2) Pro. 6:16-19
      - (a) haughty eyes, Pro. 6:17a
      - (b) lying tongue, Pro. 6:17a

- (c) murderer, Pro. 6:17b
- (d) wicked planner, Pro. 6:18a; 15:26
- (e) active evil, Pro. 6:18b
- (f) false witness, Pro 6:19a
- (g) one who spreads strife among brothers, Pro. 6:19b
- (3) Pro. 11:1; 20:10,23 – cheating merchants
- (4) Pro. 11:20 – perverse in heart
- (5) Pro. 12:22 – lying lips
- (6) Pro. 15:8; 21:27 – sacrifices of the wicked
- (7) Pro. 15:9 – the way of the wicked
- (8) Pro. 16:5 – proud of heart
- (9) Pro. 17:15
  - (a) he who justifies the wicked
  - (b) he who condemns the righteous
- (10) Pro. 28:9 – he who violates the law
- 4. There is a recurrent eschatological phrase “abomination of desolation,” which is used in Daniel (cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). It seems to refer to three different occasions (multiple fulfillment prophecy):
  - a. Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the interbiblical Maccabean period (cf. I Macc. 1:54,59; II Macc. 6:1-2)
  - b. the Roman general (later Emperor), Titus, who sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in A.D. 70 (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20)
  - c. an end-time world leader called “the man of lawlessness” (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3-4) or “the Antichrist” (cf. 1 John 2:18; 4:3; Revelation 13)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:13-19**

<sup>13</sup>“**These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, <sup>14</sup>and the kite and the falcon in its kind, <sup>15</sup>every raven in its kind, <sup>16</sup>and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, <sup>17</sup>and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, <sup>18</sup>and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, <sup>19</sup>and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat.**”

**11:13 “These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds”** Leviticus 11:13-19 contains a long list of birds. Most of them seem to be scavenger types (cf. Deut. 14:11-18). We are uncertain as to the exact type of many of these birds (see UBS *Handbook*, pp. 162-162 for translation options). All birds not listed are clean to eat.

The bat is included with the birds (Lev. 11:19) because in the ANE it was included in lists of winged creatures. Today, we know it is not technically a bird. Remember, like the rabbit, this is about human perception, not modern biological categories.

**11:18**

**NASB, TEV,**

**NJB, JPSOA**

**LXX, Vulgate**

**“pelican”**

NKJV	“jackdaw”
NRSV, NIV	“desert owl”
Peshitta (Lamsa)	“hoopoe”
REB	“horned owl”

The MT has a root (BDB 866, KB 1059) which is uncertain. Most ancient versions translate it as “pelican” (cf. Deut. 14:17), but this is problematic because

1. it seems to be a desert creature of ruins (cf. Isa. 34:11; Zeph. 2:14)
2. it is a symbol of isolation, but pelicans form groups (Ps. 102:7)

The UBS *Handbook*, p. 163, suggests “owl.”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:20-23**

<sup>20</sup>“All the winged insects that walk on *all* fours are detestable to you. <sup>21</sup>Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on *all* fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. <sup>22</sup>These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds. <sup>23</sup>But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you.”

**11:20**

NASB, NRSV,  
JPSOA, NET,  
LXX

NKJV, Peshitta

NJB

REB

“that walk on *all* fours”

“that creep on all fours”

“moving on all four feet”

“go on all fours”

The MT has

1. the “to be” VERB (*Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE)
2. the preposition “upon”
3. “four,” SINGULAR (BDB 916, cf. Lev. 11:27)

The UBE *Handbook*, p. 163, says “This expression is surprising, since the ancient Jews almost certainly knew that winged insects had six legs. The expression was probably used in a non-literal sense, meaning ‘to crawl’ and was used of any flying creature with more than two legs to distinguish the insects from other flying creatures, such as birds just mentioned in the previous verses.”

**11:21 “those which have above their feet jointed legs”** The MT has “which do not have legs.” The Masoretic scholars changed this (*Qere*) to “which have legs.” The term “bended legs above their feet” is surely implied by the following VERB “to leap” (BDB 684 I, KB 736, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:24-28**

<sup>24</sup>“By these, moreover, you will be made unclean: whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, <sup>25</sup>and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. <sup>26</sup>Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof but do not make a split *hoof*, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean. <sup>27</sup>Also whatever walks on its paws, among all the creatures that walk on *all* fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, <sup>28</sup>and the one who picks up their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; they are unclean to you.”

**11:24-25 “whoever touches their carcasses. . . whoever picks up any of their carcasses”** Notice that there is ceremonial uncleanness involved even in the touching of the animals mentioned as “unclean,” which may imply a hygienic purpose or ceremonial distinction. However, we are uncertain.

There was a procedure for being restored to a state of “cleanness”/“holiness” (cf. Lev. 11:25, 28,31,32,40).

1. wash clothes
2. be excluded from worship and/or cultic participation for a period of time
3. if it is a vessel, break it (Lev. 11:33)
4. if it is made of stone, break it (Lv. 11:35)

God provided a clear and repeated procedure for restoration!

The sacrificial system was a means of restoration of fellowship between sinful humans and a holy God.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:29-38**

**<sup>29</sup>“Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things which swarm on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard in its kinds, <sup>30</sup>and the gecko, and the crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand reptile, and the chameleon. <sup>31</sup>These are to you the unclean among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening. <sup>32</sup>Also anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead becomes unclean, including any wooden article, or clothing, or a skin, or a sack—any article of which use is made—it shall be put in the water and be unclean until evening, then it becomes clean. <sup>33</sup>As for any earthenware vessel into which one of them may fall, whatever is in it becomes unclean and you shall break the vessel. <sup>34</sup>Any of the food which may be eaten, on which water comes, shall become unclean, and any liquid which may be drunk in every vessel shall become unclean. <sup>35</sup>Everything, moreover, on which part of their carcass may fall becomes unclean; an oven or a stove shall be smashed; they are unclean and shall continue as unclean to you. <sup>36</sup>Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean. <sup>37</sup>If a part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing which is to be sown, it is clean. <sup>38</sup>Though if water is put on the seed and a part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.”**

**11:29 “Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things”** There is another group of swarming things, as in Lev. 11:41. The difference between these two terms is uncertain. The group found in Lev. 11:29-38 includes the mole, the mouse, lizards, geckos, crocodiles, other kinds of lizards, sand reptiles, and chameleons. Again, moderns are uncertain about the names of these particular ANE animals. Check other translations to see the variety that is possible.

**11:32-35** This shows the ceremonial nature of these laws because some utensils had to be washed; some had to be broken and the contents thrown out. Notice in Lev. 11:36 that a large body of water, like a cistern, was not unclean because of these animals. This shows the very practical nature of these laws.

**11:35 “stove”** This term (BDB 468) is in the dual form and, therefore, denotes a fire stove on which two cooking pots could be used. It occurs only here in the OT (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 635).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:39-40**

**<sup>39</sup>“Also if one of the animals dies which you have for food, the one who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening. <sup>40</sup>He too, who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and the one who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.”**

**11:39-40** This shows that even “clean” animals that die of natural causes become “unclean.”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:41-45**

<sup>41</sup>“Now every swarming thing that swarms on the earth is detestable, not to be eaten. <sup>42</sup>Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on *all* fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable. <sup>43</sup>Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean. <sup>44</sup>For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. <sup>45</sup>For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

**11:41-43** The swarming things mentioned here seem to involve those which crawl on their belly, walk on all fours, or have many feet. All of these were “unclean” and could not be eaten.

**11:43** “Do not render yourselves detestable” This VERB (BDB 1055, KB 1046, *Piel* IMPERFECT) is used in a JUSSIVE sense.

The theologically parallel VERB (BDB 379, KB 375) is “defile oneself,” which the NASB translates as “make yourselves unclean.” It is used in Lev. 11:24,25,26,27,28,31,32,33,34,35,36,39,40,43,44, but not in the parallel passage of Deuteronomy 14.

**11:44** “I am the LORD your God” This is covenant language (cf. Exod. 6:7; 16:12; 23:25). Notice the use of both common titles for Deity.

1. YHWH – see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D. at Lev. 1:1
2. *Elohim* – see Special Topic: Names for Deity, C. at Lev. 1:1

YHWH was uniquely Israel’s God. See the following Special Topics

1. Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel’s God (OT) at Lev. 10:3b
2. Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13
3. Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs
4. Special Topic: Covenant Requirements of Israel

**SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT PROMISES TO PATRIARCHS**

This initial promise of a special covenant relationship was made to

1. Abraham, Gen. 12:1-3
  - a. land, Gen. 12:7; 13:4-15; 15:18-21
  - b. people, Gen. 13:16; 15:4-5; 17:2-6; 22:18
  - c. blessing to the world, Gen. 18:18; 22:18
2. Isaac, Gen. 26:2-4
  - a. land
  - b. people
  - c. blessing to the world
3. Jacob, Gen. 28:2-4,13; 35:9-12; 48:3-4
  - a. land
  - b. people

4. the nation of Israel (a land), Exod. 3:8,17; 6:8; 13:5; 33:1-3; Deut. 1:7-8,35; 4:31; 9:3; 11:25; 31:7; Jos. 1:6

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S COVENANT REQUIREMENTS OF ISRAEL (Deut. 10:12-13)**

YHWH's requirements ("require," BDB 981, KB 1371, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) are stated clearly in a series of *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS:

1. "to fear the LORD" – BDB 431, KB 432, cf. Deut. 4:10; 10:20
2. "to walk in all His ways" – BDB 229, KB 246, cf. Deut. 4:29; 10:12; Isa. 2:3
3. "to love Him" – BDB 12, KB 17, cf. Deut. 6:5; 10:15; see full note at 5:10
4. "to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" – BDB 712, KB 773, cf. Deut. 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:2,6,10
5. "to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes" – BDB 1036, KB 1581

This passage is similar to Micah 6:6-8. Both speak of a faith that affects daily life!

▣ **"Consecrate yourselves"** One would expect this, like "be holy," to be an IMPERATIVE, but it is not.

1. "consecrate" – BDB 872, KB 1073, *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*, cf. Lev. 20:7
2. "be holy" – BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*

Since there is a *waw* with these PERFECTS, it could be understood as an IMPERFECT (cf. Lev. 19:20. If this is true, then the IMPERFECT could function as a JUSSIVE.

The Tabernacle, its utensils, and its workers were all "consecrated," but now so are its worshipers!

▣ **"be holy"** See grammatical note above and Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c.

"Holy," in this context, is not ethical or moral but ceremonial. In Lev. 19:2 (cf. Matt. 5:48) it takes on a religious aspect related to how the Israelites deal with:

1. their idolatrous neighbors
2. their fellow countrymen (i.e., covenant partners)
3. their covenant God

▣ **"for I am holy"** YHWH chose Abraham to choose a family or people who would reflect His character to a pagan world (see a negative example in Ezek. 36:22-36). YHWH has an eternal redemptive plan for all humans made in His image. See Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan and Special Topic: Why Do OT Covenant Promises Seem so Different from NT Covenant Promises?

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN**

I must admit to you the reader that I am biased at this point. My systematic theology is not Calvinism or Dispensationalism, but it is Great Commission evangelicalism (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8). I Ezekiel 18; 36:22-39; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29; Rom. 3:9-18,19-20,21-31), all those created in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). The covenants are united in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28-29; Col. 3:11). Jesus is the mystery of God, hidden but now revealed (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13)! The NT gospel, not Israel, is the key to Scripture.

This pre-understanding colors all my interpretations of Scripture. I read all texts through it! It is surely a bias (all interpreters have them!), but it is a Scripturally-informed presupposition.

The focus of Genesis 1-2 is YHWH creating a place where He and His highest creation, mankind, can fellowship (cf. Gen. 1:26,27; 3:8). Physical creation is a stage for this interpersonal divine agenda.

1. St. Augustine characterized it as a divine-shaped hole in every person that can be filled only by God Himself.
2. C. S. Lewis called this planet “the touched planet,” (i.e., prepared by God for humans).

The OT has many hints of this divine agenda.

1. Genesis 3:15 is the first promise that YHWH will not leave mankind in the terrible mess of sin and rebellion. It does not refer to Israel because there is no Israel, or covenant people, until the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.
2. Genesis 12:1-3 is YHWH’s initial call and revelation to Abraham which will become the covenant people, Israel. But even in this initial call, God had an eye to the whole world. Notice verse 3!
3. In Exodus 20 (Deuteronomy 5) YHWH gave His law to Moses to guide His special people. Notice that in Exod. 19:5-6 YHWH reveals to Moses the unique relationship Israel will have. But also notice that they were chosen, like Abraham, to bless the world (cf. Exod. 19:5, “for all the earth is Mine”). Israel was to be a mechanism for the nations to know YHWH and be attracted to Him. Tragically they failed (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38).
4. In 1 Kings 8 Solomon dedicates the temple so all can come to YHWH (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:43,60)
5. In the Psalms – 22:27-28; 66:4; 86:9 (Rev. 15:4)
6. Through the prophets YHWH continued to reveal His universal redemptive plans.
  - a. Isaiah – 2:2-4; 12:4-5; 25:6-9; 42:6,10-12; 45:22; 49:5-6; 51:4-5; 56:6-8; 60:1-3; 66:18,23
  - b. Jeremiah – 3:17; 4:2; 16:19
  - c. Micah 4:1-3
  - d. Malachi 1:11

This universal emphasis is facilitated by the emergence of the “new covenant” (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38), which focuses on the mercy of YHWH, not the performance of fallen humans. There is a “new heart,” a “new mind,” and a “new spirit.” Obedience is crucial but it is internal, not an eternal code only (cf. Rom. 3:21-31).

The NT clearly reinforces the universal redemptive plan in several ways.

1. The Great Commission – Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8
2. God’s eternal plan (i.e., predestined) – Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29
3. God wants all humans to be saved – John 3:16; 4:42; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14
4. Christ unites the OT and NT – Gal. 3:28-29; Eph. 2:11-3:13; Col. 3:11. All human barriers and distinctions are removed in Christ. Jesus is the “mystery of God,” hidden but now revealed (Eph. 2:11-3:13).

The NT focuses on Jesus, not Israel. The gospel, not a nationality or geographical region, is central. Israel was the first revelation but Jesus is the ultimate revelation (cf. Matt. 5:17-48).

I hope you will take a moment to read the Special Topic: Why Do OT Covenant Promises Seem So Different from NT Covenant Promises. You can find it online at [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org).



## **SPECIAL TOPIC: Old Testament Predictions of the Future Vs. New Testament Predictions ("Crucial Introduction" to Revelation)**

Through the years of my study of eschatology I have learned that most Christians do not have or want a developed, systematized, end-time chronology. There are some Christians who focus or major on this area of Christianity for theological, psychological, or denominational reasons. These Christians seem to become obsessed with how it will all end, and somehow miss the urgency of the gospel! Believers cannot affect God's eschatological (end-time) agenda, but they can participate in the gospel mandate (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8). Most believers affirm a Second Coming of Christ and an end-time culmination of the promises of God. The interpretive problems arising from how to understand this temporal culmination come from several biblical paradoxes (see Special Topic: Paradox in Scripture).

1. the tension between Old Covenant prophetic models and New Covenant apostolic models
2. the tension between the Bible's monotheism (one God for all) and the election of Israel (a special people)
3. the tension between the conditional aspect of biblical covenants and promises ("if. . .then") and the unconditional faithfulness of God to fallen mankind's redemption
4. the tension between Near Eastern literary genres and modern western literary models
5. the tension between the Kingdom of God as present, yet future
6. the tension between belief in the imminent return of Christ and the belief that some events must happen first

Let us discuss these tensions one at a time.

### **FIRST TENSION** (OT racial, national, and geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but neither Jesus nor any NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world.

1. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)
2. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezekiel 37-39; Daniel 7-12; Zechariah)
3. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
4. Jesus Himself (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
5. the writings of Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2)
6. the writings of John (1 John and Revelation)

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor for the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the "new Jerusalem" of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to

redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15, before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5). See Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan.

2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which is so integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7,15,16; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Revelation 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are
  - a. the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29)
  - b. the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45, quoted in 2 Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14)
  - c. the temple is now Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:61; 27:40; John 2:19-21) and through Him the local church (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19)
  - d. even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e., "Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e., "kingdom of priests," cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the book of Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome (cf. Revelation 17).

## **SECOND TENSION (monotheism vs. an elect people)**

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer, God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7, 14, 18, 21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism (see Special Topic: Monotheism). All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Genesis 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)!

The tension arises when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12; 15; 17; 18) and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf.

Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4:3,9,22; Gal. 3:6). Israel lost her mission (the church is now a kingdom of priests, cf. Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet.2:5,9) and turned mandate into privilege, service into a special standing! God chose one to choose all!

### **THIRD TENSION** (conditional covenants vs. unconditional covenants)

There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if. . .then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary. See Special Topic: Election/Predestination and the Need For A Theological Balance.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it! God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isaiah 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in who was your father/mother! Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7 and Galatians 3).

The world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It is still a conditional covenant! This is not to imply that God has totally rejected the Jews (cf. Romans 9-11). There may be a place and purpose for end-time, believing Israel (cf. Zech. 12:10).

### **FOURTH TENSION** (Near Eastern literary models vs. western models)

Genre is a critical element in correctly interpreting the Bible (see Fee and Stuart, *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*). The Church developed in a western (Greek) cultural setting. Eastern literature is much more figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic than modern, western culture's literary models (see Special Topic: Eastern Literature (biblical paradoxes)). It focuses on people, encounters, and events more than succinct propositional truths. Christians have been guilty of using their history and literary models to interpret biblical prophecy (both OT and NT). Each generation and geographical entity has used its culture, history, and literalness to interpret Revelation. Every one of them has been wrong! It is arrogant to think that modern western culture is the focus of biblical prophecy!

The genre in which the original, inspired author chooses to write is a literary contract with the reader (Bruce Corley). The book of Revelation is not historical narrative. It is a combination of letter (chapters 1-3), prophecy, and mostly apocalyptic literature. It is as wrong to make the Bible say more than was intended by the original author as it is to make it say less than what he intended! Interpreters' arrogance and dogmatism are even more inappropriate in a book like Revelation.

The Church has never agreed on a proper interpretation of Revelation. My concern is to hear and deal with the whole Bible, not some selected part(s). The Bible's eastern mindset presents truth in tension-filled pairs. Our western trend toward propositional truth is not invalid, but unbalanced! I think it is possible to remove at least some of the impasse in interpreting Revelation by noting its changing purpose to successive generations of believers. It is obvious to most interpreters that Revelation must be interpreted in light of its own day and its genre. An historical approach to Revelation must deal with what the first readers would

have, and could have, understood. In many ways modern interpreters have lost the meaning of many of the symbols of the book. Revelation's initial main thrust was to encourage persecuted believers. It showed God's control of history (as did the OT prophets); it affirmed that history is moving toward an appointed terminus, judgment or blessing (as did the OT prophets). It affirmed in first century Jewish apocalyptic terms God's love, presence, power, and sovereignty!

It functions in these same theological ways to every generation of believers. It depicts the cosmic struggle of good and evil. The first century details may have been lost to us, but not the powerful, comforting truths. When modern, western interpreters try to force the details of Revelation into their contemporary history, the pattern of false interpretations continues!

It is quite possible that the details of the book may become strikingly literal again (as did the OT in relation to the birth, life, and death of Christ) for the last generation of believers as they face the onslaught of an anti-God leader (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2) and culture. No one can know these literal fulfillments of the Revelation until the words of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21) and Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; and 2 Thessalonians 2) also become historically evident. Guessing, speculation, and dogmatism are all inappropriate. Apocalyptic literature allows this flexibility. Thank God for images and symbols that surpass historical narrative! God is in control; He reigns; He comes!

Most modern commentaries miss the point of the genre! Modern western interpreters often seek a clear, logical system of theology rather than being fair with an ambiguous, symbolic, dramatic genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature. This truth is expressed well by Ralph P. Martin in his article, "Approaches to New Testament Exegesis," in the book *New Testament Interpretation*, edited by I. Howard Marshall:

"Unless we recognize the dramatic quality of this writing and recall the way in which language is being used as a vehicle to express religious truth, we shall grievously err in our understanding of the Apocalypse, and mistakenly try to interpret its visions as though it were a book of literal prose and concerned to describe events of empirical and datable history. To attempt the latter course is to run into all manner of problems of interpretation. More seriously it leads to a distortion of the essential meaning of apocalyptic and so misses the great value of this part of the New Testament as a dramatic assertion in mythopoetic language of the sovereignty of God in Christ and the paradox of his rule which blends might and love (cf. Rev. 5:5,6; the Lion is the Lamb)" (p. 235).

W. Randolph Tate in his book *Biblical Interpretations*:

"No other genre of the Bible has been so fervently read with such depressing results as apocalypse, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. This genre had suffered from a disastrous history of misinterpretation due to a fundamental misunderstanding of its literary forms, structure, and purpose. Because of its very claim to reveal what is shortly to happen, apocalypse has been viewed as a road map into and a blueprint of the future. The tragic flaw in this view is the assumption that the books' frame of reference is the reader's contemporary age rather than the author's. This misguided approach to apocalypse (particularly Revelation) treats the work as if it were a cryptogram by which contemporary events can be used to interpret the symbol of the text. . . First, the interpreter must recognize that apocalyptic communicates its messages through symbolism. To interpret a symbol literally when it is metaphoric is simply to misinterpret. The issue is not whether the events in apocalyptic are historical. The events may be historical; they may have really happened, or might happen, but the author presents events and communicates meaning through images and archetypes" (p. 137).

From *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Ryken, Wilhost and Longman III:

"Today's readers are often puzzled and frustrated by this genre. The unexpected imagery and out-of-this-world experiences seem bizarre and out of sync with most of Scripture. Taking this

literature at face value leaves many readers scrambling to determine ‘what will happen when,’ thus missing the intent of the apocalyptic message” (p. 35).

#### **FIFTH TENSION** (the Kingdom of God as present yet future)

The kingdom of God is present, yet future. This theological paradox becomes focused at the point of eschatology. If one expects a literal fulfillment of all OT prophecies to Israel then the Kingdom becomes mostly a restoration of Israel to a geographical locality and a theological pre-eminence! This would necessitate that the Church is secretly raptured out at chapter 5 and the remaining chapters relate to Israel (but note Rev. 22:16).

However, if the focus is on the kingdom being inaugurated by the promised OT Messiah, then it is present with Christ’s first coming, and then the focus becomes the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The theological emphasis is on a current salvation. The kingdom has come, the OT is fulfilled in Christ’s offer of salvation to all, not His millennial reign over some!

It is surely true that the Bible speaks of both of Christ’s comings, but where is the emphasis to be placed? It seems to me that most OT prophecies focus on the first coming, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (cf. Daniel 2). In many ways this is analogous to the eternal reign of God (cf. Daniel 7). In the OT the focus is on the eternal reign of God, yet the mechanism for that reign’s manifestation is the ministry of the Messiah (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26-27). It is not a question of which is true; both are true, but where is the emphasis? It must be said that some interpreters become so focused on the millennial reign of the Messiah (cf. Contextual Insights to Revelation 20) that they have missed the biblical focus on the eternal reign of the Father. Christ’s reign is a preliminary event. As the two comings of Christ were not obvious in the OT, neither is a temporal reign of the Messiah!

The key to Jesus’ preaching and teaching is the kingdom of God. It is both present (in salvation and service), and future (in pervasiveness and power). Revelation, if it focuses on a Messianic millennial reign (cf. Revelation 20), is preliminary, not ultimate (cf. Revelation 21-22). It is not obvious from the OT that a temporal reign is necessary; as a matter of fact, the Messianic reign of Daniel 7 is eternal, not millennial.

#### **SIXTH TENSION** (imminent return of Christ vs. the delayed Parousia)

Most believers have been taught that Jesus is coming soon, suddenly, and unexpectedly (cf. Matt. 10:23; 24:27,34,44; Mark 9:1; 13:30; Rev. 1:1,3; 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,10,12,20; see Special Topic: Soon Return). But every expectant generation of believers so far has been wrong! The soonness (immediacy) of Jesus’ return is a powerful promised hope of every generation, but a reality to only one (and that one a persecuted one). Believers must live as if He were coming tomorrow, but plan and implement the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20) if He tarries.

Some passages in the Gospels and 1 and 2 Thessalonians are based on a delayed Second Coming (*Parousia*). There are some historical events that must happen first:

1. world-wide evangelization (cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10)
2. the revelation of “the man of Sin” (cf. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 13)
3. the great persecution (cf. Matt. 24:21,24; Revelation 13)

There is a purposeful ambiguity (cf. Matt. 24:42-51; Mark 13:32-36)! Live every day as if it were your last but plan and train for future ministry!

#### **CONSISTENCY AND BALANCE**

It must be said that the different schools of modern eschatological interpretation all contain half truths. They explain and interpret well some texts. The problem lies in consistency and balance. Often there is a

set of presuppositions which use the biblical text to fill in the pre-set theological skeleton. The Bible does not reveal a logical, chronological, systematic eschatology. It is like a family album. The pictures are true, but not always in order, in context, in a logical sequence. Some of the pictures have fallen out of the album and later generations of family members do not know exactly how to put them back. The key to proper interpretation of Revelation is the intent of the original author as revealed in his choice of literary genre. Most interpreters try to carry their exegetical tools and procedures from other genres of the NT into their interpretations of Revelation. They focus on the OT instead of allowing the teachings of Jesus and Paul to set the theological structure and let Revelation act as illustrative.

I must admit that I approach this commentary on the Revelation with some fear and trepidation, not because of the curse of Rev. 22:18-19, but because of the level of controversy the interpretation of this book has caused and continues to cause among God's people. I love God's revelation. It is true when all men are liars (cf. Rom. 3:4)! Please use this commentary as an attempt to be thought provoking and not definitive, as a sign post and not a road map, as a "what if," not a "thus says the Lord." I have come face to face with my own inadequacies, biases, and theological agenda. I have also seen those of other interpreters. It almost seems that people find in Revelation what they expect to find. The genre lends itself to abuse! However, it is in the Bible for a purpose. Its placement as the concluding "word" is not by accident. It has a message from God to His children of each and every generation. God wants us to understand! Let us join hands, not form camps; let us affirm what is clear and central, not all that may be, might be, could be true. God help us all!

**11:45** This verse goes back to reiterate YHWH's historical acts of deliverance from Egypt (i.e., Exodus and Numbers), which were prophesied in Gen. 15:12-21.

1. brought you up from the land of Egypt
  - a. exodus from Egypt (cf. Lev. 19:36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38,42,52; 26:13,45)
  - b. wilderness wandering period
  - c. conquest of Canaan (i.e., Joshua)
2. to be your God-covenant Deity (cf. Lev. 11:44)
3. you shall be holy for I am holy (see notes at Lev. 11:44). This these is repeated often in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 11:45; 19:2; 20:7,26). The key word in Leviticus is "holy" and the key task is "be clean."

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:46-47**

**<sup>46</sup>This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, <sup>47</sup>to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.**

**11:46-47** This is a summary of Leviticus 11 laws added by the author or editor of Leviticus (cf. Lev. 12:7b; 13:54-59; 14:32,54,57; 15:32-33; for "Law" see Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Lev. 4:2c).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of the food laws?
2. Where does the distinction of “clean” and “unclean” come from?
3. Has man always been a meat eater?
4. Does Lev. 11:6 prove the Bible is not accurate?
5. Explain the difference between sacrificially clean versus clean to eat.
6. Is this system still God’s will for His children? Why or why not?
7. What does “holy” imply in Lev. 11:44?
8. Why is Leviticus 11 different from Deuteronomy 14?

# LEVITICUS 12

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Laws of Motherhood	The Ritual After Childbirth	Purification of a Woman After Childbirth	The Purification of Women After Childbirth	Purification of a Woman After Childbirth
12:1-2a	12:1-5	12:1-2a	12:1-4	12:1-4
12:2b-5		12:2b-5		
			12:5	12:5
12:6-8	12:6-8	12:6-8	12:6-7	12:6-7a
				12:7b-8
			12:8	

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

There are two authors who help me understand these ancient rites.

1. Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*; for “circumcision” see pp. 46-48.
2. R. K Harrison, *Leviticus, Tyndale OT Commentaries*, vol. 3, pp. 134-135

Both of these authors, like John H. Walton, try to interpret the OT in light of the surrounding cultures and terminology of the ANE. The OT must be first understood in light of its own historical setting. Then for as Christians, we must find the NT parallels, quotes, and allusions.

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-2a

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying:”

**12:1** Notice Lev. 12:1 is YHWH speaking to Moses, not Moses and Aaron, as in Lev. 11:1.

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:2b-5

<sup>2b</sup>“When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. <sup>3</sup>On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup>Then she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed. <sup>5</sup>But if she bears a female *child*, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for sixty-six days.”

**12:2b** “When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*” The exact reason why the birthing process was considered unclean can probably be seen more clearly in Leviticus 15, where any bodily emission made one ceremonially unclean. Because the birthing process involves not only blood, but other fluids, and the discharge can last for many days, perhaps this is the reason for the need of a sacrifice for purification and



the long period of estrangement from worship. For seven days the woman was unclean to everything and everyone that she touched, but after seven days she was unclean only as far as worship was concerned.

▣ **“menstruation”** This is the monthly cycle by which women renew the ability of conception by shedding layers of their uterus (i.e., menses). This regular renewing process involves the loss of blood, which, to the Israelites, was the sign of life uniquely given by God (see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b).

It is difficult for moderns to understand the ceremonial impurity felt by the ancient world (i.e., Lev. 15:19-30). For sure, this chapter is not negative against

1. women (cf. Gen. 1:26-27)
2. sex (cf. Gen. 1:28)
3. children (cf. Gen. 33:5; 48:9; Ps. 127:3-5)
4. birthing

Leviticus 15 explains the Israelite sense of uncleanness of bodily fluids (see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 925-928).

**12:3 “On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised”** Most of the people in the ANE practiced circumcision except possibly the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hivites, Horites, and the Philistines (see R. K. Harrison, p. 134). However, in other cultures it was a rite of passage into manhood (as it is in Arab culture today, at 13 years of age; NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 474-476). In the Hebrew system, going back to the covenant with Abraham in Gen. 17:9-14, it was done very early as a religious symbol, a sign of the Abrahamic covenant.

Circumcision also became faith imagery. Deuteronomy 30:6, “God will circumcise your heart,” is a metaphor for an open and accessible hearing of God’s word. The opposite is stated in v. 17. In Deut. 10:16 and Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26, the Israelite is called upon to perform this spiritual act (cf. Rom. 2:28-29), yet here God must do it. This same tension between God’s sovereignty and human action is seen in Ezek. 18:31 vs. 36:26. Here circumcision is a metaphor for a proper spiritual attitude.

**12:4 “thirty-three days”** Some have tried to explain this as an extended period of the discharge of fluids, while others have said it refers to a way for the law to allow the woman to abstain from the normal wifely duties during this time of recuperation (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 1295, #e). It probably is to be added to the first seven days, making it add up to 40. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #7 at Lev. 4:6.

**12:5** The exact reason why the birth of a daughter made the woman unclean for a double amount of time has caused much conjecture. It must be remembered that we are in a patriarchal culture where the birth of a son was regarded as superior to the birth of a daughter. However, some has asserted that because a female child will one day also experience a monthly emission of fluids, this is the reason for the double length of time.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:6-8**

**““When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. <sup>7</sup>Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female. <sup>8</sup>But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.””**

**12:6 “When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting. . .”** There are two different types of sacrifices here:

a lamb and a bird. One was for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. The burnt offering expresses joy and thanks at the birth of a healthy child and the protection of the mother during the potential time of danger. This sin offering was to cleanse the sanctuary from the uncleanness caused by bodily emissions (cf. Lev. 15:31).

**12:7 “flow of her blood”** This phrase (BDB 881 construct 196) is used only twice in the OT (i.e., here and Lev. 20:18) for a woman’s discharge.

1. monthly
2. childbirth

Its basic meaning is “spring” or “fountain.”

**12:8** As always throughout the book of Leviticus, God is concerned that everyone can approach Him equally and, therefore, He makes a provision for the poor. Jesus’ parents offered this sacrifice (cf. Luke 2:22-24).

▣ **“make atonement”** See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Is it sinful to have a child? Why is a sin offering needed?
2. Why is the time of purification longer for a girl than a boy?
3. How do bodily fluids make one unclean (cf. Leviticus 15)?
4. How does lev. 12:6 show that women did participate in the sacrificial system?
5. How is Lev. 12:8 an act of compassion on YHWH’s part?

# LEVITICUS 13

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
The Test for Leprosy	The Law Concerning Leprosy	The Diagnosis of Leprosy	Law Concerning Skin Diseases	Human Skin Diseases a. swelling, scabs, discolorations
13:1-8	13:1-8	13:1 13:2-8	13:1-8	13:1-6  13:7-8  b. cases of dormant skin diseases
13:9-17	13:9-11 13:12-17	13:9-17	13:9-17	13:9-11 13:12-17  c. ulcers
13:18-23	13:18-23	13:18-23	13:18-23	13:18-23  d. burns
13:24-28	13:24-28	13:24-28	13:24-28	13:24-28  e. diseases of the scalp and chin
13:29-37	13:29-37	13:29-37	13:29-37	13:29-37  f. rash
13:38-39	13:38-46	13:38-39	13:38-39	13:38-39  g. loss of hair
13:40-44		13:40-44	13:40-44	13:40-44  The Law Governing Cases of Contagious Skin Diseases
13:45-46	The Law Concerning Leprous Garments	13:45-46	13:45-52  Laws Concerning Mildew	13:45-46  Infections of Clothing
13:47-52	13:47-58	13:47-52	13:47-52	13:47-52
13:53-55		13:53-55	13:53-58	13:53-55
13:56-58		13:56-58		13:56-58
13:59	13:59	13:59	13:59	13:59

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Leviticus 13-14 forms a unified context based on uncleanness in humans, garments, houses.

B. Brief Outline of Leviticus 13-14

1. Lev. 13:1-46, unclean skin diseases in humans
  - a. swelling (BDB 673)
  - b. scab (BDB 705, JPSOA, “rash”)
  - c. bright spot (BDB 97, JPSOA, “discoloration”)
  - d. other skin problems
2. Lev. 13:47-55, unclean marks in fabrics
3. Lev. 14:1-32, procedures for cleansing
4. Lev. 14:33-53, deals with marks in houses and how to make them clean
5. Lev. 14:54-57, typical editorial summary of the laws of “leprosy”

C. There are several types of skin diseases discussed here.

1. a swelling
2. a scab
3. a bright spot
4. the collective term “leprosy”

However, most modern physicians assume that this does not include what we know today as leprosy. The reason for this is that the priest had the option of quarantining the person for seven or fourteen days and then making a determination according to the progression of the disease. Modern leprosy is a very slow developing disease and would, therefore, be excluded from this criteria. This context would involve things such as eczema or skin diseases which have an oozing fluid or which are highly contagious and would affect the entire community. This does show that the rights of the individual were limited to the rights and well-being of the community.

D. For a good discussion of “leprosy” in Leviticus, see ABD, vol. 4, pp. 277-282.

**WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1-8**

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, <sup>2</sup>“When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes an infection of leprosy on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. <sup>3</sup>The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean. <sup>4</sup>But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *him who has* the infection for seven days. <sup>5</sup>The priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the infection has not changed *and* the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days. <sup>6</sup>The priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and if the infection has faded and the mark has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is *only* a scab. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. <sup>7</sup>“But if the scab spreads farther on the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again to the priest. <sup>8</sup>The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy.”**

**13:1** This opening phrase matches Lev. 11:1, but not Lev. 12:1. One wonders why. The book of Leviticus is an editorial process over a long period of time. Much goes back to the Tabernacle, but not all.

▣ **“man”** This is the term *adam* (BDB 9, Lev. 13:9) used in a generic sense (i.e., any person, cf. Lev. 13:29,38).

**13:2 “swelling”** The MT has “swelling” (BDB 673, NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 737, #2), but AB, p. 773, suggests that it does not come from the VERBAL root “to lift” or “to rise,” but advocates the translation of the Targums.

1. deep spot (i.e., indented)
2. prominent mark
3. mark

▣ **“scab”** See note at Lev. 13:6.

▣ **“a bright spot”** This translates “spot” (BDB 97); it may relate to

1. an eruption of bodily fluids
2. a feverish, discolored place (whitish and hot, like a boil), cf Lev. 13:10,19

▣

**NASB** “an infection of leprosy”

**NKJV** “a leprous sore”

**NRSV, LXX** “a leprous disease”

**TEV** “dreaded skin disease”

**NJB** “a contagious skin disease”

**JPSOA** “scaly affection”

The MT has “mark” or “stroke” (BDB 619, #3) CONSTRUCT “leprosy” (BDB 863) but see note in Contextual Insights, C.

**13:3** The priest is to be the one to test the different kinds of skin diseases. A brief outline of the type of tests would help us see the structure of this chapter.

1. Lev. 13:10-17 deals with raw flesh
2. Lev. 13:18-23 deals with boils (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 81)
3. Lev. 13:24-28 deals with burns
4. Lev. 13:29-37 deals with head infections
5. Lev. 13:38-39 deals with eczema (white spots)
6. Lev. 13:40-44 deals with baldness

▣ **“look”** This VERB (BDB 906, KB 1157) is used often in the sense of “examine” (cf. Lev. 13:3,5,6,7, 8,10,13,15,17,20,21,25,26,27,39,31,32,34,36,39,43,50,51,53,55,56,57). The priests were responsible for the spiritual and physical health of the community. Israel must be a people without blemish because they represented “the holy one of Israel” (see Special Topic: The Holy One).

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE HOLY ONE**

### **I. OT**

“The Holy One of Israel” is a favorite title for Deity in Isaiah (cf. Isa. 1:4; 5:19; 10:17,20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19,23; 30:11,12,15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14,16,20; 43:3,14,15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9,14). Because He is “holy,” His people should be holy (cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; 1Pet. 1:16).

This title, in a sense, expresses the impossible tension of a sinful, fallen people conforming to a holy standard. The Mosaic Covenant was impossible to keep (cf. Jos. 24:19; Acts 15; Galatians 3; Hebrews). The old covenant was a way to show the impossibility of humans to conform to God's standard (Galatians 3), yet He was with them, for them, preparing them for His answer to their fallen condition (i.e., "the New Covenant in Jesus"). He does not lower His standard, but provides it through His Messiah. The new covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38) is a covenant of faith and repentance, not human performance, though it issues in Christlikeness (cf. James 2:14-26). God wants a people who reflect His character to the nations (cf. Matt. 5:48).

II. "The Holy One" can refer to

1. God the Father (cf. numerous OT passages on "the Holy One of Israel")
2. God the Son (cf. Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Acts 3:14; 1 John 2:20)
3. God the Spirit (His title, "Holy Spirit" cf. John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22).

Acts 10:38 is a verse where all three persons of the Godhead are involved in anointing. Jesus was anointed (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). The concept is widened to include all believers (cf. 1 John 2:27). The Anointed One has become the anointed ones! This may be parallel to Antichrist and antichrists (cf. 1 John 2:18). The OT symbolic act of physical anointing with oil (cf. Exod. 29:7; 30:25; 37:29) relates to those who were called and equipped by God for a special task (i.e., prophets, priests, and kings). The word "Christ" is a translation of the Hebrew term "the anointed one" or Messiah.

▣ **"hair"** In the context of Leviticus 13-14 human hair color in an infected area is mentioned several times as a way to determine "clean" or "unclean."

1. white – Lev. 13:3-4,10,21,25,26
2. yellow – Lev. 13:30,32,36
3. black – Lev. 13:31,37

Being "unclean" excluded one from worship and also, in certain cases, from community.

**13:4 "isolate"** This VERB (BDB 688, KB 742, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*) is used for quarantining a contagious person from the community (cf. Lev. 13:4,5,11,21,26,31,33,50,54; 14:38,46). Miriam is isolated for leprosy in Num. 12:14-15. Usually it was for a specific period of time.

1. seven days
2. fourteen days
3. permanently until healing or death

There is another possible meaning that "isolate" relates to the sore, possibly drawing a line around it to see if it spreads.

**13:5 "seventh day"** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4 at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **"spread"** This VERB (BDB 832, KB 979) occurs only in this literary unit (i.e., Leviticus 13-14), but it occurs 22 times. Spreading was one of the criteria for determining if someone/something was "unclean."

**13:6** Notice the criteria the priest used to pronounce an infected person clean.

1. the infection (BDB 619, lit. "mark" or "stroke") has faded
2. it has not spread



NASB, NJB,	
Peshitta	“a scab”
NKJV, TEV	“a sore”
NRSV	“an eruption”
JPSOA	“a rash”
LXX	“a mark”

This term (ספחה, BDB 705, KB 764) occurs only here (Lev. 13:2,6,7,8) and Lev. 14:56. Its meaning is uncertain. KB lists a related root from Ethiopia (KB 764 III), which means “spread out” or from KB 764 II, “make scabby” (i.e., related to שפה).

It may relate to ספה (BDB I, II) to “pour,” i.e., eruption of fluids.

**13:7 “spreads farther”** This grammatical construct of intensity (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 832, KB 979) appears four times (i.e., Lev. 13:7,22,27,35).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:9-17**

**<sup>9</sup>“When the infection of leprosy is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. <sup>10</sup>The priest shall then look, and if there is a white swelling in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is quick raw flesh in the swelling, <sup>11</sup>it is a chronic leprosy on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean. <sup>12</sup>If the leprosy breaks out farther on the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of *him who has* the infection from his head even to his feet, as far as the priest can see, <sup>13</sup>then the priest shall look, and behold, *if* the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce clean *him who has* the infection; it has all turned white *and* he is clean. <sup>14</sup>But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. <sup>15</sup>The priest shall look at the raw flesh, and he shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean, it is leprosy. <sup>16</sup>Or if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest, <sup>17</sup>and the priest shall look at him, and behold, *if* the infection has turned to white, then the priest shall pronounce clean *him who has* the infection; he is clean.”**

**13:9-10** There is a distinction between “the mark” or “the stroke” (BDB 619) of Lev. 13:2 and 13:9. But exactly how is uncertain because of the ambiguity of the terms.

In Lev. 13:10 there are new criteria for judging.

1. white swelling in the skin
2. hair in the spot is also white
3. raw flesh (cf. Lev. 13:14-15)

This type of skin disease must be isolated.

**13:10 “swelling”** The NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 767 (?) Suggests several different translations for this Hebrew word.

1. swelling – Lev. 13:2; 14:56
2. white blotch – Lev. 13:10,19
3. scar/blotch of a burn – Lev. 13:28
4. inflamed swelling – Lev. 13:43

There are so many of these terms describing medical conditions that moderns are not sure about. Obviously, they were terms of their ANE vocabulary which do not fit or conform to modern medical terminology.

**13:12-13** If it spreads to the whole body, Lev. 13:12, it is a non-infectious skin disease and the person is pronounced clean.

**13:12 “breaks out farther”** This is another intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB, BDB 827, KB 965). This probably refers to a skin disease that causes the skin to lose all pigment. This ailment is not contagious (Lev. 13:13).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:18-23**

**<sup>18</sup>“When the body has a boil on its skin and it is healed, <sup>19</sup>and in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a reddish-white, bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest; <sup>20</sup>and the priest shall look, and behold, *if* it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the infection of leprosy, it has broken out in the boil. <sup>21</sup>But if the priest looks at it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it and it is not lower than the skin and is faded, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; <sup>22</sup>and if it spreads farther on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection. <sup>23</sup>But if the bright spot remains in its place and does not spread, it is *only* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.”**

**13:18**

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, TEV “a boil”

NJB “ulcer”

JPSOA “an inflammation”

REB “fester”

LXX “a festering sore”

The MT has “boil” or “eruption” (BDB 1006), which is related to the Arabic and Aramaic root “to be hot.” The same root is used of the “boils” in the plagues on Egypt (i.e., Deut. 28:27,35).

Notice what the priest is looking for (Lev. 13:19-20).

1. white swelling
2. reddish-white, bright spot
3. appears lower than the skin
4. hair on it has turned white

The same criteria is used for burns (cf. Lev. 13:24-28).

**13:23 “scar”** This FEMININE NOUN (BDB 863) is translated “scab,” “scar.” It occurs only in Lev. 13:23,28. It is related to the VERB “to burn” or “to scorch” (BDB 863) and may refer to the healed wound of the burning.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:24-28**

**<sup>24</sup>“Or if the body sustains in its skin a burn by fire, and the raw *flesh* of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, <sup>25</sup>then the priest shall look at it. And if the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears to be deeper than the skin, it is leprosy; it has broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy. <sup>26</sup>But if the priest looks at it, and indeed, there is no white hair in the bright spot and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; <sup>27</sup>and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads farther in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy. <sup>28</sup>But if the bright spot remains in its place and has not spread in the skin, but is dim, it**



is the swelling from the burn; and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is *only* the scar of the burn.”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:29-37**

<sup>29</sup>“Now if a man or woman has an infection on the head or on the beard, <sup>30</sup>then the priest shall look at the infection, and if it appears to be deeper than the skin and there is thin yellowish hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scale, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard. <sup>31</sup>But if the priest looks at the infection of the scale, and indeed, it appears to be no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the person* with the scaly infection for seven days. <sup>32</sup>On the seventh day the priest shall look at the infection, and if the scale has not spread and no yellowish hair has grown in it, and the appearance of the scale is no deeper than the skin, <sup>33</sup>then he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the scale; and the priest shall isolate *the person* with the scale seven more days. <sup>34</sup>Then on the seventh day the priest shall look at the scale, and if the scale has not spread in the skin and it appears to be no deeper than the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. <sup>35</sup>But if the scale spreads farther in the skin after his cleansing, <sup>36</sup>then the priest shall look at him, and if the scale has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellowish hair; he is unclean. <sup>37</sup>If in his sight the scale has remained, however, and black hair has grown in it, the scale has healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.”

**13:30-32** This describes the physical criteria for a pronouncement of “unclean” connected to a head/beard (i.e., scales, BDB 683).

1. appears deeper than the skin
2. has yellowish hair in it
3. it is scaly (BDB 683)
4. if it has not spread after seven days the person is “clean”; they must
  - a. shave
  - b. wash his/her clothes

**13:30**

NASB, REB “scale”

NKJV, JPSOA,  
NET “scaly”

NRSV, NIV “itch”

LXX “rupture”

JB “ringworm”

The MT has “scab” (BDB 683), which is from the VERB “to pull,” “to draw,” or “to tear away,” which denotes intensive and recurrent itching.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:38-39**

<sup>38</sup>“When a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, *even* white bright spots, <sup>39</sup>then the priest shall look, and if the bright spots on the skin of their bodies are a faint white, it is eczema that has broken out on the skin; he is clean.”

**13:38-39** This is a different skin disorder but one that is not contagious. AB, p. 800, calls it “vitiligo” or “leukoderma,” which is common in tropical climates.

1. the NASB translated this (BDB 97) as “eczema
2. NRSV and NJB have “rash
3. UBS *Handbook*, p. 196, suggests “harmless eruption of the skin”; TEV, “only a blemish”

This word occurs only here.

**13:39 “eczema”** This seems to refer to a particular kind of skin disease called “leukoderma,” which, although it changes the pigmentation of the skin, is not contagious and is not considered unclean.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:40-44**

<sup>40</sup>“Now if a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald; he is clean. <sup>41</sup>If his head becomes bald at the front and sides, he is bald on the forehead; he is clean. <sup>42</sup>But if on the bald head or the bald forehead, there occurs a reddish-white infection, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead. <sup>43</sup>Then the priest shall look at him; and if the swelling of the infection is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the body, <sup>44</sup>he is a leprous man, he is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his infection is on his head.”

**13:40 “he is bald; he is clean”** I simply added this for all of you men who have been wondering!!!

**13:44 “The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean”** The VERB is another intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 389, KB 375).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:45-46**

<sup>45</sup>“As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ <sup>46</sup>He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

**13:45-46 “As for the leper who had the infection”** This is a series of procedures which a person designated as “unclean” must perform in order to warn his covenant partners of his ceremonial contamination.

1. He shall tear his clothes in a symbolic fashion of mourning.
2. He shall let the hair of his head go unkempt.
3. he shall cover his mustache.
4. He shall cry, “Unclean! Unclean!”
5. From 2 Kgs. 7:3, we also know that lepers may have lived in colonies outside the camp.

Leprosy was a terrible disease because it excluded one from the normal joys of life and from his or her own family. Some would see by this that leprosy was a divine punishment for sin, somewhat like barrenness in women. However, they base this on Uzziah’s getting leprosy because he disobeyed God, but making a general statement is probably inappropriate.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:47-52**

<sup>47</sup>“When a garment has a mark of leprosy in it, whether it is a wool garment or a linen garment, <sup>48</sup>whether in warp or woof, of linen or of wool, whether in leather or in any article made of leather, <sup>49</sup>if the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is a leprous mark and shall be shown to the priest. <sup>50</sup>Then the priest shall

**look at the mark and shall quarantine the article with the mark for seven days. <sup>51</sup>He shall then look at the mark on the seventh day; if the mark has spread in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in the leather, whatever the purpose for which the leather is used, the mark is a leprous malignancy, it is unclean. <sup>52</sup>So he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather in which the mark occurs, for it is a leprous malignancy; it shall be burned in the fire.”**

**13:47 “When a garment has a mark of leprosy in it”** This apparently deals with mildew in garments (i.e., linen, wool, leather). This passage of Scripture is pretty much self-explanatory.

**13:48** The terms “warp” or “woof” (BDB 1059, NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 262 and BDB 786 II, NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 523), found in Lev. 13:48ff in the NASB version, is extremely difficult to understand. This term, although used several times in this particular context, is found only here in the entire Old Testament and we must admit that we are not sure what it means. Best guess is that the mildew or mold is deep in the fabric or has caused an indentation.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:53-55**

**<sup>53</sup>“But if the priest shall look, and indeed the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, <sup>54</sup>then the priest shall order them to wash the thing in which the mark occurs and he shall quarantine it for seven more days. <sup>55</sup>After the article with the mark has been washed, the priest shall again look, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though the mark has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether an eating away has produced bareness on the top or on the front of it.”**

**13:54-57** This is a summary statement. These editorial comments are common in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 11:46-47; 12:7b; 13:54-59; 14:32,54-57; 15:32-33). They show the process of compilation which produced (i.e., under inspiration; see Special Topic: Inspiration at Lev. 6:8) the current book of Leviticus.

**13:54-55 “wash. . .fire”** These were two different procedures to restore ceremonial purity. See Special Topic: Fire at Lev. 10:2.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:56-58**

**<sup>56</sup>“Then if the priest looks, and if the mark has faded after it has been washed, then he shall tear it out of the garment or out of the leather, whether from the warp or from the woof; <sup>57</sup>and if it appears again in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is an outbreak; the article with the mark shall be burned in the fire. <sup>58</sup>The garment, whether the warp or the woof, or any article of leather from which the mark has departed when you washed it, it shall then be washed a second time and will be clean.”**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:59**

**<sup>59</sup>This is the law for the mark of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean.”**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why were skin diseases so important to the priest?
2. Define “leprosy” in this context.
3. Why was ceremonial cleanness so important to YHWH?
4. How does one apply this text to today?

# LEVITICUS 14

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Law of Cleansing a Leper	The Ritual for Cleansing Healed Lepers	The Cleansing of Leprosy	Purification After Having Skin diseases	Purification from Contagious Skin-diseases
14:1-9	14:1-9	14:1-2a 14:2b-9	14:1-9	14:1-9
14:10-20	14:10-20	14:10-20	14:10-20	14:10-18 14:19-20
14:21-32	14:21-32	14:21-32	14:21-32	14:21-31 14:32
Cleansing a Leprous House	The Law Concerning Leprous Houses		Mildew in Houses	Similar Infections of Houses
14:33	14:33-42	14:33	14:33-42	14:33
14:34-42		14:34-42		14:34-42
14:43-47	14:43-47	14:43-47	14:43-47	14:43-45 14:46-48
14:48-53	14:48-53	14:48-53	14:48-53	14:49-53
14:54-57	14:54-57	14:54-57	14:54-57	4:54-57

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:1-9

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, <sup>3</sup>and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, <sup>4</sup>then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. <sup>5</sup>The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. <sup>6</sup>As for the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. <sup>7</sup>He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. <sup>8</sup>The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. <sup>9</sup>It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean.”

**14:1 “This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing”** Leviticus 14 describes an elaborate ritual to thank God for the cleansing of the leper. It has much in common with

1. the ordination of Aaron (Leviticus 8-9)
2. the ashes of the Red Heifer (Numbers 19)
3. the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

It is almost like a life coming back from the dead. It also held out hope for those who had leprosy that healing was possible. The rabbis asserted (because of Uzziah’s leprosy) that it was a God-given disease.

▣ **“the law”** This term, “Torah” (BDB 435), means “instruction” or “direction.” It is used often in Leviticus to describe YHWH’s guidelines (cf. Lev. 6:9,14,25; 7:1,7,11,37; 11:46; 12:7; 13:59; 14:2,32, 54,57; 15:32; 26:46). See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ **“in the day of his cleansing”** Notice the time sequence.

1. day one – priest goes outside the camp, Lev. 14:2-8
2. day seven – still outside the camp, Lev. 14:9
3. day eight – in the Tabernacle, Lev. 14:10-32

Notice “day” is used symbolically not literally. See Special Topic: Day (*yom*).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: DAY (*yom*, BDB 398, KB 399)**

Theories of the meaning of *yom* (day) in Genesis 1, taken and adapted from Dr. John Harris’ (Dean of the School of Christian Studies and Professor of OT at East Texas Baptist University) OT Survey I Notebook:

1. The Literal Twenty-Four Hour Period Theory

This is the straightforward approach (cf. Exod. 20:9-11). Questions arising from this approach:

- a. How was there light on day one when the sun was not created until day four?
- b. How were all the animals (especially those original to other parts of the world) named in less than one day? (cf. Gen. 2:19-20)?

2. The Day-Age Theory

This theory attempts to harmonize science (particularly geology) with scripture. This theory states that the “days” were “geological ages” in length. Their length is unequal, and they approximate the various layers described in uniformitarian geology. Scientists tend to agree with the general development of Gen. 1: vapor and a watery mass preceded the separation of land and sea prior to

the appearance of life. Vegetable life came before animal life, and mankind represented the latest and most complex form of life. Questions arising from this approach.

- a. How did plants survive for “ages” without the sun?
- b. How did pollination take place in plants if insects and birds were not made until “ages” later?

3. The Alternate Age-Day Theory

The days are in fact twenty-four hour periods, but each day is separated by ages in which what was created developed. Questions arising from this approach.

- a. The same problems arise as in the Day-Age Theory.
- b. Does the text indicate “day” to be used both as twenty-four hours and as an era?

4. The Progressive Creation-Catastrophe Theory

This theory goes as follows: between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2, there was an indefinite period of time in which the geological ages took place; during this period, the pre-historic creatures in the order suggested by the fossils were created; around 200,000 years ago, a supernatural disaster occurred and destroyed much of the life on this planet and made many animals extinct; then the days of Genesis 1 occurred. These days refer to a re-creation, rather than to an original creation.

5. The Eden-Only Theory

The creation account refers only to the creation and physical aspects of the Garden of Eden.

6. The Gap Theory

Based on Gen. 1:1, God created a perfect world. Based on Gen. 1:2, Lucifer (Satan) was placed in charge of the world and rebelled. God then judged Lucifer and the world by utter destruction. For millions of years, the world was left alone and the geological ages passed. Based on Gen. 1:3-2:3, in 4004 B.C.E., the six literal twenty-four hour days of re-creation occurred. Bishop Ussher (A.D. 1654) used the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 to calculate and date the creation of humanity, ca. 4004 B.C.E. However, genealogies do not represent complete chronological schemes.

7. The Sacred Week Theory

The writer of the book of Genesis used the concept of days and a week as a literary device to put across the divine message of the activity of God in creation. Such a structure illustrates the beauty and symmetry of God's creative work.

8. The Cosmic Temple Inauguration

This is a recent view by John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, IVP, 2009, which sees the six days as a "functional ontology, not a material ontology. They describe God ordering or setting up a functioning universe for mankind's good. This fits the other ancient cosmologies. For example, the first three days would represent God providing "seasons" (i.e., time), "weather" (i.e., for crops) and "food." The repeated phrase "it is good" would denote functionality.

The seventh day would describe God entering His fully functional and inhabited "cosmic temple" as its rightful owner, controller, and director. Genesis 1 has nothing to do with the material creation of matter but the ordering of that matter for a functioning place for God and humans to fellowship. The "days" become a literary device to communicate the ANE's general consensus that

- a. there is no distinction between the "natural" and the "supernatural"
- b. Deity is involved in every aspect of life. Israel's uniqueness was not her general worldview but the following
  - (1) her monotheism
  - (2) creation was for mankind, not for the gods
  - (3) there is no conflict between the gods nor the gods and humanity in Israel's account.

She did not borrow her creation account from others but shared their general worldview.

The term "day" usually refers to a 24 hour cycle of the earth's rotation (i.e., Exod. 20:9-10), but it can refer to a period of unspecified time (cf. Gen. 2:4; 5:2; Ruth 1:1; Ps. 50:15; 90:4; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 4:2; 11:2; Zech. 4:10).

▣ **“Now he shall be brought to the priest”** This action is referred to in Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14; 17:14. However, the priest must be outside the camp in this context. Maybe there was a designated place (but note Lev. 13:46).

**14:3** The leper had to live away from the camp of Israel (cf. Lev. 13:45-46), therefore, the priest must go to him.

▣ **“infection of leprosy”** See note at Lev. 13:2. This root (BDB 619) is used 60 times in Leviticus 13-14, but no where else in Leviticus.

**14:4-7** This records the priest’s part in the cleansing procedures.

1. items
  - a. take two clean birds (wild birds, cf. Lev. 14:7)
  - b. take cedar wood
  - c. take scarlet string
  - d. take hyssop
2. ritual
  - a. kill one bird in earthen vessel over running water
  - b. mix b, c, d from above with the live bird in the earthenware vessel
  - c. sprinkle the blood on the cured person
  - d. make an official pronouncement of their cleansing
  - e. let the live bird go free (see note at Lev. 1:7)

**14:4**

**NASB, REB** “scarlet string”

**NKJV** “scarlet”

**NRSV** “crimson yarn”

**TEV** “red cord”

**NJB, Peshitta** “scarlet material”

**JPSOA** “scarlet stuff”

**NET** “crimson fabric”

**LXX** “scarlet spun thread”

This is from two NOUNS (BDB 1040 CONSTRUCT BDB 1009). Literally it means “red worm.” It is used in

1. Lev. 14:4,6,49,51,52
2. Num. 19:6 (ashes of red heifer)

It may refer to the red dye itself. Notice the ritual earthen bowl has

1. blood of the bird
2. water
3. cedar wood (reddish)
4. this

All are reddish in color, somehow ?? with the theological concept of blood atonement; leprosy takes life—this gives it back.

▣ **“hyssop”** It was a desert shrub with hairy, straight branches. It was used in blood sprinkling rituals (cf. Exod. 12:22; Lev. 14:4,6,49,51,52; Num. 19:6,18; 1 Kgs. 4:37; Ps. 51:7). See UBS *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pp. 129-130, and NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 334-335.



Some commentators think that the blood of the slain bird was sprinkled with both

1. hyssop and
2. the piece of cedar with a red-dyed cloth or string attached

#### 14:5

NASB, NKJV,

NJB, Peshitta “running water”

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB, NET “fresh water”

LXX “living water”

The ADJECTIVE (BDB 311) means “alive” or “living.” It is used of water that has not been “stored” (cf. Gen. 26:19; Lev. 14:5,6,50,51,52; 15:13; Num. 19:17; Song of Songs 4:15; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Zech. 14:8. The last three refer to YHWH and His new day of forgiveness. This is the theological thrust.

**14:7 “sprinkle”** It does not specify where. The rabbis ??

1. the back
2. the forehead

For the VERB see note at Lev. 1:15.

▣ **“seven times”** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4 at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **“the one who is to be cleansed”** Notice the person is already cured but the ritual is for ceremonial purification.

After the ritual the priest must still “pronounce him clean” (BDB 372, KB 369, *Piel* PERFECT with *waw*). They were “pronounced” (i.e., “judged”) unclean, now they must be pronounced “clean” so that they can resume

1. community
2. worship
3. family

▣ **“shall let the live bird go free over the open field”** This ritual, like the live goat of Leviticus 16, is a symbol of bearing away the impurity/uncleanness of the “leprosy.” The bird, like the goat of Leviticus 16, is not to return to the camp, therefore, it is probably a wild bird.

Some say that this symbolized the person going free, while others say it refers to the sin being borne away like the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). This is a unique aspect of this sacrifice, as one bird dies, the other is set free.

**14:8-9** These are the remaining ritual procedures for the person pronounced clean.

1. wash clothes
2. shave off all hair
3. bathe ones body
4. stay outside of his/her tent for seven days

**14:8 “shave off all his hair”** This ritual had several connotations.

1. removal of uncleanness
  - a. here, in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 13:33; 14:8,9; 21:5)
  - b. end of temporary Nazirite vow (cf. Num. 6:9,18-19; Acts 21:24)
2. procedure for wife captured in battle (cf. Deut. 21:12)

3. sign of mourning – see Special Topic: Grieving Rites at Lev. 10:3
4. symbol of humiliation and defeat in battle – 2 Sam. 10:4; 1 Chr. 19:4; Isa. 7:20; Jer. 41:5

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:10-20**

<sup>10</sup>“Now on the eighth day he is to take two male lambs without defect, and a yearling ewe lamb without defect, and three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil; <sup>11</sup>and the priest who pronounces him clean shall present the man to be cleansed and the aforesaid before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>12</sup>Then the priest shall take the one male lamb and bring it for a guilt offering, with the log of oil, and present them as a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>13</sup>Next he shall slaughter the male lamb in the place where they slaughter the sin offering and the burnt offering, at the place of the sanctuary—for the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest; it is most holy. <sup>14</sup>The priest shall then take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. <sup>15</sup>The priest shall also take some of the log of oil, and pour *it* into his left palm; <sup>16</sup>the priest shall then dip his right-hand finger into the oil that is in his left palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of the oil seven times before the LORD. <sup>17</sup>Of the remaining oil which is in his palm, the priest shall put some on the right ear lobe of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the guilt offering; <sup>18</sup>while the rest of the oil that is in the priest’s palm, he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD. <sup>19</sup>The priest shall next offer the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Then afterward, he shall slaughter the burnt offering. <sup>20</sup>The priest shall offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be clean.”

**14:10-20** These verses describe the sacrifices to be made on the altar in regard to the pronouncement of the person cured.

1. on the eighth day have available (Lev. 14:10)
  - a. two male lambs
  - b. a yearling ewe lamb
  - c. 3/10 of a bushel of fine flour with oil
  - d. one log of oil
2. the procedure
  - a. present the person at the doorway of the Tabernacle
  - b. present one male lamb and the log of oil as a guilt offering (i.e., wave)
  - c. put the lamb’s blood on the cleansed person’s
    - (1) the right ear lobe
    - (2) the right big toe
    - (3) pour some of the oil on the priest’s left palm (Lev. 14:15)
  - d. of the oil in the left palm the priest shall
    - (1) sprinkle it seven times before the Lord (Lev. 14:16)
    - (2) put it on (Lev. 14:17)
      - (a) right thumb
      - (b) right big toe
    - (3) remainder of the oil on the head of the person cured (Lev. 14:15)
  - e. killing of sin offering (Lev. 14:19)

- f. burning of burnt offering (Lev. 14:19-20)
- g. offer the grain offering (Lev. 14:20)

**14:10 “without defect”** See note at Lev. 3:9 and Special Topic: Blameless, Innocent, Guiltless, Without Reproach at Lev. 9:2b.



NASB	“ <i>an ephah</i> ”
NKJV, NRSV,	
REB, NET	“ <i>of an ephah</i> ”
TEV	“half a pint”
JPSOA	“of a measure”
LXX	-----
Peshitta	“deals”

The MT does not specify which measurement. Ephah is assumed by most translations. The Talmud has 1/10 of a “*hin*.” See Special Topic: Ancient Near East Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

▣ “**fine flour**” See note on BDB 701 at Lev. 2:2.

▣ “**log**” This term (BDB 528) refers to some amount of liquid (cf. Lev. 14:10,12,15,21,24). UBS *Handbook*, p. 211, suggests “half a pint.” The term is found only in this chapter.

**14:12 “and present them as a wave offering”** This phrase is a combination of the NOUN “wave” (BDB 632) and the VERB (BDB 631, KB 682) “wave them as a wave offering.” See note at Lev. 7:30.

**14:13 “in the place where they slaughter. . .”** This refers to the area around the altar of sacrifice in the Tabernacle. See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7 and Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c.

▣ “**it is most holy**” The distinction between “holy” and “most holy” was where the blood was placed. If it was taken into the shrine (i.e., holy place and most holy place), it was “most holy.”

**14:14 “some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the lobe of the right ear”**  
This is similar to the ordination of Aaron (cf. Lev. 8:24). It may denote the whole person.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:21-32**

<sup>21</sup>“**But if he is poor and his means are insufficient, then he is to take one male lamb for a guilt offering as a wave offering to make atonement for him, and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil, <sup>22</sup>and two turtledoves or two young pigeons which are within his means, the one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. <sup>23</sup>Then the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, before the LORD. <sup>24</sup>The priest shall take the lamb of the guilt offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall offer them for a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>25</sup>Next he shall slaughter the lamb of the guilt offering; and 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 and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. <sup>26</sup>The priest shall also pour some of the oil into his left palm; <sup>27</sup>and with his right-hand finger the priest shall sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before the LORD. <sup>28</sup>The priest shall then**

put some of the oil that is in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the guilt offering. <sup>29</sup>Moreover, the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement on his behalf before the LORD. <sup>30</sup>He shall then offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, which are within his means. <sup>31</sup>*He shall offer* what he can afford, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the one to be cleansed. <sup>32</sup>This is the law *for him* in whom there is an infection of leprosy, whose means are limited for his cleansing.”

**14:21-32** There is a similar ritual procedure for the poor person who has been cleansed (i.e., Lev. 14:32).

1. one male lamb
2. 1/10 of a bushel of fine flour and oil
3. one log of oil
4. two clean birds

For a good brief discussion, see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 462-464.

**14:31 “make atonement”** This is a summary of the purification rite (cf. Lev. 14:18,20) of the poorer person. See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:33**

<sup>33</sup>The LORD further spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying:

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:34-42**

<sup>34</sup>“When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession, <sup>35</sup>then the one who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, ‘*Something* like a mark of leprosy has become visible to me in the house.’ <sup>36</sup>The priest shall then command that they empty the house before the priest goes in to look at the mark, so that everything in the house need not become unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to look at the house. <sup>37</sup>So he shall look at the mark, and if the mark on the walls of the house has greenish or reddish depressions and appears deeper than the surface, <sup>38</sup>then the priest shall come out of the house, to the doorway, and quarantine the house for seven days. <sup>39</sup>The priest shall return on the seventh day and make an inspection. If the mark has indeed spread in the walls of the house, <sup>40</sup>then the priest shall order them to tear out the stones with the mark in them and throw them away at an unclean place outside the city. <sup>41</sup>He shall have the house scraped all around inside, and they shall dump the plaster that they scrape off at an unclean place outside the city. <sup>42</sup>Then they shall take other stones and replace *those* stones, and he shall take other plaster and replaster the house.”

**14:33-53** These verses deal with some type of “leprosy” in a house. This seems to refer to mildew (i.e., mildew, mold, fungus) or mineral deposits on the walls. It also reflects a future time because at this period the people were at Mt. Sinai living in tents and they would not enter the Promised Land (Lev. 14:34) and live in houses until forty years later. This is evidence that Leviticus is an editorial compilation.

**14:34** This verse is meant to express that YHWH is the cause of all things (i.e., Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 14:24-27; 43:13; 45:7; 54:16; Jer. 18:11; Lam. 3:33-38; Amos 3:6).

Verses like these magnify the question about causality. I think there are several sources.

1. God

2. evil
3. fallen world

This is not the world God intended it to be. Bad things happen. I am uncomfortable attributing evil (personal or natural) to God. This is not meant to diminish His power and knowledge (i.e., Rom. 8:28), but it does assert His goodness and mercy. See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel’s God (OT) at Lev. 10:3b and Characteristics of Israel’s God (NT).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL’S GOD (NT)**

(Taken from Dr. Utley’s notes on 1 Timothy 1:17)

A. “the King” – This doxology is similar to 1 Tim. 6:15-16, which may reflect Deut. 10:17. It reflects the language of the later synagogue (“the King of the Universe,” cf. Rev. 15:3) and the Jews of the diaspora.

It is quite possible that Paul is quoting a creed or hymn of the early church as he does in 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:15-16 and 2 Tim. 2:11-13.

B. “Eternal” – This is the first of four powerful ADJECTIVES which are the same ones used in the phrase “eternal life” in 1 Tim. 1:16, but here to describe God. It is literally “of the ages” (*aiōnion*), which may be a metaphor of eternity or a reference to the Jewish concept of two ages:

1. a current evil age characterized by independence and rebellion (angel and human)
2. a coming promised age of righteousness brought by the Spirit and implemented by the Messiah (see Special Topic: This Age and the Age to Come).

C. “immortal” – This is literally “incorruptible.” It refers metaphorically of the ever-living, only-living One (YHWH from the Hebrew VERB “to be,” cf. Exod. 3:14, see Special Topic: Names for Deity). Only God has life in Himself (cf. Rom. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). All other life is a derived gift and a stewardship. It comes only through the grace of the Father, the work of Christ (cf. 2 Tim. 1:10), and the ministry of the Spirit.

D. “invisible” – This is used in the sense of the spiritual realm (cf. Col. 1:15) or possibly YHWH as the unseen God (i.e., no images, cf. Exod. 33:20; Deut. 4:15; 1 Tim. 6:16). God is the eternal Spirit present in all of creation!

E. “the only God” – This refers to Jewish monotheism (see Special Topic: Monotheism). This context reflects Israel’s unique worldview. The Bible presents mankind with a faith perspective beyond the five senses.

1. There is one and only one God (cf. Gen. 1:1; Exod. 8:10; 9:14; Deut. 4:35-39; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 7:22; 22:32; 1 Kgs. 8:23; Ps. 86:8,10; Isa. 43:11; 44:6,8; 45:6-7,14,18,21-22; 46:5,9; Jer. 2:11; 5:7; 10:6; 16:20).
2. He is a personal, creator, redeemer God (cf. Genesis 1-2; 3:15; Psalm 103-104).
3. He gives promises of hope and restoration by means of Messiah (cf. Isaiah 53).
4. Faith in Messiah repairs the breach of rebellion (the gospel).
5. Whosoever believes in Messiah may have eternal life (the gospel).

The Textus Receptus, following the Greek uncial manuscripts  $\aleph^c$ ,  $D^c$ , K, L, and P, adds “wise” (NKJV, “to God who alone is wise”). This addition is absent in the Greek manuscripts  $\aleph^*$ , A,  $D^*$ , F, G, and  $H^*$ . It may be a scribal addition from Rom. 16:27. The UBS<sup>4</sup> gives the shorter text an “A” rating (certain).

F. “be honor and glory” – This is basically the meaning of the OT term *kabod* (cf. 1 Tim. 1:11). It is used several times in the book of Revelation along with other praises (cf. Rev. 4:9,11; 5:12,13; 7:12). In the OT the most common Hebrew word for “glory” (*kabod*, see Special Topic: Glory [OT]) was

originally a commercial term referring to a pair of scales which meant “to be heavy.” That which was heavy was valuable or had intrinsic worth. Often the concept of brightness was added to the word to express God’s majesty (cf. Exod. 15:16; 24:17; Isa. 60:1-2). He alone is worthy and honorable. He is too brilliant for fallen mankind to behold (cf. Exod. 33:17-23; Isa. 6:5). God can only be truly known through Christ (cf. Jer. 1:14; Matt. 17:2; Heb. 1:3; James 2:1).

The term “glory” is somewhat ambiguous.

1. it may be parallel to “the righteousness of God”
2. it may refer to the “holiness” or “perfection” of God
3. it could refer to the image of God in which mankind was created (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6), but which was later marred through rebellion (cf. Gen. 3:1-22; Rom. 3:9-18)

It is first used of YHWH’s presence with His people (cf. Exod. 16:7,10; Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10).

- G. “forever and ever” – This is literally “ages of the ages,” an idiom for eternity (cf. Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 2 Tim. 4:18). This same term is used in 1 Tim. 4:16 for “eternal life” and in 2 Tim. 4:18 for “King eternal.” See Special Topic: Forever (Greek idiom).

**14:36** This is extremely interesting to me because it shows the practicality of these laws. Man was to remove all of the things he needed for daily life before the priest came to determine if the house was clean or unclean. If he did not remove them, then all of the possessions needed for daily life would be quarantined.

**14:37**

NASB, NJB,

REB “depressions”

NKJV, JPSOA “streaks”

NRSV, TEV “spots”

NET (Egyptian root) “eruptions”

LXX “hollow”

Peshitta (Ibn Ezra) “scales”

This term (BDB 891) occurs only here (PLURAL). There have been many suggestions. NASB assumes it comes from Arabic root “to be deep” (BDB 891) or the Hebrew root (BDB 891) “dish” (cf. Exod. 37:16).

If “depression” is accurate, it seems to link up with the depressions of “leprosy” in Lev. 13:3 (i.e., “deeper than the skin”). It is the similarity between “leprosy” in humans and mold/mildew/fungus in houses and garments that unites chapters 13 and 14.

**14:40 “the stones”** This is surprising that both “the camp” and “stones” in houses appear in the same context. Israel lived in “tents” when this was originally given, but only later after the conquest did they have stone houses.

▣ **“at an unclean place outside the camp”** This location (cf. Lev. 14:40,41,45) is unknown but it is in contrast to the place where the remains of the sacrificial rituals were taken (i.e., “a clean place outside the camp,” cf. Lev. 4:12; 6:4). Somehow these two locations were marked or well known.

**14:41** This procedure on a house is theologically parallel to the cleansed leper shaving.

**14:42 “plaster. . .replaster”** A plaster made of mud/earth/clay (BDB 779, #1, g) and

1. straw
2. ash
3. sand
4. lime

See James Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 90, #159.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:43-47**

<sup>43</sup>“If, however, the mark breaks out again in the house after he has torn out the stones and scraped the house, and after it has been replastered, <sup>44</sup>then the priest shall come in and make an inspection. If he sees that the mark has indeed spread in the house, it is a malignant mark in the house; it is unclean. <sup>45</sup>He shall therefore tear down the house, its stones, and its timbers, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall take *them* outside the city to an unclean place. <sup>46</sup>Moreover, whoever goes into the house during the time that he has quarantined it, becomes unclean until evening. <sup>47</sup>Likewise, whoever lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and whoever eats in the house shall wash his clothes.”

**14:45** The reason the stones, timbers, and the plaster were put into an unclean place outside the town was because the people had a tendency to reuse building materials in other dwellings. To put them in an unclean place made the stones, timber, and plaster “unclean” and the Hebrews would not be tempted to reuse them.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:48-53**

<sup>48</sup>“If, on the other hand, the priest comes in and makes an inspection and the mark has not indeed spread in the house after the house has been replastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean because the mark has not reappeared. <sup>49</sup>To cleanse the house then, he shall take two birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop, <sup>50</sup>and he shall slaughter the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. <sup>51</sup>Then he shall take the cedar wood and the hyssop and the scarlet string, with the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird as well as in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. <sup>52</sup>He shall thus cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the running water, along with the live bird and with the cedar wood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet string. <sup>53</sup>However, he shall let the live bird go free outside the city into the open field. So he shall make atonement for the house, and it will be clean.”

**14:48-53** This describes the sacrifices for cleansing, which are similar to those for the cleansing of a leper.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:54-57**

<sup>54</sup>This is the law for any mark of leprosy—even for a scale, <sup>55</sup>and for the leprous garment or house, <sup>56</sup>and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot—<sup>57</sup>to teach when they are unclean and when they are clean. This is the law of leprosy.

**14:54-57** This is a summary of Leviticus 13 and 14. For a brief discussion on how to apply these rituals to Christians, see Sandy and Giese, *Cracking OT Codes*, pp. 123-125 and Fee and Stuart *How To Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, pp. 165-169.

**14:56** See note at Lev. 12:2 on the meaning of these three key words.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is the ritual of Leviticus 14 similar to Leviticus 16?
2. How can Lev. 14:34 be related to Israel in the wilderness?
3. Does God send “leprosy” on houses? (Lev. 14:34)
4. Why release one bird?
5. How is “leprosy” in humans similar to “leprosy” in garments, leather, and houses?



# LEVITICUS 15

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Cleansing Unhealthiness	The Law Concerning Bodily Discharges	Bodily Discharges	Unclean Bodily Discharges	Sexual Impurity a. of men
15:1-12	15:1-12	15:1-2a  15:2b-12	15:1-12	15:1 15:2a 15:2b-3a 15:3b 15:4 15:5 15:6 15:7 15:8 15:9 15:10a 15:10b 15:11 15:12
15:13-15	15:13-15	15:13-15	15:13-15	15:13-15
15:16-18	15:16-18	15:16-18	15:16-18	15:16-18  b. of women
15:19-24	15:19-24	15:19-24	15:19-24	15:19a 15:19b 15:20 15:21 15:22-23 15:24
15:25-30	15:25-27  15:28-30	15:25-30	15:25-30	15:25-27 15:28-30  Conclusion
15:31-33	15:31  15:32-33	15:31  15:32-33	15:31  15:32-33	15:31  15:32-33

READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

## CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Israel's guidelines about ceremonial uncleanness (see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 365-375; and vol. 4, pp. 479-486) is confusing to moderns. The key verse is Lev. 15:31. Israel was uniquely YHWH's covenant people. YHWH was pure and holy, so must His people be. To approach YHWH (i.e., the Tabernacle) in an unclean condition could cause death.
- B. YHWH gave Israel the Tabernacle (i.e., the sacrificial system) to allow unclean humans to approach Him and maintain fellowship, but there were rigid procedures involved to clearly demonstrate the holiness of Israel's Deity. His character involved
1. holiness
  2. purity
- but also
3. compassion
  4. mercy
- See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God (OT) at Lev. 10:3b.
- C. This chapter may be outlined as
1. Lev. 15:1-18 deals with male discharges and how they make others unclean
    - a. disease (Lev. 15:2-15)
    - b. sexual activity (Lev. 15:16-18; see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1198-1211)
  2. Lev. 15:19-30 deals with female discharges
    - a. disease
    - b. sexual activity and birthing (for "menstruate" see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 925-928)
  3. Lev. 15:31-33 is a summary
- D. Please remember these are OT guidelines which do not relate to new covenant Gentile or Jewish believers in Christ. Please read
1. Jeremiah 31:31-34, described in Ezek. 36:22-36
  2. Jesus changing the OT law (i.e., Matt. 5:27-32; Mark 7:19)
  3. the acceptance of Cornelius in Acts 10
  4. the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15
  5. Paul's discussion of the purpose of the Mosaic Law in Galatians 3 (see Special Topic: Paul's View of the Mosaic Law at Lev. 5:17-19)

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:1-12

<sup>1</sup>The LORD also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. <sup>3</sup>This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge. <sup>4</sup>Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean. <sup>5</sup>Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening; <sup>6</sup>and whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting, shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>7</sup>Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>8</sup>Or if the man with the discharge spits

**on one who is clean, he too shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>9</sup>Every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean. <sup>10</sup>Whoever then touches any of the things which were under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who carries them shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>11</sup>Likewise, whomever the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>12</sup>However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.”**

**15:2 “any man”** Literally the MT has “adam adam,” which was an idiom for “any man” or “every man who. . .” (i.e., Lev. 17:3; 22:18) of the covenant people.

▣ **“a discharge from his body”** Remember that this chapter is divided into two categories between (1) male and female and (2) a discharge that lasts for a brief period and one that lasts for a long period. It must be remembered that any kind of bodily emission caused one to be ceremonially unclean. This initially goes back to the reverence that the Jews had for the blood (cf. Lev. 17:11).

**15:3 “or whether his body obstructs its discharge”** This verse is referring to some type of venereal disease. The TEV (Lev. 15:2-3) expresses the thought, “When any man had a discharge from his penis, the discharge is unclean, whether the penis runs with it or is stopped up by it.” This is also the understanding of the LXX.

**15:4** Physical contact with an unclean person or anything that has come into contact with them (bed, clothes, spit, cookware, saddles, etc.) becomes unclean.

**15:5** There is a set procedure (cf. Lev. 15:5,6,7,8,10,11,21,22,27) for the transferred uncleanness.

1. wash clothes
2. wash body
3. be unclean until evening (i.e., the next day)

For the unclean person there is a similar procedure (Lev. 15:13), but also a sacrifice (Lev. 15:14-15).

**15:12** The “earthenware” would refer to any pot that contained a liquid or dried weight. It could be for

1. preparing food
2. working with animals
3. related to ones daily work

It must be destroyed (cf. Lev. 6:28; 11:33,35).

The “wooden” could refer to

1. a tool
2. a weapon
3. a bowl

The MT has BDB 479, which could be translated “article,” “utensil,” “vessel,” or “pouch” (cf Lev. 11:32).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:13-15**

<sup>13</sup>“Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and will become clean. <sup>14</sup>Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest; <sup>15</sup>and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for

**a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD because of his discharge.”**

**15:13-15** These verses describe the sacrifice for the cleansing of a male discharge.

**15:13** “running water” See note at Lev. 14:5.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:16-18**

<sup>16</sup>“Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>17</sup>As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening. <sup>18</sup>If a man lies with a woman *so that* there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.”

**15:16-18** “seminal emission” Sexual intercourse made one ceremonially unclean. This has nothing to do with the idea that sex was sin. It was God’s idea that men and women reproduce themselves by sexual union (cf. Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7). It was God’s command that we be fruitful and multiply. It was God’s will that a man leave father and mother and cleave only to his wife (cf. Gen. 2:24). The sex act itself, within God’s bounds (i.e., one man, one woman for life), can be sin but because it involves the exchange of bodily fluids it made one ceremonially unclean.

**15:18** “unclean until evening” This may have been done in Hebrew society to separate the sexual act from worship, which was so common in the pagan world. Therefore, after sexual contact, a person remained unclean until evening. This seemed to separate the time between the worship event and the sexual event.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:19-24**

<sup>19</sup>“When a woman has a discharge, *if* her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. <sup>20</sup>Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean. <sup>21</sup>Anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup>Whoever touches any thing on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>23</sup>Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. <sup>24</sup>If a man actually lies with her so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.”

**15:24** “actually lies with her” This is the intensified grammatical form of an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root (BDB 1011, KB 1486).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:25-30**

<sup>25</sup>“Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. <sup>26</sup>Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. <sup>27</sup>Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>28</sup>When she becomes clean

**from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean. <sup>29</sup>Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them in to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>30</sup>The priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the LORD because of her impure discharge.”**

**15:25** This refers to an issue of blood not related to a woman’s normal monthly period. This was the problem of the woman mentioned in Matt. 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43.

**15:28-30** This describes the sacrifices for a female to be cleansed from discharges.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:31-33**

**<sup>31</sup>“Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them.” <sup>32</sup>This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it, <sup>33</sup>and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.**

**15:31-33** This is a summary of chapter 15. Notice that it is the cleanliness of the Tabernacle that is significant. YHWH dwelt with His people but His people had to remain clean in order for Him to remain. His people were not clean, so He provided a way whereby they could be clean and He could remain in their midst (i.e., the Tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrificial system).

**15:31** As the food laws separated Israel from their pagan neighbors’ feasts, the separation of sexual activity from the Tabernacle also emphasized Israel’s distinction from her fertility worshipping neighbors.

As the purpose of the food laws is missed by moderns, so too, the purpose of these bodily emission laws.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Does Lev. 15:2-15 refer to sexually transmitted diseases?
2. Why are the sex act and the birthing act considered to be ceremonially unclean?
3. Why did bodily discharges exclude one from worship?
4. Why is Lev. 15:31 so theologically significant?

# LEVITICUS 16

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Law of Atonement	The Day of Atonement	The Ritual for the Day of Atonement	The Day of Atonement	The Great Day of Expiation
16:1-2a	16:1-5	16:1-2a	16:1-3	16:1-2a
16:2b-10		16:2b-5		16:2b
				16:3-4
			16:4	
			16:5-10	16:5-10
	16:6-10	16:6-10		
16:11-14	16:11-14	16:11-14	16:11-14	16:11-14
16:15-19	16:15-19	16:15-19	16:15-19	16:14-16a
				16:16b-17a
			The Scapegoat	16:17b-19
16:20-22	16:20-22	16:20-22	16:20-22	16:20-22a
				16:22b-25
15:23-28	16:23-28	16:23-28	16:23-28	
An Annual Atonement			Observing the Day of Atonement	16:26-28
16:29-34	16:29-34	16:29-34	16:29-34a	16:29a
				16:29b-31
				16:32-34a
			16:34b	16:34b

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter deals with the voluntary offering of an individual to ensure or restore favor with YHWH.
- B. There are several types of the whole burnt offerings (holocaust). Probably they represent different socio-economic levels.
  1. the bull (herd), Lev. 1:1-9
  2. the male sheep or goat (flock), Lev. 1:10-13
  3. the bird, Lev. 1:14-17
- C. My favorite commentator on these OT ritual texts is Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, particularly for sacrifices at pp. 415-454.  
I also enjoy the discussion on “offerings and sacrifices” in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 996-1021.

- D. There seems to be some variety of procedures but this may be attributed to the assumed knowledge of the receivers and the brevity of the writer (i.e., laying on of hands on each type of animal, a set ritual pronouncement by the officiating priest).  
There is obviously a distinction where the animal was killed.

### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY (brief exegetical notes)

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:1-2a

<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. <sup>2</sup>The LORD said to Moses:

### BACKGROUND STUDY

- A. All of the feast days listed in Leviticus 23 are happy, joyful praise to God days. Only the Day of Atonement, found in Leviticus 16, is a penitent fast day (i.e., no peace offerings). We need to make a distinction between most of our worship times being rejoicing occasions and yet still provide a time for sorrow and penitence over the sin in our lives.
- B. Several different animal sacrifices are involved (see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 699, #20).
1. a sacrifice for the priest beginning in Lev. 16:3
  2. a sacrifice for the nation beginning in Lev. 16:5
  3. a sacrifice for the Holy Place beginning in Lev. 16:16
  4. a sacrifice for the altar beginning in Lev. 16:19
  5. a sacrifice for the bearing away from the entire community and Tabernacle, Lev. 16:21
- C. It needs to be understood that the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were not so much for the removal of sin from individual people as it was the removal of the taint of their collective, unintentional sins from the Tabernacle (see Lev. 15:31). God symbolically dwelt over the wings of the *Cherubim* over the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies (cf. Exod. 25:21-22; Num. 7:89; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). He could only remain among His people if they were ceremonially clean. Much of what they did continued to make them unclean. It is a sign of the weakness of the Old Testament system that all of the sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus 1-7 were not able to deal with the sin problem of the nation of Israel. Once a year there had to be a special sacrifice just to remove the pollution of the people from the Tabernacle and the priesthood (it had to be rededicated year after year).
- D. For a good brief discussion see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 507-510.
- E. The ritual of the Day of Atonement has extreme significance in the life of Jesus, the Messiah (cf. The book of Hebrews, particularly chapter 9). See F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, pp. 11-12.

### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:2b-9

<sup>2b</sup>“Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. <sup>3</sup>Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt

offering. <sup>4</sup>He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. <sup>5</sup>He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. <sup>6</sup>Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. <sup>7</sup>He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup>Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. <sup>9</sup>Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering.

**16:1** “Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron” It is obvious that Leviticus is not in chronological order. Leviticus 10, as well as chapter 16, is historical narrative. See Special Topic: Old Testament Historical Narrative.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: GENRE AND INTERPRETATION: OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE**

### **I. OPENING STATEMENTS**

- A. The relationship between the OT and other ways of the chronicling events
  - 1. Other ancient Near Eastern literature is mythological
    - a. polytheistic (usually humanistic gods reflecting the powers of nature but using interpersonal conflict motifs)
    - b. Based on the cycles of nature (dying and rising gods)
  - 2. Greco-Roman is for entertainment and encouragement rather than the recording of historical events per se (Homer in many ways reflects Mesopotamian motifs)
- B. Possibly the use of three German terms illustrates the difference in types or definitions of history
  - 1. “Historie,” the recording of events (bare facts)
  - 2. “Geschichte,” the interpretation of events showing their significance to mankind
  - 3. “Heilsgeschichte” refers uniquely to God’s redemptive plan and activity within the historical process
- C. The OT and NT narratives are “Geschichte” which leads to an understanding of Heilgeschichte. They are selected theologically-oriented historical events
  - 1. selected events only
  - 2. chronology not as significant as theology
  - 3. events shared to reveal truth
- D. Narrative is the most common genre in the OT. It has been estimated that 40% of the OT is narrative. Therefore, this genre is useful to the Spirit in communicating God’s message and character to fallen mankind. But, it is done, not propositionally (like the NT Epistles), but by implication, summation or selected dialog/monolog. One must continue to ask why this is recorded. What is it trying to emphasize? What is its theological purpose?

This in no way is meant to depreciate the history. But, it is history as the servant and channel of revelation.



## II. Biblical Narratives

- A. God is active in His world. Inspired Bible authors chose certain events to reveal God. God is the major character of the OT.
- B. Every narrative functions in several ways:
  - 1. who is God and what is He doing in His world
  - 2. mankind is revealed through God's dealing with individuals and national entities
  - 3. as an example, specifically notice Joshua's military victory linked to covenant performance (cf. Jos. 1:7-8; 8:30-35).
- C. Narratives are often strung together to make a larger literary unit which reveals a single theological truth.

## III. Interpretive principles of OT narratives

- A. The best discussion I have seen about interpreting OT narratives is by Douglas Stuart in *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 83-84
  - 1. An OT narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
  - 2. OT narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.
  - 3. Narratives record what happened—not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.
  - 2. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
  - 3. Most of the characters in OT narratives are far from perfect, and their actions also.
  - 4. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in the Scripture.
  - 5. *All* narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.
  - 6. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific, limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
  - 7. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
  - 8. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.
- B. Another good discussion on interpreting narratives is in Walter Kaiser's *Toward Exegetical Theology*.

“The unique aspect of the narrative portions of Scripture is that the writer usually allows the words and actions of the people in his narrative to convey the main thrust of his message. Thus, instead of addressing us through direct statements, such as are found in doctrinal or teaching portions of Scripture, the writer tends to remain instead somewhat in the background as far as direct teaching or evaluative statements are concerned. Consequently, it becomes critically important to recognize the larger context in which the narrative fits and to ask why the writer used the specific selection of events in the precise sequence in which he placed them. The twin clues to meaning now will be *arrangement* of episodes and *selection* of detail from a welter of possible speeches, persons, or episodes. Furthermore, the divine reaction to and

estimate of these people and events must often be determined from the way the author allows one person or a group of people to respond at the climax of the selected sequence of events; that is, if he has not interrupted the narration to give his own (in this instance, God's) estimate of what has taken place" (p. 205).

- C. In narratives the truth is found in the whole literary unit and not the details. Beware of proof-texting or using OT narratives as a precedent for your life.

IV. Two levels of interpretation

- A. YHWH's redemptive, revelatory acts for Abraham's seed  
B. YHWH's will for every believer's life (in every age)  
C. The first focuses on "knowing God" (salvation), the second on "serving Him" (the Christian life of faith, cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6,11).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:1-2b-10**

<sup>2b</sup>“Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. <sup>3</sup>Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. <sup>4</sup>He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. <sup>5</sup>He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. <sup>6</sup>Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. <sup>7</sup>He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup>Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. <sup>9</sup>Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. <sup>10</sup>But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.”

**16:2b** “he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil” Although this seems to imply no entrance, in context it denotes entrance only once a year with the appropriate sacrifices and only by the High Priest. He is even warned that he will die unless he follows the exact procedures. This links chapter 16 with chapter 10.

There were two veils (BDB 827).

1. one to separate the inner shrine tent from the surrounding enclosure
2. one separating the Holy Place (entire inner shrine) from the Holy of Holies (cf. Exod. 26:31-35; Matt. 27:51), see Special Topic: Tabernacle (chart) at Lev. 1:1c

▣ **“the mercy seat”** This translation comes from Martin Luther. This is the special golden lid (i.e., covering) on the ark of the covenant (BDB 498, KB 495, more literally “lid of covering”) on which the two *Cherubim* are mounted. The symbolism seems to be that as the blood was sprinkled once a year on this particular item, God looked down from His abode in heaven and saw His Ten Commandments, the sin of Israel was covered (BDB 497, KB 493) by the placement of the blood of an innocent animal.

The AB, p. 1014, mentions that the rare term may reflect an Egyptian root meaning “sole of the feet.” This is surely possible since the ark was viewed as YHWH's footstool (cf. 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 99:5; 132:7; Isa. 66:1; Lam. 2:1; Ezek. 43:7). Psalm 99:1 asserts that YHWH sits enthroned above the *Cherubim* (i.e., mercy seat, note Exod. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4).

See the following Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant at Lev. 3:1d
2. Special Topic: *Cherubim*
3. Special Topic: Mercy Seat at Lev. 1:4c
4. Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b

**SPECIAL TOPIC: *CHERUBIM* (BDB 500, KB 497)**

- A. One of several types of angelic beings mentioned in the OT (i.e., *Cherubim*, *Seraphim*, Archangels, messenger angels). This particular type guarded sacred areas (cf. Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18-22; 1 Kgs. 8:6-7).
- B. Etymology is uncertain.
  1. from Akkadian “intercessor” or “mediator” between God and mankind
  2. from Hebrew there is a possible word play between “chariot” and “cherub” (cf. Ezekiel 1; 10)
  3. some scholars say it means “brilliant appearance”
- C. Physical form – This has been difficult to ascertain because of varying descriptions within the Bible and varying animal-human forms found in the Ancient Near East. Some link them to
  1. winged bull of Mesopotamia
  2. winged eagle – lions of Egypt called “griffins”
  3. winged creatures on Hiram’s (King of Tyre) throne
  4. sphinx of Egypt and similar forms found in King Ahab’s ivory palace in Samaria
- D. Physical Description
  1. The form of the *Cherubim* is linked with the form of the *Seraphim* of Isaiah 6.
  2. Examples of different forms
    - a. Number of faces
      - (1) two – Ezek. 41:18
      - (2) four – Ezek. 1:6,10; 10:14,21
      - (3) one – Rev. 4:7
    - b. Number of wings
      - (1) two – 1 Kgs. 6:24
      - (2) four – Ezek. 1:6,11; 10:7,8-21
      - (3) six (like *Seraphim* of Isa. 6:2) – Rev. 4:8
  3. Other features (also called “The Living Creatures”)
    - a. Human hands – Ezek. 1:8; 10:8,21
    - b. Legs
      - (1) Straight, no knee – Ezek. 1:7
      - (2) Calf feet – Ezek. 1:7
  4. Flavius Josephus admits that no one knew what a cherub looked like (cf. *Antiquities of the Jews*, VIII.3.3).
- E. Places and purpose found in the Bible
  1. Guardian of the tree of life, Gen. 3:24 (possibly used metaphorically in Ezek. 28:14,16)
  2. Guardian of the Tabernacle

- a. Over the Ark of the Covenant; Exod. 25:18-20; Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; Heb. 9:5
- b. Depicted on veil and curtains of the tabernacle; Exod. 26:1,31; 36:8,35
3. Guardian of Solomon's Temple
  - a. Two large carved cherubs in Holy of Holies; 1 Kgs. 6:23-28; 8:6-7; 2 Chr. 3:10-14; 5:7-9
  - b. On walls of inner shrine; 1 Kgs. 6:29,35; 2 Chr. 3:7
  - c. On panels that were associated with the several lavers; 1 Kgs. 7:27-39
4. Guardian of Ezekiel's Temple – Carved on walls and doors; Ezek. 41:18-20, 25
5. Connected with transportation of deity
  - a. possibly a metaphor for wind; 2 Sam. 22:11; Ps. 18:10; 104:3-4; Isa. 19:1
  - b. guardian of God's throne; Ps.80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16
  - c. guardian of God's portable throne chariot; Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:3-22; 1 Chr. 28:18
6. Herod's Temple – Painted on walls (i.e., guardian cf. Talmud "Yoma" 54a)
7. Revelation throne scene (i.e., guardian cf. Rev. 4-5)

▣ **"I will appear in a cloud over the mercy seat"** At first it seems that refers to the *Shekinah* cloud which was a symbol of the presence of God (cf. Exod. 13:21-22; 19:9; 24:15-16,18; 34:5; 40:34-38; Num. 9:15-23). However, because of Lev. 16:13, this may refer to the cloud of incense which the High Priest caused from the incense altar (see Special Topic: Altar of Incense at Lev. 4:7) so that he would not see God and die (cf. Gen. 16:13; Exod. 33:20; 1 Kgs. 19:13; Isa. 6:5; John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:16) when he entered behind the second veil.

**16:3 "with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering"** The rabbis say that the bull and the ram must belong to Aaron personally (cf. Lev. 16:6) because this first ritual deals with his sin. Here again is a series of sacrifices.

1. first, the sin offering, making one acceptable to God
2. then the burn offering, showing complete commitment to God

**16:4 "and he shall put on the holy linen tunic"** His High Priestly robes (see Special Topic: Garments of the High Priest at Lev. 6:10-11) and accouterments are described in Exod. 39:27-29. This very plain, working garment is a combination of a slave's working garment and the material of the priest's normal clothing. It was a sign of humility and openness to God. See Special Topic: Linen at Lev. 6:10-11.

**16:5 "two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering"** These two male goats formed a uniqueness of the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16:6-10). One goat would be sacrificed on the altar showing that sin costs a life. The other goat would be sent out into the wilderness to symbolically bear sin out from the camp.

**16:6 "for himself and his household"** Some say that this refers to Aaron and his immediate family, while others say that it refers to his family, the priests. It may be a collective sacrifice for all the priests. See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**16:8 "Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats"** The method of the casting of lots is somewhat uncertain. The rabbis say that two rocks were used: one marked "for the LORD" and the other, "for Azazel." Others say that it was the use of the Urim and Thummim and was simply a way of determining which goat would be killed and which would be sent away. See Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Lev. 8:8b.

For a good brief discussion about casting lots to know God’s will, see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 512-514.



NASB, NKJV,  
Vulgate “scapegoat”  
NASB Margin “goat of removal”  
NRSV, TEV,  
NJB, JPSOA,  
REB, Net,  
Peshitta “for Azazel”  
LXX “to be sent off”  
REB footnote “for the precipice”

This is a very difficult term (BDB 736) to interpret. It occurs only in this chapter. Some try to make it a place; some a person; and some an abstraction. There have been several suggestions for the meaning of the root.

1. from the Hebrew words (i.e., goat and the verb “to send away”); this same understanding is found in the LXX’s translation of “one to be sent out”
2. in Enoch 8:1; 9:6; 10:4-8; 13:1-2; 54:5; 55:4; 69:2, it refers to a desert demon; this interpretation has been followed by rabbinical Judaism, which makes it either a name for Satan or a desert demon (Satyr III, Lev. 17:7); the desert was the abode of the demonic (cf. Isa. 13:21-22; 34:11-15)
3. the New English Bible translates this word as “for the precipice”
  - a. the wilderness where the goat is driven, which was rough and desolate (Arabic root)
  - b. shows the post-exilic procedure of throwing the second goat over a cliff to make sure it died

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:11-14**

**<sup>11</sup>“Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. <sup>12</sup>He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring *it* inside the veil. <sup>13</sup>He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on *the ark of the testimony*, otherwise he will die. <sup>14</sup>Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.”**

**16:12 “He shall take a firepan full of coals from upon the altar before the LORD”** The rabbis have identified the altar before the Lord as the incense altar inside the Holy Place, just before the veil. Most Christian commentators assume that it is the brazen altar at the door of the Tabernacle. The Jews would say that the High Priest stayed inside the Holy Place, while Christian commentators say that he moved in and out of the Holy Place between the bronze altar and the inner shrine.

▣ **“two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring *it* inside the veil”** This was a huge amount of incense and its purpose was to put forth large billows of smoke which would fill the internal part of the shrine (i.e., Holy Place) and, therefore, veil the eyes of the High Priest from seeing God when he entered the Holy of Holies. They believed that God symbolically dwelt above the wings of the *Cherubim* (cf. Exod.

25:21-22; Num. 7:89; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). For a person to see YHWH meant death. It is also true that even seeing the ark itself could cause death (cf. Num. 4:20; 1 Sam. 6:19).

**16:14 “sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat”** Remember that the mercy seat was that special place of atonement (cf. Hebrews 9). It was used in the ritual only on the Day of Atonement, where the High Priest first offered a sin offering for himself and then for the nation. See Special Topic: Mercy Seat at Lev. 1:4c. It was an annual cleansing of the Tabernacle and the priesthood.

For “sprinkle” see note at Lev. 1:5 and Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms in the OT*, pp. 151-152.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:15-19**

<sup>15</sup>“Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. <sup>16</sup>He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. <sup>17</sup>When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. <sup>18</sup>Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. <sup>19</sup>With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it.”

**16:16-19 “shall make atonement for the holy place. . .and cleanse it”** This shows that the purpose of this ritual was not so much for the cleansing of the people that should have been done in the sacrifices described in Leviticus 1-7, but the cleansing of the Tabernacle and the priesthood (cf. Exod. 30:10; see Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c) for the continuation of its mediatory activities.

**16:18 “put it on the horns of the altar and on all sides”** Horns were a normal part of Canaanite altars. They were the most holy part of the altar that lifted the sacrifices to God or it expressed the power of that altar in its efficatory significance. See full note at Lev. 7:4.

**16:19** See the following Special Topics for more information.

1. Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b
2. Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, “seven,” #4 at Lev. 4:6
3. Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:20-22**

<sup>20</sup>“When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. <sup>21</sup>Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who *stands* in readiness. <sup>22</sup>The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”

**16:21 “lay both hands on the head of the live goat”** It usually states to lay a hand (singular; see note at Lev. 1:4), but here both hands were laid on the goat as Aaron confessed the sins of the whole nation. This

animal symbolically took the place of the nation as it bore the corporate sin outside the camp. See Special Topic: Laying on of Hands at Lev. 1:3b.

▣ **“the iniquities. . .transgressions. . .sins”** these are the major terms which describe Israel’s violations of their covenant with YHWH.

1. iniquities – BDB 833
2. transgressions – BDB 833
3. sins – BDB 308

All three of these terms appear in Exod. 34:7; Lev. 16:21; Job 13:23; Ps. 32:5; Isa. 59:12; Ezek. 21:24; Dan. 9:24. Together they express Israel’s sin

1. in many areas
2. over and over again

The word for “evil” (BDB 948 II) appears with #2 and #3 in Gen. 50:17. Israel, with all her special blessings (cf. Rom. 9:4) could not/would not follow YHWH. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Covenant Requirements of Israel and Special Topic: The Fall at Lev. 4:2d. This is why there must be a “new covenant” (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-36; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:9,13; 9:15).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:23-28**

**<sup>23</sup>“Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. <sup>24</sup>He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. <sup>25</sup>Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar. <sup>26</sup>The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp. <sup>27</sup>But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. <sup>28</sup>Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp.”**

**16:24 “put on his clothes”** The beautiful garments described in Exodus 28 and 39 (see Special Topic: Garments of the High Priest at Lev. 6:10-11) are now put on and the High Priest comes out of the inner shrine to let the people know that the sacrifice has been accepted. In later years, the Jews tied a rope to the leg of the High Priest in case he died inside the Holy Place and they could pull him out without having to enter the Holy Place themselves!

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:29-34**

**<sup>29</sup>“This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; <sup>30</sup>for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. <sup>31</sup>It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. <sup>32</sup>So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, <sup>33</sup>and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. <sup>34</sup>Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.” And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did.**

**16:29-34** The Israelite people had a part in the ritual of the annual Day of Atonement.

1. cessation of work
2. fasting
3. attitude of humility
4. sense of need for corporate, annual cleansing

**16:29** “shall be a permanent statute for you” The Hebrew concept of “permanent” (lit. *‘olam*, cf. Lev. 16:29,31,34) had several possible connotations. See Special Topic: Forever (*‘olam*) at Lev. 3:17.

▣ “in the seventh month” See Special Topic: Ancient Near Eastern Calendars.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CALENDARS**

<b>Canaanite (1 Kgs. 6:1,37-38; 8:2)</b>	<b>Sumerian-Babylonian (Nippur Calendar)</b>	<b>Hebrew (Geezer Calendar)</b>	<b>Modern Equivalents</b>
Abib (“greenheads” of barley)	Nisanu	Nisan	March-April
Zin (spring brilliance)	Ayaru	Iyyar	April-May
	Simanu	Sivan	May-June
	Du-uzu	Tammuz	June-July
	Abu	Ab	July-August
	Ululu	Elul	August-September
Ethanim (permanent water source)	Teshritu	Tishri	September-October
Bul (rains on produce)	Arah-samna	Marcheshvan	October-November
	Kislimu	Chislev	November-December
	Tebitu	Tebeth	December-January
	Shabatu	Shebat	January-February
	Adaru	Adar	February-March

▣ “you shall humble your souls and not do any work” From Ps. 35:13 the words “humble your souls” implies fasting. We also believe that there were other unexpressed penitent acts (i.e., liturgy or symbolic actions) involved in this day of national mourning for the sins of the entire nation and the cleansing of the Tabernacle and the priesthood.

**16:33** “to make atonement for . . .” This is a summary of the purpose of the ritual of the Day of Atonement and the five different things that were cleansed.

1. the inner shrine (Lev. 16:17,24)
2. the tent of meeting (Lev. 16:16,20,33)
3. the altar (Lev. 16:18-19,20,33)
4. the priests (Lev. 16:6,11,17,24,33)
5. the people (Lev. 16:15,17,19,22,24,30,34)



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of the Day of Atonement?
2. What does the word “scapegoat” mean?
3. Find the two unnamed men who performed rather mundane functions but are mentioned to describe how they can become clean and return to camp. Why are these people singled out?
4. How do the two goats seem to speak to the ministry of Christ (cf. Hebrews 9)?
5. What does it mean “to humble your soul”?

# LEVITICUS 17

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Blood for Atonement	The Sanctity of Blood	Restrictions Upon the Slaughter of Animals	The Sacredness of Blood	Slaughtering and Sacrifice
17:1-7	17:1-9	17:1-7	17:1-7	17:1-2a 17:2b 17:3-7
17:8-9		17:8-9	17:8-9	17:8-9
17:10-13	17:10-14	17:10-13	17:10-12 17:13-14	17:10-12 17:13-14
17:14-16	17:15-16	17:14-16	17:15-16	17:15-16

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### BACKGROUND

- A. Leviticus 17-20 is a literary unit which deals with ritual laws and procedures for holiness. "Holiness" is the key term in Leviticus. It denotes moral and ceremonial obedience to YHWH's revealed character and laws. YHWH is "Holy" (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; 21:8; 22:32-33). See Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c.
- B. A brief outline of Leviticus 17-20.
1. Leviticus 17 deals with how to treat sacrificial blood and is primarily focused toward laymen.
  2. Leviticus 18 deals with the laws regulating human sexuality for covenant people.
  3. Leviticus 19 deals with relating to a covenant partner who has sinned.
  4. Leviticus 20 deals with the consequences and punishment of the sin of a covenant partner.

#### WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

##### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the LORD has commanded, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, <sup>4</sup>and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present *it* as an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>5</sup>The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the LORD, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD. <sup>6</sup>The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the doorway

**of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the LORD. <sup>7</sup>They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.”**

**17:1** This is a recurrent theme in Leviticus. These laws and rules are from YHWH, not Moses. See Special Topic: Moses’ Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b and Special Topic: Inspiration at Lev. 6:8.

**17:2** Moses is commanded to speak to

1. Aaron – Lev. 16:2; 17:2
2. Aaron and his sons – Leviticus 9; 10:12; 17:2; 22
3. Aaron’s sons – Leviticus 21
4. the sons of Israel – Leviticus 12; 18; 19; 20; 23; 24; 25-26; 27

In chapters 11; 13; 15 YHWH speaks to both Moses and Aaron.

**17:3 “Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters. . .”** There are two major discussions here: (1) the ritual slaughtering of clean domestic animals (cf. Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14) and (2) the hunting of clean wild animals (cf. Lev. 17:5,13). Also, there is a distinction in this chapter between the time of the wilderness wandering period, where the Tabernacle was available to all people, and a later time, discussed in detail in Deut. 12:23ff, when the Tabernacle may have been too far away.

▣ **“man”** In the MT it is “man man,” which is an idiom for “any man” (cf. Lev. 17:8,10,13; 15:2; 22:18).

**17:4 “bloodguiltiness”** Blood had a strange power to the Hebrew mind, Gen. 4:10. It was the essence of life itself, Lev. 17:11,14. Therefore, the life belonged to God and the blood had to be handled in a very precise and reverent way. This not only had to do with kosher cleanliness but also with the significance of life. See Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b.

**17:6 “sprinkle the blood”** See note at Lev. 1:5.

▣ **“the altar of the LORD at the doorway”** See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Lev. 1:7.

▣ **“offer up the fat”** Two parts of the sacrifice always belonged to YHWH.

1. the fat on the internal organs
2. the blood (cf. Lev. 17:10; see Special Topic: Blood at Lev. 1:5b)

▣ **“a soothing aroma”** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

▣ **“the LORD”** See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1.

**17:7 “goat demons”** The term “goat demons” (possibly “hairy goats,” BDB 972 III, KB 1341) is used several times.

1. wild animals that lived in the ruins of destroyed, cursed cities and, therefore, could represent the demonic – Isa. 13:21; 34:14
2. physical representations of animals as pagan idols – 2 Chr. 11:15

This text is referring to covenant partners, so this must refer to idolatry of some of the people of God (cf. Deut. 32:17). It is interesting that Azazel, mentioned in Lev. 16:8 (see note there), is thought by some to be a desert demon. The very fact that the phrase “play the harlot with it” seems to refer, not only to the

possibility of idolatry, which is seen as “going a whoring after other gods,” but also to fertility worship (cf. Exod. 34:15-16; Lev. 17:7; 20:5; Deut. 31:16; Jdgs. 2:17; 8:27,33). incomplete sentence) We know that the goat was sometimes worshiped as a fertility god in Egypt and later in both Greek and Roman mythology. See Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance.

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:8-9**

**<sup>8</sup>“Then you shall say to them, ‘Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, <sup>9</sup>and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man also shall be cut off from his people.’”**

**17:8 “the aliens who sojourn among them”** The Jews had the responsibility to apply the law to all the people who lived in their land. This is a summary of what the alien was responsible for.

1. to keep the Sabbath, Exod. 20:10
2. to observe the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16:29
3. no improper slaughter of food animals (here)
4. no idolatry, Lev. 20:2
5. no blasphemy, Lev. 24:16

**17:9** All dead animals for consumption must be brought to the Lord at the Tabernacle. This requirement was to

1. acknowledge YHWH as the giver of life and the only true God (see Special Topic: Monotheism)
2. restrict all other kinds of sacrifice to pagan gods

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: MONOTHEISM**

The concept of “monotheism” (one and only one, personal, ethical God with no female consort), not just the “high god” of polytheism or the good god of Iranian dualism (Zoroastrianism), is unique to Israel (Abraham and Job, 2000 B.C.). There is one rare exception briefly in Egypt (Amenhotep IV, also known as Akhenaten, 1367-1350 or 1386-1361 B.C., who worshiped *Aten*, the sun god as the only god). See J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt*, pp. 215-217.

This concept is expressed in several phrases in the OT.

1. “no one like YHWH our *Elohim*,” Exod. 8:10; 9:14; Deut. 33:26; 1 Kgs. 8:23
2. “no other besides Him,” Deut. 4:35,39; 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 22:32; Isa. 45:21; 44:6,8; 45:6,21
3. “YHWH is one,” Deut. 6:4; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; 1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19
4. “none like You,” 2 Sam. 7:22; Jer. 10:6
5. “You alone are God,” Ps. 86:10; Isa. 37:16
6. “Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me,” Isa. 43:10
7. “there is no other; besides Me. . .there is no other,” Isa. 45:5,6,22
8. He is the cause of all things, Isa. 45:7 (cf. Amos 3:6)
9. “there is none else, no other God,” Isa. 45:14,18
10. “there is none except Me,” Isa. 45:21
11. “there is no other;. . .there is no one like Me,” Isa. 46:9

It must be admitted that this crucial doctrine has been revealed in progressive ways. The early statements could be understood as “henotheism” or practical monotheism (there are other gods, i.e., Jos. 24:15; 1 Kgs. 18:21, but only one God for us, cf. Exod. 15:11; 20:2-5; Deut. 5:7; 6:4,14; 10:17; 32:12; 1 Kgs. 8:23; Ps. 83:18; 86:8; 136:1-9).

The first texts that begin to denote a singularity (philosophical monotheism) are early (cf. Exod. 8:10; 9:14; 20:2-3; Deut. 4:35,39; 33:26). The full and complete claims are found in Isaiah 43-46 (cf. 43:10-11; 44:6,8; 45:7,14,18,22; 46:5,9).

The OT depreciates the gods of the nations as

1. human creations – Deut. 4:28; 2 Kgs. 19:18; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; 40:19; 41:7,24,29; 44:10,12; 46:6-7; Jer. 10:3-5; Rev. 9:10
2. demons – Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; Isa. 8:19; 19:3c; 1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20
3. vanity, empty – Deut. 32:21; 2 Kgs. 17:15; Ps. 31:6; Isa. 2:18; 41:29; Jer. 2:5; 10:8; 14:22; Jer. 2:5; 8:19
4. no gods – Deut. 32:21; 2 Chr. 13:9; Isa. 37:19; Jer. 2:11; 5:7; 1 Cor. 8:4-5; 10:20; Rev. 9:20

The NT alludes to Deut. 6:4 in Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; and James 2:19. Jesus quotes it as the first commandment in Matt. 22:36-37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27. The OT, as well as the NT, asserts the reality of other spiritual beings (demons, angels), but only one creator/redeemer God (YHWH, Gen. 1:1).

Biblical monotheism is characterized by

1. God is one and unique (ontology is assumed, not specified)
2. God is personal (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 3:8)
3. God is ethical (cf. Exod. 34:6; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8-10)
4. God created humans in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) for fellowship (i.e., #2). He is a jealous God (cf. Exod. 20:5-6)

From the NT

1. God has three eternal, personal manifestations (see Special Topic: The Trinity)
2. God is perfectly and completely revealed in Jesus (cf. John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 1:2-3)
3. God’s eternal plan for fallen humanity’s redemption is the sacrificial offering of His only Son (Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:6-11; Hebrews)

▣ **“cut off from his people”** This phrase is used several times (i.e., Lev. 7:20-21) and could mean

1. prohibited from the Tabernacle
2. physical excommunication from the camp of Israel
3. an acknowledgment that YHWH would stop his line/descendants by his early death (and/or the children, cf. Exod. 31:14)

Whichever it is, it demonstrated that fellowship between YHWH and His people was stopped! See Special Topic: Consequences of Idolatry.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: CONSEQUENCES OF IDOLATRY (cf. Deut. 11:16-17)**

- A. “Beware, lest your hearts are not deceived” – BDB 834, KB 984, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Job 31:27
  1. “turn away” – BDB 693, KB 747, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 32:8; 9:12; 17:11,17; Jer. 5:23

2. “serve other gods” – BDB 712, KB 773, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:4,26; 8:19; 11:16; 13:6,13; 17:3; 28:14,36,64; 29:26; 30:17; 31:20; Jos. 23:16; 24:2,16; Jer. 11:10; 13:10; 16:11,13; 22:9; 25:6; 35:15
3. “to worship” – BDB 1005, KB 295, *Hithpael* (Owens, p. 805) and *Hishtaphel* (Parsing Guide, p. 146)

Obviously this was a recurrent tendency on Israel’s part! The consequences for idolatry were severe.

- B. “the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you” – BDB 354, KB 351, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Num. 11:1,10; 12:9; 32:10; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; Jos. 23:11
  1. “He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain.” This is part of the curse for disobeying the covenant, cf. Deut. 28:24; 2 Chr. 6:26-28; 7:13
  2. “the ground will not yield its fruit” – results of no rain
- C. “you will perish quickly from the good land” – BDB 1, KB 2, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Deut. 4:26; 7:4; 8:19,20; 28:20,22; 30:18; Jos. 23:13,16

There is no middle option! God presents His covenant as fully compliant or in default. Fallen humanity cannot obtain this level of consistent or complete obedience (cf. Jos. 24:19). Therefore, there was/is a need for a new covenant based on God’s mercy and His performance (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38; Rom. 3:9-18,23; Galatians 3)!

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:10-13

<sup>10</sup>“And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. <sup>11</sup>For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’ <sup>12</sup>Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.’ <sup>13</sup>So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.”

**17:10 “I will set My face”** The Jewish Study Bible, p. 248, says this phrase means “I will give it My personal, undivided and immediate attention.” This intense imagery is used several times (i.e., Lev. 20:3, 5,6; 26:17; Ps. 34:16; Jer. 21:10; 44:11; Amos 9:4).

▣ **“who eats any blood”** This had to do with the sanctity of blood because the life belonged to God (cf. Lev. 17:11)

**17:11** The Hebrew root, **נָפַח** (BDB 659, KB 711), is used three times in this verse (also note Lev. 17:14 and Gen. 9:3-7).

1. “life of the flesh” (BDB 659 CONSTRUCT BDB142)
2. “your souls”
3. “life”

KB lists six different ways this general word for life/person is used.

1. “gullet,” “throat,” or “wind pipe” (Ps. 107:9; Isa. 5:14)
2. “neck” (Ps. 69:1)
3. “breath” (i.e., creatures of this planet that breathe air)

- a. humans (Gen. 2:7)
- b. animals (Gen. 1:20)
- 4. a living, breathing creature (Gen. 2:19)
- 5. people (Lev. 24:17)
- 6. personality
  - a. YHWH (Lev. 26:11)
  - b. covenant person (Lev. 26:15)
- 7. life (Gen. 9:5; 19:17; Lev. 17:11,14)
- 8. soul (Exod. 23:9)
- 9. dead soul (Lev. 19:28)

Some of these are overlapping and it is hard to distinguish a difference. See further notes online at Ezek. 18:4, [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org).

**17:13** The guidelines here reflect the wilderness wandering period (i.e., presence of the Tabernacle with the camp of Israel), but Deut. 12:15-16,20-27 reflect the post conquest era when Israel is scattered throughout Palestine and some towns are too distant from the Tabernacle to perform these rites (i.e., before the meat went bad in the hot climate).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:14-16**

<sup>14</sup>“For *as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life.* Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.’ <sup>15</sup>When any person eats *an animal* which dies or is torn *by beasts*, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt.”

**17:14-16** This is a summary on the importance of blood, as well as the consequences and remedy for its abuse.

**17:15** There were several levels of “uncleanness.” Eating animals that had died or been killed by other animals was a lesser level of uncleanness than eating the blood of a slaughtered animal. The difference being that “the life” of the dead animal was already gone.

**17:16** “**he shall bear his guilt**” The NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 162, makes a good point about this VERB (BDB 669, KB 724). When the SUBJECT is YHWH, it means “remove iniquity” (i.e., Exod. 34:7; Num. 14:18), but when the SUBJECT is a person, it means “bear responsibility” or “bear punishment” (i.e., Exod. 28:43; Lev. 5:1,27; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; Num. 5:31; 18:1,23). This suggests death (cf. Lev. 5:1-13).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was blood so holy and important to the Israelites?
2. What does “cut off from among his people” mean?
3. Why are Lev. 17:5,11,14 so theologically significant?
4. Do these guidelines refer to the wilderness wandering period or the period of the united monarchy?



# LEVITICUS 18

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Laws on Immoral Relations	Laws of Sexual Morality	Forbidden Sexual Relations	Forbidden Sexual Practices	Sexual Prohibitions
18:1-5	18:1-5	18:1-5	18:1-5	18:1-2a 18:2b-4a 18:4b-5a 18:5b
18:6-18	18:6-18	18:6-18	18:6-18	18:6 18:7 18:8 18:9 18:10 18:11 18:12 18:13 18:14 18:15 18:16
18:19-23	18:19-23	18:18-23	18:19-23	18:19 18:20 18:21 18:22 18:23
18:24-30	18:24-30	18:24-30	18:24-29 18:30	18:24-25 18:26-30

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Most moderns see this chapter as

1. not relevant
2. a list of prohibitions

But in reality, although believers in Christ are not responsible for these laws (cf. Mark 7:19; Acts 10; 15; Galatians 3; see Special Topic: Paul's View of the Mosaic Law at Lev. 5:17-19 and Special Topic: Mosaic Law and the Christian), they do clearly show YHWH's respect for

marriage and procreation (cf. Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7). Human sexuality is God's idea and plan for mankind (see Special Topic: Human Sexuality, below).

- B. These laws are meant to assure a stable, healthy, godly society. They are in direct contrast with fertility worship (see Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the Ancient Near East at Lev. 19:29-30).
- C. Sexuality is meant to be a gift from God, not a biological/hormonal master!
- D. For a good discussion of Israel's sexual laws, see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1198-1211.
  - 1. sexual terms
  - 2. sexual differentiation
  - 3. sexual morality
  - 4. sexual rules
  - 5. rape
  - 6. harlotry
  - 7. sacred prostitution
  - 8. homosexuality
  - 9. bestiality
  - 10. miscellaneous

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE MOSAIC LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN**

- A. The Law is inspired Scripture and is eternal (cf. Matt. 5:17-19).
- B. The Law as a way of salvation is void and has always been, but mankind had to see that his/her own efforts were futile (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48; Rom. 7:7-12; Gal. 3:1ff; James 2:10).
- C. The gospel of Christ is the only way to God (cf. John 14:6; Rom. 3:21; Gal. 2:15-21; Heb. 8:12).
- D. The Old Testament is still helpful to believers as God's will for humans in society (esp. "The Ten Words"), but not as the way of salvation (i.e., it functions in sanctification but not in justification). The cultus of Israel (sacrificial system, holy days, civic and religious laws) has passed away but God still speaks through the OT. The stipulations mentioned in Acts 15:20 refer only to fellowship issues, not to salvation.
- E. The crucial texts about the OT and its relationship to NT believers are
  - 1. The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15
  - 2. The theological summary of the gospel message in Galatians 3
  - 3. The comparison of the Mosaic Covenant (OT) with the new covenant of Jesus (NT) is the book of Hebrews. It uses several categories to illustrate the superiority of the NT.
  - 4. See Special Topic: Paul's View of the Mosaic Law

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: HUMAN SEXUALITY**

- I. Introductory Remarks
  - A. Christians have been unduly influenced by Greek asceticism, which makes both the human body and its normal activities evil.

The Bible affirms the goodness of physical creation (cf. Gen. 1:31), but acknowledges the results of human rebellion (cf. Genesis 3). One day this curse shall be removed (cf. Rom. 8:18-22).

B. Maleness and femaleness are God's idea! Human sexuality is part of God's creation and plan for human beings made in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Sex is not something we do; it is something we are. Every area of our thoughts and lives is affected by sexual orientation, as interpreted by our cultures.

## II. Biblical Insights (selected examples)

### A. From Genesis

1. There was an original mutuality between men and women (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; see sord study on "helpmate" at Gen. 1:18 online).
2. Children were a mandate from God (i.e., Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7).
3. All creation is affirmed as "very good" in Gen. 1:31, including human sexual activity.
4. Women are not opposites, but complements, to men (i.e., Gen. 2:18).
5. Eve and Adam's open-eyed rebellion has affected all of us and our world, including sexuality (cf. Gen. 3:7,16; Rom. 5:12-21).

### B. Physical love is affirmed in Scripture, even after the Fall.

1. Proverbs 5:15-23 affirms life-long monogamy and regular sexual activity.
2. Ecclesiastes 9:7-9, enjoy life in all its aspects while you can.
3. Song of Songs is an affirmation of physical love.
4. God is an eternal spirit without a body, yet "He" uses human sexual metaphors to describe Himself (i.e., Hosea 1-3,11).

## III. God-given boundaries for expressing human sexuality

### A. Marriage

1. the norm in the OT and NT
2. used as an example of the "Spirit filled life," Eph. 5:15-6:9
3. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, sex is more than procreation
  - a. the body belongs to God, 1 Cor. 6:19-20
  - b. the body belongs to one's spouse, 1 Cor. 7:4

### B. Human sexuality used to illustrate God and His love.

1. Galatians 3:28, summary of the new age, the gospel and its across-the-board availability and equality
2. Ephesians 5:21-31, the Christian home becomes an example of the relationship between Christ and His church (as Hosea 1-3 used Hosea's marriage as a way to explain God's love for Israel)

### C. God Himself is described as both male and female.

1. male, so common
  - a. Father, Deut. 1:31; 32:5; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4,19; 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 3:17
  - b. husband, Hos. 11:3-4
2. female
  - a. Gen. 1:2, Spirit of God brooded over the waters
  - b. Gen 17:1, *El Shaddai* may have feminine connotations (i.e., Arabic root)
  - c. Deut. 32:18, God as mother bird
  - d. Exod. 19:4, God as mother eagle

e. Isa. 49:14-15; 66:9-13, God compared to a nursing mother

IV. Mankind's perversions of God-given human sexuality

A. Pre-marital (fornication) and extra-marital (adultery)

B. Some selected texts

1. 1 Cor. 6:15-20

2. Gal. 5:19-21

3. Heb. 13:4

C. Sex (in both thought and act, cf. Matt. 5:27-28) can become a license to use people as things for personal gratification.

D. Divorce

1. always second best

2. allowed in the OT, Deut. 24:1-4, but restricted by Jesus, Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-12

3. hear audio tapes online in "Controversial and Difficult Texts," #2130 and 2131

E. Homosexuality (see Special Topic: Homosexuality)

1. never the will of God

a. Lev. 20:13

b. Rom. 1:26-27

c. 1 Cor. 6:9-11

2. It is serious because it is a lifestyle sin, but no worse than other lifestyle sexual sins (fornication or adultery or lust). It is not the "unpardonable sin" (which is unbelief).

3. All fallen humans struggle with human sexuality. This powerful, persistent, pervasive desire, instinct, and appetite must be dealt with daily by all of us!

4. Many believers were homosexual partners to pagan temple prostitution, but after salvation they were not slaves to it any more, 1 Cor. 6:9,11

V. Concluding remarks

A. Sexuality is God's plan for a completely populated earth.

B. Sexuality is only for time, not eternity, Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36.

C. Sexuality has been affected by the Fall. Every one of us is naturally a self-centered, selfish person.

D. Sexuality is meant to help us as redeemed people to become more self-controlled (the capstone of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:23).

E. Christians bear a primary role in helping families, communities, and nations deal with this powerful and pervasive issue. It can be a drag or a ladder. We are models of divine grace. The best sex education is two parents who love each other selflessly!

F. Sex can be wonderful or awful. It was meant to

1. fill the earth

2. bond two people

3. form the family and communities

4. be enjoyed

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:1-5

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘I am the LORD your God. <sup>3</sup>You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. <sup>4</sup>You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God. <sup>5</sup>So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.’”

**18:1** Notice, like Lev. 8:1; 12:1; 14:1; 16:1-2; 17:1, YHWH spoke to Moses commanding him (Lev. 18:2) to speak His words to the sons of Israel.

**18:2** In this chapter, Moses addresses the priests and the people about sexual laws.

▣ **“I am the LORD your God”** This is covenant language from Exodus (cf. Exod. 6:7; 16:12; 23:25). The two main words for Deity are used.

1. LORD – YHWH, see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1
2. God – *Elohim*, see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1

Although not specifically stated here, the implication of this phrase links to Lev. 11:44, where YHWH’s “holiness” is to be the character of His people (i.e., “holy,” cf. Lev. 19:2; 28:7,24; see Special Topic: The Holy One at Lev. 13:3b). These sexual restrictions were meant to

1. insure a stable, godly society
2. keep Israel from pagan idol worship (see Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the Ancient Near East at Lev. 19:29-30)
3. document and establish proper inheritance rights within families, tribes, because the land was a gift from God (i.e., Joshua 12-19) and it must stay in the family

**18:3 “You shall not do. . .”** This shows that these restrictions on human sexuality were influenced by Canaanite and Egyptian worship practices. As the food laws probably reflect pagan worship, so these sexual prohibitions also reflect the abuse of pagan worship.

Remember, it is “the iniquity of the Amorite” (i.e., collective term for all the Canaanite tribes) that was the reason YHWH took them out of His land (i.e., Canaan); see full text at Gen. 12:12-21. If Israel acts like them they, too, will be (and were) removed (i.e., the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles).

▣ **“you shall not walk”** “Walk” is a biblical metaphor for godly living (cf. Lev. 18:4; Psalm 1; Eph. 4:1,17; 5:2,15). Note the parallel in Lev. 20:22. The repeat of regulations so close together shows the composite nature of Leviticus.

▣ **“statutes”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

**18:4-5** Notice the emphasis on obedience (see Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d and Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13)

1. to perform – BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. keep – BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* IMPERFECT
3. live (lit. to walk in them) – BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
4. you shall keep – BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*

5. if he does them –BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* IMPERFECT

Also notice the covenant for Israel’s deity, “I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 18:4,30) and “I am the LORD” (Lev. 18:5,6,21).

**18:4 “judgments. . .statutes”** These terms are repeated in Lev. 18:26. See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

**18:5 “by which a man may live if he does them”** In the Old Testament, if a man keeps the law, he will be blessed by God (i.e., Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-14; see F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, p. 53, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 160-161). However, the New Testament teaches that no person can keep the law of God (cf. Rom. 3:9-23 and Gal. 3:15-29). See Special Topic: Why Do OT Covenant Promises Seem so Different from NT Covenant Promises? at Lev. 11:44d).

▣ **“if”** Note the conditional nature of all/most of God’s dealings with humans. See Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:6-18**

**6“None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD. 7You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness. 8You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is your father’s nakedness. 9The nakedness of your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10The nakedness of your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours. 11The nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s sister; she is your father’s blood relative. 13You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, for she is your mother’s blood relative. 14You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt. 15You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son’s wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness. 17You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness. 18You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.”**

**18:6 “None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD”** These laws were given to assure the stability of the covenant people. They basically define the term “uncover nakedness” as an obvious reference to sexual intercourse. The list of people here is extensive, although there are some notable exceptions. The exceptions may have been so obvious that there were not mentioned. In a day of polygamy, incest had to be precisely defined.

The VERB “uncover” (BDB 163, KB 191) is used 17 times in Lev. 18:6-19. It is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

There is a parallel in the VERB “approach” (BDB 897, KB 1132, *Qal* IMPERFECT, NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 976-977).

<b>18:17</b>	
<b>NASB, REB</b>	<b>“they are blood relatives”</b>
<b>NKJV</b>	<b>“they are near kin to her”</b>
<b>NRSV</b>	<b>“they are your flesh”</b>
<b>TEV</b>	<b>“related to you”</b>
<b>NJB</b>	<b>“they are your own flesh and blood”</b>
<b>JPSOA</b>	<b>“they are kindred”</b>
<b>LXX</b>	<b>“they are of your household”</b>

The MT has “they are flesh.” This implies they are blood-relatives. However, the phrase is better understood in this context as “fellow Israelites” (i.e., covenant partners). Notice the suggested emendations.

1. blood-relative – פֶּאֶרֶץ (BDB 984-5)
2. covenant partner – פֶּאֶרֶץ

See UBS Text Project, p. 187. The second option fits the context best.



<b>NASB, REB</b>	<b>“lewdness”</b>
<b>NKJV, Peshitta</b>	<b>“wickedness”</b>
<b>NRSV, JPSOA</b>	<b>“depravity”</b>
<b>TEV, NJB</b>	<b>“incest”</b>
<b>LXX</b>	<b>“profane act”</b>

The MT has a term (BDB 273 I) that denotes “a plan” or “a device” of wickedness. BDB lists two uses.

1. plan on purpose – Job 17:11
2. evil plan
  - a. evil device – Ps. 26:10; 119:150; Pro. 24:9
  - b. wicked act – Pro. 10:23; 21:27; Hos. 6:9
  - c. act of unchastity
    - (1) incest – Lev. 18:17; 20:14
    - (2) licentiousness – Lev. 19:29; Jdgs. 20:6
    - (3) adultery – Job 31:11
    - (4) spiritual adultery of idol worship – Jer. 13:27; Ezek. 16:27,43,58; 22:9; 23:21,27, 29,35,44,48,49; 24:1

**18:18** These laws developed over time and in reaction to

1. the problems they caused in Israel
2. the practices of fertility worship (i.e., Hosea 1-3)

There are several examples of early violations of these rules.

1. Abraham married his half-sister – Gen. 20:12
2. Reuben lay with his father’s concubine – Gen. 35:22
3. Amram married his aunt – Exod. 6:20
4. Jacob married sisters – Gen. 29:16-28
5. Levirate marriage described in Deut. 25:5-9

▣ **“while she is alive”** This brief phrase implies that if the wife, who had a sister, died then the widower could marry the sister. The rabbis even commented “who would love the children more?”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:19-23**

<sup>19</sup>“Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity. <sup>20</sup>You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor’s wife, to be defiled with her. <sup>21</sup>You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD. <sup>22</sup>You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. <sup>23</sup>Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.”

**18:19 “during her menstrual impurity”** This law goes back to previous passages (cf. Lev. 15:19-24; 20:18). This had to do with the ceremonial uncleanness of bodily emissions. We must be careful about making this a universal principle for every age and culture. See Special Topic: Mosaic Law and the Christian after Contextual Insights at Leviticus 18 and Special Topic: Paul’s View of the Mosaic Law at Lev. 5:17-19.

▣ **“menstrual impurity”** For a good brief discussion of this issue see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 925-928.

**18:20 “You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor’s wife”** This refers to a type of adultery (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 2-5) which would destabilize any society and especially Israel because of its inheritance rights, which were so important (i.e., Joshua 12-19 and “the Year of Jubilee).



NASB, TEV,

NJB “shall not have intercourse”

NKJV, Peshitta “shall not lie carnally”

NRSV “shall not have sexual relations

JPSOA “do not have carnal relations”

LXX “shall not give your bed of semen”

The MT has an unusual phrase, “you shall not give your lying/place of lying/copulation for seed.”

1. negated VERB, “give” – BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERFECT
2. NOUN from three possible roots (all BDB 1012)
  - a. lying
  - b. place of lying
  - c. copulation
3. NOUN, “seed”

Although it is ambiguous in its phrasing, it is obvious what it means (cf. Deut. 27:20-24).

**18:21 “give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech”** The name of this god (BDB 574) is a corruption of the Hebrew word *Melech*, with the vowels for the Hebrew word for “shame.” This Phoenician fire god is mentioned in the Old Testament (cf. Lev. 19:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10). It was apparently worshiped by offering the firstborn child. This human sacrifice is discussed in Jer. 32:35 and Ezek. 16:20. The Jews so hated this god that they turned its place of sacrifice into the garbage dump of Jerusalem. This becomes the word that Jesus used to describe hell, “*Gehenna*” (cf. Jer. 7:30-32). See Special Topic: *Molech* and Special Topic: Where Are The Dead?

**SPECIAL TOPIC: MOLECH**

The Term (BDB 574, KB 592) is uncertain. There have been several theories.

1. associated with a deity of the underworld



- a. “*Malik*” from the Ebla Tablets (± 2,300 B.C from northern Syria)
  - b. “*Maliku*” or “*Muluk*” from the Mari Tablets (± 1800-1750 B.C. from a Sumerian city located on the Euphrates River)
2. associated with a type of sacrifice from one of the Punic terms, “*molk*,” from a North African stele from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. It may have involved a substitute lamb being burned in place of a child (Eissfeldt). N. H. Snaith theorizes it means that children were given for cultic prostitution based on
    - a. Lev. 18:19-23 is about sexual sins so verse 18 might be also
    - b. this is the way the Talmud sees it also
  3. possibly a confusion with *Milcom* (cf. *Molech* in 1 Kgs. 11:7, but note that *Milcom* is mentioned in 1 Kgs. 11:5,33; however, both gods are referred to in Ps. 106:35-39)
  4. the word is a Hebrew word play from the consonants for “King” (*mlk*, BDB 591) combined with the vowels from “shame” (BDB 101 or 102). But even if this is true it does not identify the god or the cult.

The cult of *Molech* is described as a human sacrifice of children, by fire (whether burned alive or offered as a burnt offering after they were killed another way is uncertain). If this is true, it was

1. a type of fertility cult
2. a cult that worshiped the god of the underworld

This god was worshiped in Jerusalem in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, which became known as “Topheth” (cf. Isa. 30:33; 57:5; Jer. 7:31; 32:35). The worship is characterized by causing ones sons and daughters to pass through the fire (cf. Deut. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 17:17,31; 21:6; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; Ezek. 16:20-21). The word itself appears in Lev. 18:21; 20:2,3,4,5; 1 Kgs. 11:7; 2 Kgs. 23:10; Jer. 32:35; possibly Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43. The cult is most associated by Judean Kings, Ahab and Manasseh, though it appears earlier in Jewish contacts with surrounding pagan fertility worship.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

### I. Old Testament

- A. All humans go to *Sheol* (there are no cognate roots and the etymology is uncertain, BDB 982, KB 1368), which was a way of referring to the place where the dead live, or the grave, mostly in Wisdom Literature and Isaiah. In the OT it was a shadowy, conscious but joyless, existence (cf. Job 10:21-22; 38:17).
- B. *Sheol* characterized
  1. associated with God’s judgment (fire), Deut. 32:22
  2. a prison with gates, Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18
  3. A land of no return, Job 7:9 (an Akkadian title for death)
  4. a land/realm of darkness, Job 10:21-22; 17:13; 18:18
  5. a place of silence, Ps. 28:1; 31:17; 94:17; 115:17; Isa. 47:5
  6. associated with punishment even before Judgment Day, Ps. 18:4-5
  7. associated with *abaddon* (destruction; see Special Topic: *Abaddon*. . .*Apollyon*), in which God is also present, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2
  8. associated with “the Pit” (grave), Ps.16:10; 88:3-4; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:15-17
  9. wicked descend alive into *Sheol*, Num. 16:30,33; Job 7:9; Ps. 55:15

10. personified often as an animal with a large mouth, Num. 16:30; Pro. 1:12; Isa. 5:14; Hab. 2:5
11. people there called *Repha'im* (i.e., “spirits of the dead”), Job 26:5; Pro. 2:18; 12:16; 26:14; Isa. 14:9-11)
12. however, YHWH is present even here, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Pro. 15:11

## II. New Testament

- A. The Hebrew *Sheol* is translated by the Greek *Hades* (the unseen world)
- B. *Hades* characterized (much like *Sheol*)
  1. refers to death, Matt. 16:18
  2. linked to death, Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14
  3. often analogous to the place of permanent punishment (*Gehenna*), Matt. 11:23 (OT quote); Luke 10:15; 16:23-24
  4. often analogous to the grave, Luke 16:23
- C. Possibly divided (rabbis)
  1. righteous part called *Paradise* (really another name for heaven, cf. 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7), Luke 23:43
  2. wicked part called *Tartarus*, a holding place far below *Hades*, 2 Peter 2:4, where it is a holding place for evil angels (cf. Genesis 6; I Enoch); it is associated with the “Abyss,” Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3
- D. *Gehenna*
  1. Reflects the OT phrase, “the valley of the sons of Hinnom,” (south of Jerusalem). It was the place where the Phoenician fire god, *Molech* (BDB 574, KB 591), was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6), which was forbidden in Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5.
  2. Jeremiah changed it from a place of pagan worship into a site of YHWH’s judgment (cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6-7). It became the place of fiery, eternal judgment in I Enoch 90:26-27 and Sib. 1:103.
  3. The Jews of Jesus’ day were so appalled by their ancestors’ participation in pagan worship by child sacrifice, that they turned this area into the garbage dump for Jerusalem. Many of Jesus’ metaphors for eternal judgment came from this landfill (fire, smoke, worms, stench, cf. Mark 9:44,46). The term *Gehenna* is used only by Jesus (except in James 3:6).
  4. Jesus’ usage of *Gehenna*
    - a. fire, Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43
    - b. permanent, Mark 9:48 (Matt. 25:46)
    - c. place of destruction (both soul and body), Matt. 10:28
    - d. paralleled to *Sheol*, Matt. 5:29-30; 18:9
    - e. characterizes the wicked as “son of hell,” Matt. 23:15
    - f. result of judicial sentence, Matt. 23:33; Luke 12:5
    - g. the concept of *Gehenna* is parallel to the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14) or the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). It is possible the lake of fire becomes the permanent dwelling place of humans (from *Sheol*) and evil angels (from *Tartarus*, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude v. 6, or the abyss, cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-11; 20:1,3).
    - h. it was not designed for humans, but for Satan and his angels, Matt. 25:41

- E. It is possible, because of the overlap of *Sheol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna* that
1. originally all humans went to *Sheol/Hades*
  2. their experience there (good/bad) is exacerbated after Judgment Day, but the place of the wicked remains the same (this is why the KJV translated *hades* (grave) as *gehenna* (hell)).
  3. the only NT text to mention torment before Judgment is the parable of Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the Rich Man). *Sheol* is also described as a place of punishment now (cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:1-5). However, one cannot establish a doctrine on a parable.

### III. Intermediate state between death and resurrection

- A. The NT does not teach the “immortality of the soul,” which is one of several ancient views of the afterlife that assert:
1. human souls exist before their physical life
  2. human souls are eternal before and after physical death
  3. often the physical body is seen as a prison and death as release back to pre-existent state
- B. The NT hints at a disembodied state between death and resurrection
1. Jesus speaks of a division between body and soul, Matt. 10:28
  2. Abraham may already have a body, Mark 12:26-27; Luke 16:23
  3. Moses and Elijah have a physical body at the transfiguration, Matthew 17
  4. Paul asserts that at the Second Coming the believers with Christ will get their new bodies first, 1 Thess. 4:13-18
  5. Paul asserts that believers get their new spiritual bodies on Resurrection Day, 1 Cor. 15:23,52
  6. Paul asserts that believers do not go to *Hades*, but at death are with Jesus, 2 Cor. 5:6,8; Phil. 1:23. Jesus overcame death and took the righteous to heaven with Him, 1 Pet. 3:18-22.

### IV. Heaven

- A. This term is used in three senses in the Bible.
1. the atmosphere above the earth, Gen. 1:1,8; Isa. 42:5; 45:18
  2. the starry heavens, Gen. 1:14; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 148:4; Heb. 4:14; 7:26
  3. the place of God’s throne, Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 9:24 (third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2)
- B. The Bible does not reveal much about the afterlife, probably because fallen humans have no way or capacity to understand (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).
- C. Heaven is both a place (cf. John 14:2-3) and a person (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6,8). Heaven may be a restored Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-2; Revelation 21-22). The earth will be cleansed and restored (cf. Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21; 2 Pet. 3:10). The image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) is restored in Christ. Now the intimate fellowship of the Garden of Eden is possible again.

However, this may be metaphorical (heaven as a huge, cubed city of Rev. 21:9-27) and not literal. 1 Corinthians 15 describes the difference between the physical body and the spiritual body as the seed to the mature plant. Again, 1 Cor. 2:9 (a quote from Isa. 64:4 and 65:17) is a great promise and hope! I know that when we see Him we will be like Him (cf. 1 John 3:2).

### V. Helpful resources

- A. William Hendriksen, *The Bible On the Life Hereafter*
- B. Maurice Rawlings, *Beyond Death’s Door*

▣ **“nor shall you profane the name of your God”** The VERB (BDB 320, KB 319, *Piel* IMPERFECT) means “to pollute,” “to defile,” “to profane.” Israel was meant to bring the whole world to YHWH (see Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan at Lev. 11:44d). However, their disobedience and idolatry confused the nations (i.e., Ezek. 36:22-32). *Molech* was one of the fertility idols that Israel worshiped. Notice the same phrase in Lev. 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:32. Israel was a covenant partner who was recurrently faithless! This had terrible consequences to the nations and to Israel herself!

**18:22 “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female”** This is an obvious reference to homosexuality, which is dealt with several times in the Scriptures (cf. Gen. 19:5ff; Lev. 20:13; Jdgs. 19:22ff; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9). See Special Topic: Homosexuality and Special Topic: Human Sexuality at end of Contextual Insights, chapter 18. Also see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 343-345.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: HOMOSEXUALITY**

There is much modern cultural pressure to accept homosexuality as an appropriate alternate lifestyle. The Bible lists it as a destructive lifestyle, out of the will of God for His creation.

1. it violates the command of Gen. 1 to be fruitful and multiply
2. it is judged in Genesis 19 (cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-8; Jude 7) and Judges 19
3. it characterizes pagan worship and culture (cf. Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:18-28; and Jude 7)
4. it reveals a self-centered independence from God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:10)

However, before I leave this topic let me assert God’s love and forgiveness to all rebellious human beings. This is not the “unpardonable sin.” Christians have no right to act hatefully and arrogantly towards this particular sin, especially when it is obvious that all of us sin. And, with Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:2-28) asserting that sin is in the thought as well as the act, sexual sins are multiplied exponentially. Prayer, concern, testimony, and compassion do far more in this area than vehement condemnation. God’s Word and His Spirit will do the appropriate work if we let them. All sexual sins, not just this one, are an abomination to God and lead to judgment. Sexuality is a powerful gift from God for mankind’s well-being, joy, and a stable society. But this pervasive, God-given urge is often turned into rebellious, self-centered, pleasure-seeking, “more-for-me-at-any-cost” living (cf. Rom. 8:1-8; Gal. 6:7-8).

God loves people and desires the long-term health, happiness, and vitality of all those made in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27; see Special Topic: Human Sexuality). Those things/acts that disrupt individual health and happiness, as well as community, are condemned. God wants our best! We want our immediate gratification, no matter the cost!

Just a concluding word, as a church leader, I know that a percentage of Christians struggle with this issue. The problem is not the propensity but the act. Some ministerial students at my university struggle with other sexual issues (they are so powerful at this stage of life). Those who choose to limit their desires (i.e., abstinence) in this area (i.e., sexual desires) are surely candidates for ministry positions. This is also true for those who struggle with homosexuality. The act, not the thought, is the real issue. Why some are drawn to others of the same sex is a mystery. There is a choice in this area (as in all areas). We are responsible for our choices!

▣ **“an abomination”** See Special Topic: Abomination (OT) at Lev. 11:10. In Lev. 20:13, this offense brings the death penalty. See Special Topic: Homosexuality at Lev. 18:22.

For an interesting brief overview of homosexuality in the ANE, see R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale OT Commentaries*, vol. 3, pp. 191-193; also note Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 593, for a discussion on “abomination.”

**18:23 “you shall not have intercourse with any animal”** This seems to refer to the inappropriate mixing of the orders of creation, as does Lev. 18:22 (cf. Lev. 19:19). This possibly refers to some of the pagan worship practices that we know from history, particularly Egyptian.

▣ **“nor shall any woman”** Usually God’s laws are addressed to both men and women (cf. Exod. 21:29; Lev. 13:29,38; 30:27; Num. 5:6; 6:2; Deut. 17:2), but in Lev. 18:23b and 20:16 a law (i.e., bestiality) is directed at women (note Lev. 18:23a is directed to men).

It is surprising that the prohibition against same sex union is directed only at men, possibly because they had more access to activities outside the home.

▣

**NASB, NKJV,**

**NRSV, JPSOA** “perversion”

**NJB, REB** “violation of nature”

**LXX** “it is loathsome”

**Peshitta** “an abomination”

The MT has the NOUN (BDB 117) which means “confusion.” It is found only in Lev. 18:23 and 20:12, but a related root is also found in Lev. 21:20. BDB describes it as a “violation of nature” (i.e., the mixing of set orders).

For a brief discussion of bestiality in the ANE, see R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale OT Commentaries*, vol. 3, pp. 193-195.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:24-30**

**<sup>24</sup>“Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. <sup>25</sup>For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup>But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, *neither* the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you <sup>27</sup>(for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); <sup>28</sup>so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. <sup>29</sup>For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. <sup>30</sup>Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God.”**

**18:24-30** We learn from Gen. 15:16 that the Canaanites practiced these abominations and God removed them from the land. The same will occur if God’s people do these abominations; when they did, the result was the exile (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28).

**18:25 “For the land has become defiled”** The term “land” (BDB 75, KB 90) has a large semantic field. See Special Topic: Land, Country, Earth (OT). This is the reason for their expulsion. There is even the strong imagery in Leviticus that the land will “vomit them out” (cf. Lev. 19:25,28; 20:22).

As the Tabernacle became defiled because of its relationship to the sins of the people, so the land became defiled.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: LAND, COUNTRY, EARTH (*erets*)

Like all Hebrew roots, context is crucial in determining the intended meaning of the original author. The limited number of Hebrew roots (i.e., an ancient Semitic language) causes each of them to function with different meanings and connotations. This root (BDB 75, KB 90) can mean

1. the whole planet (although the ancients did not realize its size and shape. Usually it is used of the “known world”)
  - a. Genesis 1-2; 6-9; 10:32; 11:1,4,8,9; 14:19; 18:18,25; 22:18, etc.
  - b. Exodus 9:29; 19:5
  - c. Psalm 8:1,9; 24:1; 47:2,7; Jer. 25:26,29,30
  - d. Proverbs 8:31
  - e. Isaiah 2:19,21; 6:3; 11:4,9,12; 12:5
2. earth in contrast to heaven
  - a. Genesis 1:2
  - b. Exodus 20:4
  - c. Deuteronomy 5:8; 30:19
  - d. Isaiah 37:16
3. metaphor for the human inhabitants of the planet
  - a. Genesis 6:11; 11:1
  - b. 1 Kings 2:2; 10:24
  - c. Job 37:12
  - d. Psalm 33:8; 66:4
4. country or territory
  - a. Genesis 10:10,11; 11:28,31
  - b. esp. Israel (a gift from YHWH, He owns it)
5. soil, cf. Joshua 7:21
6. underworld (KB 91)
  - a. Exodus 15:12
  - b. Psalm 22:29; 71:20; Jer. 17:13; Jonah 2:6
7. new world
  - a. Isaiah 9:1-7; 65:17; 66:22
  - b. see NT, Rom. 8:19-22; Gal. 6:15; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1,5

Remember, context, context, context is crucial. Often cognate roots can help, but not always.

The book that helped me begin thinking about how this word is used in different senses is Bernard Namm, *Christian View of Science and Scripture*. He convinced me in local flood (i.e., Genesis 6-9). Be careful of basing your theology on the definition of English words!



NASB, NKJV,

Peshitta “brought its punishment”

NRSV, TEV,

NJB, REB “punished”

JPSOA

“called it to account”

## LXX “repaid”

The VERB (BDB 823, KB 955, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*) in *Qal* has the connotation of “to pay close attention to” or “to observe with interest.” It can be

1. positive – Gen. 50:24,25; Exod. 4:31; Ruth 1:6; Jer. 15:15; Zeph. 2:7
2. negative – Exod. 20:5; Lev. 18:25; 1 Sam. 15:2; Isa. 13:11; Hos. 4:14

The covenant God is always diligent in His attention to His people and purpose. All live in His gaze! There are consequences for how we live!

**18:26 “neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you”** The Israelites had divine requirement to legislate the religious practices of all the people who lived within their borders.

**18:29 “cut off”** It is not clear exactly what this VERB (BDB 503, KB 500) means.

1. death
  - a. by God
  - b. by the community
2. excommunication
  - a. from worship (Tabernacle)
  - b. from the community

**18:30** Notice the theological historical points.

1. Israel, keep My charge (cf. Deut. 30:15,19)
2. do not practice any of these abominable customs
3. which have been practiced before you (pagan worship or culture)
4. so as to defile yourselves and by implication, their God and His Tabernacle
5. Israel and YHWH are in a covenant relationship (blessings and curses, Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-28)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Israel’s sexual guideline agree or disagree with its ANE culture?
2. Why are sexual guidelines so significant in the life of a culture?
3. Explain the theological issue involved in Lev. 18:5, when one compares the OT and NT.
4. Are the sexual guidelines directed only toward men?
5. Why was “menstruation” considered unclean?
6. Who is *Molech*?
7. Explain Lev. 18:27-28 in light of Gen. 15:12-22.

# LEVITICUS 19

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Idolatry Forbidden	Moral and Ceremonial Laws	The Life of Holiness	Laws of Holiness and Justice	Moral and Religious Regulations
19:1-8	19:1-3	19:1 19:2-4	19:1-3	19:1-2a 19:2b 19:3a 19:3b
	19:4-8		19:4	19:4
Sundry Laws		19:5-8	19:5-8	19:5-8
19:9-10	19:9-10	19:9-10	19:9-10	19:9-10
19:11-12	19:11-12	19:11-12	19:11-12	19:11-14
19:13-14	19:13-14	19:13-14	19:13-14	
19:15-16	19:15-16	19:15-16	19:15-16	19:15-18
19:17-18	19:17-18	19:17-18	19:17-18	
19:19	19:19-22	19:19	19:19	19:19a 19:19b
19:20-22		19:20-22	19:20-22	19:20-22
19:23-25	19:23-25	19:23-25	19:23-25	19:23-25
19:26-28	19:26-28	19:26-28	19:26-28	19:26 19:27-28
19:29-30	19:29-30	19:29-30	19:29-30	19:29 19:30
19:31	19:31	19:31	19:31	19:31
19:32	19:32	19:32	19:32	19:32
19:33-34	19:33-34	19:33-34	19:33-34	19:33-34
19:35-37	19:35-36 19:37	19:35-37	19:35-37	19:35-37

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter deals with various regulations (note the curses of Deuteronomy 27). These are repeated in several places in the Pentateuch. This shows some type of editing. Remember, OT compilations or editing are also inspired.



B. List of subject and parallels.

1. be holy for I am holy, Lev. 19:2 – Exod. 19:5-6; Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Num. 15:40; Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21
2. honor parents, Lev. 19:3 – Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; 27:16 (see full note online at Deut. 5:16)
3. keep the sabbath, Lev. 19:3b – Exod. 20:8; 23:12; 31:15; Lev. 19:30; Deut. 5:12-14
4. no idolatry, Lev. 19:4 – Exod. 20:3-4,23; 34:17; Deut. 4:15-19; 5:7-9
5. peace offering regulations, Lev. 19:5-8 – Leviticus 3; 7:28-34
6. gleaning (see full note online at Deut. 24:19-23), Lev. 19:9-10 – Lev. 23:22; Deut. 23:24-25; 24:19-21
7. no stealing, Lev. 19:11 – Exod. 20:15; 21:16; Deut. 5:19 (may refer to kidnaping, see Deut. 24:7)
8. no false witness, Lev. 19:11 – Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20 (see full note online at Deut. 5:20)
9. take YHWH's name in vain, Lev. 19:12 – Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; 6:13; 10:20 (see full note online at Deut. 5:11)
10. do not oppress or rob neighbor, Lev. 19:13a – Exod. 22:7-15,21-23
11. pay the hired help immediately, Lev. 19:13b – Deut. 24:14-15
12. treat the disabled with care, not malice, Lev. 19:14 – Deut. 27:18
13. be fair in judgment, Lev. 19:15-16 – Lev. 23:3,6-9; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; 24:17; 27:19,25 (see full note online at Deut. 1:17)
14. do not hate or take revenge on your covenant partner but love him, Lev. 19:17-18 – Deut. 32:35 (see full note online)
15. do not mix things, Lev. 19:19 – Deut. 22:9-11
16. improper sexual activity with a slave, Lev. 19:20-22 – Deut. 22:23-27
17. initial dedication of fruit tree harvest to God until the fifth year, Lev. 19:23-25
18. do not eat blood, Lev. 19:26a – Lev. 3:17; 7:26-27; Deut. 12:16,23-25
19. do not practice divination or soothsaying, Lev. 19:26b,31 – Lev. 20:6; 27; Deut. 18:9-13,14 (see full note online at Deut. 18:9-14)
20. do not cut your beards, Lev. 19:27-28 – Lev. 21:5; Deut. 14:1 (see full note online)
21. do not sell/give your daughter to prostitution, Lev. 19:29 – Deut. 23:17-18; for priest's daughters see Lev. 21:9 (see full note online at Deut. 23:17-18)
22. revere YHWH's sanctuary, Lev. 19:30b – Lev. 26:2
23. honor the aged, Lev. 19:32
24. treat the stranger/sojourner well, Lev. 19:33-34 – Exod. 22:21
25. fair commerce, Lev. 19:35-36 – Deut. 25:13-16

C. Notice how Israel made no distinction between what we now label as “cultic” and “moral.” All of life was sacred and a gift from God. Not only the Sabbath but every day, the people of God model His character to a pagan world.

D. There is a lot of confusion in this chapter between SINGULAR and PLURAL in the MT and the ancient versions.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:1**

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:2-4**

**<sup>2</sup>“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. <sup>3</sup>Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God. <sup>4</sup>Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the LORD your God.’”**

**19:2 “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel”** This is a *Piel* IMPERATIVE, like so many in the chapters in Leviticus, but this one is uniquely addressed to the whole congregation (cf. Exod. 12:3).

▣ **“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”** The VERB (BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used as an IMPERATIVE or JUSSIVE, with an emphasis on “continue to be holy,” as are all the VERBS in Lev. 19:2b-5). This is the reason for all of these stipulations. God is to be reflected in the daily life of His people (cf. Lev. 1:44,45; 20:7,26; Matt. 5:48). See Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c and Special Topic: The Holy One at Lev. 13:3b.

**19:3 “you shall reverence his mother and his father”** Notice that a stable family pattern, reflected in Exod. 20:12, is what will make a strong society. There are several texts that express this same truth from a negative perspective (cf. Exod. 21:15,17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18-21; Pro. 20:20; 23:22; 30:17).

Also notice that the mother is mentioned first (cf. Lev. 21:2), which shows the respect for her in the Hebrew society. The LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate reverse the order of the MT.

The VERB “revere” (BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* PERFECT) is literally “fear.” It is used in several senses.

1. fear
  - a. of God – Gen. 3:10; 18:15; 20:8; 28:12
  - b. of men – Gen. 32:8; 42:3; 43:18; Exod. 2:14; 14:10; Deut. 20:8; 31:8
2. in awe
  - a. of God – Exod. 9:30; Lev. 19:14,32; 25:17,36,43
  - b. of men – Exod. 34:30 (i.e., Moses)
3. honor/respect/fear
  - a. God – Gen. 42:18; Exod. 1:17,21; 18:21; Deut. 4:10; 6:2,13,24; 8:6; 10:12,20; 14:23; 17:19; 31:12-13
  - b. parents – Lev. 19:3 (Deut. 5:16, different VERB)
  - c. YHWH’s sanctuary – Lev. 19:30; 26:2
  - d. leaders (i.e., Moses and Joshua) – Josh. 4:14
  - e. not fear other gods – Jdgs. 6:10

▣ **“you shall keep My sabbaths”** The VERB, like all VERBS in Lev. 19:2b-5, is IMPERFECT, which denotes continual action. Notice “sabbath” is PLURAL. This admonition means “keep all the regulations about My sabbath worship, week by week and year by year. It is important to Him (cf. Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11).

**19:4 “Do not turn to idols”** The term translated “idols” is difficult to define (BDB 47, KB 55).

1. diminutive of *El* (the general name for god in the ANE; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, A at Lev. 1:1)
2. from Arabic root – useless
3. from Akkadian root – powerless
4. NET Bible suggests “worthless,” p. 254 and mentions that Snaith translates it as “worthless godlings,” which combines two of the theories.

It is obvious, as one goes through this chapter, that much of it reflects a delineation of the Ten Commandments, although in a different order (cf. Exod. 20:4-6). See Special Topic: Consequences of Idolatry at Lev. 17:9b.

The VERB “turn” (BDB 815, KB 937, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense, negated) implies a turning from and a turning to (cf. Deut. 31:18,20; Hos. 3:1). This terrible spiritual reality is expressed in Jer. 2:13! See Special Topic: Monotheism at Lev. 17:9.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:5-8**

**<sup>5</sup>“Now when you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. <sup>6</sup>It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and the next day; but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire. <sup>7</sup>So if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an offense; it will not be accepted. <sup>8</sup>Everyone who eats it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned the holy thing of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.**

**19:5 “peace offerings”** See full note at Leviticus 3 and 7:28-34.

▣ **“so that you may be accepted”** There is no VERB in the MT. The NOUN (BDB 953) has three connotations.

1. goodwill, favor
2. acceptance – see here and Exod. 28:38; Lev. 1:3; 22:19,29; 23:11
3. will, desire, pleasure

Proper offering, proper animal, proper place, proper ritual were all required for the sacrifice to be accepted (i.e., Lev. 22:19,20,21). It is difficult to know if “the acceptance” is of the “offering” or the “offerer,” possibly both.

**19:6 “but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire”** This is possibly because the fellowship meal was meant to include other Israelites and Levites. Israelites did not eat much meat and certainly an individual could not eat this much meat at one time, so they were encouraged to invite their covenant partners to share with them.

There may be some kind of hygienic purpose to this regulation.

**19:7 “So if it is eaten at all”** This is an intensified grammatical construction (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, also note Lev. 19:17 and 20).

**19:8 “the holy thing”** The difference between “the most holy” and “the holy,” in referring to sacrifices, has to do with where the blood was placed.

1. if taken into the inner shrine it became “most holy” and could be eaten only by priests
2. if put on the altar of sacrifice (i.e., peace offerings) it was “holy” but could be eaten by non-priests, priests and their families

▣ **“that person shall be cut off from his people”** This obviously refers to some kind of separation from the people of God. Some see it as excommunication, while others see it as a divine death. The context implies death. See note at Lev. 7:20.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:9-10**

**<sup>9</sup>“Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup>Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor**

**shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.”**

**19:9 “you shall not reap”** This was a provision for the poor and sojourner (cf. Lev. 23:22; Deut. 23:4-25; 24:19-22). They were not to completely harvest their field crops or vineyards in order that the poor and needy might have access to gather something to eat.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:11-12**

**<sup>11</sup>“You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. <sup>12</sup>You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.”**

**19:11 “You shall not steal”** This may refer to kidnaping. See Special Topic: Stealing.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: STEAL (Exodus 20:15, BDB 170, KB 198)**

#### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. Like all other regulations in the Decalog, our faith, love, and respect for God must be seen in the sacred and secular aspects of our daily lives. It is an abomination to God to claim to know Him and then exploit our covenant partner (cf. 1 John 2:7-11; 4:20-21).
- B. This command is meant to help maintain the fellowship of the covenant community. The quality of this spiritual fellowship will attract a confused and seeking world to our God which is the purpose of Scripture.
- C. As other commandments have focused on God’s ownership of all of life, so too, this one! We are stewards, not owners. Our fallen drive toward possessions, without cost, is behind this prohibition (cf. Ps. 50:10-12).

#### **II. WORD AND PHRASE STUDY**

- A. This is the third command in the second half of the Decalog which is made up of only two words in Hebrew.
- B. The object of the prohibition is absent. This is usually supported by:
  2. The context of the two previous commands relating to capital offenses.
  3. The presence of applicable parallel passages both immediate (Exod. 21:16) and remote (Deut. 24:7). Also see Genesis 37.
- C. However, the short form is also defensible
  1. It is recorded for us by inspiration
  2. It widens the scope of the injunction
  3. There is also a parallel passage in the immediate context which relates to theft – Exodus 22:1ff (not kidnaping).
  4. Jesus apparently quotes this passage in reference to stealing (cf. Matt. 19:18).
- D. Theft is also dealt with in the other ancient Law Codes but usually the penalty is death, mutilation, or 30 times restitution.
- E. There are some significant parallel passages which define and explain this truth:
  1. Leviticus 19:1-18 — “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy”
    - c. Our lifestyle must reflect the family characteristics of our Father and our God (cf. Leviticus 19).

- d. Our faith must impact our lives daily, both in positive actions and negative prohibition, both informed by proper motives (cf. Leviticus 19).
  - e. Compassion for the ostracized and needy, Lev. 19:9-10,13, is as significant as refusal to rip off our neighbors, v. 11.
2. Amos 8:4-7 – God hates exploitations!
  3. Micah 6:6-8 – God wants proper motives in all of our actions. Why we don’t steal is the issue!
  4. Exodus 22:1ff – Often the missing truth in our modern discussion of robbery is restitution! Sin always costs!

### III. APPLICATION TRUTHS

- A. Joy Davidman, C. S. Lewis’ wife, has written a delightful book on the Decalog. She translates this command “Thou shalt not try to get something for nothing.” This assuredly widens the scope beyond possessions. She also says that “property is neither sin nor inalienable right, but a loan, a trust from God.”
- B. Theft, like all other sins of the fallen heart, are dealt with by a new heart (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26; Eph. 4:28). It is amazing how the old nature of “take” turns into the new nature of “share!”
- C. Our respect for God is clearly seen in our respect for other covenant partners! This truth overshadows the Decalog.
- D. Fallen people steal in many ways!

### IV. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does modern man practice stealing?
2. How is restitution related to repentance?
3. How does this verse relate to capitalism’s view of property?

▣ **“nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another”** See full note online at Exod. 20:16.

**19:12 “You shall not swear falsely by My name”** See full note online at Exod. 20:7. This refers to an oath, either in a business deal or in worship. See Special Topic: “The Name” of YHWH (OT).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: “THE NAME” OF YHWH (OT)**

The use of “the name” as a substitute for YHWH Himself is parallel to the Exod. 23:20-33 use of “angel,” who is said to have “My name is in him.” This same substitution can be seen in the use of “His glory” (e.g., John 1:14; 17:22; see Special Topic: God Described As Human). All are attempts to soften the personal anthropomorphic presence of YHWH (cf. Exod. 3:13-16; 6:3). YHWH is surely spoken of in human terms, but it was also known that He was spiritually present throughout creation (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 139:7-16; Jer. 23:24; Acts 7:49 quotes Isa. 66:1).

There are several examples of “the name” representing YHWH’s divine essence and personal presence.

1. Deut. 12:5; 2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Kgs. 9:3; 11:36
2. Deut. 28:58
3. Ps. 5:11; 7:17; 9:10; 33:21; 68:4; 91:14; 103:1; 105:3; 145:21
4. Isa. 48:9; 56:6

5. Ezek. 20:44; 36:21; 39:7
6. Amos 2:7
7. John 17:6,11,26

The concept of “calling on” (i.e., worshiping) the name of YHWH is seen early in Genesis.

1. Gen. 4:26, the line of Seth
2. Gen. 12:8, Abraham
3. Gen. 13:4, Abraham
4. Gen. 16:13, Hagar
5. Gen. 21:33, Abraham
6. Gen. 26:25, Isaac

and in Exodus:

1. Exod. 5:22-23, speak in Your name
2. Exod. 9:16, proclaim My name through all the earth (cf. Rom. 9:17)
3. Exod. 20:7, do not take the name of the LORD your God in vain (cf. Lev. 19:12; Deut. 5:11; 6:13; 10:20)
4. Exod. 20:24, where I cause my name to be remembered (cf. Deut. 12:5; 26:2)
5. Exod. 23:20-21, an angel (“since My name is in him”)
6. Exod. 34:5-7, Moses calls on (or “called out”) the name of the Lord. This is one of a handful of texts that describe YHWH’s character (cf. Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13)

Knowing someone by name implies an intimacy (cf. Exod. 33:12); Moses knows YHWH’s name and in 33:17, YHWH knows Moses’ name. This is the context where Moses wants to see God’s glory (cf. Exod. 33:18), but God allows him to see “His goodness” (33:19), which is parallel to “the name” (33:19).

The Israelites are to destroy “the names” of Canaan’s gods (cf. Deut. 12:3) and call on Him (cf. Deut. 6:13; 10:20; 26:2) at the special place He causes His name to dwell (cf. Exod. 20:24; Deut. 12:5,11,21; 14:23,24; 16:2,6,11; 26:2).

YHWH has a universal purpose involving His name.

1. Gen. 12:3
2. Exod. 9:16
3. Exod. 19:5-6
4. Deut. 28:10,58
5. Micah 4:1-5

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:13-14**

**<sup>13</sup>“You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning. <sup>14</sup>You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.”**

**19:13 “You shall not oppress your neighbor”** This refers to the wages given to a day laborer at the end of the day, whereby he might feed himself and his family (i.e., Exod. 23:3). The owner of the land wanted to be assured that the man would return the next day and often held the money until then, but this was regarded as taking advantage of the poor (cf. Deut. 24:14-15).

**19:14** Action toward other members of the covenant people, even though they might have some kind of handicap, was considered to be an action against God (cf. Matt. 25:45).

If a person were “deaf” how would they know someone had “cursed” them?

1. lip reading (i.e., use sight)
2. unimportant that it was heard, a curse once pronounced had an affect (like God’s word, Isa. 55:9-11)
3. cursing depreciates the “divine image” in all humans; this depreciation is “felt” by how others act toward the handicapped one

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:15-16**

**<sup>15</sup>“You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. <sup>16</sup>You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD.”**

**19:15-16** God did not show partiality (cf. Deut. 10:17), so neither should His people.

These two verses express the need for

1. warnings to both judges and witnesses about lying for personal gain
2. warnings about withholding knowledge of an act/event/crime

**19:16**

**NASB, NRSV,**

**NJB “as a slanderer”**

**NKJV, JPSOA footnote “as a talebearer”**

**TEV “spread lies”**

**LXX “deal basely”**

**Peshitta “accuse”**

The NOUN (BDB 940, KB 1236) has an uncertain root meaning.

1. to travel
2. to slander

So, does it refer to someone who

1. is a deceptive business person who travels
2. a slanderer who goes from person to person, home to home telling falsehoods?

Whichever, the consequences may be devastating, even death. This is far more than gossip but implies a witness in a legal case (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1114-1115).



**NASB “You are not to act against the life of your neighbor”**

**NKJV “nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor”**

**NRSV, JPSOA “you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor”**

**TEV “and when someone is on trial for his life, speak out if your testimony can help him”**

**NJB “do not take sides against your neighbor on a capital charge”**

**LXX “you shall not conspire against the blood of your neighbor”**

The MT has “you shall not stand forth against the blood of your neighbor” (BDB 196 CONSTRUCT BDB 945). There are two majority opinions.

1. if you know the truth about a court case you must speak
2. do not give false testimony in a capital offense trial

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:17-18**

**<sup>17</sup>“You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup>You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.”**

**19:17 “You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart”** This is a regulation (or possibly two separate laws) regarding attitude, much like Exod. 20:17. This shows that a root of bitterness was not allowed between individuals of covenant people of God. Leviticus 19:18 shows that God will set everything straight; it is not up to the individual Israelite to do so (cf. Deut. 32:35).

▣ **“you may surely reprove your neighbor”** This is an intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 406, KB 410).

Israelites could disagree and confront one another ([1] personally, see Ben Sira 9:3; [2] in a lawsuit, see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 442, #1) but not hate one another. How faithful followers treat each other is a reflection of their love and respect for God.

**19:18 “love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD”** Notice that some degree of self love is mandatory as we see ourselves in an appropriate relationship to God and, therefore, to others (cf. Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19). This same law is mentioned in Lev. 19:34, where it is expanded to include the resident alien. This was Jesus’ “second great commandment” (cf. Matt. 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8).

For a helpful discussion of the relationship of the NT believers to OT law, see Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, pp. 165-169.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:19**

**<sup>19</sup>“You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.”**

**19:19** The theological or cultural reason behind this rule has been lost. Like other rules, it probably related to

1. magic, sorcery (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; 27, see Special Topic: Magic and the full notes online at Deuteronomy 18)
2. things related to pagan worship (cf. Lev. 18:3,24-30, i.e., sacrifices or priestly clothes)

**SPECIAL TOPIC: MAGIC**

In ancient times there appear to have been several types of individuals and groups involved in different kinds of magic. Magic was a form of religious practice.

1. The first appearance of magic is found in the first written culture (i.e., Sumer) in its creation accounts.
  - a. a chief deity, *Ea-Enki*, is called “Lord of Incantation” because he killed *Apsu* by the aid of a spell
  - b. his son, *Marduk*, defeats *Tiamat* because of his father’s magic spells and potions
  - c. see E. Reiner, *Surpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations*



2. Magic was very prominent in Egypt involving *Thoth* and *Isis*. There was no distinction made between good and evil magic as in #1 and 3. usually it was connected to
  - a. healings
  - b. dream interpretation
  - c. political activities
  - d. passage to the realm of death
3. Magic in Anatolia (Hittite culture) was similar to #1. There was good magic and evil magic. The first was supported and the second condemned. Often older women were used along with priests. It, like all ANE peoples, saw magic as a valid part of any military campaign.
4. There is a priestly caste from Medea involved in astrology called “Chaldeans” (cf. Dan. 1:20; 2:2,10,27; 4:7,9; 5:11; Matt. 2:1,7,16). Herodotus calls them “Medean priests.” They were involved in foretelling and controlling future events based on the movement and configuration of astral gods (i.e., planets, stars, constellations, comets).
5. There is very little surviving literature about the magic of Canaan (i.e., Ugaritic). Obviously *El* had great power and healed a Ugarit King by magic (see “The Legend of King Keret,” ANET. 148b).
6. Most magical groups were made up of persons who claimed to be able to manipulate the supernatural or natural forces of nature (cf. Gen. 41:8,24; Exod. 7:11,22; 8:7,19; 9:11). Often these forces (or gods) were seen to be in conflict with humanity and by taking the side of this force or that force the possessor of the knowledge could control the forces for personal gain (cf. the magical papyri of the third and fourth centuries A.D.). These individuals would:
  - a. foretell future events
  - b. control future events
  - c. interpret future events and dreams
  - d. curse or protect other individuals, cities, nations, armies, etc.
7. Magicians, as in Acts 8:9,11, claimed to be able to manipulate the impersonal forces of nature or the personal (demonic) forces to perform their will. This often involved magical rites and incantation.
 

“True” magicians often attacked other magicians who did not perform the rites and liturgies correctly. These were called charlatans or deceivers (cf. Acts 13:6,8; 19:13).
8. The power of the gospel is seen in Paul’s ministry in Ephesus where former magicians converted to faith in Christ, and burned their expensive magic books (i.e., how to properly perform incantations, rites and liturgies, cf. Acts 19:19) publicly instead of selling them.
9. For further reading
  - a. Susan Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil*, Fortress Press, 1989
  - b. Merrill Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Scripture Press, 1967
  - c. Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, Herald Press, 1977
  - d. Waller Wink, *Naming the Powers*, Fortress Press, 1984
  - e. Clinton Arnold, *Three Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare*, Baker, 1997
10. All of these magic, occultic practices are an abomination to YHWH and forbidden to His people (see notes on Deut. 18:10-14, online).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:20-22**

<sup>20</sup>“Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for *another* man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, *however*, be put to death, because she was not free. <sup>21</sup>He shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. <sup>22</sup>The priest shall also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed, and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him.”

**19:20** “if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for *another* man” Leviticus 19:20-22 seems to form a separate unit going back to sexual improprieties which had to do with slave women. There are some double standards in the Old Testament. However, this seems to imply that a price had to be paid.



NASB	“acquired for <i>another</i> man”
NKJV	“who is betrothed as a concubine to another man”
NRSV	“designated for another man”
TEV	“the recognized concubine of a man”
NJB	“who is a concubine slave of a man”
JPSOA, REB	“who has been designated for another man”
LXX	“she is a domestic carefully guarded for a man”
Peshitta	“who is a bond maid betrothed to a husband”

The MT has the PARTICIPLE (BDB 358, KB 356, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE), which KB simply defines as “intended for (another) man.” BDB adds the designation “concubine.” The *Niphal* occurs only here. It is not meant to be a negative term in any way. She is not the problem, the one who lies with her is the guilty party.

▣ “who has in no way been redeemed” This is the third example in this chapter of an emphatic construction (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a VERB from the same root, BDB 804, KB 911, cf. Lev. 19:7,17). This one, however, has a PERFECT VERB and not the normal IMPERFECT. See Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: RANSOM/REDEEM**

I. OLD TESTAMENT

A. There are primarily two Hebrew legal terms which convey this concept.

1. *Ga'al* (BDB 145 I, KB 169 I), which basically means “to free by means of a price paid.” A form of the term *go'el* adds to the concept a personal intermediary, usually a family member (i.e., kinsman redeemer). This cultural aspect of the right to buy back objects, animals, land (cf. Leviticus 25,27), or relatives (cf. Ruth 4:14; Isa. 29:22) is transferred theologically to YHWH’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt (cf. Exod. 6:6; 15:13; Ps. 74:2; 77:15; Jer. 31:11). He becomes “the Redeemer” (cf. Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; Pro. 23:11; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Jer. 50:34).
2. *Padah* (BDB 804, KB 911), which basically means “to deliver” or “to rescue.”
  - a. the redemption of the firstborn (Exod. 13:13-15 and Num. 18:15-17)

- b. physical redemption is contrasted with spiritual redemption (Ps. 49:7,8,15)
  - c. YHWH will redeem Israel from their sin and rebellion (Ps. 130:7-8)
- B. The theological concept involves several related items.
  - 1. There is a need, a bondage, a forfeiting, an imprisonment.
    - a. physical
    - b. social
    - c. spiritual (cf. Ps. 130:8)
  - 2. A price must be paid for freedom, release, and restoration.
    - a. of the nation of Israel (cf. Deut. 7:8)
    - b. of the individual (cf. Job 19:25-27; 33:28; Isaiah 53)
  - 3. Someone must act as intermediary and benefactor. In *ga'al* this one is usually a family member or near kin (i.e., *go'el*, BDB 145).
  - 4. YHWH often describes Himself in familial terms.
    - a. Father
    - b. Husband
    - c. Near Kin Redeemer/Avenger

Redemption was secured through YHWH's personal agency; a price was paid, and redemption was achieved!

## II. NEW TESTAMENT

- A. There are several terms used to convey the theological concept.
  - 1. *Agorazō* (cf. 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). This is a commercial term which reflects a price paid for something. We are blood-bought people who do not control our own lives. We belong to Christ.
  - 2. *Exagorazō* (cf. Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). This is also a commercial term. It reflects Jesus' substitutionary death on our behalf. Jesus bore the "curse" of a performance-based law (i.e., Mosaic Law, cf. Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14), which sinful humans could not accomplish. He bore the curse (cf. Deut. 21:23) for us all (cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21)! In Jesus, God's justice and love merge into full forgiveness, acceptance, and access!
  - 3. *Luō*, "to set free"
    - a. *Lutron*, "a price paid" (cf. Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). These are powerful words from Jesus' own mouth concerning the purpose of His coming, to be the Savior of the world by paying a sin-debt He did not owe (cf. John 1:29).
    - b. *Lutroō*, "to release"
      - (1) to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21)
      - (2) to give Himself to redeem and purify a people (Titus 2:14)
      - (3) to be a sinless substitute (1 Pet. 1:18-19)
    - c. *Lutrōsis*, "redemption," "deliverance," or "liberation"
      - (1) Zacharias' prophecy about Jesus, Luke 1:68
      - (2) Anna's praise to God for Jesus, Luke 2:38
      - (3) Jesus' better, once offered sacrifice, Heb. 9:12
  - 4. *Apolytrōsis*
    - a. redemption at the Second Coming (cf. Acts 3:19-21)

- (1) Luke 21:28
- (2) Romans 8:23
- (3) Ephesians 1:14; 4:30
- (4) Hebrews 9:15
- b. redemption in Christ's death
  - (1) Romans 3:24
  - (2) 1 Corinthians 1:30
  - (3) Ephesians 1:7
  - (4) Colossians 1:14
- 5. *Antilytron* (cf. 1 Tim. 2:6). This is a crucial text (as is Titus 2:14) which links "release" to Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross. He is the one and only acceptable sacrifice, the one who dies for "all" (cf. John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14).
- B. The theological concept in the NT.
  - 1. Mankind is enslaved to sin (cf. John 8:34; Rom. 3:10-18,23; 6:23).
  - 2. Mankind's bondage to sin has been revealed by the OT Mosaic Law (cf. Galatians 3) and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matthew 5-7). Human performance has become a death sentence (cf. Col. 2:14).
  - 3. Jesus, the sinless lamb of God, has come and died in our place (cf. Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21). We have been purchased from sin so that we might serve God (cf. Romans 6).
  - 4. By implication both YHWH and Jesus are "near kin" who act on our behalf. This continues the familial metaphors (i.e., father, husband, son, brother, near kin).
  - 5. Redemption was not a price paid to Satan (i.e., Medieval theology), but the reconciliation of God's word and God's justice with God's love and full provision in Christ. At the cross peace was restored, human rebellion was forgiven, the image of God in mankind is now fully functional again in intimate fellowship!
  - 6. There is still a future aspect of redemption (cf. Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30), which involves our resurrection bodies and personal intimacy with the Triune God (see Special Topic: The Trinity). Our resurrected bodies will be like His (cf. 1 John 3:2). He had a physical body, but with an extra dimensional aspect. It is hard to define the paradox of 1 Cor. 15:12-19 with 1 Cor. 15:35-58. Obviously there is a physical, earthly body and there will be a heavenly, spiritual body. Jesus had both!



**NASB, TEV** "there shall be punishment"  
**NKJV** "for this there shall be scourging"  
**NRSV, REB,**  
**LXX, Peshitta** "an inquiry shall be held"  
**NJB** "he will be liable for a fine"  
**JPSOA** "there shall be an indemnity"

The phrase, "there shall be punishment" (BDB 134, KB 152), is very difficult (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 7071 #3) to understand and the rabbis differ over its meaning. It may refer

- 1. according to the Jerusalem Bible, to damages which must be paid (i.e., the dowry price) to the slave girl's owner or to her fiancé.

2. BDB defines the term as “punishment after iniquity.”
3. KB defines the term as “obligation to compensate.”

**19:22 “make atonement”** See Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:23-25**

<sup>23</sup>“When you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; *it shall not be eaten.* <sup>24</sup>But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. <sup>25</sup>In the fifth year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am the LORD your God.”

**19:23 “When you enter the land”** This phrase clearly shows that

1. parts of Leviticus were given by YHWH to Moses before Israel entered the Promised Land
2. this is an anachronism by a later editor



NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA, REB “forbidden”

NKJV, NJB “uncircumcised”

TEV “ritually unclean”

LXX “impure”

The MT has “uncircumcised” (lit. “foreskin”), which was an idiom for that which was unclean or “to be removed.”

**19:24** The fruit from the fourth year was to be offered to the Lord as a sign that all of the fruit belonged to Him. The Old Testament quite often takes the part to refer to the whole. This is true of

1. the Sabbath day, which reflects the truth that all days belong to God, see Special Topic: Sabbath (OT)
2. the firstborn, that all children belong to God, see Special Topic: Firstborn
3. the tithe, that all income belongs to God, see Special Topic: Tithing
4. the first fruits, which shows that all of the produce belongs to God

The term (BDB 239) is translated “an offering of praise.” The same word refers to a pagan harvest festival in Jdgs. 9:27. Some scholars suspect that this law had its origin in contrast to pagan worship. Many of Israel’s laws were meant to separate the Israelites from Egyptian and Canaanite practices (cf. Lev. 18:3).

**SPECIAL TOPIC: SABBATH (OT)**

This is from the Hebrew word (BDB 992, KB 409) meaning “rest” or “cessation.” It is connected to the seventh day of creation (see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*) where God ceased His labor after finishing initial creation and rested (cf. Gen. 2:1-3). God did not rest because He was tired, but because (1) creation was complete and good (cf. Gen. 1:31) and (2) to give mankind a regular pattern for worship and rest. The usage as a day of worship starts with Gen. 2:2-3, where YHWH uses His rest as a pattern for animals (cf. Exod. 23:12) and mankind (humans need a regular schedule of work, rest, and worship). The Sabbath begins like all the days of Genesis 1, at twilight; therefore, twilight on Friday to twilight on Saturday was the official time period. All the details of its observance are given in Exodus (especially chapters 16,20,31, and 35) and Leviticus (especially chapters 23-26). The first specialized use of this day by Israel was in Exod. 16:25-26 in the gathering of manna. It then becomes part of “the Ten

Words” (cf. Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). This is one example where the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are slightly different from the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5. Deuteronomy is preparing Israel for the settled, agricultural life in Canaan.

The Pharisees had taken these regulations and, by their oral discussions, interpreted them (i.e., the Oral Traditions) to include many rules. Jesus often performed miracles, knowingly violating their picky rules so as to enter into a theological dialogue with them (i.e., Matthew 12). It was not the Sabbath that Jesus rejected or belittled, but their self-righteous legalism and lack of love (cf. Mark 2:27-28).

The early church worshiped on both the Sabbath and the first day of the week (i.e., Sunday, resurrection day, cf. John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). The Synagogue addressed the growing Christian movement by demanding members to reject Jesus as the Messiah (i.e., The Eighteen Benedictions). At this point (i.e., A.D. 70) the Christians began to meet exclusively on Sunday.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRSTBORN**

This word “firstborn” (*prōtotokos*) is used in the Bible in several distinct senses.

1. its OT background refers to
  - a. the firstborn belongs to YHWH (BDB 114, KB 131, cf. Exod. 13:2,12; 22:29; 34:19; Num. 3:13)
  - b. the pre-imminence of the firstborn son of the family (cf. Deut. 21:17; Ps. 89:27; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 11:28)
2. its use in Col. 1:15 speaks of Jesus as the first of creation which is a possible OT allusion to Pro. 8:22-31, or God’s agent of creation (cf. John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2)
3. its use in Col. 1:15,18; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Rev. 1:5 refers to Jesus as the firstborn from the dead
4. it is an OT title used of the Messiah (cf. Ps. 89:27; Heb. 1:6; 12:23); it is a title which combines several aspects of the primacy and centrality of Jesus.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: TITHING**

The NT has few references to tithing. I do not believe the NT teaches tithing because this entire setting is against “nit-picking” Jewish legalism and self-righteousness (i.e., Matt. 23:13-36). I believe the NT guidelines for regular giving (if there are any) are found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (i.e., referring to the one-time gift of the Gentile churches to the poor of the Mother Church in Jerusalem), which go far beyond tithing! If a Jew with only the information of the OT was commanded to give ten to thirty percent (there are two, possibly three, required tithes in the OT; see Special Topic: Tithes in the Mosaic Legislation), then Christians should give far beyond and not even take the time to discuss the tithe!

NT believers must be careful of turning Christianity into a new legal, performance-oriented code (Christian Talmud). Their desire to be pleasing to God causes them to try to find guidelines for every area of life. However, theologically it is dangerous to pull old covenant rules which are not reaffirmed in the NT (i.e., the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15) and make them dogmatic criteria, especially when they are claimed (by modern preachers) to be causes of calamity or promises of prosperity (cf. Malachi 3).

Here is a good quote from Frank Stagg, *New Testament Theology*, pp. 292-293.

“The New Testament does not once introduce tithing into the grace of giving. Tithes are mentioned only three times in the New Testament:

1. in censoring the Pharisees for neglect of justice, mercy, and faith while giving meticulous care to the tithing of even garden produce (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42)
2. in the exposure of the proud Pharisee who ‘prayed to himself,’ boasting that he fasted twice each week and tithed all his possessions (Luke 18:12)
3. in arguing for the superiority of Melchizedek, and hence of Christ, to Levi (Heb. 7:6-9).

“It is clear that Jesus approved tithing as a part of the Temple system, just as in principle and practice he supported the general practices of the Temple and the synagogues. But there is no indication that he imposed any part of the Temple cultus on his followers. Tithes were chiefly produce, formerly eaten at the sanctuary by the one tithing and later eaten by the priests. Tithing as set forth in the Old Testament could be carried out only in a religious system built around a system of animal sacrifice.”

“Many Christians find the tithe to be a fair and workable plan for giving. So long as it is not made to be a coercive or legalistic system, it may prove to be a happy plan. However, one may not validly claim that tithing is taught in the New Testament. It is recognized as proper for Jewish observance (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42), but it is not imposed upon Christians. In fact, it is now impossible for Jews or Christians to tithe in the Old Testament sense. Tithing today only faintly resembles the ancient ritual practice belonging to the sacrificial system of the Jews.”

Stagg has summed it up.

“While much may be said for adopting the tithe voluntarily as a standard for one’s giving without rigidly imposing it upon others as a Christian requirement, it is clear in adopting such a practice that one is not carrying on the Old Testament practice. At most one is doing something only remotely analogous to the tithing practice of the Old Testament, which was a tax to support the Temple and the priestly system, a social and religious system which no longer exists. Tithes were obligatory in Judaism as a tax until the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, but they are not thus binding upon Christians.

This is not to discredit tithing, but it is to clarify its relationship to the New Testament. It is to deny that the New Testament supports the coerciveness, legalism, profit motive, and the bargaining which so often characterize the tithing appeals today. As a voluntary system, tithing offers much; but it must be redeemed by grace if it is to be Christian. To plead that ‘it works’ is only to adopt the pragmatic tests of the world. Much ‘works’ that is not Christian. Tithing, if it is to be congenial to New Testament theology, must be rooted in the grace and love of God.”

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:26-28**

**<sup>26</sup>“You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying. <sup>27</sup>You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard. <sup>28</sup>You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.”**

**19:26** Instead of a prohibition of eating blood (cf. Lev. 17:12), the LXX has “Do not eat on the mountains,” which would reflect *Ba’al* worship (cf. Isa. 57:5-7; Ezek. 6:13; 18:6,15; 20:28; 22:9; Hos. 4:13).

▣ **“divination or soothsaying”** These were different ways that the surrounding nations determined the will of God (see full note online at Deut. 18:10-12). Although Leviticus is speaking to the people of God, it shows that they had been influenced, or would be influenced, by Canaanite worship practices.

**19:27 “You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard”** This was related somehow to the Canaanite worship rites of mourning (cf. Lev. 21:1-5; Deut. 14:1-2) but we are simply unsure at this point (i.e., Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 61). See Special Topic: Grieving Rites at Lev. 10:3.

**19:28 “You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves”** This same type of procedure is found in Lev. 21:5 and Deut. 14:1. It relates somewhat to Canaanite worship practices (cf. 2 Kings 18). This does not relate to modern artistic tattoos. The word “tattoo” (BDB 508) occurs only here.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:29-30**

**<sup>29</sup>“Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and the land become full of lewdness. <sup>30</sup>You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary; I am the LORD.”**

**19:29-30** This relates to YHWH’s Tabernacle being totally different from the worship practices of the fertility cults of the ANE. See Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the Ancient Near East.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: FERTILITY WORSHIP OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST**

I. Reasons For

- A. Ancient humans began as hunters-gatherers, but as nomadic life became settled, the need for crops and herds developed.
- B. Ancient Near Eastern inhabitants were vulnerable to the forces of nature. As civilizations developed around the major bodies of fresh water they became dependant on the regular order of the seasons.
- C. The forces of nature became gods who needed to be supplicated and controlled.

II. Where and Why

- A. Fertility religions developed in
  1. Egypt (Nile)
  2. Mesopotamia (Tigris and Euphrates)
  3. Canaan (Jordan)
- B. There is a basic commonality among the fertility cults of the Ancient Near East.
- C. The changing and unpredictable seasons and weather conditions caused the development of myths using human/divine analogies as the basis of life in the spiritual realm and on earth.

III. Who and How

- A. Who (the gods and goddesses)
  1. Egypt
    - a. *Isis* (female)
    - b. *Osiris* (male)
  2. Mesopotamia
    - a. *Ishtar/Inanna* (female)
    - b. *Tammuz/Dumuzi* (male)



3. Canaan
    - a. *Ba'al* (male)
    - b. *Asherah, Astarte, Anath* (female)
  - B. Each of these pairs were mythologized in similar ways
    1. one dies
    2. the other restores
    3. the pattern of dying and rising gods mimics the annual cycles of nature
  - C. Imitation magic saw human sexual unions (i.e., marriage of the gods) as a way of insuring fertility of crops, herds, and people
- IV. The Israelites
- A. YHWH's people were warned (i.e., Leviticus and Deuteronomy) to avoid the fertility cults (especially of Canaan).
  - B. These cults were very popular because of the superstition of human beings and the added incentive of sexual activity.
  - C. Idolatry involves the blessing of life to be sought in cultic or ritual ways instead of a personal faith and trust in YHWH.
- V. Suggested Reading
- A. W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*
  - B. J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*
  - C. James G. Frazer
    1. *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*
    2. *Folklore in the Old Testament*
    3. *The Worship of Nature*
  - D. C. H. Gordon, *Before the Bible*
  - E. S. N. Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*

**19:29,31** There are three IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense.

1. do not profane, Lev. 19:29
2. do not turn to, Lev. 19:31
3. do not seek, Lev. 29:31

Notice the same contextual thrust in Lev. 19:4, “do not turn to. . .”

**19:30** “You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary” This reflects Exod. 20:8-11.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:31**

<sup>31</sup>“Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.”

**19:31** “mediums or spiritists” These were people who tried to contact the dead (cf, Deut. 18:10-12). Ancestor worship or an attempt to manipulate “the powers” dominated ancient worship practices. See full notes online in Deuteronomy 18.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:32**

**<sup>32</sup>“You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.”**

**19:32 “You shall rise up before the grayheaded”** This is a unique passage about reverence for the aged. See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 568-570.

It is possible that the aged person here is part of the community leadership (i.e., elder, judge) and this was an act of defiance toward authority, not just age.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:33-34**

**<sup>33</sup>“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. <sup>34</sup>The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”**

**19:33** Abraham and Isaac were sojourners in a foreign land. Israel knew how it felt, as they were slaves in Egypt (cf. Exod. 22:21; 23:9; Deut. 5:15; 10:19). Israel must be distinct, holy, different, reflecting YHWH’s character. See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel’s God (OT) at Lev. 10:3b.

**19:34 “The stranger who resides with you. . .you shall love him as yourself”** This even expands the concept which was mentioned in Lev. 19:18, where we are told to love our neighbors. Here we are told to even include our resident aliens. In the New Testament it is expanded to include even those who persecute us.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:35-37**

**<sup>35</sup>“You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. <sup>36</sup>You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. <sup>37</sup>You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD.”**

**19:35-37** This basically deals with honesty in business practices. The famous statement, “business is business” is an untrue maxim. We should reflect who our God is in every area of our lives.

**19:36 “ephah. . .hin”** YHWH was concerned with fair business practices (cf. Pro. 11:1; 20:23; Hos 12:7; Amos 8:5; Mic. 6:11). How one does business reveals his heart and priorities! See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

▣ **“just balances, just weights”** This is an example of the term (BDB 841, cf. Deut. 25:15), usually translated “righteousness” (see Special Topic: Righteousness) in a non-theological sense.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS**

“Righteousness” is such a crucial topic that a Bible student must make a personal extensive study of the concept.

In the OT God’s character is described as “just” or “righteous” (VERB, BDB 842, KB 1003; MASCULINE NOUN, BDB 841, KB 1004; FEMININE NOUN, BDB 842, KB 1006). The Mesopotamian term itself comes

from a “river reed,” which was used as a construction tool to judge the horizontal straightness of walls and fences. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God’s righteousness as well as His right to judge.

Man was created in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1,3; 9:6). Mankind was created for fellowship with God (i.e., Gen. 3:8). All of creation is a stage or backdrop for God and mankind’s interaction. God wanted His highest creation, mankind, to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and be like Him! Mankind’s loyalty was tested (cf. Genesis 3) and the original couple failed the test. This resulted in a disruption of the relationship between God and humanity (cf. Rom. 5:12-21).

God promised to repair and restore the fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:15; see Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan). He does this through His own will and His own Son. Humans were incapable of restoring the breach (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:20; Revelation 5).

After the Fall, God’s first step toward restoration was the concept of covenant based on His invitation and mankind’s repentant, faithful, obedient response (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38). Because of the Fall, humans were incapable of appropriate action (cf. Rom. 3:21-31; Galatians 3). God Himself had to take the initiative to restore covenant-breaking humans. He did this by

1. declaring mankind righteous through the work of Christ (i.e., forensic righteousness)
2. freely giving mankind righteousness through the work of Christ (i.e., imputed righteousness)
3. providing the indwelling Spirit who produces righteousness (i.e., Christlikeness, the restoration of the image of God) in mankind
4. restoring the fellowship of the Garden of Eden (compare Genesis 1-2 with Revelation 21-22)

However, God requires a covenantal response. God decrees (i.e., freely gives, i.e., Rom. 5:8; 6:23) and provides, but humans must respond and continue to respond in

1. repentance
2. faith
3. lifestyle obedience
4. perseverance

Righteousness, therefore, is a covenantal, reciprocal action between God and His highest creation, based on the character of God, the work of Christ, and the enabling of the Spirit, to which each individual must personally and continually respond appropriately. The concept is called “justification by grace through faith” (i.e., Eph. 2:8-9). The concept is revealed in the Gospels, but not in these terms. It is primarily defined by Paul, who uses the Greek term “righteousness” in its various forms over 100 times.

Paul, being a trained rabbi, uses the term *dikaioσunē* in its Hebrew sense of the term *tsaddiq* used in the Septuagint, not from Greek literature. In Greek writings the term is connected to someone who conformed to the expectations of Deity and society (i.e., Noah, Job). In the Hebrew sense it is always structured in covenantal terms (see Special Topic: Covenant). YHWH is a just, ethical, moral God. He wants His people to reflect His character. Redeemed mankind becomes a new creature (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). This newness results in a new lifestyle of godliness (Matthew 5-7; Gal. 5:22-24; James; 1 John). Since Israel was a theocracy there was no clear delineation between the secular (society’s norms) and the sacred (God’s will). This distinction is expressed in the Hebrew and Greek terms being translated into English as “justice” (relating to society) and “righteousness” (relating to religion).

The gospel (good news) of Jesus is that fallen mankind has been restored to fellowship with God. This has been accomplished through the Father’s love, mercy, and grace; the Son’s life, death, and resurrection; and the Spirit’s wooing and drawing to the gospel. Justification is a free act of God, but it must issue in godliness (Augustine’s position, which reflects both the Reformation emphasis on the freeness of the gospel and Roman Catholic emphasis on a changed life of love and faithfulness). For Reformers the term “the

righteousness of God” is an OBJECTIVE GENITIVE (i.e., the act of making sinful mankind acceptable to God [positional sanctification], while for the Catholics it is a SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE, which is the process of becoming more like God [experiential progressive sanctification]. In reality it is surely both!!)

In my view all of the Bible from Genesis 4 – Revelation 20 is a record of God’s restoring the fellowship of Eden. The Bible starts with God and mankind in fellowship in an earthly setting (cf. Genesis 1-2) and the Bible ends with the same setting (cf. Revelation 21-22). God’s image and purpose will be restored!

To document the above discussions note the following selected NT passages illustrating the Greek word group.

1. God is righteous (often connected to God as Judge)
  - a. Romans 3:26
  - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-6
  - c. 2 Timothy 4:8
  - d. Revelation 16:5
2. Jesus is righteous
  - a. Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14 (title of Messiah)
  - b. Matthew 27:19
  - c. 1 John 2:1,29; 3:7
3. God’s will for His creation is righteousness
  - a. Leviticus 19:2
  - b. Matthew 5:48 (cf. 5:17-20)
4. God’s means of providing and producing righteousness
  - a. Romans 3:21-31
  - b. Romans 4
  - c. Romans 5:6-11
  - d. Galatians 3:6-14
5. Given by God
  - a. Romans 3:24; 6:23
  - b. 1 Corinthians 1:30
  - c. Ephesians 2:8-9
6. Received by faith
  - a. Romans 1:17; 3:22,26; 4:3,5,13; 9:30; 10:4,6,10
  - b. 2 Corinthians 5:7,21
7. Through acts of the Son
  - a. Romans 5:21
  - b. 2 Corinthians 5:21
  - c. Philippians 2:6-11
8. God’s will is that His followers be righteous
  - a. Matthew 5:3-48; 7:24-27
  - b. Romans 2:13; 5:1-5; 6:1-23
  - c. Ephesians 1:4; 2:10
  - d. 1 Timothy 6:11
  - e. 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:16

- f. John 3:7
- g. 1 Peter 2:24
- 9. God will judge the world by righteousness
  - a. Acts 17:31
  - b. 2 Timothy 4:8

Righteousness is a characteristic of God, freely given to sinful mankind through Christ. It is

- 1. a decree of God
- 2. a gift of God
- 3. an act of Christ
- 4. a life to be lived

But it is also a process of becoming righteous that must be vigorously and steadfastly pursued, which will one day be consummated at the Second Coming. Fellowship with God is restored at salvation but progresses throughout life to become a face-to-face encounter with Him (cf. 1 John 3:2) at death or the *Parousia*!

Here is a good quote to conclude this discussion. It is taken from *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* from IVP

“Calvin, more so than Luther, emphasizes the relational aspect of the righteousness of God. Luther’s view of the righteousness of God seems to contain the aspect of acquittal. Calvin emphasizes the marvelous nature of the communication or imparting of God’s righteousness to us” (p. 834).

For me the believer’s relationship to God has three aspects.

- 1. the gospel is a person (emphasis of the Eastern Church and Calvin)
- 2. the gospel is truth (emphasis of Augustine and Luther)
- 3. the gospel is a changed life (Catholic emphasis)

They are all true and must be held together for a healthy, sound, biblical Christianity. If any one is over emphasized or depreciated, problems occur.

We must welcome Jesus!

We must believe the gospel!

We must pursue Christlikeness!

**19:37 “statutes. . .ordinances”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does “be holy” mean in this context?
2. What is the theological purpose of these various laws?
3. Is there a distinction between worship and daily life in these guidelines?
4. Why is Lev. 19:18 so significant?
5. What was the “practical” outcome of these guidelines?
6. How is Lev. 19:26 different from 19:31?

# LEVITICUS 20

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
On Human Sacrifices and Immoralities	Penalties for Breaking the Law	Penalties for Violating the Rules of the Theocratic Community	Penalties for Disobedience	Penalties a. religious offences
20:1-2a	20:1-5	20:1-2a	20:1-5	20:1-2a
20:2b-5		20:2b-5		20:2b-5
20:6-8	20:6-7	20:6-9	20:6-8	20:6 20:7
	20:8-21			b. offences against the family 20:8-9a
20:9			20:9	20:9b
20:10-16		20:10-16	20:10-16	20:10 20:11 20:12 20:13 20:14 20:15 20:16
20:17-21		20:17-21	20:17-18 20:19-21	20:17 20:18 20:19 20:20 20:21
				Concluding Exhortation
20:22-26	20:22-26	20:22-26	20:22-26	20:22-24a 20:24b-25 20:26
20:27	20:27	20:27	20:27	20:27

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. As Leviticus 18 and 19 deal with specific definitions of improper acts of covenant partners, chapter 20 deals with the consequences of sins.

B. Leviticus 20:2-5 deals with *Molech*, who is first mentioned in Lev. 18:21. See Special Topic: *Molech* at Lev. 18:21 and Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the ANE at Lev. 19:29-30.

C. This chapter uses an intensified grammatical structure (i.e., INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB of the same root).

1. Lev. 20:2 – “shall surely be put to death” (BDB 559, KB 562)
2. Lev. 20:4 – “should ever disregard” (lit. “should ever hide,” BDB 761, KB 834)
3. Lev. 20:9 – same as #1
4. Lev. 20:11 – same as #1
5. Lev. 20:12 – same as #1
6. Lev. 20:13 – same as #1
7. Lev. 20:15 – same as #1
8. Lev. 20:16 – same as #1
9. Lev. 20:27 – same as #1

There are terrible consequences to disobedience in time and eternity. YHWH wants a “holy” people to reflect His character to a pagan world (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7,24,26)

D. A good list of death penalty (i.e., by stoning) cases would be

1. premeditated (non-legal) murder – Exod. 21:12; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:16-21
2. kidnaping – Exod. 21:16; Deut. 24:7
3. idolatry – Exod. 22:19; Lev. 20:1-5; Deut. 13:2-19; 17:2-7 (cursed in Deut. 27:15)
4. blasphemy – Lev. 24:14-16,23
5. profane the sabbath – Exod. 31:14-15
6. sorcery – Exod. 22:17; Lev. 20:27
7. prostitution involving a priest’s family – Lev. 21:9
8. dishonoring parents – Exod. 21:15,17; Lev. 20:8; Deut. 21:18-21 (cursed in Deut. 27:16)
9. adultery – Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22
10. incest – Lev. 20:11,12,14,17 (see Leviticus 18)
11. homosexuality – Lev. 20:13
12. bestiality – Lev. 20:15-16 (cursed in Deut. 27:21)

Stoning to death by the community was a way to demonstrate Israel as a holy people, a community of purity which must rid itself of wickedness and law breakers (i.e., Lev. 20:2,27; 24:14-23; Num. 15:35; Deut. 21:21).

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:1-2a**

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“You shall also say to the sons of Israel:**

**20:2** This chapter’s introductory phrase is different from previous chapters. The VERB “say,” “speak” is not an IMPERATIVE.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:2b-5**

**<sup>2b</sup>“Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. <sup>3</sup>I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy name. <sup>4</sup>If**



**the people of the land, however, should ever disregard that man when he gives any of his offspring to Molech, so as not to put him to death, <sup>5</sup>then I Myself will set My face against that man and against his family, and I will cut off from among their people both him and all those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech.”**

**20:2b “Molech”** See Special Topic: *Molech* at Lev. 18:21.

▣ **“put to death”** This chapter gives the death penalty for various kinds of violations. See Contextual Insights, C.

▣ **“the people of the land”** This phrase has several different meanings in different periods of Israel’s history (see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 70-72).

1. landed gentry
2. a legislative council (R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale OT*, p. 204)
3. the common covenant person (c.f., Exod. 5:5)

It denotes “stoning” by the whole community (cf. Lev. 20:27; 24:14-23; Num. 15:35,36; Deut. 21:21). It was the designated way for the community of faith to remove the evil person (i.e., Deut. 13:1-18; 18:20).

**20:3 “I will set My face”** See note at Lev. 17:10. This is a repeated phrase (cf. Lev. 20:3,5,6).

▣ **“I will cut him off from among his people”** See note at Lev. 17:10.

▣ **“so as to. . .”** Notice how idolatry affects Israel.

1. defiles YHWH’s sanctuary (BDB 379, KB 375, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT; cf. Lev. 15:31; Num. 19:13,20)
2. profanes YHWH’s name (BDB 320, KB 319, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT; cf. Lev. 18:21)

**20:4**

**NASB** “should ever disregard”

**NKJV** “should in any way hide their eyes”

**NRSV** “should even close their eyes”

**TEV, Peshitta** “ignores”

**NJB** “choose to close their eyes”

**JPSOA, NET** “shut their eyes”

**REB** “connive at it”

**LXX** “should by an oversight overlook with their eyes”

This VERB (BDB 761, KB 834) is linked to the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root, which intensifies the thought. The “hiding” can be of the

1. eyes – 1 Sam. 12:3; Ps. 10:1; Pro. 28:27; Isa. 1:15; Ezek. 22:26
2. ears – Lam. 3:56
3. fact – 2 Kgs. 4:27
4. council – Job 42:3

Here, it denotes someone who knows a fellow Israeli has given his child (lit. “seed”) to *Molech* and does not tell the proper authorities will be put to death. See Special Topic: Consequences of Idolatry at Lev. 17:9b.

**20:5 “set My face against that man”** See note at Lev. 17:10.

Notice that several people are to be put to death (probably by the stoning of the whole community, Lev. 20:2).

1. the one who sees the idolatry and does not tell
2. the family (wife, children, grandchildren) of the one who does not tell
3. the ones involved in the idolatry
4. although not specifically mentioned, the family of the one giving his children to *Molech* because they would have known.

I have two comments about this.

1. This is an example of Hebrew corporality. One’s actions affect the whole (Exod. 20:5; Joshua 7).
2. This must also be seen in light of Ezekiel 18, where only the sinner is affected.
3. This is typical biblical paradox. See Special Topic: Paradox in Scripture.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: EASTERN LITERATURE (Biblical paradoxes)**

1. This insight (i.e., that the Bible is an eastern book, not a western book) has been the most helpful to me personally as one who loves and trusts the Bible as God’s Word. In trying to take the Bible seriously it became obvious that different texts reveal truth in selected, not systematic ways. One inspired text cannot cancel or depreciate another inspired text! Truth comes in knowing all Scripture (all Scripture, not just some, is inspired, cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17), not quoting a single passage (proof-texting)!
2. Most biblical truths (eastern literature) are presented in dialectical or paradoxical pairs (remember the NT authors, except Luke, are Hebrew thinkers, writing in common Greek. Wisdom Literature and Poetic Literature present truth in parallel lines. The antithetical parallelism functions like the paradox. This synthetic parallelism functions like parallel passages). Somehow both are equally true! These paradoxes are painful to our cherished, simplistic, denominational traditions!
  - a. predestination versus human free will
  - b. security of the believer versus the need for perseverance (see Special Topic: Perseverance)
  - c. original sin versus volitional sin
  - d. Jesus as God versus Jesus as man
  - e. Jesus as equal with the Father versus Jesus as subservient to the Father
  - f. Bible as God’s Word versus human authorship
  - g. sinlessness (perfectionism, cf. Romans 6) versus sinning less
  - h. initial instantaneous justification and sanctification versus progressive sanctification (see Special Topic: Sanctification)
  - i. justification by faith (Romans 4) versus justification confirmed by works (cf. James 2:14-26)
  - j. Christian freedom (cf. Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-33) versus Christian responsibility (cf. Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 4:1)
  - k. God’s transcendence versus His immanence
  - l. God as ultimately unknowable versus knowable in Scripture and Christ
  - m. Paul’s many metaphors for salvation
    - (1) adoption
    - (2) sanctification

- (3) justification
- (4) redemption
- (5) glorification
- (6) predestination
- (7) reconciliation
- n. the kingdom of God as present versus future consummation
- o. repentance as a gift of God (cf. Acts 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25) versus repentance as a mandated response for salvation (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21)
- p. the OT is permanent versus the OT has passed away and is null and void (cf. Matt. 3:17-19 vs. 5:21-48; Romans 7 vs. Galatians 3)
- q. believers are servants/slaves or children/heirs

▣ **“playing the harlot after Molech”** This refers to “spiritual adultery” by the fact that YHWH was Israel’s true husband (see Special Topic: Father) and, therefore, when Israel went after other gods it was a symbol of her going “awhoring after other gods” (cf. Exod. 34:15-16; Lev. 17:7; Deut. 31:16; Jdgs. 2:17; 8:27,33; Jer. 3:1; Ezek. 20:30; Hos. 2:7).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: FATHER**

The OT introduces the intimate familial metaphor of God as Father (see Special Topic: The Fatherhood of God):

1. the nation of Israel is often described as YHWH’s “son” (cf. Hos. 11:1; Mal. 3:17)
2. even earlier in Deuteronomy the analogy of God as Father is used (1:31; 32:6)
3. in Deuteronomy 32 Israel is called “his children” and God is called “your father”
4. this analogy is stated in Ps. 103:13 and developed in Ps. 68:5 (the father of orphans)
5. it was common in the prophets (cf. Isa. 1:2; 63:8; Israel as son, God as Father, 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4,19; 31:9).

Jesus spoke Aramaic, which means that many of the places where “Father” appears, it is the Greek *Pater* and may reflect the Aramaic *Abba* (cf. Mark 14:36). This familial term “Daddy” or “Papa” reflects Jesus’ intimacy with the Father; His revealing this to His followers also encourages our own intimacy with the Father. The term “Father” was used sparingly in the OT for YHWH, but Jesus uses it often and pervasively. It is a major evidence of believers’ new relationship with God through Christ (cf. Matthew 6:9).

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:6-8**

**““As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. <sup>7</sup>You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup>You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”**

**20:6 “medium and spiritists”** See Lev. 19:26,31; 20:27; Deut. 18:10-12. See full notes online in Deuteronomy 19.

**20:7 “consecrate”** This is the Hebrew term *kadosh* (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*). It is the VERB form of “holy” (see Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c). This is demanded several times in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7,26).

This concept is parallel to (1) “sanctifies” (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Piel* PARTICIPLE) in Lev. 20:8 (2) “separated” (BDB 95, KB 110) in Lev. 20:24,25, literally, “to divide.

Israel made a distinction between what was clean and unclean (Lev. 20:25; Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). Israel was to be different from her surrounding pagan nations. She was to reflect YHWH’s holiness!

**20:8 “keep”** Notice the number of times in Leviticus this is stated (cf. Lev. 8:35; 18:4,5,26,30; 19:3,19,30,37; 20:8,22; 22:9,31; 25:18; 26:2,3; and many more times in Deuteronomy. See Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d and Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

▣ **“statutes”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ **“the Lord”** This is covenant language. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1.

▣ **“sanctifies”** Notice the parallel concepts of

1. be holy, Lev. 20:7
2. sanctify, Lev. 20:8
3. separate, Lev. 20:24-25

YHWH sanctified them but Israel must “practice” (BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*) them!

All the doctrines of the Bible involve God’s sovereignty and mankind’s free will. See Special Topic: Election/Predestination and the Need for a Theological Balance and Special Topic: Predestination (Calvinism) and Human Free Will (Arminianism) and Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: ELECTION/PREDESTINATION AND THE NEED FOR A THEOLOGICAL BALANCE**

Election is a wonderful doctrine. However, it is not a call to favoritism, but a call to be a channel, a tool or means of others’ redemption! In the Old Testament the term was used primarily for service; in the New Testament it is used primarily for salvation which issues in service. The Bible never reconciles the seeming contradiction between God’s sovereignty and mankind’s free will, but affirms them both! A good example of the biblical tension would be Romans 9 on God’s sovereign choice and Romans 10 on mankind’s necessary response (cf. Rom. 10:11,13).

The key to this theological tension may be found in Ephesians 1:4. Jesus is God’s elect man and all are potentially elect in Him (Karl Barth). Jesus is God’s “yes” to fallen mankind’s need (Karl Barth). Ephesians 1:4 also helps clarify the issue by asserting that the goal of predestination is not heaven, but holiness (Christlikeness). We are often attracted to the benefits of the gospel and ignore the responsibilities! God’s call (election) is for time as well as eternity!

Doctrines come in relation to other truths, not as single, unrelated truths. A good analogy would be a constellation versus a single star. God presents truth in eastern, not western, genres. We must not remove the tension caused by dialectical (paradoxical) pairs of doctrinal truths:

1. Predestination vs. human free will
2. Security of the believer vs. the need for perseverance
3. Original sin vs. volitional sin
4. Sinlessness (perfectionism) vs. sinning less
5. Initial instantaneous justification and sanctification vs. progressive sanctification

6. Christian freedom vs. Christian responsibility
7. God's transcendence vs. God's immanence
8. God as ultimately unknowable vs. God as knowable in Scripture
9. The Kingdom of God as present vs. future consummation
10. Repentance as a gift of God vs. repentance as a necessary human covenantal response
11. Jesus as divine vs. Jesus as human
12. Jesus is equal to the Father vs. Jesus as subservient to the Father

The theological concept of "covenant" unites the sovereignty of God (who always takes the initiative and sets the agenda) with a mandatory initial and continuing repentant, faith response from humans. Be careful of proof-texting one side of the paradox and depreciating the other! Be careful of asserting only your favorite doctrine or system of theology!

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: PREDESTINATION (CALVINISM) VERSUS HUMAN FREE WILL (ARMINIANISM)**

Titus 2:11 is a balance to other NT passages on election. I thought it might be theologically helpful to provide my commentary notes from Romans 8:29 and chapter 9, as well as Ephesians 1.

- I. Romans 8:29 – Paul uses “foreknew” (*proginōskō*, “to know before”) twice, here and Rom. 11:2. In 11:2 it refers to God’s covenant love for Israel before time began. Remember that the term “know” in

Hebrew related to intimate, personal relationship, not to facts about someone (cf. Gen. 4:1; Jer. 1:5). Here it was included in a chain of eternal events (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). This term was linked with predestination. However, it must be stated that God’s foreknowledge is not the basis of election because if that were so, then election would be based on fallen humanity’s future response, which would be human performance. This term is also found in Acts 26:5; 1 Pet. 1:2,20 and 2 Pet. 3:17.

- A. “foreknew” (*proginōskō*, “to know before”)

The terms “foreknow” and “predestine” are both compounds with the PREPOSITION “before” and, therefore, should be translated “to know before,” “to set bounds before,” or “mark off before.” The definitive passages on predestination in the NT are Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:13-14; and Romans 9. These texts obviously stress that God is sovereign. He is in total control of all things. There is a preset divine plan being worked out in time. However, this plan is not arbitrary or selective. It is based, not only on God’s sovereignty and foreknowledge, but on His unchanging character of love, mercy, and undeserved grace. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan.

We must be careful of our western (American) individualism or our evangelical zeal coloring this wonderful truth. We must also guard against being polarized into the historical, theological conflicts between Augustine versus Pelagius or Calvinism versus Arminianism.

- B. “predestined” (*proorizō*, “to set the bounds before”)

Predestination is not a doctrine meant to limit God’s love, grace, and mercy nor to exclude some from the gospel. It is meant to strengthen believers by molding their worldview. God is for all mankind (cf. John 1:11-12; 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 4:14). God is in control of all things. Who or what can separate us from Him (cf. Rom. 8:31-39)? God views all history as present; humans are time bound. Our perspective and mental abilities are limited. There is no contradiction between God’s sovereignty and mankind’s free will. It is a covenantal structure. This is another example of truth given in dialectical tension. Biblical doctrines are presented

from different perspectives. They often appear paradoxical. The truth is a balance between the seemingly opposite pairs. We must not remove the tension by picking one of the truths. We must not isolate any biblical truth into a compartment by itself.

It is also important to add that the goal of election is not only heaven when we die, but Christlikeness now (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 2:10; 4:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:15). We were chosen to be “holy and blameless.” God chooses to change us so that others may see the change and respond by faith to God in Christ. Predestination is not a personal privilege, but a covenantal responsibility. This is the major truth of the passage. This is the goal of Christianity. Holiness is God’s will for every believer. God’s election is to Christlikeness (cf. Eph. 1:4), not a special standing. The image of God, which was given to man in creation (cf. Gen. 1:26; 5:1,3; 9:6), is to be restored.

- C. “conformed to the image of His Son”—God’s ultimate goal is the restoration of the image lost in the Fall. Believers are foreordained to Christlikeness (cf. Eph. 1:4).

## II. Romans 9

- A. Romans 9 is one of the strongest NT passages on God’s sovereignty (the other being Eph. 1:3-14), while chapter 10 states humans’ free will clearly and repeatedly (cf. “everyone,” Rom. 10:4; “whosoever,” Rom. 10:11,13; “all,” Rom. 10:12 [twice]). Paul never tries to reconcile this theological tension. They are both true! Most Bible doctrines are presented in paradoxical or dialectical pairs. Most systems of theology are logical half-truths. Augustinianism and Calvinism versus semi-Pelegianism and Arminianism have elements of truth and error. Biblical tension between doctrines is preferable to a proof-texted, dogmatic, rational, theological system that forces the Bible onto a preconceived interpretive grid.
- B. This same truth (found in Rom. 9:23) is stated in Rom. 8:29-30 and Eph. 1:4,11. This chapter is the strongest expression of God’s sovereignty in the NT. There can be no dispute that God is in total charge of creation and redemption. This great truth should never be softened or diminished. However, it must be balanced with God’s choice of covenant as a means of relating to human creation, made in His image. It is surely true that some OT covenants, like Genesis 15, are unconditional and do not relate at all to human response, but other covenants are conditioned on human response (e.g., Eden, Noah, Moses, David). God has a plan of redemption for His creation; no human can affect this plan. God has chosen to allow individuals to participate in His plans. This opportunity for participation is a theological tension between sovereignty (Romans 9) and human free will (Romans 10).

It is not appropriate to select one biblical emphasis and ignore another. There is tension between doctrines because eastern people present truth in dialectical or tension-filled pairs. Doctrines must be held in relationship to other doctrines. Truth is a mosaic of truths.

## III. Ephesians 1

- A. Election is a wonderful doctrine. However, it is not a call to favoritism, but a call to be a channel, a tool, or means of others’ redemption! In the OT the term was used primarily for service; in the NT it is used primarily for salvation which issues in service. The Bible never reconciles the seeming contradiction between God’s sovereignty and mankind’s free will, but affirms them both! A good example of the biblical tension would be Romans 9 on God’s sovereign choice and Romans 10 on mankind’s necessary response (cf. Rom. 10:11,13).

The key to this theological tension may be found in Eph. 1:4. Jesus is God’s elect man and all are potentially elect in Him (Karl Barth). Jesus is God’s “yes” to fallen mankind’s need (Karl Barth). Ephesians 1:4 also helps clarify the issue by asserting that the goal of predestination is

not heaven only, but holiness (Christlikeness). We are often attracted to the benefits of the gospel and ignore the responsibilities! God's call (election) is for time as well as eternity!

Doctrines come in relation to other truths, not as single, unrelated truths. A good analogy would be a constellation versus a single star. God presents truth in eastern, not western, genres. We must not remove the tension caused by dialectical (paradoxical) pairs of doctrinal truths (God as transcendent versus God as immanent; security vs. perseverance; Jesus as equal with the Father vs. Jesus as subservient to the Father; Christian freedom vs. Christian responsibility to a covenant partner, etc).

The theological concept of "covenant" unites the sovereignty of God (who always takes the initiative and sets the agenda) with a mandatory initial and continuing repentant faith response from man. Be careful of proof-texting one side of the paradox and depreciating the other! Be careful of asserting only your favorite doctrine or system of theology.

- B. "He chose us" in Eph. 1:4 is an AORIST MIDDLE INDICATIVE which emphasizes the SUBJECT. This focuses on the Father's choice before time. God's choice must not be understood in the Islamic sense of determinism, nor in the ultra-Calvinistic sense as some versus others, but in the covenantal sense. God promised to redeem fallen mankind (cf. Gen. 3:15). God called and chose Abraham to choose all humans (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). God Himself elected all persons who would exercise faith in Christ. God always takes the initiative in salvation (cf. John 6:44,65). This text and Romans 9 are the biblical basis for the doctrine of predestination emphasized by Augustine and Calvin.

God chose believers not only to salvation (justification), but also to sanctification (cf. Colossians 1: 10-12). This could relate to (1) our position in Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21) or (2) God's desire to reproduce His character in His children (cf. 2:10; Rom. 8:28-29; Gal. 4:19). God's will for His children is both heaven one day and Christlikeness now!

"In Him" is a key concept of Eph. 1:4. The Father's blessings, grace, and salvation flow through Christ (cf. John 14:6). Notice the repetition of this grammatical form (LOCATIVE of SPHERE) in Eph. 1:3, "in Christ"; Eph. 1:4, "in Him"; Eph. 1:7, "in Him"; Eph. 1:9, "in Him"; Eph. 1:10, "in Christ," "in Him"; Eph. 1:12, "in Christ" and Eph.1:13, "in Him" (twice). Jesus is God's "yes" to fallen mankind (Karl Barth). Jesus is the elect man and all are potentially elect in Him. All of God the Father's blessings flow through Christ.

The phrase "before the foundation of the world" is also used in Matt. 25:34; John 17:24; 1 Pet. 1:19-20 and Rev. 13:8. It shows the Triune God's redemptive activity even before Gen. 1:1. Humans are limited by their sense of time; everything to us is past, present, and future, but not to God.

The goal of predestination is holiness, not privilege. God's call is not to a selected few of Adam's children, but to all! It is a call to be what God intended mankind to be, like Himself (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13); in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). To turn predestination into a theological tenet instead of a holy life is a tragedy. Often our theologies speak louder than the biblical text.

The term "blameless" (*amōmos*) or "free from blemish" is used of

1. Jesus (cf. Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19)
2. Zachariah and Elizabeth (cf. Luke 1:6)
3. Paul (cf. Phil. 3:6)
4. all true Christians (cf. Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23)

God's unalterable will for every Christian is not only heaven later, but Christlikeness now (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; Gal. 4:19; 1 Pet. 1:2). Believers are to reflect God's characteristics to a lost world for the purpose of evangelism.

Grammatically the phrase "in love" in this verse could go with either Eph. 1:4 or 1:5. However, when this phrase is used in other places in Ephesians it always refers to human love for God (cf. Eph. 3:17; 4:2,15,16).

- C. In Eph. 1:5 the phrase "He predestined us" is an AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. This Greek term is a compound of "before" and "mark off." It refers to God's predetermined redemptive plan (cf. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 17:31; Rom. 8:29-30). Predestination is one of several truths related to mankind's salvation. It is part of a theological pattern or series of related truths. It was never meant to be emphasized in isolation! Biblical truth has been given in a series of tension-filled, paradoxical pairs. Denominationalism has tended to remove the biblical tension by emphasizing only one of the dialectical truths (predestination versus human free will; security of the believer versus perseverance of the saints; original sin versus volitional sin; sinlessness versus sinning less; instantaneously declared sanctification versus progressive sanctification; faith versus works; Christian freedom versus Christian responsibility; transcendence versus immanence).

God's choice is not based on foreknowledge of human performance, but on His gracious character (cf. Eph. 1:7,9,11). He wishes that all (not just some special ones like the Gnostics or modern-day ultra-Calvinists) would be saved (cf. Ezek. 18:21-23,32; John 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 2 John 2:2; 4:14). God's grace (God's character) is the theological key to this passage (cf. Eph. 1:6a, 7c, 9b), as God's mercy is the key to the other passage on predestination, Romans 9-11.

Fallen mankind's only hope is the grace and mercy of God (cf. Isa. 53:6 and several other OT texts quoted in Rom. 3:9-18). It is crucial in interpreting these first theological chapters to realize that Paul emphasizes those things which are totally unrelated to human performance: predestination (Ephesians 1), grace (Ephesians 2), and God's eternal plan of redemption (mystery, Eph. 2:11-3:13). This was to counterbalance the emphasis of the false teachers on human merit and pride.

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:9**

**<sup>9</sup>“If *there* is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him.”**

**20:9 “curses his father or his mother”** This is the opposite of “honor” (cf. Exod. 20:12 and would encompass Exod. 21:15). See note at Lev. 19:3. This shows the significance of family stability as it relates to long term societal stability. Note the parallel in Deut. 21:18-21.

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:10-16**

**<sup>10</sup>“If *there* is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. <sup>11</sup>If *there* is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. <sup>12</sup>If *there* is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. <sup>13</sup>If *there* is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have**



**committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. <sup>14</sup>If *there is* a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst. <sup>15</sup>If *there is* a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal. <sup>16</sup>If *there is* a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”**

**20:10-21** This deals with sexual abuses mentioned in chapter 18. See full note there.

1. Lev. 20:10 – Lev. 18:20
2. Lev. 20:11 – Lev. 18:7,8
3. Lev. 20:12 – Lev. 18:15
4. Lev. 20:13 – Lev. 18:22
5. Lev. 20:14 – Deut. 27:23
6. Lev. 20:15 – Lev. 18:23
7. Lev. 20:16 – Lev. 18:23
8. Lev. 20:17 – Lev. 18:9
9. Lev. 20:18 – Lev. 18:19
10. Lev. 20:19 – Lev. 18:12,13
11. Lev. 20:20 – Lev. 18:14
12. Lev. 20:21 – Lev. 18:16

Leviticus 18 defines the boundaries and chapter 19 the consequences for disobedience.

**20:10** The word “adultery” (BDB 610, KB 158) is used four times.

- 1-2. *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE
3. adulterer
4. adulteress

All require the death penalty.

This verse seems to have a redundant phrase which may be the result of an early copyist’s error. See Special Topic: Textual Criticism at Lev. 4:31.

**20:11** See note at Lev. 18:7,8 and at Contextual Insights, C.

**20:12** See note at Lev. 18:15 and at Contextual Insights, C.



NASB, TEV, JPSOA	“incest”
NKJV, NRSV	“perversion”
NJB, REB	“violated nature”
LXX	“behaved impiously”
Peshitta	“committed a sin”

This term (BDB 117) basically means “confusion” in the sense of the NJB, REB (cf. Lev. 18:23; 20:12).

**20:13** See note at Lev. 18:22 and at Contextual Insights, C.

▣ **“a detestable act”** This (BDB 1072) is used earlier in Lev. 7:18; 11:10; 18:22,26,27,29. See notes there. See Special Topic: Abomination (OT) at Lev. 11:10 and Special Topic: Homosexuality at Lev. 18:22b.

For a brief discussion of the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality, see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 543-545.

**20:14 “they shall be burned with fire”** Fire was one way to cleanse. See Special Topic: Fire at Lev. 10:2.

▣ There are several verses that require the burning of law breakers (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9). Also, Saul's and his sons' bodies were burned in 1 Sam. 31:12-13. See Special Topic: Cremation.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: CREMATION

### I. OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Cremation (burning) was one of the four ways to inflict capital punishment in Leviticus (cf. 20:14; 21:9, examples, Gen. 38:24 and Jos. 7:15,25).
- B. People friendly with Saul, reclaimed his body and those of his three sons from the Philistines and burned (BDB 976, LXX) them before burying their bones in the land of Benjamin (cf. 1 Sam. 31:12-13, omitted in the parallel of 1 Chr. 10:12). This text is the only seemingly positive cremation in the OT (cf. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 5, p. 1074). It may also refer to burning spices at the grave site (cf. 2 Chr. 16:14; 21:19; Jer. 34:5).
- C. Burning corpses was a symbol of judgment.
  - 1. a Judean prophet predicts the burning of the priests at Bethel on its sacrificial altar (cf. 1 Kgs. 13:2)
  - 2. in the eschaton the foreign invaders of Canaan will be burned and buried (cf. Ezek. 39:11-16)
  - 3. In connection with a plague of judgment in Amos 6:10 (i.e., difficult text)
- D. The issue of cremation has sometimes been falsely linked to the OT use of fire as a metaphor for judgment (cf. Isa. 30:33). Cremation metaphors (i.e. “pyre”) are used to accentuate eschatological condemnation.
- E. Cremation was seen as a humiliation (cf. Amos 2:1).
- F. Burial was practiced by all of the countries of the ancient Near East (cf. Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, p. 57).

### II. RABBINICAL JUDAISM

- A. Most early rabbis assert that burying is commanded by Deut. 21:23.
- B. Cremation is forbidden in the Talmud (*Sanh.* 7:2,24b) and *Mishna* ('*Abodiah Zarah* 1.3).
- C. Modern Judaism allows those cremated to be placed in Jewish cemeteries (cf. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 5, p. 1074), possibly an influence by the cremation of Jews by the Nazis

### III. GREECE AND ROME

- A. Both of these civilizations practiced cremation.
  - 1. Greece regularly (Sophocles, *Electra*, 1136-1139)
  - 2. Rome as a viable, but not common, option (Cicero, *Deleg* 2,22,56)
- B. The cultures of the Mediterranean had a different attitude toward cremation than the cultures of the Ancient Near East. Tacitus mentions that the Jews bury, not burn (*His.* 5.5)

### IV. NEW TESTAMENT

There is no discussion or mention of this subject in the NT. The physical body is viewed as a temporary shelter (cf. 2 Corinthians 5). Something of the old body will be reunited with the believer at the Second Coming, but there are no details or explanations (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18). This is simply

not an issue of “faith and practice” for Christians. Like the Jews of the OT, believers of the NT assert a bodily resurrection. There is a physicalness to eschatology, but the how or why is not specified! The condition or location of the physical remains do not affect a believer’s reunion with Jesus. Faith in Christ is the key, not physical remains!

**20:15** See note at Lev. 18:23 and at Contextual Insights, C.

**20:16** See note at Lev. 18:23 and at Contextual Insights, C.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:17-21**

<sup>17</sup>“If *there is* a man who takes his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister’s nakedness; he bears his guilt. <sup>18</sup>If *there is* a man who lies with a menstruous woman and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has exposed the flow of her blood; thus both of them shall be cut off from among their people. <sup>19</sup>You shall also not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister or of your father’s sister, for such a one has made naked his blood relative; they will bear their guilt. <sup>20</sup>If *there is* a man who lies with his uncle’s wife he has uncovered his uncle’s nakedness; they will bear their sin. They will die childless. <sup>21</sup>If *there is* a man who takes his brother’s wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother’s nakedness. They will be childless.”

**20:20,21** “They will be childless” For a Jewish family to be childless even affected their afterlife (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 534-535). In this chapter this is the result of “cut off” (i.e., the family line ceases; see note at Lev. 7:20).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:22-26**

<sup>22</sup>“You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. <sup>23</sup>Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. <sup>24</sup>Hence I have said to you, “You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. <sup>25</sup>You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. <sup>26</sup>Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.”

**20:22** “to keep” See Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d and Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

▣ “My statutes and all My ordinances” See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ “the land. . .will not spew you out” As Israel’s sin made the Tabernacle ceremonially unclean, so Israel’s sin made the land unclean. The land is personified as spewing out (cf. Lev. 18:28) the Hebrews as it had the Canaanites (cf. Lev. 20:23 and Gen. 15:16).

**20:23 “I have abhorred them”** This VERB (BDB 880, KB 1089, *Qal* IMPERFECT) means “to feel disgust.” In the Pentateuch it is used in several senses.

1. Gen. 27:46 – Rebekah was distraught over her Canaanite daughter-in-law
2. Exod. 1:12; Num. 22:3 – the Egyptians feared the Israelites because of their numbers
3. Num. 21:5 – the Israelites were sick and tired of the manna they had to eat every day
4. here, the VERB is theologically parallel to
  - a. “abhor” (BDB 1055, KB 1646, cf. Lev. 20:25)
  - b. “loath” (BDB 1072, KB 1702); cf. Gen. 43:32; 46:34; Exod. 8:26; Ps. 95:10; see Special Topic: Abomination

**20:24 “a land flowing with milk and honey”** This phrase describes the agricultural abundance of Canaan. It is mentioned several times.

1. YHWH’s initial call to Moses, Exod. 3:8,17
2. consecration of the firstborn after the 10<sup>th</sup> plague on Egypt, Exod. 13:5
4. YHWH’s message about the conquest by the power of YHWH’s special angel, Exod. 33:3
5. the spies sent into Canaan, Num. 13:27; 14:8
6. remember all the victories and blessings were a gift from YHWH, Deut. 8:7-10; 31:20
7. an allusion to Gen. 15:12-22 – Exod. 11:9
8. consecration and giving of first fruits after the conquest, Deut. 26:9
9. write the law on the stones from Jordan, Deut. 31:20
10. just after crossing Jordan, Josh. 5:6

▣ **“separated”** The terms “holy,” “set apart,” and “separated” have a similar root idea—that which is given to God for His special use. The people of God are holy because they have been set apart as a kingdom of priests (cf. Lev. 20:26; Exod. 19:5-6; 33:16). Israel was meant to bring the whole world to God. God has revealed Himself through Israel. One of the real problems with Israel’s lack of faith is that she affects the whole world. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan at Lev. 11:44d.

**20:25 “You are therefore to make a distinction”** This is the essence of the concept of “holiness” in Leviticus. YHWH is “separate”; they, too, should be different from their pagan neighbors in every area of life. Leviticus 20:25, like Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14, deals with food.

The VERB translated “make distinction” (BDB 95, KB 110, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw* is exactly the same for as the last VERB of Lev. 20:24, “I have separated.” The basic meaning of the VERB is “to divide.”

1. separate Israel from the other nations, Lev. 20:24
2. separate Israel’s food, clean from unclean, Lev. 20:25
3. in Exod. 26:33 it is used of the veil that separates the “Holy of Holies” from the “Holy Place” of the inner shrine of the Tabernacle
4. in Num. 16:9 it is used of the priests being separated to serve YHWH (i.e., they took the place of the firstborn, cf. Exodus 13)

**20:6** This is the key theological concept of Leviticus (cf. Lev. 11:14; 19:2; 20:24). Israel was uniquely YHWH’s people by covenant, not just creation.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:27**

<sup>27</sup>“Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

**20:27** In some way this verse seems to intrude on the context but it does show another area of Israel's distinctiveness (cf. Lev. 19; 26-28,31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18).

This chapter clearly revealed Israel's tendency toward idolatry!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How is this chapter related to chapter 18?
2. Who is *Molech*?
3. In this context what does the phrase "play the harlot" mean?
4. Define
  - a. medium, Lev. 20:6,27
  - b. spiritist, Lev. 20:6,27
5. How is "separated" in Lev. 20:24 related to "be holy" in Lev. 20:26?

# LEVITICUS 21

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Regulations Concerning Priests	Regulations for Conduct of Priests (21:1-22:15)	Instructions to the Priests (21:1-22:33)	The Holiness of the Priests	The Holiness of the Priesthood a. the priests
21:1a	21:1-4	21:1a	21:1-4	21:1a
21:1b-9		21:1b-9		21:1b-4
	21:5-9		21:5-9	21:5-6
				21:7
				21:8
				21:9
				b. the High Priest
21:10-15	21:10-15	21:10-15	21:10-15	21:10-12
				21:13-15
				c. impediments to the priesthood
21:16-24	21:16-24	21:16-24	21:16-23	21:16
				21:17a
				21:17b-21
				21:22-23
			21:24	21:24

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter addresses
  1. priests (Lev. 21:1-9)
  2. Aaron, the High Priest (Lev. 21:10-15)
  3. things that disqualify a person of the tribe of Levi from being a priest (Lev. 21:16-24)
  
- B. It deals with certain qualifications which deal with “holiness.”
  1. how and for whom they grieve
  2. who they marry
  3. their physical appearance (i.e., “no defect”)
  
- C. As the people are to be holy (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:24,26), so too, the priests (cf. Lev. 21:6,7,8; also note “sanctifies,” Lev. 21:8,15,23).

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:1

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them:”

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:1b-9

<sup>1b</sup>“No one shall defile himself for a *dead* person among his people, <sup>2</sup>except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother and his father and his son and his daughter and his brother, <sup>3</sup>also for his virgin sister, who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself. <sup>4</sup>He shall not defile himself as a relative by marriage among his people, and so profane himself. <sup>5</sup>They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh. <sup>6</sup>They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy. <sup>7</sup>They shall not take a woman who is profaned by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God. <sup>8</sup>You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, am holy. <sup>9</sup>Also the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by harlotry, she profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.”

**21:1b “No one shall defile himself”** This refers to a priest. Several categories are mentioned.

1. who they grieve for, Lev. 21:1-6,10-11
2. who they marry, Lev. 21:7,13-15
3. their family, specifically their daughters, Lev. 21:9
4. no physical defect (for animals see Lev. 22:12-25)
  - a. blind (even in one eye)
  - b. lame
  - c. disfigured face (from Hebrew root “to split,” BDB 356 II)
  - d. deformed limb (JPSOA footnote, “a limb too long”)
  - e. broken foot or hand
  - f. hunchback (or misshaped brow, BDB 148)
  - g. dwarf
  - h. eye problems (BDB 744, visible to another person, i.e., discoloration, marks, etc.)
  - i. eczema (BDB 173, cf. Lev. 21:20; 22:22; Deut. 28:27)
  - j. scabs (BDB 410, cf. Lev. 21:20; Deut. 22:22)
  - k. crushed testicle (Peshitta, “has one testicle”)
5. what and where he may eat his portion of the sacrifices, Lev. 21:22-23

▣ **“defile”** This VERB (BDB 379, KB 375, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT) means “to become unclean.” In chapters 21-22 it is translated by NASB as

1. defile, Lev. 21:1,3,11
2. profane, Lev. 21:4
3. unclean, Lev. 22:5,6,8

This defilement can come from several areas of life.

1. sexual (i.e., Leviticus 18)
2. idolatry (i.e., Leviticus 19)
3. food (i.e., Leviticus 11)
4. here, for grieving rites (see Special Topic: Grieving Rites at Lev. 10:3)

**21:2** Leviticus 21:2 seems to contradict 21:11, but apparently verse 2 deals with priests but verse 11 deals with the High Priest.

**21:3** This makes an exception. YHWH's laws often made exceptions for vulnerable people. He cares for the widow, orphan, alien, and here the unwed sister.

**21:4** This verse is uncertain in meaning (i.e., JPSOA footnote). The UBS *Handbook*, p. 316, calls it "the most difficult verse in the entire book." Some see it as

1. a restatement of Lev. 21:1b (Jewish Study Bible, p. 259).
2. the NET Bible, p. 258; NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 148; and NIC (OT), *Leviticus*, p. 290, think it refers to being involved in the burial of a relative by marriage. This is in contrast to "flesh" relatives (i.e., "one flesh," i.e., Gen. 1:23) who are mentioned in Lev. 21:2-3.
3. R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale OT*, vol. 32, p. 209, suggests "He shall not defile himself, being a leader among the people, thus profaning himself."
4. Keil, p. 430, sees it as a foreshadow of the statement in Lev. 21:7.

**21:5** These grieving rites are somehow connected to pagan rituals (cf. Lev. 19:27-28; Deut. 14:1-2). Israel must be distinct from her pagan neighbors, even in their funerals!

Later in Ezek. 44:20, there are two related rules.

1. priests shall not shave their heads
2. priests must trim their hair (i.e., head and beard)

**21:6** "They shall be holy" As the nation of Israel must be "holy" (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:24,26), so too, must her priests (cf. Lev. 21:6,7,8, same concept as "sanctified" in Lev. 21:15,23).

Since they work in YHWH's Tabernacle and deal with His sacrifices, they must be pure!

▣ "God . . . LORD" Notice the two most common names for Deity.

1. *Elohim* (three times), which denotes God as creator, sustainer of all life on this planet (see Special Topic: Names for Deity at Lev. 1:1, C).
2. YHWH (once), which denotes God as Savior, Redeemer, Covenant-making God (see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1, cf. Lev. 21:8,23; Gen. 2:4).

▣ "the food of their God" This phrase is repeated several times in this chapter (cf. Lev. 21:6,8,17,21,22). See full note at Lev. 3:11; also see Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

R. K. Harrison, *Tyndale OT*, vol. 3, p. 210, suggests that "bread" (BDB 536) is an ancient sacrificial term for "flesh" (i.e., Lev. 3:11,16; 21:21).

**21:7** The family life of the priests is also important to God. A priest may be defiled by it.

1. he should not marry
  - a. a prostitute, Lev. 21:7,18 (i.e., lost her virginity)
  - b. a sacred prostitute (Lev. 17:7; 19:29)
  - c. a divorced woman
  - d. a widow involved in prostitution, Lev. 21:14
2. he should marry a virgin, Lev. 21:13-14
3. of his own tribe, Lev. 21:14 (but LXX); Targums have "from his people" meaning another Israelite)
4. because his seed (either sperm or offspring) is holy



▣ **“profaned”** This ADJECTIVE (BDB 321 II) normally refers to someone slain or morbidly wounded in battle. Only here and in Lev. 21:14 does it refer to the metaphorical sense of “wounded” by improper sexual activity.

▣ **“divorced”** See full note at Deut. 24:1-4.

**21:9** This verse seems to refer to “cultic” prostitution (i.e., fertility worship; see Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the ANE at Lev. 19:29-30). This same injunction was given to all Israelites in Lev. 19:29.

Notice the verse mentions capital punishment by fire (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; rabbis say the incest rules of Leviticus 18; see Special Topic: Fire at Lev. 10:2). The other method was stoning by the whole community (cf. Lev. 20:2,27).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:10-15**

<sup>10</sup>“**The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;** <sup>11</sup>**nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself *even* for his father or his mother;** <sup>12</sup>**nor shall he go out of the sanctuary nor profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him; I am the Lord.** <sup>13</sup>**He shall take a wife in her virginity.** <sup>14</sup>**A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people,** <sup>15</sup>**so that he will not profane his offspring among his people; for I am the LORD who sanctifies him.”**

**21:10**

**NASB** “the priest who is the highest”

**NKJV, TEV,**

**REB, Peshitta** “the High Priest”

**NRSV, JPSOA** “the priest who is exalted”

**NJB** “the priest who is pre-eminent”

**LXX** “the priest who is great”

This refers to Aaron who is directly addressed in Lev. 21:17. The consecration of Aaron and his sons is described in Leviticus 8-10.

▣ **“on whose head the anointing oil has been poured”** See Exod. 29:7; 30:25,30; Lev. 8:12; Ps. 133:2. See Special Topic: Anointing in the Bible at Lev. 4:3.

▣ **“shall not uncover his head, nor tear his clothes”** This is specifically mentioned in connection to YHWH killing Aaron’s two sons in Lev. 10:6,7. Here, it seems to refer to grieving rites over dead relatives and friends in a general sense (cf. Lev. 21:11). See Special Topic: Grieving Rites at Lev. 10:3.

**21:11 “dead person”** The word *nephesh* (see note at Lev. 4:2b), here refers to a body without life. *Nephesh* refers to air-breathing animals on this planet. A human corpse does not breathe and is in the process of decay. This is why touching it makes one unclean.

**21:12** This prohibition is directed at two different things.

1. Do not leave the Tabernacle while on official duties (cf. Lev. 10:7).
2. Do not enter the Tabernacle in a ceremonially unclean state.

21:13-15 See notes at Lev. 21:7.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:16-24**

<sup>16</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>17</sup>“Speak to Aaron, saying, ‘No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to offer the food of his God. <sup>18</sup>For no one who has a defect shall approach: a blind man, or a lame man, or he who has a disfigured *face*, or any deformed *limb*, <sup>19</sup>or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, <sup>20</sup>or a hunchback or a dwarf, or *one who has* a defect in his eye or eczema or scabs or crushed testicles. <sup>21</sup>No man among the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to offer the LORD’s offerings by fire; *since* he has a defect, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God. <sup>22</sup>He may eat the food of his God, *both* of the most holy and of the holy, <sup>23</sup>only he shall not go in to the veil or come near the altar because he has a defect, so that he will not profane My sanctuaries. For I am the LORD who sanctifies them.” <sup>24</sup>So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel.

**21:16-21 “who has a defect”** The defects (see full note at Lev. 21:1, #4) seem cruel to moderns but it was just another way to publically, physically show the purity of God’s worship and leadership.

It is possible that these defects were somehow a part of pagan worship.

**21:17 “the food of his God”** See note at Lev. 21:6.

**21:20 “hunchback”** This NOUN (BDB 148) is found only here. It may refer to

1. the spine (JPSOA)
2. the brow (some ancient rabbis; Peshitta, NEB, REB)

▣ **“his sight”** This is the simple NOUN for “eye” (BDB 744). It appears to refer, not to a priest’s sight (that is covered in Lev. 21:18), but to the eye’s appearance to others.

1. discolored
2. two different colored eyes
3. flakes in eye color
4. marks in the white area

The LXX translates the second and third terms in Lev. 21:20 as referring to sight.

**21:22-23** These verses affirm what the priest may do.

1. eat of the “most holy” (i.e., sacrifices where the blood was taken into the shrine)
2. eat of the “holy” (i.e., sacrifices where the blood was put only on/at the altar of sacrifice)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was a dead person considered unclean?
2. What does Lev. 21:5 refer to?
3. Was capital punishment by burning (Lev. 21:9) a common practice?
4. Why were people with physical deformities banned from being a priest?
5. What is the difference between “holy” and “most holy”?

# LEVITICUS 22

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Sundry Rules for Priests	Regulations for Conduct of Priests (21:1-22:16)	Instructions to the Priests (21:1-22:33)	The Holiness of the Offerings	Holiness in Consuming Sacred Food a. the priests
22:1-9	22:1-9	22:1-9	22:1-3	22:1-3a  22:3b
			22:4-8	22:4-7  22:8
			22:9	22:9  b. lay people
22:10-16	22:10-13	22:10-16	22:10-13	22:10-11  22:12-14
	22:14-16		22:14-16	22:15-16
Flawless Animals for Sacrifice	Offerings Accepted and Not Accepted			c. sacrificial animals
22:17-25	22:17-25	22:17-20	22:17-24	22:17  22:18a
		22:21-25		22:18b-20  22:21-25
			22:25	
22:26-31	22:26-30	22:26-30	22:26-30	22:26  22:27-28
				22:29-30  d. concluding exhortation
	22:31-33	22:31-33	22:31-33	22:31-33
22:32-33				

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Brief outline
  1. Be careful about the “cleanness” of
    - a. the priests, Lev. 22:3-9
    - b. who can eat the sacrifices, Lev. 22:10-16
    - c. acceptable sacrifices, Lev. 22:17-25,26-30
  2. Concluding statement, Lev. 22:2 and 30-33

- B. Notice that the defects in priests mentioned in chapter 21 are matched in chapter 22 by defects in animals (Lev. 22:17-25).
- C. This ceremonial defilement seems so strange to moderns but remember, this is the ANE and “holiness” is the key theological issue of the book.
- D. Only priests in the Tabernacle could eat that which is “most holy” but the priest and his family (cf. Leviticus 7) could eat some sacrifices (cf. Leviticus 6-7).
1. grain offerings (except for the small part offered on the altar)
  2. tithes
  3. right thighs
  4. peace offerings
  5. firstlings
- Also, the person of the tribe of Levi who could not function as a priest because of the deformities or accidents listed in Leviticus 21, could still eat of the holy gifts.
- E. Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 417, suggests that there were three kinds of communal sacrifices.
1. the sacrifice of praise (*todah*, cf. Lev. 7:12-15; 22:29-30)
  2. the voluntary sacrifice from one’s devotion (*nedabah*, cf. Lev. 7:16-17; 22:18-23)
  3. the votive sacrifice (*nedar*, cf. Lev. 7:16-17; 22:18-23)
- All of these are addressed in Leviticus 3.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:1-9

<sup>1</sup>Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy *gifts* of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Say to them, ‘If any man among all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy *gifts* which the sons of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from before Me; I am the LORD. <sup>4</sup>No man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or who has a discharge, may eat of the holy *gifts* until he is clean. And if one touches anything made unclean by a corpse or if a man has a seminal emission, <sup>5</sup>or if a man touches any teeming things by which he is made unclean, or any man by whom he is made unclean, whatever his uncleanness; <sup>6</sup>a person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy *gifts* unless he has bathed his body in water. <sup>7</sup>But when the sun sets, he will be clean, and afterward he shall eat of the holy *gifts*, for it is his food. <sup>8</sup>He shall not eat *an animal* which dies or is torn by *beasts*, becoming unclean by it; I am the LORD. <sup>9</sup>They shall therefore keep My charge, so that they will not bear sin because of it and die thereby because they profane it; I am the LORD who sanctifies them.”

**22:2 “be careful with the holy *gifts*”** The subject of ceremonial purity continues. The priest must maintain purity because

1. if not he profanes YHWH’s name, Lev. 22:2 (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 145-150; cf. Lev. 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6); see Special Topic: “The Name” of YHWH (OT) at Lev. 19:12
2. if not he will be “cut off,” Lev. 22:3; see full note at Lev. 7:20

The MT has “hold yourself away from the holy things.” This VERB (BDB 634, KB 684, *Niphal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) means “to separate something/someone in a ceremonial sense.” The priests were to be very careful about how they handled sacrifices.

1. right animal
2. right place
3. right person
4. right time
5. who at what, where, and when
6. how to specifically handle the blood
7. how to specifically dispose of the remains

These procedures were crucial to maintain “holiness.”



NASB, NRSV,                   “dedicate”  
TEV, LXX                   “sanctify”  
NKJV, NJB                   “consecrate”  
JPSOA                       “hallow”  
REV, Peshitta (Lamsa)

This is the VERB form (*Niphal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) of the root “holy,” “sacred,” “apartness,” “separated to” (BDB 871-3, KB 1073). It is used six times in this chapter. The NASB translates it in two ways.

1. “dedicate” – Lev. 22:2,3
2. “sanctify” – Lev. 22:10,16,32 (twice)

See Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c.

▣ “so as not to profane” This VERB (BDB 320, KB 319, *Piel* IMPERFECT, possibly another IMPERFECT, like “dedicate,” used in a JUSSIVE sense). This word for “pollute,” “defile,” or “profane” occurs several times in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 18:21; 19:8,12,29; 20:3; 21:4,6,9,12,15,23; 22:2,9,15,32). It is the opposite of “holy.”

▣ “My holy name” See Special Topic: “The Name” of YHWH (OT) at Lev. 19:12.

**22:3 “I am the Lord”** This is Israel’s God covenant title – YHWH. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1. It is repeated in Lev. 22:2, 3, 8, 9, 16, 30, 31,3 2, 33. YHWH’s covenant people must keep His commandments (cf. Lev. 22:31; see Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d and Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13).

▣ “uncleanness” This NOUN (BDB 380) is the focus of the chapter. As chapter 21 dealt with the priest’s family, this chapter deals with necessity of the “cleanness” of the priest (Lev. 22:4-7) and sacrifices (Lev. 22:8) that are eaten.

**22:4-9** Here is a list of what defiles a priest from eating sacrifices.

1. leprosy (cf. Lev. 21:20; and chapter 13)
2. a discharge
3. one who touches something unclean
  - a. a corpse
  - b. seminal emission (cf. Lev. 15:1-18)
  - c. teeming things (cf. Lev. 11:29-31)

The unclean priest must remain defiled until

- a. evening
- b. a bath (i.e., cleaned by water, cf. Lev. 11:24-25,28,32,40)

but then he may eat.

**22:4 “No man”** This is a Hebrew idiom, literally, “man, man” (cf. Lev. 15:2; 17:3; 22:18; and several more).

**22:5**

<b>NASB</b>	“teeming things”
<b>NKJV, LXX,</b>	
<b>Peshitta</b>	“creeping things”
<b>NRSV, JPSOA</b>	“swarming things”
<b>TEV</b>	“unclean animal”
<b>NJB</b>	“reptile”
<b>REB</b>	“creature”

The root (BDB 1056) denotes that which swarms in great numbers (i.e., Gen. 7:21; 8:17). In Leviticus they are all classified as “unclean” (cf. Lev. 11:29-31,41-45,46-47).

All of these cause “uncleanness” (BDB 379, KB 375, cf. Lev. 22:5,6,8) by either

1. touching them (Lev. 22:5-6)
2. touching their dead bodies (cf. Lev. 5:2)
3. eating them (cf. Deut. 14:19)

**22:8** As Lev. 22:4-7 defined the priest who may eat, 22:8 puts a restriction on the type of sacrifice that may be eaten by priests (i.e., no animal that has died naturally or has been torn by other animals, cf. Lev. 11:39-40; 17:15).

**22:9 “keep My charge”** This VERB (BDB 1036, KB 1581) and NOUN (BDB 1038) often appear together (cf. Lev. 18:30; Deut. 11:1; Josh. 22:3; Mal. 3:14). YHWH expects obedience!

▣ **“die”** The VERB “cut off” (BDB 503, KB 500) in Lev. 22:3 is defined as death in 22:9. See full note at Lev. 7:30.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:10-16**

<sup>10</sup>“No layman, however, is to eat the holy *gift*; a sojourner with the priest or a hired man shall not eat of the holy *gift*. <sup>11</sup>But if a priest buys a slave as *his* property with his money, that one may eat of it, and those who are born in his house may eat of his food. <sup>12</sup>If a priest’s daughter is married to a layman, she shall not eat of the offering of the *gifts*. <sup>13</sup>But if a priest’s daughter becomes a widow or divorced, and has no child and returns to her father’s house as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s food; but no layman shall eat of it. <sup>14</sup>But if a man eats a holy *gift* unintentionally, then he shall add to it a fifth of it and shall give the holy *gift* to the priest. <sup>15</sup>They shall not profane the holy *gifts* of the sons of Israel which they offer to the LORD, <sup>16</sup>and so cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy *gifts*; for I am the LORD who sanctifies them.”

**22:10-13** This paragraph delineates those people so closely connected to a priest’s family that they can also eat of the holy sacrifices.

1. a sojourner living with a priest (see note at Lev. 22:10)
2. a hired person of a priest (possibly non-Israelite)

3. a slave of a priest
4. the slave's children
5. the priest's daughter who has been widowed or divorced (but not if she is married to a non-priest or has children of a non-priest); for a good brief discussion of the place of the widow in ancient Israel, see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 413-414

**22:10**

NASB "layman"  
 NKJV "outsider"  
 NRSV, NJB,  
 JPSOA, REB "lay person"  
 TEV "only a member of a priestly family"  
 LXX, Peshitta "alien"

This PARTICIPLE (BDB 266, KB 267) denotes someone not of the tribe of Levi, nor someone of the tribe of Levi but not a priest (cf. Exod. 29:33; 30:33; Lev. 22:10,12,13; Num. 1:51; 3:10; 18:7). It could denote an Israelite of another tribe (cf. Lev. 22:12).

**22:14 "unintentionally"** See Special Topic: Unintentional Sins at Lev. 4:2. Here, it denotes "by accident" (cf. Lev. 5:14-16). But even so, he must add a fifth more and give it back to a priest. This is part of the "guilt offerings" (cf. Lev. 5:16).

This verse is also addressing the "layman" or "sojourner."

**22:15 "them"** In context this must refer to "the priests" (i.e., who offered the sacrifices to YHWH), not the "layman" of 22:14.

**22:16** The PRONOUNS of Lev. 22:16 are ambiguous. The context has been addressing two people.

1. priests
2. non-priest Israelites

▣ **"I am the LORD who sanctifies them"** This is recurrent theme. Israel is holy because their God is holy (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7,26). These guidelines in Leviticus are meant to maintain that holiness.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:17-25**

<sup>17</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>18</sup>"Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Any man of the house of Israel or of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they present to the LORD for a burnt offering—<sup>19</sup>for you to be accepted—it *must be* a male without defect from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. <sup>20</sup>Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. <sup>21</sup>When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. <sup>22</sup>Those *that are* blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted *member*, you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted. <sup>24</sup>Also anything *with its testicles* bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the Lord, or sacrifice in your land, <sup>25</sup>nor shall you accept any such from the hand of a foreigner for offering as the food of your God; for their corruption is in them, they have a defect, they shall not be accepted for you.'"



**22:17-25** This deals with freewill/peace offerings connected to the fulfillment of a vow (cf. Leviticus 3).

**22:18** Notice two distinct groups are addressed.

1. Israelites
2. non-Israelites living among them (i.e., sojourners, aliens, cf. Lev. 16:29)

**22:19 “for you to be accepted”** This has no VERB. The NOUN (BDB 953; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1186-1188) ?? It is often hard to know when YHWH

1. accepts a sacrifice on behalf of a person (cf. Lev. 19:5)
2. accepts the person into fellowship (i.e., Lev. 1:4; 7:18)

The root is repeated several times in this chapter.

1. the NOUN (cf. Lev. 22:19,20,21,29)
2. the VERB (BDB 953, KB 1980, *Niphal* IMPERFECT, cf. Lev. 22:23,25,27)

**22:22-25** This lists the defects that are not acceptable. They are like the defects that eliminate Levites from being a functioning priest (cf. Lev. 21:16-20). The offering and the offerer, as well as the ones who eat it, are to be “clean,” without defect. It was a visible sign of the perfection of YHWH.

For the lexical aspect of these defects, see Leviticus 21.

**22:23** Notice the exception related to freewill offerings. This shows there were “levels” of “cleanness” or “holiness.”

The PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, “too long” (BDB 976, KB 1358), occurs only here and in Lev. 21:18. The PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, “too short” (BDB 886, KB 2102), occurs only here.

**22:24** This has been understood as outlawing the castration of animals (Targums, Jeseplus, *Antiq.* 4.8.40) in Israel. This may be another distinction between Israel and her pagan neighbors.

**22:25 “the food of your God”** See note at Lev. 21:22.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:26-31**

<sup>26</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>27</sup>“When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted as a sacrifice of an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>28</sup>But, *whether* it is an ox or a sheep, you shall not kill *both* it and its young in one day. <sup>29</sup>When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. <sup>30</sup>It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning; I am the LORD. <sup>31</sup>So you shall keep My commandments, and do them; I am the LORD.”

**22:26-28** These are further restrictions on acceptable sacrifice.

1. age of young animal, Lev. 22:27
2. time of death of the sacrifice, Lev. 22:28

There are other texts which call for compassion to animals (i.e., Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21; and 22:6-7). It may refer to pagan practices.

**22:29-30** These are further guidelines on the peace or thanksgiving sacrifice.

1. it must be eaten on the same day
2. none must be left until morning (see Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-34)

This is a change from Lev. 7:17. Again, it seems to denote a further restriction on the priests because they had a greater love of “holiness” than the average Israelite.

**22:31 “My commandments”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c. This is parallel to Lev. 22:9. See notes there.

▣ **“keep. . .do”** Obedience is important to YHWH.

1. admonition (cf. Gen. 17:9; 18:19; Exod. 20:6; Lev. 18:26; Deut. 4:2,40; 6:2; 10:12; 26:17; Josh. 22:5)
2. curses and blessing for obedience (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27-28)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:32-33**

<sup>32</sup>“You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you, <sup>33</sup>who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God; I am the LORD.”

**22:32 “sanctified. . .sanctifies”** This is the root *kadosh* (BDB 872, KB 1073; see Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c). It is used several times in Leviticus 21-22 as a NOUN, an ADJECTIVE, and a VERB. Here are some of the different ways it is translated.

1. holy, most holy
2. sacred
3. sanctify
4. dedicate
5. consecrate
6. hallowed

Holiness is “the” key theological concept in Leviticus. Remember, it is the “how to” manual for the Tabernacle. It gives the guidelines on how a holy God can fellowship with an unholy people. Their holiness is mandated and facilitates the fellowship with YHWH.

**22:33** This is an allusion to YHWH’s great act of promise (cf. Gen. 15:12-22) and mercy (i.e., the exodus). This is covenant language (cf. Lev. 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 25:38; 26:45). The Feast of Passover was a way to remind and educate future Israelites of YHWH’s great act of deliverance!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was holiness so important to YHWH?
2. Why is the phrase “I am the LORD” repeated so often?
3. Who can eat “holy” sacrifices?
4. How did physical defects affect holiness?
5. Why is Lev. 22:31 so theologically significant? How does it relate to Ezek. 36:22-36?
6. Explain the significance of the exodus (Lev. 22:33).

# LEVITICUS 23

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Laws of Religious Festivals	Feasts of the LORD	The Sacred Calendar	The Religious Festivals	The Ritual for the Annual Feasts
23:1-2	23:1-2	23:1-2	23:1-4	23:1-2a 23:2b
	The Sabbath			a. the Sabbath
23:3	23:3	23:3		23:3
	Passover and Unleavened Bread			
23:4-8	23:4-8	23:4-8		23:4
			Passover and Unleavened Bread	b. the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
			23:5-8	23:5-8
	The Feast of First Fruits			c. the first sheaf
23:9-14	23:9-14	23:9-14	23:9-14	23:9 23:10a 23:10b-14
	The Feasts of Weeks		The Harvest Festival	d. the feast of weeks
23:15-21	23:15-21	23:15-21	23:15-21	23:15-20 23:21
23:22	23:22	23:22	23:22	23:22
	The Feast of Trumpets		The New Year Festival	e. the first day of the seventh month
23:23-25	23:23-25	23:23-25	23:23-25	23:23 23:24a 23:24b-25
The Day of Atonement	The Day of Atonement		The Day of Atonement	f. The Day of Expiation
23:26-32	23:26-32	23:26-32	23:26-32	23:26 23:27-32
	The Feast of Tabernacles		The Festival of Shelters	The Feast of Shelters
23:33-36	23:33-38	23:33-36	23:33-36	23:33 23:34-36 Conclusion
23:37-38		23:37-38	23:37-38	23:37-38 Recapitulation on the Feast of Shelters

23:39-44	23:39-43	23:39-43	23:39-43	23:39-41a 23:41b-43
	23:44	23:44	23:44	23:44

## READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

#### SPECIAL TOPIC: FEASTS OF ISRAEL

A. Leviticus 23 is divided into several different special days.

1. the Sabbath, Lev. 23:2-3
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover, Lev. 23:4-8
3. Feast of First Fruits, Lev. 23:9-14
4. Feasts of Weeks or Pentecost, Lev. 23:15-22
5. Feast of Trumpets (i.e., New Year), Lev. 23:23-25
6. Fast Day of Atonement, Lev. 23:26-32
7. Feast of Booths, Tabernacles, Lev. 23:33-44

Does this imply that there were five annual feast days (three were required for all males to appear at the central sanctuary) and one fast day? The problem is in Lev. 23:9-14! Is it an annual feast or a one-time feast as Israel entered Canaan?

B. Mosaic Annual Feasts (cf. Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-26; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28:16-29; Deuteronomy 16; Ezek. 45:18-25)

1. All male Jews were required to attend three annual feasts (cf. Exod. 23:14,17; 34:23) if possible.
2. These feasts had agricultural, as well as national significance.
3. Each was a day of rest, worship, and community fellowship.
4. The three required annual feasts (Exod. 23:14,17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16)
  - a. the first feast called
    - (1) Unleavened Bread – Exod. 23:15; 34:18-20; Lev. 23:5-8
    - (2) Passover – Exodus 12; 34:25; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16-25; Deut. 16:1-8; Ezek. 45:21-25
    - (3) see Special Topic: Passover
    - (4) significance
      - (a) thanksgiving and dedication of the barley harvest
      - (b) commemorating the exodus
      - (c) it was followed by a seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Exod. 12:15-20; 34:18-20)
  - b. the second feast called (beginning of harvest)
    - (1) Feast of Harvest – Exod. 23:16; Num. 28:26
    - (2) Feast of Weeks – Exod. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9-12
    - (3) “Fifty Days” (Pentecost) – Lev. 23:15-21; Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8

- (4) First Fruits – Lev. 23:9-14; Num. 28:26
- (5) see Special Topic: Pentecost
- (6) significance
  - (a) thanksgiving and dedication of the grain harvest
  - (b) commemorating the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai by rabbinical reckoning
- c. the third feast called (end of harvest)
  - (1) Feast of Ingathering – Exod. 23:16
  - (2) Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (*Succoth*) – Lev. 23:34-44; Num. 29:12-40; Deut. 16:13-17
  - (3) significance
    - (a) thanksgiving for the general harvest
    - (b) commemorating the beginning of the wilderness wandering period
    - (c) it was followed by an eight-day feast (cf. Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35-38)
- C. Other annual feasts
  - 1. New Year Celebration (*Rosh Hashanah*)
    - a. see Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 10:9-10; 29:1-6
    - b. this day of rest and sacrifice was held on the first day of *Tishri*
    - c. the feast aspect of this day, so common in the NT era, is unspecified in the Torah
  - 2. Day of Atonement – “day of covering” or *Yom Kippur* (the only corporate fast day)
    - (a) a day of rest, fasting, and repentance for the whole community
    - (b) a ritual for the removal of unintentional corporate uncleanness (Tabernacle, priests, and people)
    - (c) see Exod. 30:10; Leviticus 16; 23:26-32; 25:9; Num. 29:7-11
    - (d) it is difficult to pin down when this feast was re-instituted after the exile
- D. Other Mosaic Feast Days
  - 1. The Sabbath (see Special Topic: Sabbath)
    - a. weekly day of rest and worship
    - b. see Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 16:22-30; 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-16; 34:21; Lev. 23:1-3; Num. 28:9-10
  - 2. Sabbath Year
    - a. every seventh year the land rested (no sowing)
    - b. see Exod. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7; Deut. 15:1
    - c. it signified that YHWH owned the land and gave it to Israel
    - d. all slaves were set free (cf. Exod. 21:2-6) and all debts were forgiven (cf. Deut. 15:1-6)
  - 3. Jubilee Year
    - a. every seventh Sabbath year (i.e., 50<sup>th</sup> year)
    - b. see Lev. 25:8-18; 27:17-24
    - c. release of debt and returning of land, freeing of slaves (cf. Lev. 25:10,13, very similar to Sabbath Year)
    - d. its inauguration is never recorded

4. New Moon (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1020-1021)
  - a. special offerings and a day of rest
  - b. see Num. 10:10; 28:11-15; 29:6; Ps. 81:3
  - c. possibly commemorated the setting up of the Tabernacle (cf. Exod. 40:2,17)
  - d. Jewish calendar is based on lunar cycles
- E. These rituals and regulations show a development over time. These feasts and one fast may have had a beginning in pagan calendars (see Special Topic: Moon Worship), but developed into uniquely Jewish praise and devotion to YHWH. Nature (seasonal), agricultural (planting, rain, and harvest), and national events (Exodus, giving of the Law, etc.) combined to highlight certain times of the year for worship. It has proved to be difficult to discuss these special annual feasts because
  1. of the historical development
  2. of the different names the Bible and later Judaism used for the same feast
  3. of the different kinds of “fruits”
    - a. early ripening barley could be eaten if roasted
    - b. later barley harvest
    - c. later wheat harvest
  4. it is possible Lev. 23:9-14 could be an initial requirement which later became included in #3, a. or b.
  5. the possible use of two calendars, one sacred and one civil, by the ancient Israelites

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: PENTECOST**

The annual Jewish feast of Pentecost is also called “Feast of Weeks” (cf. Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:10). The term “Pentecost” means “fiftieth.” This feast was held fifty days (seven weeks) after Passover (i.e., numbering from the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread). It had three purposes in Jesus’ Day.

1. commemoration of giving of the Law to Moses (cf. *Jubilees* 1:1)
2. thanksgiving to God for the harvest
3. an offering of the first fruits (i.e., a sign of YHWH’s ownership of the whole harvest) of the grain harvest; the OT background is in Exod. 23:16-17; 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; and Deut. 16:9-12)

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: MOON WORSHIP**

Moon worship was the most widespread mythology of the Ancient Near East starting with *Sumer* (the first written culture of the ANE). There was both a male and female aspect to the myth. Originally the moon god came from the rape of the grain goddess, *Ninlil* by *Enlil*, the sky god. *Enlil* was cast out of the pantheon and condemned to the underworld for his act, but when *Ninlil* found out she was with child she joined him. The child, *Sin*, was allowed to climb into the sky each night.

The worship of the moon is designed by its different phases.

1. new moon – *Asimbabbar*
2. crescent moon – *Sin*
3. full moon – *Nanna* (Sumerian “illumination” from *En-su*, “lord of wisdom”)

These names basically mean “wise lord” (i.e., *Su'en*) or “illumination” (*Nanna*, Sumerian), worshiped at Ur of the Chaldees. The city itself was often called the city of Nannar. The fertility pair (i.e., *En-su* and consort *Ningal*) were worshiped at Ziggurats (large pyramids with flat tops) located in the city. The sun god (*Shamash*) was the firstborn of the couple and later *Ereshkigal* (the Queen of the Underworld) and *Inanna* (the Queen of Heaven/sky).

The cult was spread all across the ANE, but the major centers of worship were

1. Ur
2. Haran
3. Tema
4. Canaan
5. Mecca

Basically this mythology combined the fertility emphasis with astral worship.

The OT rejects astral worship (cf. Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs. 21:3,5; 23:5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; Zeph. 1:5) and fertility worship (i.e., *Ba'al* and *Asherah*, Ugarit poems). The Hebrews, originally nomads, were very careful to resist moon worship because in general moon worship was characteristic of nomadic peoples who traveled at night, while the sun was much more generally worshiped by settled or agricultural peoples. Eventually nomads settle and then astral worship in general became the problem.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:1-2

**<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The LORD’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these:’”**

**23:2 “The LORD’s appointed times”** YHWH set special times for His people to congregate at a central worship site and to commemorate His character and past acts on their behalf. They were ways to train the next generation of Israelites (i.e., Deut. 6:1-9; see full note online).

Those special days are also called “holy convocations” (cf. Lev. 23:2,4,7,21,27,35). This name (i.e., “holy convocations”) occurs only

1. in this chapter, eleven times
2. Exod. 12:16, twice
3. Numbers 28:29, six times

For a good discussion of “holy” see Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c and NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 877-887, esp. p. 880, (g).

These special feasts (and one fast day) may be in view in Gen. 1:14, as the purpose of the great night light and sun.

The three annual feasts that must be attended by all males (i.e., those who live close enough, which reflects a later period) at the Tabernacle or later Temple in Jerusalem. (Incomplete sentence?)

There are several of these lists of feast days and they are difficult to coordinate because of

1. different names
2. brief texts
3. historical developments
4. use of two calendars (i.e., sacred and civil) by ancient Israel

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:3**

**<sup>3</sup>“For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.”**

**23:3** “but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest” This special weekly time of worship goes back to

1. Gen. 2:1-2
2. Exod. 16:27-30; 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-16

Surprisingly it is discussed very little in this context (Lev. 23:3 only). Probably because the Sabbath guidelines and purpose were so well known. See Roland deVaux *Ancient Israel*, pp. 475-493. See Special Topic: Sabbath (OT) at Lev. 19:24 and NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1157-1161.

Notice that some holy days had complete rest but others allowed some labor

1. complete rest – Lev. 23:3,7,28,30-32
2. limited labor (i.e. preparing for the feast, but not vocational work) – Lev. 23:8,21,25,35,36

▣ **“in all your dwellings”** The biblical material about Israel’s feasts and special days developed over time. It is hard to know if the text is a later editorial addition or idiom.

1. wilderness wandering period with Tabernacle (i.e., Exod. 12:20; Num. 35:29)
2. early period after crossing the Jordan (i.e., Lev. 3:16-17; 7:26; 23:3,14,17,31)
3. later period with Temple (i.e., Ezek. 6:6)
4. still later to Jewish settlement outside of Palestine

Maybe the best way to deal with a phrase like this is to translate it as a dynamic equivalent – NIV, NEB, “wherever you live”; TEV, “no matter where you live.”

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:4-8**

**<sup>4</sup>“These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. <sup>5</sup>In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. <sup>6</sup>Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup>On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. <sup>8</sup>But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.”**

**23:4-8** This is the discussion of the combined feasts of

1. Passover (1 day; see Special Topic: Passover; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 642-644, vol. 4, pp. 1043-1045)
2. Unleavened Bread (1 week; see Special Topic: Feast of Unleavened Bread)
3. see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 484-493

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PASSOVER**

#### **I. Opening Statements**

- A. The divine act of judgment of Egyptians and deliverance for Israel is the touchstone for YHWH’s love and establishment of Israel as a nation (i.e., esp. for the Prophets).



- B. The exodus is a specific fulfillment of YHWH's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:12-21. The Passover commemorates the exodus.
- C. This is the last, most pervasive (geographically, i.e, Egypt and Goshen) and devastating (first born of humans and cattle killed) of the ten plagues sent by YHWH on Egypt through Moses.

## II. The Term Itself (BDB 820, KB 947)

- A. Meaning of NOUN is uncertain
  - 1. connected to "plague," thereby "to strike a blow" (i.e., Exod. 11:1); YHWH's angel strikes the firstborn of humans and cattle
- B. Meaning of VERB
  - 1. "to limp" or "to hobble" (cf. 2 Sam. 4:4), used in sense of "jump over the marked homes" (i.e., Exod. 12:13,23,27, BDB 619, a popular etymology)
  - 2. "to dance" (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:21)
  - 3. Akkadian – "to appease"
  - 4. Egyptian – "to strike"
  - 5. parallel VERBS in Isa. 31:5, "to stand guard over" (cf. REB of Exod. 12:13)
  - 6. early Christian popular sound play between Hebrew *pasah* to Greek *paschō*, "to suffer"
- C. Possible historical precedents
  - 1. shepherd sacrifice for a new year
  - 2. Bedouin sacrifice and communal meal at the time of moving tents to spring pasture to ward off evil
  - 3. sacrifice to ward off evil from nomadic people
- D. The reasons it is so hard to not only be sure of the meaning of the word itself, but also its origins is that so many varied features of the Passover are also found in other ancient rituals.
  - 1. spring date
  - 2. etymology of NOUN uncertain
  - 3. connected to night watchings
  - 4. use of blood
  - 5. imagery of angels/demons
  - 6. special meal
  - 7. agricultural elements (unleavened bread)
  - 8. no priests, no altar, local focus

## III. The Event

- A. The event itself is recorded in Exodus 11-12.
- B. The annual feast is described in Exodus 12 and is combined into an eight day festival with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
  - 1. originally it was a local event, cf. Exod. 12:21-23; Deut. 16:5 (cf. Numbers 9)
    - a. no priest
    - b. no special altar
    - c. specialized uses of blood
  - 2. it became an event at the central shrine

3. this combination of a local sacrifice (i.e., lamb's blood to commemorate the passing over of the death angel) and a harvest feast at the central sanctuary was accomplished by the close proximity of dates *Abib* or *Nisan* 14 and 15-21
- C. The symbolic ownership of all of the firstborn of humans and cattle and their redemption is described in Exodus 13.

#### IV. Historical Accounts of Its Observance

- A. the first Passover celebrated in Egypt, Exodus 12
- B. at Mt. Horeb/Sinai, Numbers 9
- C. the first Passover celebrated in Canaan (Gilgal), Jos. 5:10-12
- D. at the time of Solomon's dedication of the temple, 1 Kgs. 9:25 and 2 Chr. 8:12 (probably, but not specifically stated)
- E. the one during Hezekiah's reign, 2 Chronicles 30
- F. the one during Josiah's reforms, 2 Kgs. 23:21-23; 2 Chr. 35:1-18
- G. Notice 2 Kgs. 23:22 and 2 Chr. 35:18 mention Israel's neglect in keeping this annual feast

#### V. The Significance

- A. This is one of three required annual feast days (cf. Exod. 23:14-17; 34:22-24; Deut. 16:16):
  1. Passover/Unleavened Bread
  2. Feast of Weeks
  3. Feast of Booths
- B. Moses foreshadows the day it will be observed at the central sanctuary (as were the other two feasts) in Deuteronomy.
- C. Jesus used the occasion of the annual Passover meal (or the day before) to reveal the New Covenant in the symbol of bread and wine, but did not use the lamb:
  1. communal meal
  2. redemptive sacrifice
  3. ongoing significance to later generations

**23:5 “the first month”** Remember Israel used a lunar calendar. See Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Lev. 16:29b.

▣ **“at twilight”** This is literally “between the two evenings.” The Israelites made a distinction between the setting of the sun and the appearance of the first star (cf. Exod. 12:6; Num. 9:3,5,11; Deut. 16:4,6). Note the same type imagery in Lev. 23:32.

▣ **“Passover”** The Feast of Passover (i.e., Exodus 12) is later combined with the Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Lev. 23:6) into one eight-day feast (cf. Deut. 16:1-8).

**23:6 “feast”** This Hebrew NOUN (BDB 290) means “festival gathering” (i.e., at the Tabernacle/Temple) or “pilgrim feast.” This same root in Arabic denotes the annual Muslim pilgrimage (*Hag*) to Mecca.

▣ **“for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread”** This would have been grain from the previous year’s harvest.

**23:8 “you shall not do any laborious work”** This phrase is repeated in Lev. 23:8,21,25,35,36. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 262, suggests that there is a total ban on work on the Sabbath (Lev. 23:3) or Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:28,30), but for the other feast days, preparations for the feast were allowed (cf. Exod. 12:16). People could not do their normal work activities.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:9-14**

**<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. <sup>11</sup>He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. <sup>12</sup>Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. <sup>13</sup>Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. <sup>14</sup>Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.”**

**23:9-14** This is the discussion of the initial offering of first fruits. It is uncertain how Lev. 23:9-14 relates to 23:15-21. I think one occurred at the beginning of the barley harvest (i.e., Feast of Unleavened Bread; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 490-493) and the next at the conclusion of the wheat harvest (i.e., Pentecost); see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 21, #2; 1272.

**23:11-12 “wave”** See notes at Lev. 7:30 and NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 64-65.

**23:11 “for you to be accepted”** This NOUN (BDB 953) is used several times in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 1:3; 19:5; 22:19,20,21,29; 23:11). It is hard to determine if the “acceptance” is of the appropriate sacrifice or the person offering the sacrifice (see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 413). Either way, it shows the essence of Leviticus—how to make sinful Israelites acceptable for fellowship with a “holy” God.

▣ **“on the day after the sabbath”** This would refer to our “Sunday” (cf. Lev. 23:15). This is the day Jesus rose from the dead. The first fruit of the resurrection. See Special Topic: The Resurrection.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: THE RESURRECTION**

In the Bible, being brought back from death has three senses.

- A. Those who did not die but who went to be with God (i.e., Enoch, cf. Gen. 5:24; Elijah, cf. 2 Kgs. 2:11), which is called, “being translated.”
- B. Some, through the power of God, are brought back from death’s door to physical health; this is called “resuscitation.” They will die at some point in the future
- C. There has been only one resurrection (i.e., Jesus); He died but was raised from the dead (*Hades*) and given a new body prepared for eternal life with God. He is the first fruits of the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20,23; “firstborn of dead,” cf. Col. 1:15,17). Because of Him, believers will be resurrected at the Second Coming (cf. Ps. 49:15; 73:24; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:31-32;

Mark 12:26-27; John 5:25,28-29; 6:39-40,44,54; Rom. 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2).

#### Evidence for the resurrection

- A. Fifty (50) days later at Pentecost, the resurrection had become the key note of Peter's sermon (cf. Acts 2). Thousands who lived in the area where it happened believed!
- B. The lives of the disciples were changed radically from discouragement (they were not expecting resurrection) to boldness, even martyrdom.
- C. Paul lists many eyewitnesses in 1 Cor. 15:5-8, including himself (cf. Acts 9).

#### Significance of the resurrection

- A. Shows Jesus was who He claimed to be (cf. Matt. 12:38-40 prediction of death and resurrection)
- B. God put His approval on Jesus' life, teaching, and substitutionary death! (cf. Rom. 4:25)
- C. Shows us the promise to all Christians (i.e. resurrection bodies, cf. 1 Corinthians 15)

#### Claims from Jesus that He would rise from the dead

- A. Matt. 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9,22, 23; 20:18-19; 26:32; 27:63
- B. Mark 8:31; 9:1-10,31; 14:28,58
- C. Luke 9:22-27
- D. John 2:19-22; 12:34; chapters 14-16

#### Both Peter and Paul assert that Psalm 16 refers to Jesus, the Messiah.

- A. Peter in Acts 2:24-32
- B. Paul in Acts 13:32-37

#### Further Study

- A. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell
- B. *Who Moved the Stone?* by Frank Morrison
- C. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, "Resurrection," "Resurrection of Jesus Christ"

**23:12 "without defect"** See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Lev. 1:3b.

▣ **"a burnt offering"** See notes at Leviticus 1.

**23:13 "grain offering"** See notes at Leviticus 2.

▣ **"ephah. . . hin"** See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

▣ **"a soothing aroma"** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

▣ **"libation"** This was a liquid offering (cf. Lev. 23:13,18,37; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 115, #3).

▣ **“wine”** See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Lev. 10:9.

**23:14** This giving of the first fruits was a symbol of YHWH’s ownership of all crops, as the Sabbath was a symbol of all property belonging to YHWH! We are stewards, not owners! See Special Topic: Tithes in the Mosaic Legislation and Special Topic: Tithing at Lev. 19:24.

The new crop could not be eaten until the appropriate offering (Lev. 23:13) to YHWH (Lev. 23:14).

1. the wave offering of the first fruits
2. a one year old lamb
2. Grain offering
4. drink offering (cf. Lev. 23:13,18,37)

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: TITHES IN THE MOSAIC LEGISLATION**

A. Scripture References

**For Priests and Central  
Sanctuary**

1. Lev. 27:30-32
2. Deut. 12:6-7,11,17
3. Deut. 14:22-26
- 4.
5. Num. 18:21-24

**For Local Levites**

- Deut. 12:12
- Deut. 14:27
- Deut. 26:12-15
- Num. 18:25-29 (Levites  
must tithe of their tithe to  
central shrine)
- Neh. 10:37,38

**For Local Poor**

- Deut. 14:28-29
- Neh. 12:44

6. Neh. 12:44
7. Mal. 3:8,10

B. Examples of tithing predate Mosaic legislation

1. Genesis 14:20, Abraham to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:2-9)
2. Genesis 28:22, Jacob to YHWH

C. The tithes of Israel were used to support the central sanctuary, but every third year the national tithes were directed exclusively to the local poor.

▣ **“perpetual statute”** See the Special Topic: Forever (*‘olam*) at Lev. 3:17 and Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c; also see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 349.

These two words also appear in Lev. 23:21 and 41. The term *‘olam* has several connotations. Here, “age abiding,” but the OT has been superceded. See Special Topic: Why Do O covenant Promises Seem So Different from NT Covenant Promises?

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:15-21**

<sup>15</sup>“**You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths.** <sup>16</sup>**You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD.** <sup>17</sup>**You shall bring in from your dwelling places two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an ephah; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to the LORD.** <sup>18</sup>**Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.** <sup>19</sup>**You shall also offer one male**

goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. <sup>20</sup>The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be holy to the LORD for the priest. <sup>21</sup>On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.”

**23:15-21** This is the discussion of the festival at the end of the harvest season. See notes in Contextual Insights, B. 4. c.; Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 493-495.

The offerings are similar to the ones at the beginning of the harvest (Lev. 23:13), but more extensive.

1. two loaves of bread for each family/village (Lev. 23:17)
2. seven one-year old lambs (Lev. 23:18)
3. one bull (Lev. 23:18) for a burnt offering
5. #3 and 4 with accompanying grain and drink offerings (cf. Lev. 23:13; see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 115)
6. one male goat (Lev. 23:19) for a sin offering
7. two one-year old lambs (Lev. 23:19) for a peace offering

Numbers 28-29 deal much more specifically about the timing of these sacrifices.

**23:15** “seven” See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture at Lev. 4:6.

**23:16** “a new grain offering” This was distinct from the first fruit barley offering of Lev. 23:9-14. This was a grain offering from the new crop (i.e., wheat).

**23:17** “baked with leaven” This shows that leaven was not always forbidden in sacrifices (cf. Lev. 7:13-14). It is not always a symbol of evil. Sometimes it is imagery for “penetration and permeation.” See Special Topic: Leaven at Lev. 2:4b.

**23:18** “without defect” See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Lev. 1:3b.

▣ “a burnt offering” See Leviticus 1.

▣ “a grain offering” See Leviticus 2.

▣ “a soothing aroma” See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

**23:19** “a sin offering” See Leviticus 4.

▣ “a peace offering” See Leviticus 3.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:22**

<sup>22</sup>“When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.”

**23:22** This refers to “gleaning.” See note at Lev. 19:9-10.

The needy and the alien refer to those who have no land and must work for others for their sustenance. God (uniquely in the ANE) cares for the powerless and disenfranchised.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:23-25**

<sup>23</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing *of trumpets*, a holy convocation. <sup>25</sup>You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.’”

**23:23** The footnote in the JB, p. 161, suggests this verse is referring to a monthly lunar festival. See Contextual Insights ??

**23:24-25** This refers to the “New Year” celebration called *Rosh Hashanah* (cf. Num. 10:9-10; 29:1-6; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 502-506). It was held on the first day of the seventh month. The New Year’s celebration has several problems.

1. Israel’s new year may have begun in the spring or autumn (possibly ancient Israel used two calendars, sacred and civil).
2. This feast is not called “New Year” by Josephus or Philo.
3. Nehemiah 8:1-12 does not mention a “new year” feast at all.
4. In Leviticus 23 it is not called “New Year” feast, nor in Num. 29:1-6.

It surely was meant to begin a period of preparation for the Day of Atonement on the tenth of the seventh month.

1. Trumpets – seventh month, first day
2. Day of Atonement – seventh month, tenth day
3. Feast of Booths – seventh month, fifteenth day

**23:24 “blowing of trumpets”** See parallel in Num. 29:1-6. See Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: HORNS USED BY ISRAEL**

There are four words in Hebrew associated with horns/trumpets:

1. “the ram’s horn” (BDB 901, KB 1144) – used as a wind instrument, cf. Jos. 6:5. This same word is used for the ram caught by his horns which Abraham substituted for Isaac in Gen. 22:13.
2. “trumpet” (BDB 1051) – from Assyrian term for wild sheep (ibex). This is the horn that was used in Exod 19:16,19 at Mt. Sinai/Horeb. #1 and #2 are parallel in Jos. 6:5. It was used to communicate a. times to worship (cf. Lev. 25:9)  
b. times to fight (i.e., Jericho was both, cf. Jos. 6:4; Jdgs. 3:27; 6:34; 1 Sam. 13:3; Jer. 4:5; Hos. 5:8).  
c. anointing a new king, 1 Kgs. 1:34,39  
d. blown by God, Zech. 9:14
3. “ram’s horn” (BDB 385, KB 398) – from Phoenician word for Ram (cf. Jos. 6:4,6,8,13). It also stands for the Year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25:13,28,40,50,52,54; 27:17,18,23,24).

These first three seem interchangeable with no distinction intended. The Mishnah (RH 3.2) allowed animal horns from sheep, goats, or antelope, but not from a cow.

4. “trumpets” (BDB 348, KB 344) – possibly from the VERB “stretch out,” implying a straight bone (not curved as the animal horns). These were made of silver (after the shape and form of Egypt). These are used:  
a. with worship rites (cf. Num. 10:2,8,10; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:35,41)

b. for military purposes (cf. Num. 10:9; 31:6; Hosea 5:8)

c. for royal purposes (cf. 2 Kgs. 11:14)

One of these metal horns is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome; also Josephus describes them in *Antiq.* 3.12.6.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:26-32**

<sup>26</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>27</sup>“On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>28</sup>You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. <sup>29</sup>If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. <sup>30</sup>As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. <sup>31</sup>You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. <sup>32</sup>It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath.”

**23:26-32** This annual fast day (i.e., “humble your souls”) for unintentional sins of the people, the priest, and the Tabernacle, was discussed in detail in Leviticus 16 (see notes there; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 507-510).

**23:27 “you shall humble your souls”** The VERB (BDB 776, KB 853) is used here and in Lev. 16:31 in connection to the national fast Day of Atonement. Israel was to contemplate her violation of YHWH’s character and laws, probably by fasting, praying, hearing the law, and meditation.

**23:29 “he shall be cut off from his people”** See full note at Lev. 7:20.

In Lev. 23:30 this phrase is parallel to “I will destroy from among his people.” This implies a divine taking of life.

**23:32 “ninth month”** See Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Lev. 16:29b.

▣ **“you shall keep your sabbath”** This is a combination of the VERB (BDB 991, KB 1407) for “rest” and the NOUN (BDB 992) “sabbath” or “rest.” The LXX has “you shall sabbatize on your sabbaths.” REB, “you shall keep your sabbath rest.”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:33-36**

<sup>33</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>34</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. <sup>35</sup>On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. <sup>36</sup>For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the Lord; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.’”

**23:34-44 “the Feast of Booths”** See Contextual Insight, ?? and NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 249-251, esp. p. 250, #3, c.



**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:37-38**

<sup>37</sup>“These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD—burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, *each day’s matter on its own day*—<sup>38</sup>besides *those of* the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.”

**23:37** “*each day’s matter on its own day*” This may refer to the different sacrifices offered on each day (see Numbers 28-29, which focuses on these sacrifices).

**23:38** TEV expresses the sense of the verse well: “These festivals are in addition to the regular Sabbaths, and these offerings are in addition to your regular gifts, your offerings as fulfillment of vows, and your freewill offerings that you give to the LORD.”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:39-44**

<sup>39</sup>“On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. <sup>40</sup>Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. <sup>41</sup>You shall thus celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. <sup>42</sup>You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, <sup>43</sup>so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” <sup>44</sup>So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD.

**23:40** This verse is the origin of the title “Feast of Booths.” The reason is explained in Lev. 23:43. It was a teaching tool to pass on Israel’s faith to the next generation (cf. Exod. 12:26-27; 13:8,14; Deut. 6:1-2,7,20-25).



**NASB** “the foliage of beautiful trees”

**NKJV** “the fruit of beautiful trees”

**NRSV** “the fruit of majestic trees”

**TEV** “some of the best fruit of your trees”

**NJB** “choice fruit”

**JPSOA** “the product of hadar trees”

**REB** “the fruit of citrus trees”

**LXX** “ripe fruit of tree”

**Peshitta** “fruits of goodly trees”

The word “foliage” in NASB is literally “fruit” (BDB 826). But the harvest is past so there would be no fruit on the trees, yet they would still be “leafy.”

The word “beautiful” (BDB 214) can mean

1. ornament
2. splendor
3. honor

Here, it refers to either

1. beautiful trees

2. fruit trees

Israel made booths/huts of the branches of various leafy trees and decorated them with fruit (cf. Neh. 8:15).

▣ Notice there are four trees mentioned. Why four is unknown. These tree/palm branches were

1. waved before the Lord (rabbinical tradition)
2. made into booths (cf. Lev. 23:42-43; Neh. 8:13-18) or carried as festival sheaves (Lev. 23:40)
3. these fruitless branches were a way to signal the harvest was over and a new agricultural cycle would begin

**23:43 “that your generations may know”** The Hebrew VERB “know” (BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* IMPERFECT) has several senses (see Special Topic: Know), but here it denotes two things.

1. Know YHWH in a personal way that affects the way one lives.
2. Know YHWH’s will by knowing His law.

Both of these concepts are expressed by the VERB *shema*, which means “to hear so as to do” (cf. Deut. 6:4; see full note online).

As with so many of Israel’s feast days and cultus, living in “booths” was to provide an opportunity for the adults to share with the children about the exodus (i.e., Deuteronomy 6).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: KNOW (illustrated from Deuteronomy)**

The Hebrew word “know” (*yada*, BDB 393, KB 390) has several senses in the *Qal* stem.

1. to understand good and evil – Gen. 3:22; Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:14-15; Jonah 4:11
2. to know by understanding – Deut. 9:2,3,6; 18:21
3. to know by experience – Deut. 3:19; 4:35; 8:2,3,5; 11:2; 20:20; 31:13; Jos. 23:14
4. to consider – Deut. 4:39; 11:2; 29:16
5. to know personally
  - a. a person – Gen. 29:5; Exod. 1:8; Deut. 22:2; 33:9; Jer. 1:5
  - b. a god – Deut. 11:28; 13:2,6,13; 28:64; 29:26; 32:17
  - c. YHWH – Deut. 4:35,39; 7:9; 29:6; Isa. 1:3; 56:10-11
  - d. sexual partner – Gen. 4:1,17,25; 24:16; 38:26
6. a learned skill or knowledge – Isa. 29:11,12; Amos 5:16
7. be wise – Deut. 29:4; Pro. 1:2; 4:1; Isa. 29:24
8. God’s knowledge
  - a. of Moses – Deut. 34:10
  - b. of Israel – Deut. 31:21

Theologically #5 is very important. Biblical faith is a daily, growing, intimate fellowship with God (see Special Topic: *Koinōnia*). It is not a creed alone, or a moral life alone. It is personal faith relationship. This is why Paul used the Christian home in Eph. 5:22-6:9 to illustrate Christ’s love for the Church.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Are the descriptions of the three major feasts described the same in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy?
2. Why was no work to be done on the Sabbath?
3. Did Israel have two calendars?
4. Were Passover and Unleavened Bread always combined into an eight-day feast?
5. Does Lev. 23:9-15 go with 23:4-8? Why, why not.
6. Does Lev. 23:9-15 refer to only the first year of entering Canaan or every year?
7. How did the feasts of first fruits (Lev. 23:15-21) come to be called Pentecost?
8. Is Lev. 23:23-25 a new year's festival?
9. How is the Day of Atonement different from all the other special annual events?

# LEVITICUS 24

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Lamp and the Bread of the Sanctuary	Care of the Temple Lamps	Various Priestly Laws	Taking Care of the Lamps	Complementary Ritual Prescriptions a. the perpetual flame
24:1-4	24:1-4	24:1-4	24:1-4	24:1-4
	The Bread of the Tabernacle		The Bread Offered to God	b. the loaves of permanent offering on the golden table
24:5-9	24:5-9	24:5-9	24:5-9	24:5-9
	The Penalty for Blasphemy		An Example of Just and Fair Punishment	A Case of Blasphemy
24:10-12	24:10-12	24:10-12	24:10-12	24:10-12
24:13-16	24:13-16	24:13-23	24:13-16	24:13 24:14-15a 24:15b-16
An Eye for An Eye				The Law of Retaliation
24:17-23	24:17-22		24:17-18	24:17 24:18
			24:19-22	24:19-22
	24:23		24:23	24:23

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Care for the Menorah (Lev. 24:1-4)
  1. This information is also found in Exod. 27:20-21.
  2. This lampstand is described in Exod. 25:31-40. See Special Topic: The Lampstand (Menorah) at Lev. 6:13.
  
- B. Care for the Table of Show Bread (Lev. 24:5-9)
  1. This information is also found in Exod. 25:23-30; 37:10-16; 40:22-23; see Special Topic: Show Bread or Bread of the Presence.
  2. The bread had to be made of precise ingredients and was replaced every week.
  3. The old bread was to be eaten by the priests (Lev. 24:9).
  
- C. A case of blasphemy (Lev. 24:10-12) and how to handle it (Lev. 24:13-16). Punishment meted out in Lev. 24:23.
  
- D. Notice the “ifs” (Lev. 24:15,17,19). Specific acts require special punishments.
  1. cursing God – stoning to death

2. murder – death penalty
3. death of an animal – restitution
4. injury to a neighbor – same to the offender (i.e., eye-for-eye, Lev. 24:20)
5. one standard of justice shall apply to all levels of Israeli society (Lev. 24:22)

**SPECIAL TOPIC: “Showbread” or “The Bread of the Presence”**

The “consecrated bread,” “bread of the promise,” or “the bread offered to God” referred to “the Showbread” or “the Bread of the Presence,” which was placed on the table in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and later the Temple (each weighing over 12 pounds). This seems to have symbolized YHWH’s provision and care for His people, not food for YHWH! It was unleavened, which linked back to the Exodus (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). They became weekly nourishment exclusively for the priests (cf. Lev. 24:5-9; Exod. 25:30). These twelve loaves were replaced every week. However, under the special conditions of I Samuel 21, David was allowed to eat them.

**WORD AND PHRASE STUDY**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:1-4**

**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. <sup>3</sup>Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD continually; *it shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations. <sup>4</sup>He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually.”**

**24:2 “Command the sons of Israel”** This IMPERATIVE (BDB 845, KB 1010, *Piel*) is unusual in Leviticus. Many chapters are introduced by “speak” (BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* IMPERATIVE) but only here, “command.”



NASB, JPSOA

REB “clear”

NKJV, NRSV,

TEV, LXX,

Peshitta “pure”

NJB

“crushed”

The MT has the MASCULINE ADJECTIVE “pure” (BDB 269), the VERB form means “be bright,” “clear,” or “pure.” The ADJECTIVE denotes that which is “free from foreign substances” (cf. Exod. 27:20-21; Lev. 24:7). The special olive oil (see James Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 74) was to be used in the inner shrine (holy place) and, therefore, must be uncontaminated.

The same ADJECTIVE (but FEMININE) is used in Lev. 24:4 to describe the metal of the lampstand (gold, cf. Exod. 25:31,39; 31:8; 37:17).

The same ADJECTIVE is used in Lev. 24:6 for the gold table on which the Show Bread rested in the Holy Place (cf. Exod. 25:23-30; 31:8; 37:11).

The same ADJECTIVE is used in Lev. 24:7 of the additive to the frankincense on the Show Bread (cf. Exod. 30:34).

▣ **“the light”** It is mentioned in Exod. 25:6; 27:20; 35:14,28; 39:37; Num. 4:9,16. See Special Topic: The Lampstand (Menorah) at Lev. 6:13.

There are several words in this context used to describe this lamp of the Holy Place.

1. Lev. 24:2, “luminary” (BDB 22, cf. Exod. 35:14,28; 39:37)
2. Lev. 24:2, “lamp” (BDB 632, cf. Lev. 24:4)
3. Lev. 24:4, “lampstand” (BDB 633)

All three are mentioned in Exod. 39:37. It was one lampstand with seven flower shaped bowls on the top of branches.

▣ **“burn continuously”** This is a recurrent demand, cf. Lev. 24:3 (thrice), 4, 8 (twice). This means from evening to morning, not all day (cf. Exod. 27:20-21).

**24:3 “the veil of testimony”** This refers to the inner veil which divided the “holy of Holies” (where the ark was located) from the “holy place,” where the special furniture was located (see Special Topic: Tabernacle [chart] at Lev. 1:1c, cf. Lev. 4:6).

The ark was known as the “ark of testimony” (cf. Exod. 25:22) so the veil before it took this designation.

▣ **“it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations”** This phrase is made up of three parallel parts.

1. ADVERB, “continually” (BDB 556, i.e., in the night time, every night, cf. Exod. 30:7,8)
2. NOUN, “*olam*” (BDB 761, see Special Topic: Forever at Lev. 3:17)
3. phrase, “throughout your generations” (cf. Lev. 7:36; 10:P9; 23:41)

Remember, in the OT “forever” must be interpreted in context. Most of YHWH’s covenant promises are conditional on obedience (see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 348-349). Also note that the OT was a “guardian” only for a period of time (i.e., cf. Acts 15; Galatians 3; Hebrews; and Special Topic: Paul’s View of the Mosaic Law at Lev. 5:17-19).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:5-9**

<sup>5</sup>“Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. <sup>6</sup>You shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. <sup>7</sup>You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the LORD continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. <sup>9</sup>It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the LORD’s offerings by fire, his portion forever.”

**24:5 “fine flour”** This refers to wheat flour not barley flour.

- ▣ **“twelve cakes”** They may have symbolized
1. a previous covenant (Noah, Abraham)
  2. an everlasting covenant
  3. the twelve tribes
  4. YHWH providing Israel’s physical needs

See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **“ephah”** This term is assumed. See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

**24:6 “you shall set them in rows”** These were large loaves (Lev. 24:5, about ± 3.5 lbs.) and they were arranged on a small table. Josephus (*Antiq.* 3.6.6) says they were piled up on top of each other.

▣ **“the pure gold table before the LORD”** See Special Topic: The Show Bread of the Presence at Leviticus 24 Contextual Insights.

The phrase “before the LORD” denoted in the Tabernacle’s holy shrine.

**24:7 “frankincense”** Apparently it was burned beside the bread. See Special Topic: Frankincense at Lev. 2:2b.

▣ **“a memorial portion”** This refers to part of the offering burned on the altar to YHWH (cf. Lev. 2:2,9,16). Here it refers to the frankincense (cf. Lev. 2:1,2,14-16; 6:15).

**24:8** See notes at Lev. 24:3. For “sabbath day” see Special Topic: Sabbath (OT) at Lev. 19:24 and Sabbath (NT). For “everlasting” see Special Topic: Forever (*’olam*) at Lev. 3:17. For “covenant” see Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

**24:9** The priests were to eat the week old bread (i.e., a type of grain offering accompanied by an incense offering). It was “most holy” because part of it was offered by fire to YHWH on the altar of sacrifice and was then taken into the Tabernacle’s “holy place.”

Although the text does not specifically mention that it was made from unleavened bread, the time element involved in its consumption by the priests strongly implies this.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:10-12**

**<sup>10</sup>Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, 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. <sup>11</sup>The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) <sup>12</sup>They put him in custody so that the command of the LORD might be made clear to them.**

**24:10-23** This is a very detailed historical account, it is only one of two historical accounts in Leviticus; the other being Leviticus 10 (i.e., the death of Nadab and Abihu). Several items to notice:

1. If the mother was Israeli the children were considered Israelite. There were many half Egyptians with Israel.
2. Israelis still sinned
  - a. the fight (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 137)
  - b. the blasphemy (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 828-830)
3. The tribe of Dan is always depicted as a problem because they left their tribal allotment (cf. Judges 18).

**24:11 “blasphemed”** This VERB (BDB 866 II, KB 1060, cf. Lev. 24:15) means “to utter a curse against someone,” here using YHWH’s holy name (see Special Topic: “The Name” of YHWH at Lev. 19:12).

▣ **“cursed”** This VERB (BDB 886, KB 1103, cf. Lev. 24:14,15; 19:14; 20:9; cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp.924-927 and 860) is parallel to “blasphemed.”

NIV has “blasphemed with a curse,” which expresses the thought well.

NJB has “blasphemed the name and cursed it,” which is also possible. It was a spoken disrespect to YHWH (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 149-150).

**24:12** The priests needed YHWH to make His will clearly known, possibly using

1. Urim and Thummin (see Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Lev. 8:8b)
2. dream (like Jacob)
3. prophet (later way to know YHWH’s will); see Special Topic: Prophecy (OT)

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Opening Statements**

1. The believing community does not agree on how to interpret prophecy. Other truths have been established as to an orthodox position throughout the centuries, but not this one.
2. There are several well defined stages of OT prophecy
  - a. premonarchial
    - (1) individuals called prophets
      - (a) Abraham – Gen. 20:7
      - (b) Moses – Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 18:15; 34:10
      - (c) Aaron – Exod. 7:1 (spokesman for Moses)
      - (d) Miriam – Exod. 15:20
      - (e) Medad and Eldad – Num. 11:24-30
      - (f) Deborah – Jdgs. 4:4
      - (g) unnamed – Jdgs. 6:7-10
      - (h) Samuel – 1 Sam. 3:20
    - (2) references to prophets as a group – Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22
    - (3) prophetic group or guild – 1 Sam. 10:5-13; 19:20; 1 Kgs. 20:35,41; 22:6,10-13; 2 Kgs. 2:3,7; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1, etc.
    - (4) Messiah called prophet – Deut. 18:15-18
  - b. non-writing monarchial (they address the king):
    - (1) Gad – 1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11; 1 Chr. 29:29
    - (2) Nathan – 2 Sam. 7:2; 12:25; 1 Kgs. 1:22
    - (3) Ahijah – 1 Kgs. 11:29
    - (4) Jehu – 1 Kgs. 16:1,7,12
    - (5) unnamed – 1 Kgs. 18:4,13; 20:13,22
    - (6) Elijah – 1 Kings 18 - 2 Kings 2
    - (7) Micaiah – 1 Kings 22
    - (8) Elisha – 2 Kgs. 2:9,12-13
  - c. classical writing prophets (they address the nation as well as the king): Isaiah – Malachi (except Daniel)

#### **B. Biblical Terms**

1. *Ro’eh* = “seer” (BDB 906, KB 1157), 1 Sam. 9:9. This reference itself shows the transition to the term *nabi*. *Ro’eh* is from the general term “to see.” This person understood God’s ways and plans and was consulted to ascertain God’s will in a matter.



2. *Hozeh* = “seer” (BDB 302, KB 301), 2 Sam. 24:11. It is basically a synonym of *Ro’eh*. It is from a rarer term “to see.” The PARTICIPLED form is used most often to refer to prophets (i.e., “to behold”).
3. *Nabi’* = “prophet” (BDB 611, KB 661), cognate of Akkadian VERB *Nabu* = “to call” and Arabic *Naba’a* = “to announce.” This is the most common term in the Old Testament to designate a prophet. It is used over 300 times. The exact etymology is uncertain but “to call” at present seems the best option. Possibly the best understanding comes from YHWH’s description of Moses’ relationship to Pharaoh through Aaron (cf. Exod. 4:10-16; 7:1; Deut. 5:5. A prophet is someone who speaks for God to His people (Amos 3:8; Jer. 1:7,17; Ezek. 3:4)
4. All three terms are used of the prophet’s office in 1 Chr. 29:29; Samuel – *Ro’eh*; Nathan – *Nabi’* and Gad – *Hozeh*.
5. The phrase, *ish ha – ‘elohim*, “Man of God,” is also a broader designation for a speaker for God. It is used some 76 times in the OT in the sense of “prophet.”
6. The term “prophet” is Greek in origin. It comes from: (1) *pro* = “before” or “for” and (2) *phemi* = “to speak.”

## II. DEFINITION OF PROPHECY

- A. The term “prophecy” had a wider semantic field in Hebrew than in English. The history books of Joshua through Kings (except Ruth) are labeled by the Jews as “the former prophets.” Both Abraham (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15) and Moses (Deut. 18:18) are designated as prophets (also Miriam, Exod. 15:20). Therefore, beware of an assumed English definition!
- B. “Propheticism may legitimately be defined as that understanding of history which accepts meaning only in terms of divine concern, divine purpose, divine participation,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 896.
- C. “The prophet is neither a philosopher nor a systematic theologian, but a covenant mediator who delivers the word of God to His people in order to shape their future by reforming their present, “Prophets and Prophecy,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 13 p. 1152.

## III. PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

- A. Prophecy is a way for God to speak to His people, providing guidance in their current setting and hope in His control of their lives and world events. Their message was basically corporate. It is meant to rebuke, encourage, engender faith and repentance, and inform God’s people about Himself and His plans. They hold God’s people to fidelity to God’s covenants. To this must be added that often it is used to clearly reveal God’s choice of a spokesman (Deut. 13:1-3; 18:20-22). This, taken ultimately, would refer to the Messiah.
- B. Often, the prophet took a historical or theological crisis of his day and projected this into an eschatological setting. This end-time view of history is unique in Israel and its sense of divine election and covenant promises.
- C. The office of prophet seems to balance (Jer. 18:18) and usurp the office of High Priest as a way to know God’s will. The Urim and Thummim transcend into a verbal message from God’s spokesman. The office of prophet seems to also have passed away in Israel after Malachi. It does not reappear until 400 years later with John the Baptist. It is uncertain how the New Testament gift of “prophecy” relates to the Old Testament. New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 1 Cor. 12:10,28-29; 14:29,32,37; Eph. 4:11) are not revealers of new revelation or Scripture, but forth-tellers and foretellers of God’s will in covenant situations.

- D. Prophecy is not exclusively or primarily predictive in nature. Prediction is one way to confirm his office and his message, but it must be noted “less than 2% of OT prophecy is Messianic. Less than 5% specifically describes the New Covenant Age. Less than 1% concerns events yet to come.” (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, p. 166).
- E. Prophets represent God to the people, while Priests represent the people to God. This is a general statement. There are exceptions like Habakkuk, who addresses questions to God.
- F. One reason it is difficult to understand the prophets is because we do not know how their books were structured. They are not chronological. They seem to be thematic but not always the way one would expect. Often there is no obvious historical setting, time frame or clear division between oracles. These books are difficult (1) to read through in one sitting; (2) to outline by topic; and (3) to ascertain the central truth or authorial intent in each oracle.

#### IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHECY

- A. In the Old Testament there seems to be a development of the concept of “prophet” and “prophecy.” In early Israel there developed a fellowship of prophets, led by a strong charismatic leader such as Elijah or Elisha. Sometimes the phrase, “the sons of the prophets,” was used to designate this group (2 Kings 2). The prophets were characterized by forms of ecstasy (1 Sam. 10:10-13; 19:18-24).
- B. However, this period passed rapidly into individual prophets. There were those prophets (both true and false) who identified with the King, and lived at the palace (Gad, Nathan). Also, there were those who were independent, sometimes totally unconnected with the status quo of Israeli society (Amos). They include both male and female (2 Kgs. 22:14.)
- C. The prophet was often a revealer of the future, conditioned on man’s immediate response. Often the prophet’s task was an unfolding of God’s universal plan for His creation which is not affected by human response. This universal eschatological plan is unique among the prophets of the Ancient Near East. Prediction and Covenant fidelity are twin foci of the prophetic messages (cf. Fee and Stuart, p. 150). This implies that the prophets are primarily corporate in focus. They usually, but not exclusively, address the nation.
- D. Most prophetic material was orally presented. It was later combined by means of theme, chronology, or other patterns of Near Eastern Literature which are lost to us. Because it was oral it is not as structured as written prose. This makes the books difficult to read straight through and difficult to understand without a specific historical setting.
- E. The prophets use several patterns to convey their messages.
  1. Court Scene – God takes His people to court, often it is a divorce case where YHWH rejects his wife (Israel) for her unfaithfulness (Hosea 4; Micah 6).
  2. Funeral dirge – the special meter of this type of message and its characteristic “woe” sets it apart as a special form (Isaiah 5; Habakkuk 2).
  3. Covenant Blessing Pronouncement – the conditional nature of the Covenant is emphasized and the consequences, both positively and negatively, are spelled out for the future (Deuteronomy 27-28).

#### V. HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

- A. Find the intent of the original prophet (editor) by noting the historical setting and the literary context of each oracle. Usually it will involve Israel breaking the Mosaic Covenant in some way.
- B. Read and interpret the whole oracle, not just a part; outline it as to content. See how it relates to surrounding oracles. Try to outline the whole book.

- C. Assume a literal interpretation of the passage until something in the text itself points you to figurative usage; then put the figurative language into prose.
- D. Analyze symbolic action in light of historical setting and parallel passages. Be sure to remember this Ancient Near Eastern literature is not western or modern literature.
- E. Treat prediction with care.
  - 1. Are they exclusively for the author's day?
  - 2. Were they subsequently fulfilled in Israel's history?
  - 3. Are they yet future events?
  - 4. Do they have a contemporary fulfillment and yet a future fulfillment?
  - 5. Allow the authors of the Bible, not modern authors, to guide your answers.
- F. Special concerns
  - 1. Is the prediction qualified by conditional response?
  - 2. Is it certain to whom the prophecy is addressed (and why)?
  - 3. Is there a possibility, both biblically and/or historically, for multiple fulfillment?
  - 4. The NT authors, under inspiration, were able to see the Messiah in many places in the OT that are not obvious to us. They seem to use typology or word play. Since we are not inspired we best leave this approach to them.

#### VI. HELPFUL BOOKS

- A. *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy* by Carl E. Amending and W. Ward Basque
- B. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- C. *My Servants the Prophets* by Edward J. Young
- D. *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* by D. Brent Sandy
- E. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 4, pp. 1067-1078

#### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:13-16

**<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>14</sup>“Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. <sup>15</sup>You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin. <sup>16</sup>Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.’”**

**24:14** Notice the procedure.

- 1. Take the offender outside the camp (i.e., away from the holy Tabernacle and covenant people).
- 2. All who heard lay their hands on his head. This was either
  - a. a transfer of guilt (see Special Topic: Laying On of Hands at Lev. 1:3b)
  - b. a gesture similar to court witnessing (i.e., identifying the offender, cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1016, #1)
- 3. Let all the congregation stone him (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1050). This was a designated way to remove an offender from the covenant people (cf. Deut. 17:2-7; 21:18-21).

**24:15 “then he will bear his sin”** This is an idiom of death and guilt (cf. Lev. 5:1; 20:20; Num. 9:13; 18:22), whether by man or God is often not specified.

**24:16 “shall surely be put to death”** This is an intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root; here BDB 559, KB 562, repeated in Lev. 24:17).

▣ **“shall certainly stone him”** This is the same kind of intensified form as above, here BDB 920, KB 1187. Death was the mandated penalty and stoning by the whole community was the mandated form.

Note the penalty is carried out in Lev. 24:23.

#### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:17-23**

<sup>17</sup>“If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. <sup>18</sup>The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. <sup>19</sup>If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: <sup>20</sup>fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. <sup>21</sup>Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. <sup>22</sup>There shall be one standard for you; it shall be for the stranger as well as the native, for I am the LORD your God.” <sup>23</sup>Then Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and they brought the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**24:17 “If a man”** The judgment of YHWH on this blasphemer was meant to set a precedent (see Special Topic: Laws in the ANE, B. #1). Notice the “ifs” in Lev. 24:15,17,19.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: LAWS IN THE ANE**

A. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, pp. 143-144, lists the OT law codes:

1. the Decalogue – Exod. 20:2-17; Deut. 5:6-21
2. the Code of the Covenant – Exod. 20:22-23:33
3. Deuteronomy – Deuteronomy 12-26
4. the Law of Holiness – Leviticus 17-26
5. the Priestly code – Leviticus 1-7, 11-16

All of these are considered *Torah*. They are specific divine prescriptions on actions and attitudes.

B. Types of Israeli laws

1. Casuistic – laws characterized by the “if. . .then” format. There are consequences to actions. These are usually guidelines for societies.
2. Apodictic – laws stated as general prohibitions (usually SECOND PERSON PLURAL statements - “you shall not. . .”). These are usually guidelines for the spiritual life.

C. Cultural influences

1. in content - earlier law codes
  - a. Lipit-Ishtar
  - b. Code of Hammurabi
2. in form – Hittite treaties (Suzerain; see Special Topic: Hittite Treaties), which occur in several set patterns, but Deuteronomy and Joshua 24 follow the pattern of the 2000 B.C. period, which shows its historicity (cf. John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, pp. 95-107; K.A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World*, pp. 80-95; see introduction to the book, VII.

D. In many ways Israel's laws were similar in form but radically different in content. Israel had God's revelation, not only about the community's powerful, wealthy, and influential, but about the poor, powerless, and socially ostracized! God loves all people!



**NASB** "takes the life"  
**NKJV, NRSV,**  
**JPSOA, Peshitta** "kills"  
**TEV** "commit murder"  
**NJB** "strikes down"  
**REB, LXX** "strikes"

The MT has the VERB (BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) which can denote

1. one fatal blow – here
2. one non-fatal blow – Num. 22:23,25,27
3. beat repeatedly – Exod. 2:11,13; 5:10
4. metaphor
  - a. of sun – Ps. 121:6; Isa. 49:10; Jonah 4:8
  - b. of tongue – Jer. 18:18

**24:18** See notes at Lev. 5:16; 6:5; 22:14; 24:21.

▣ "life for life" This is the term *nephes*, twice. See full note at Ezek. 18:4.

**24:19-20** This was the Israeli's way (i.e., *Lex Talionis*, cf. Exod. 21:22-25; see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 150-151) to limit violence and tribal warfare. The family had the right of limited retaliation (i.e., the kinsman avenger, cf. Joshua 20-21).

Later the rabbis allowed a price to be paid for some injuries which violated this text and Deut. 19:21.

According to Gordon Wenham, *Leviticus*, *New International Commentary*, p. 312, verses 16-22 form a chiasm, with vv. 19-20 being the main truth. Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 149-150, explains how the rabbis developed the idea of appropriate compensation. However, for premeditated murder there was no compensation (i.e., Num. 35:31; Deut. 19:11-12).

**24:19**

**NASB, TEV,**  
**NJB** "injures"  
**NKJV** "causes disfigurement"  
**NRSV, JPSOA** "maims"  
**REB** "injures and disfigures"  
**LXX, Peshitta** "give a blemish"

The MT has BDB 548, which can refer to

1. physical blemish or defect – Lev. 21:17,18,21,23
2. moral blemish – Deut. 32:5

A general translation, REB, is able to cover the semantic range.

**24:22** YHWH is no respecter of persons. There is one justice for all; men, women, Israelite, stranger (cf. Exod. 12:49; Num. 9:14; 15:15,16,29; Deuteronomy especially mentions the widow, orphan, and alien; see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 588, #3, [b]).

Remember, a “mixed multitude” came out of Egypt (cf. Exod. 12:38). This would have included

1. some other foreign slaves
2. some half-Egyptian families
3. some Israelite supporters who were expelled

▣ **“I am the LORD your God”** This is a recurrent covenant form used in Leviticus 18-26.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is the IMPERATIVE (“command”) of Lev. 24:2 different from the normal introductory IMPERATIVE, “speak”?
2. List the different names used for the light in the Holy Place.
3. Explain the range of meaning of “perpetual.”
4. What did the twelve loaves of bread symbolize?
5. How is Lev. 24:10-23 different from the rest of the surrounding material?
6. Is there a distinction between “blaspheme” and “curse”?
7. Why did the hearers of the cursing lay their hands on the head of the person to be stoned?
8. How does this chapter express the differing consequences between the death of a human and an animal?
9. Explain the significance of Lev. 24:22.

# LEVITICUS 25

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
New Sabbath Year 25:1-7	The Sabbath of the Seventh Year 25:1-7	The Sabbatical Year 25:1-7	The Seventh Year 25:1-7	The Holy Years a. the sabbatical year 25:1 25:2a 25:2b-7
The Year of Jubilee 25:8-12 25:13-17	The Year of Jubilee 25:8-12 25:13-17	The Year of Jubilee 25:8-12 25:13-17	The Year of Restoration 25:8-12 25:13-17	b. the year of jubilee 25:8-12 25:13-17
25:18-22	Provision for the Seventh Year 25:18-22	25:18-24	The Problem of the Seventh Year 25:18-19 25:20-22	Divine Guarantee for the Sabbatical Year 25:18-19 25:20-22
The Law of Redemption 25:23-24	Redemption of Property 25:23-24		Restoration of Property 25:23 25:24-28	Redemption of Land 25:23-28
25:25-28 25:29-34	25:25-34	25:25-28 25:29-34	25:29-34	25:29-31 25:32-34
Of Poor Countrymen 25:35-38	Lending to the Poor 25:35-38	25:35-38	Loans to the Poor 25:35-38	Redemption of Persons 25:35-38
25:39-46	The Law Concerning Slavery 25:39-46	25:39-46	Release of Slaves 25:39-46	25:39-43
Of Redeeming a Poor Man 25:47-55	25:47-55	25:47-55	25:47-55	25:44-46 25:47-53 25:54-55

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. The passage is a development of the Sabbath (7 cycles of days, years) concept of Gen. 3:1-3. This theme is expanded along several lines by Moses.
1. "Sabbath" – weekly rest and worship day (Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15; see Special Topic: Sabbath, OT at Lev. 19:24 and Special Topic: Sabbath, NT; Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 475-483)

2. “Sabbath Year” – ever seventh year was a year of rest and a worship year, with the release of Hebrew slaves (Deut. 15:1-10)
  3. “Year of Jubilee” – every 49 years was the Sabbath of Sabbath years. During this year the land rested and all land reverted to the original tribal owner
- B. It seems that Leviticus 25 is a development of Exod. 23:10-11. Deuteronomy 15:1-11 adds even more liberty.
- C. The purpose of the Sabbath year was:
1. to show that all Israelites were YHWH’s servants (Deut. 15:1-10). It helped the poor and limited the wealthy.
  2. to force the entire population to depend on YHWH’s provision of food.
  3. to restore Israel to the quiet, simple times of pastoral life that their forefathers knew.
  4. to test the obedience of the Israelites.
  5. to provide a study period of the Covenant with YHWH (Deut. 31:10-13).
  6. It was also helpful to the productivity of the land itself.
- D. The Year of Jubilee had several purposes:
1. to show YHWH’s ownership of the land, Exod. 19:5; Lev. 25:23, and care for the poor, vulnerable, and disenfranchised (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 229, 986-988)
  2. to restore original tribal allocation of the Promised Land
  3. to further emphasize the release of Israelite slaves to a new beginning
  4. to stop exploitation of the poor by large land owners or cooperatives
  5. see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 175-177
- E. Were these regulations ever implemented?
1. Jubilees were probably kept in the early days, although we have little scriptural evidence (cf. 1 Kgs. 21:3). However, it was probably not observed later in Israel’s history. The end-time implications of this day of release are seen in Isa. 61:1-3; Ezek. 46:17.
  2. The Sabbath Year was apparently not observed early (cf. 2 Chr. 30:21; Lev. 26:43) but after the exile, it was reinstated.
    - a. Josephus’ *Antiquity of the Jews* 11.8.6; 14.10.6; 14.16.2; 15.1.2
    - b. I Maccabees 6:49
- F. How do these laws apply to believers today? This is a question all of us ask. The best discussion of this issue is found in John Bright’s book, *The Authority of the Old Testament*. Also, in a brief section of Gordon Wenham’s *New International Commentary, Leviticus*, pp. 32-37, is a discussion on this issue (cf. Section IV of this outline).

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:1-7

<sup>1</sup>The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, <sup>4</sup>but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. <sup>5</sup>Your harvest’s aftergrowth you shall not reap, and



**your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. <sup>6</sup>All of you shall have the sabbath *products* of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. <sup>7</sup>Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.”**

**25:1 “The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai”** These regulations were directly from YHWH, not Moses’ political philosophy. They were given at the same time as the other regulations of the Mosaic Legislation.

From Num. 1:1 we know this was at the end of the second year after the exodus. See Special Topic: Date of the Exodus and Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Lev. 16:29b.

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE DATE OF THE EXODUS**

There have been several scholarly opinions on the date of the Exodus.

- A. From 1 Kings 6:1, “480 years from the Exodus to the building of Solomon’s Temple”
1. Solomon began to reign in 970 B.C. This is figured by using the battle of *Qarqar* (853 B.C.) as a certain starting date.
  2. The Temple was built in his fourth year (965 B.C.), and the Exodus occurred about 1445/6 B.C.
  3. This would make it occur in the 18<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Dynasty.
    - a. The Pharaoh of the oppression would be Thutmose III (1490-1436 B.C.).
    - b. The Pharaoh of the Exodus would be Amenhotep II (1436-1407 B.C.).
      - (1) Some believe evidence from Jericho based on the fact that no diplomatic correspondence occurred between Jericho and Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep III (1413-1377 B.C.).
      - (2) The *Amarna* texts record diplomatic correspondence written on ostraca about the *Habiru* overrunning the land of Canaan in the reign of Amenhotep III. Therefore, the Exodus occurred in the reign of Amenhotep II.
      - (3) The period of the Judges is not long enough if the 13<sup>th</sup> century is the date of the Exodus.
  4. The possible problems with these dates.
    - a. The Septuagint (LXX) has 440 years, not 480.
    - b. It is possible that 480 years is representative of twelve generations of forty years each, therefore, a figurative number.
    - c. There are twelve generations of priests from Aaron to Solomon (cf. 1 Chronicles 6), then twelve from Solomon to the Second Temple. The Jews, like the Greeks, reckoned a generation as forty years. So, there is a 480 year period back and forward (symbolic use of numbers, cf. Bimson’s *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*).
  5. There are three other texts that mention dates.
    - a. Genesis 15:13,16 (cf. Acts 7:6), 400 years of bondage
    - b. Exodus 12:40-41 (cf. Gal. 3:17)
      - (1) MT – 430 years of sojourn in Egypt
      - (2) LXX – 215 years of sojourn in Egypt

- c. Judges 11:26 – 300 years between Jephthah’s day and the conquest (supports 1445 date)
- d. Acts 13:19 – exodus, wanderings, and conquest – 450 years
- 6. The author of Kings used specific historical references and did not round numbers (Edwin Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, pp. 83-85).
- B. The tentative evidence from archaeology seems to point toward a date of 1290 B.C. or the nineteenth Egyptian Dynasty.
  - 1. Joseph was able to visit his father and Pharaoh in the same day. The first native Pharaoh who began to move the capital of Egypt from Thebes back to the Nile Delta, to a place called Avaris/Zoan/Tanis, which was the old Hyksos capital, was Seti I (1309-1290 B.C.). He would be the Pharaoh of the oppression.
    - a. This seems to fit two pieces of information about the Hyksos reign of Egypt.
      - (1) A stele has been found from the time of Rameses II that commemorates the founding of Avaris four hundred years earlier (1700's B.C. by the Hyksos).
      - (2) The prophecy of Gen. 15:13 speaks of a 400 year oppression.
    - b. This implies that Joseph’s rise to power was under a Hyksos (Semitic) Pharaoh. The new Egyptian dynasty is referred to in Exod. 1:8.
  - 2. The Hyksos, an Egyptian word meaning “rulers of foreign lands,” were a group of non-Egyptian Semitic rulers, who controlled Egypt during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (1720-1570 B.C.). Some want to relate them to Joseph’s rise to power. If we subtract the 430 years of Exod. 12:40 from 1720 B.C., we get a date of about 1290 B.C.
  - 3. Seti I’s son was Rameses II (1290-1224 B.C.). This name is mentioned as one of the store cities built by the Hebrew slaves, Exod. 1:11. Also this same district in Egypt near Goshen is called Rameses, Gen. 47:11. Avaris/Zoan/Tanis was known as “House of Rameses” from 1300-1100 B.C.
  - 4. Thutmose III was known as a great builder, as was Rameses II.
  - 5. Rameses II had forty-seven daughters living in separate palaces.
  - 6. Archaeology has shown that most of the large walled cities of Canaan (Hazor, Debir, Lachish) were destroyed and rapidly rebuilt around 1250 B.C. In allowing for a thirty-eight year wilderness wandering period, this fits a date of 1290 B.C. Archaeology has found a reference to the Israelites being in southern Canaan on a memorial stele of Rameses’ successor, Merneptah (1224-1214 B.C., cf. the Stele of Merneptah, dated 1220 B.C.).
  - 7. Edom and Moab seem to have attained strong national identity in the late 1300's B.C. These countries were not organized in the fifteenth century (Glueck).
  - 8. The book, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* by John J. Bimson, published by the University of Sheffield, 1978, argues against all of the archaeological evidence for an early date.
- C. There has been a new theory which can be seen on the History Channel called “Exodus Decoded,” which asserts a direct northern route (i.e., “the way of the philistines”) even earlier than 1445 B.C., in the Hyksos period (i.e., “the Shepherd Kings,” 1630-1523 B.C.)

▣ “Mount Sinai” See Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai at Lev. 7:38.

**25:2 “the sons of Israel”** This refers to the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (cf. Gen. 32:28; see Special Topic: Israel, the Name at Lev. 1:2). However, in 922 B.C., when the tribes split under Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, the northern tribes took this collective covenant designation for themselves.

▣ **“the land which I shall give you”** God had promised Abraham the land on which he sojourned (see Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Lev. 11:44). From Gen. 15:12-21 we see that God judged the native population and removed them as He later would the Israelites, too; for the same reasons (i.e., idolatry)! See notes at Lev. 25:23.

▣ **“the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD”** See notes at Exod. 23:10-11 online and NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1157-1161. This showed YHWH’s ownership of the land.

**25:4 “seventh”** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, 6, at Lev. 4:6.

▣ **“a sabbath rest”** Both words are from the same root (BDB 992). Rest is a promise of YHWH’s presence with and purpose for His people (cf. Exod. 33:14). See good brief notes at NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1132-1136.

▣ **“you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard”** See notes at Deut. 15:1-11 online.

**25:5 “trimmed vines”** This is literally “Nazarite vines.” These untrimmed plants grew feelers like a Nazarite’s uncut hair (cf. Numbers 6).

**25:6 “all of you shall have the sabbath products”** The natural growth during the seventh year would belong to all of the people, not the land owner. This helped break down the social barriers that men had put up!

▣ **“slaves. . .hired men. . .foreign resident. . .aliens”** Although there is a distinction made between Hebrew and Gentile, God cares and provides for both. This can be seen specifically in Deuteronomy.

**25:7** If any food was left by humans the cattle could have free access to all of the land. God shows great concern for animal life in the Old Testament.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:8-12**

<sup>8</sup>“You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, *namely*, forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup>You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. <sup>10</sup>You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup>You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in *from* its untrimmed vines. <sup>12</sup>For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field.”

**25:8 “forty-nine years”** It is uncertain if the seventh Sabbath year coincided with the Year of Jubilee or if there were two fallow years in succession (see *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 83, #52). Some have supposed that every seventh year was a very short year of only 49 days to correct the lunar festival calendar.

If this is so, then Jubilee was one of these short years (Gordon Wenham, *New International Commentary, Leviticus*, p. 319).

**25:9 “the day of atonement”** This was the only fast day specifically mentioned in the Pentateuch. It is described in detail in Leviticus 16. See notes online and Special Topic: Atonement at Lev. 1:4c.

▣ **“a ram’s horn”** See Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel at Lev. 23:24.

**25:10**

**NASB, JPSOA,**

**LXX**

**“a release”**

**NKJV, NRSV,**

**Peshitta**

**“liberty”**

**TEV**

**“freedom”**

**NJB, REB**

**“liberation”**

The MT has the NOUN (BDB 204 I), which has two connotations.

1. something flowing or free running (i.e., Exod. 30:23)
2. liberty, especially connected to Year of Jubilee (i.e., the fiftieth year, seven Sabbath years)

▣ **“returns”** This VERB (BDB 996, KB 1477) occurs many times in this chapter (i.e., Lev. 25:10,13,27, 28,41,51,52). It has two distinct connotations.

1. return
2. repentance (see Special Topic: Repentance, OT at Lev. 10:11)

▣ **“each of you shall return to his own property”** This refers to the original tribal inheritance (note vv. 13-16,23; cf. Num. 36:9 and Joshua 12-19). A release after a designated number of years is common in the law codes of the Ancient Near East. For Israel it was a way to assert YHWH’s ownership and control over Canaan, His land.

▣ **“each of you shall return to his family”** This refers to the freedom of Israelite slaves. The Year of Jubilee functioned like the Sabbath Year in its release of slaves.

**25:12 “it shall be holy to you”** “Holy” means “set apart for God’s use.” See Special Topic: Holy at Lev. 6:18c. This chapter shows that the purpose of the laws was to point to the character of God (see Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel’s God, OT at Lev. 10:3b), His ownership, provision, and lordship.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:13-17**

<sup>13</sup>“On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property. <sup>14</sup>If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend’s hand, you shall not wrong one another. <sup>15</sup>Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. <sup>16</sup>In proportion to the extent of the years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for *it is* a number of crops he is selling to you. <sup>17</sup>So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.”

**25:13**

NASB, NRSV,

NJB, JPSOA,

REB “jubilee”

NKJV “Jubilee”

TEV -----

LXX “release”

The MT has יבל or יובל (BDB 385). The basic meaning is “ram” or “ram’s horn.” The ram’s horn is mentioned in Lev. 25:9 (twice), but a different term, BDB 1052 (see Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel at Lev. 23:24). It seems the idea of “Jubilee” comes from another similar Latin root. The 50<sup>th</sup> year was a year of “release” or “liberty” (cf. Lev. 25:10, BDB 204 I). These special releases were common in the ANE.

**25:14 “buy”** This chapter is about the right of “buying back”! The VERB (BDB 888, KB 1111) occurs often (i.e., vv. 14,15,28,30,44,45,50) and related to several groups and things. This VERB is parallel to “redeem” (BDB 145, KB 169, cf. Lev. 25:25,26,30,33,48,49,54; see Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem at Lev. 19:20b).

This is an intensified grammatical form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 888, KB 1111).

▣ **“you shall not wrong one another”** This verse and Lev. 25:17 show the brotherly relationship that was meant to exist between Israelites because of their covenant relationship to YHWH. This also shows that “business is not business” between God’s people!

**25:15-16** This shows that the price of redemption was related to fifth year periods of release.

**25:17 “I am the LORD your God”** This reflects the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. The stipulations in the chapter (and all the Pentateuch, see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 920) are meant to reveal and illustrate the unique character of God (cf. Lev. 25:38).

See Special Topic: Names for Deity, C and D at Lev. 1:1.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:18-22**

<sup>18</sup>“You shall thus observe My statutes and keep My judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land. <sup>19</sup>Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it. <sup>20</sup>But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” <sup>21</sup>then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. <sup>22</sup>When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating *the old* until the ninth year when its crop comes in.”

**25:18 “My statutes. . . judgments”** See special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

▣ **“that you may live securely on the land”** Obedience (i.e., conditional covenant) to YHWH would assure a stable and blessed community (cf. Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 5:16; 28:1-14). See Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13 and Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d.

**25:19** God’s blessing and protection could be seen in the agricultural produce of the land (esp. v. 21).

**25:20** God would supernaturally provide for the fallow years with a bumper crop. Rashi says that part of the 6<sup>th</sup> year, all of the 7<sup>th</sup>, and part of the 8<sup>th</sup> is referred to. This is similar to what God did concerning the extra manna on the sixth day to provide for the Sabbath (i.e., Exod. 16:22-30).

**25:21 “for three years”** We tend, in the modern western world, to be literal with numbers. This is not the case of ANE cultures. The UBS *Handbook for Translators*, p. 382, suggests this is a two year period with only parts of the first year, the entire second year, and only part of a third year, but all told, it is only twenty-four months.

I tend to agree. The same problem occurs in how long Jesus was in the tomb (i.e., three days). I think only about 36 hours; see notes online (reference?)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:23-24**

<sup>23</sup>“**The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me.** <sup>24</sup>**Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land.”**

**25:23 “the land is Mine”** Canaan is often called YHWH’s land but we must remember all land is YHWH’s land (i.e., Exod. 19:5; see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 460, #3 and p. 816, #b) by means of creation. Israel is YHWH’s special covenant people to reveal Himself to all the world and bring them to Himself. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan at Lev. 11:44d; also see note in NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 522-524, B, “The Land.” God is owner of all things; we are stewards of all things!

▣ **“for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me”** Compare this phrase with Ps. 39:12; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11.

**25:24-25** This speaks of “the kinsman redeemer” or “kinsman avenger: (BDB 145 I). This near kin who redeems his brother from poverty can be seen in Ruth 4; Jer. 32:7ff.

This later becomes a title for God. As all OT titles, it reflects an intimate, loving family setting. See Special Topic: Anthropomorphic Language to Describe God.

**SPECIAL TOPIC: GOD DESCRIBED AS HUMAN (anthropomorphism)**

- I. This type of language (i.e., deity described in human terms) is very common in the OT (some examples)
  - A. Physical body parts
    - 1. eyes – Gen. 1:4,31; 6:8; Exod. 33:17; Num. 14:14; Deut. 11:12; Zech. 4:10
    - 2. hands – Exod. 15:17; Num. 11:23; Deut. 2:15
    - 3. arm – Exod. 6:6; 15:16; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 26:8
    - 4. ears – Num. 11:18; 1 Sam. 8:21; 2 Kgs. 19:16; Ps. 5:1; 10:17; 18:6
    - 5. face – Exod. 33:11; Lev. 20:3,5,6; Num. 6:25; 12:8; Deut. 31:17; 32:20; 34:10
    - 6. finger – Exod. 8:19; 31:18; Deut. 9:10; Ps. 8:3
    - 7. voice – Gen. 3:9,11,13; Exod. 15:26; 19:19; Deut. 26:17; 27:10
    - 8. feet – Exod. 24:10; Ezek. 43:7
    - 9. human form – Exod. 24:9-11; Ps. 47; Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26

10. the angel of the Lord – Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16; Exod. 3:4,13-21; 14:19; Jdgs. 2:1; 6:22-23; 13:3-22

B. Physical actions (some examples)

1. speaking as the mechanism of creation – Gen. 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26
2. walking – Gen. 3:8 (i.e., sound of); Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14
3. closing the door of Noah’s ark – Gen. 7:16
4. smelling sacrifices – Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18,25; Lev. 26:31
5. coming down – Gen. 11:5; 18:21; Exod. 3:8; 19:11,18,20
6. burying Moses – Deut. 34:6

C. Human emotions (some examples)

1. regret/repent – Gen. 6:6,7; Exod. 32:14; Jdgs. 2:18; 1 Sam. 15:29,35; Amos 7:3,6
2. anger – Exod. 4:14; 15:7; Num. 11:10; 12:9; 22:22; 25:3,4; 32:10,13,14; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 29:20
3. jealousy – Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16,21; Jos. 24:19
4. loathe/abhor – Lev. 20:23; 26:30; Deut. 32:19

D. Family terms (some examples)

1. father
  - a. of Israel – Exod. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; Isa. 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1
  - b. of the king – 2 Sam. 7:11-16; Ps. 2:7
  - c. metaphors of fatherly action – Deut. 1:31; 8:5; 32:6-14; Ps. 27:10; Pro. 3:12; Jer. 3:4,22; 31:20; Hosea 11:1-4; Mal. 3:17
2. parent – Hosea 11:1-4
3. mother – Isa. 49:15; 66:9-13 (analogy to nursing mother)
4. young faithful lover – Hosea 1-3

II. Reasons for the use of this type of language

- A. It is a necessity for God to reveal Himself to human beings. There is no other vocabulary than fallen, worldly words. The very pervasive concept of God as male is one example of an anthropomorphism, because God is spirit!
- B. God takes the most meaningful aspects of human life and uses them to reveal Himself to fallen humanity (father, mother, parent, lover).
- C. Though necessary at times (i.e., Gen. 3:8), God does not want to be limited to any physical form (cf. Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).
- D. The ultimate anthropomorphism is the incarnation of Jesus! God became physical, touchable (cf. 1 John 1:1-3). The message of God became the Word of God (cf. John 1:1-18).

III. For a good brief discussion, see G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the bible*, chapter 10, “Anthropomorphism” (pp. 172-182); or see the article, “Anthropomorphism” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, pp. 152-154.

**25:24 “the redemption”** The VERB form (BDB 145, KB 169) is used often in this chapter, but the NOUN form is also common (Lev. 25:24,26,29 [twice], 31,32,48,51,52). This chapter is about “release” connected to

1. every seven years
2. every fifty years

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:25-28**

<sup>25</sup>“If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. <sup>26</sup>Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, <sup>27</sup>then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. <sup>28</sup>But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.”

**25:28** The rights of the poor are balanced with the rights of the owners. We are all responsible for our actions and their consequences!

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:29-34**

<sup>29</sup>Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. <sup>30</sup>But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee. <sup>31</sup>The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption rights and revert in the jubilee. <sup>32</sup>As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession. <sup>33</sup>What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee, for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. <sup>34</sup>But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.”

**25:29-34** These verses deal with the spacial requirements of certain people groups who live in

1. walled cities, Lev. 25:30
2. unwalled cities, Lev. 25:31
3. Levitical cities, Lev. 25:32-34; see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 905-907

**25:32 “cities of the Levites”** There were 48 of these special cities (cf. Num. 35:1-8; Joshua 21; 1 Chr. 6:54-81). The Levites did not inherit land like the other tribes, so they were given cities and the surrounding pastureland. Some of these cities served as places of refuge from the kinsman redeemer for various types of crimes (cf. Joshua 20, see Special Topic: Cities of Refuge).

**SPECIAL TOPIC: CITIES OF REFUGE**

Originally in the OT, those who were fleeing from hasty justice (i.e., the kinsman avenger) could grab the horns of the sacrificial altar for safety (cf. Exod. 21:14; 1 Kgs. 1:50-53; 2:28-31). However, this system was replaced by having strategically located cities within the Promised Land (i.e., 6 Levitical cities, see Joshua 20). Moses had already designated three cities in the trans-Jordan area (cf. Deut. 4:41ff). There are several discussions in the Pentateuch related to the cities of refuge (cf. Exod. 21: 12-14; Num. 35:10-28; Deut. 19:1-13). If a person killed a fellow Israelite by accident, he could flee to one of these six cities. There, a trial would be held (cf. Jos. 20:4). If innocent of premeditated murder, he still had to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest. If guilty of murder, he was turned over to the blood avenger of the family he violated for the immediate punishment of death (cf. Jos. 20:9).



**25:33** This is difficult in Hebrew; many translations use the LXX. The whole point seems to be that Levites can purchase homes in the walled cities permanently, but only Levites.

The footnote of the JPSOA translation says, “meaning of first half of verse uncertain.” The NET Bible, p. 266, lists the five major views of this half verse.

▣ **“the Levites”** Leviticus 25:32-33 is the only mention of the term “Levites” in Leviticus and it refers to members of the tribe of Levi. The family of Aaron (and Moses) comprised the priests but other members of the tribe served the temple and cultus.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:35-38**

<sup>35</sup>“Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. <sup>36</sup>Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. <sup>37</sup>You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. <sup>38</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan *and* to be your God.”

**25:35-38** These verses continue to emphasize the humanitarian nature of God’s people! It even denies the charging of interest (BDB 675, cf. Exod. 22:25; Deut. 23:20; Ps. 15:5; Pro. 28:8; Ezek. 18:8,13,17) to a fellow covenant partner but one could to a Gentile (cf. Deut. 23:20; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 170-171). The wealthier Israelite was to sustain the poorer one because of God’s care for them both (cf. Lev. 25:38).

**25:36** Leviticus 25:36 cannot be used as a proof text against our modern society’s credit practices. There are dangers in credit but this text does not relate to them specifically! Our concern for our underprivileged fellowman, here fellow covenant partner, is the main idea (cf. Exod. 22:25; Deut. 23:20-21). See *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 151-152.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:39-46**

<sup>39</sup>“If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave’s service. <sup>40</sup>He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. <sup>41</sup>He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. <sup>42</sup>For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold *in* a slave sale. <sup>43</sup>You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God. <sup>44</sup>As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. <sup>45</sup>Then, too, *it is* out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. <sup>46</sup>You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.”

**25:41** “He shall go out from you, he and his sons with him” The freedom of a hired servant also included his family, see Exod. 21:2-4; Deut. 15:12-18 online.

**25:43,46,53** These verses show the priority of people to God. We are responsible in how we treat others (cf. Eph. 6:5-9).

**25:43 “revere your God”** The VERB (BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*) basically means “to fear,” “to respect,” “to stand in awe,” “to honor.” See Special Topic: Fear.

It is used in Leviticus of

1. honor for parents – Lev. 19:3 (cf. Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16)
2. respect for YHWH – Lev. 19:14,32; 25:17,36,43
3. respect for YHWH’s sanctuary – Lev. 19:30; 26:2

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: FEAR (OT)**

#### I. Notes from Genesis 22:12

This term (BDB 431, KB 432) occurs often in the OT in two senses. It can mean “fear” (cf. Gen. 3:10; 18:15; 20:8; 28:17; 32:8; 42:35; 43:18), but in certain contexts it transitions to “awe,” “respect,” or “honor” when describing a human’s attitude toward Deity. Note the following texts: Gen. 42:18; Exod. 1:17; 9:30; 18:21; Lev. 19:14,32; 25:17,36,43; Deut. 6:2,24; 10:12,20; 14:23; 17:19; 25:18; 28:58; 31:12-13; Ps. 33:8. This “fear” should issue in worship and obedience (cf. Exod. 20:20; Deut. 6:13,24; see Special Topic: Keep). It is a lifestyle relationship, not a set of isolated events, places, creeds, or rules. Obedience flows from respect and love, not fear of reprisal. Disobedience is primarily against love, as well as law! One’s relationship with God becomes the priority of life! That “Abraham believed God” (Gen. 15:56) was demonstrated in his life by his actions in Genesis 22.

#### II. Notes from Isaiah 41:10

This is a very common word from YHWH to His people (cf. Isa. 41:13,14; 43:1,5; 44:2,8; 51:7,12; 54:4,14). Notice why they should not fear.

1. YHWH is personally with them (i.e., Ps. 23:4)
2. YHWH is their covenant God (i.e., Gen. 15:1; Exod. 14:13; Jdgs. 6:23; Isa. 41:10)
3. He will strengthen them
4. He will help them (Isa. 41:10,14)
5. He will uphold them (Isa. 41:10,13)
6. all who oppose them will
  - a. be shamed
  - b. be dishonored
  - c. be brought to nothing (Isa. 41:11-12)
  - d. perish

**25:44-46** This shows the OT distinction between fellow Israelites and Gentiles. Yet, still a compassionate attitude is required! Israelites could own Gentile slaves (Exod. 12:44; Lev. 22:11; Eccl. 2:7). They were considered property and could be inherited (Lev. 25:46).

### **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:47-55**

<sup>47</sup>“Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger’s family, <sup>48</sup>then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, <sup>49</sup>or his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself. <sup>50</sup>He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years. *It*

***is like the days of a hired man that he shall be with him. <sup>51</sup>If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own redemption; <sup>52</sup>and if few years remain until the year of jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In proportion to his years he is to refund *the amount for his redemption.* <sup>53</sup>Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight. <sup>54</sup>Even if he is not redeemed by these *means*, he shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him. <sup>55</sup>For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”***

**25:47** This verse emphasized the responsibility of the poor man for his own actions, which may result in slavery to a non-Israelite for a period of time.

**25:55** This shows God’s ownership and expectation of obedience and service from Israel.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. When was this information given to Moses?
2. When was it to take effect?
3. Why does the land have a sabbath rest?
4. How does the concept of God’s ownership and our stewardship affect our daily lives?
5. Can Israelites have a slave?
6. Is there a difference between Hebrew servants and a Gentile slave?
7. Explain the year of Jubilee. Did Israel ever do it?
8. Express in your own words the truth of this chapter in the area of the rights and responsibilities of both the wealthy and the poor.

# LEVITICUS 26

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Blessings for Obedience	Promise of Blessing and Retribution	The Two Ways	Blessings for Obedience	Summary: Conclusion
26:1-13	26:1-2 (1-2)	26:1-2	26:1-2	26:1-2
	26:3-13 (3-13)	26:3-13	26:3-5	Blessings 26:3-5
			26:6-13	26:6-8 26:9 26:10 26:11-13
Penalties of Disobedience			Punishment for Disobedience	Curses
26:14-20	26:14-17 (14-17)	26:14-20	26:14-17	26:14-16a 26:16b-17
	26:18-20 (18-20)		26:18-20	26:18-20
26:21-22	26:21-22 (21-22)	26:21-22	26:21-22	26:21-22
26:23-26	26:23-26 (23-26)	26:23-26	26:23-26	26:23-26
26:27-33	26:27-35 (27-35)	26:27-33	26:27-35	26:27-39
26:34-39		26:34-39		
	26:36-39 (36-39)		26:36-39	
26:40-45	26:40-45 (40-45)	26:40-45	26:40-45	26:40 26:41-42 26:43 26:44-45
26:46	26:46	26:46	26:46	26:46

READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

## BACKGROUND STUDY

- A. Leviticus 26 seems to reflect the structure of Hittite Suzerain treaties of the second millennium B.C. See Special Topic: Hittite (Suzerain) Treaties. The same type of pattern can be seen in the book of Deuteronomy and Joshua 24. The outline of chapter 26 is as follows:
1. the blessings, Lev. 26:1-13
  2. the cursings, Lev. 26:14-39
  3. the possibility of restitution, Lev. 26:40-46
- Blessings and curses connected to law codes were common in the second millennium B.C., but not in the first millennium B.C. This is evidence for the historicity of Moses' authorship. See Special Topic: Moses' Authorship of the Pentateuch at Lev. 1:1b.
- B. The "blessing" and "cursing" pattern is also repeated in Deuteronomy 27-28. Remember, the Mosaic Covenant is a conditional covenant (cf. Exod. 19:5-6; 23:22; see Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13). Blessing follows obedience (see Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d). However, disobedience brings judgment. Actions have consequences in time and eternity (i.e., the Two Ways of Wisdom Literature, cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1; Gal. 6:7).
- C. For an ANE historical perspective on treaty conditions, see D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*, chapter 4, "How Does the Language of Destruction and Blessing Work?" pp. 73-128.
- D. Chapter 26 seems to conclude the book of Leviticus, while chapter 27 is a miscellaneous appendix on vows.

### SPECIAL TOPIC: HITTITE (SUZERIAN) TREATIES

- A. Jeremiah 11:1-13 is a summary of YHWH's activity toward the man Abraham and his seed.
- B. The Hittite treaties of the second millennium B.C. offer us an ancient, historically contemporary parallel to the structure of Deuteronomy (as well as Exodus – Leviticus and Joshua 24). This treaty pattern changed by the first millennium B.C. This gives us evidence for the historicity of the Pentateuch and Joshua. For further reading in this area, see G. E. Mendenhall's *Law and Covenants in Israel and the Ancient Near East* and John Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, pp. 95-107.
- C. The Hittite treaty of the second millennium B.C. and its parallels in Deuteronomy
1. preamble (Deut. 1:1-5, introduction of speaker, YHWH)
  2. review of the past acts of the King (Deut. 1:6-4:49, God's past acts for Israel)
  3. treaty terms (Deuteronomy 5-26)
    - a. general (Deuteronomy 5-11)
    - b. specific (Deuteronomy 12-26)
  4. results of treaty (Deuteronomy 27-29)
    - a. benefits (Deuteronomy 28)
    - b. curses/consequences (Deuteronomy 27)
  5. witness of deity (Deut. 30:19; 31:19, also 32, Moses' son functions as a witness)
    - a. a copy in the temple of the deity
    - b. a copy with the vassal to be read annually

- c. the uniqueness of the Hittite treaties from the later Assyrian and Syrian treaties were:
  - 1) the historical review of the past acts of the king
  - 2) the cursing section was last pronounced
- D. The Hittite treaty pattern of the second millennium and its parallels in Joshua:
  - 1. identification of the King (Jos. 24:1-2)
  - 2. narrative of the King's great acts (Jos. 24:2-13)
  - 3. covenant obligations (Jos. 24:14,23)
  - 4. instructions for depositing the treaty in the sanctuary (Jos. 24:25-26)
  - 5. the deities of the parties involved invoked as witnesses (Jos. 24:22)
  - 6. blessing of fidelity; curses for violation (Jos. 24:20)

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:1-13

**1**“You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a *sacred* pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. **2**You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD. **3**If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, **4**then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. **5**Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. **6**I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making *you* tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. **7**But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; **8**five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. **9**So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. **10**You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. **11**Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. **12**I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. **13**I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that *you* would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.”

**26:1** “**idols**” This verse lists four kinds of idolatry.

- 1. idols (BDB 47, cf. Lev. 19:4)
- 2. image (BDB 820, cf. Exod. 20:4)
- 3. sacred pillar (BDB 663, cf. Exod. 23:24; 34:13)
- 4. figured stones (BDB 67 CONSTRUCT BDB 967, found only here; see PLURAL in Num. 33:52)

The very fact that all of these different types of idolatry are mentioned shows that Israel had been affected by her neighbors even at this early stage. This chapter reflects part of the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod. 20:3-6). They must worship YHWH alone!

▣ **“I am the LORD your God”** This is covenant language, found so often in the Pentateuch. It has the two most common names for Israel's Deity.

- 1. LORD = YHWH, see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Lev. 1:1
- 2. God = *Elohim*, see Special Topic: Names for Deity, C at Lev. 1:1

In this chapter it is repeated in vv. 1, 2, 13, 44, 45.

**26:2 “keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary”** This relates to Exod. 20:7-11. Taking God’s name in vain involved worship at the sanctuary. The VERB “keep” is IMPERFECT but used in an IMPERATIVE sense. See Special Topic: Keep at Lev. 4:2d.

**26:3 “if. . .”** This section shows the conditional and unconditional elements of every Old Testament covenant. God always comes to man with unconditional promises but man is expected to respond in covenant terms (cf. Deuteronomy 27; 28; Joshua 8; 24). It is interesting that the “if. . .then” section of vv. 1-13 is followed by “if you do not. . .” in vv. 14ff. See Special Topic: Covenant at Lev. 2:13.

▣ **“statutes. . .commandments”** See Special Topic: Terms for God’s Revelation at Lev. 4:2c.

**26:4-13** This is the “blessing” component of the Mosaic Covenant.

1. rain in its season for abundant crops, Lev. 26:4-5,10; Deut. 28:12
2. security in your land, Lev. 26:5-6
  - a. invaders, Lev. 26:7-8
  - b. wild beasts
3. health and growth of the people, Lev. 26:9
4. security with YHWH’s presence, Lev. 26:11-13
  - a. YHWH will dwell with them, Lev. 26:11a
  - b. YHWH will not reject them, Lev. 26:11b
  - c. YHWH will walk among them, Lev. 26:12
5. YHWH’s past acts reveal
  - a. His character is gracious
  - b. His power is unstoppable
  - c. His promises are sure

**26:4 “I will give you rains in their seasons”** YHWH was always the giver of agricultural blessings but somehow the Israelis began worshipping *Ba’al* as the source of fertility. See Special Topic: Fertility Worship in the ANE at Lev. 19:29-30.

**26:5** This verse is imagery to express an abundant crop. Before one harvest time is finished another will start.

**26:6 “peace”** See Special Topic: Peace (*shalom*) at Lev. 3:1.

**26:8 “five”** This is not normally a symbolic number. See NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 190-191.

**26:9 “I will confirm My covenant with you”** The VERB (BDB 877, KB 1086, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*) basically means “to arise,” “to stand up,” but in the *Hiphil* it takes on the meaning “to establish” or “to ratify” (cf. Gen. 6:18; 9:9,11; 17:19,21; Exod. 6:4; Ezek. 16:62).

**26:11 “I will make My dwelling among you. . .I will also walk among you”** The greatest promise that God can give is His presence (cf. Exod. 25:8). This was symbolically represented by the Tabernacle and particularly the ark of the covenant. See Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant at Lev. 3:1d.

The uncial MS B and the LXX have “covenant” instead of “tabernacle with” or “dwelling place.”



NASB, NJB “reject”  
 NKJV, NRSV,  
 LXX, Peshitta “abhor”  
 TEV “turn away from”  
 JPSOA, REB “spurn”

The MT has the VERB “abhor” or “loathe” (BDB 171, KB 199, *Qal* IMPERFECT). This word occurs several times in this chapter.

1. YHWH’s rejection of His people, Lev. 26:11,30,44
2. Israel’s rejection of Him, Lev. 26:15,43

The Hebrew root can denote (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 883):

1. consider something or someone as “dung”
2. consider something or someone as “spoiled food”; the same imagery (i.e., different root, BDB 596, KB 628) is found twice in Lev. 26:39 (i.e., “rot”)

▣ **“My soul”** This is *nephesh* (BDB 659). See full note online at Ezek. 18:4.

**26:12 “I will walk among you”** This is literally “walk to and fro” (BDB 229, KB 246, *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*).

This idiom is also found in this same form in Gen. 3:8, for God’s presence in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve before the fall.

The VERB “walk” is also found in the *Qal* stem several times (Lev. 26:3,21,23,24,27,28,40,41).

1. “walk” as lifestyle obedience, Lev. 26:3 (used of the Patriarch’s walk of faith in Gen. 5:22,24; 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15)
2. “walk” as imagery of YHWH’s presence (i.e., Gen. 3:8), Lev. 26:12 (cf. Deut. 23:4)
3. act with hostility toward YHWH, Lev. 26:21,23,24,27,28,40,41

▣ **“and be your God, and you shall be My people”** This is covenant terminology (cf. Gen. 17:7; 26:24; Exod. 6:7; Jer. 7:23; 11:4). Israel was YHWH’s special people (cf. Exod. 19:5-6; 1 Kgs. 8:51-53).

**26:13 “who brought you out of the land of Egypt”** This is a regular part of Hittite Suzerain treaties where the historical acts were given of the king who was making the covenant. The exodus was God’s great act of grace to the Hebrew people (cf. Gen. 15:12-22). See Special Topic: Hittite (Suzerain) Treaties after chapter 26 Contextual Insights.

▣ **“made you walk erect”** This is an idiom for slaves walking with heads up, as free people. No longer are they bent over under the yoke of slavery.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:14-20**

<sup>14</sup>“But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, <sup>15</sup>if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, *and* so break My covenant, <sup>16</sup>I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. <sup>17</sup>I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. <sup>18</sup>If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. <sup>19</sup>I will also break down your pride of power; I will also



**make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. <sup>20</sup>Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.”**

**26:14-39** These are the negative consequences related to covenant disobedience (i.e., Lev. 26:14-15).

1. YHWH will give them
  - a. sudden terror (cf. Ps. 78:33; Isa. 65:23; Jer. 15:8)
  - b. consumption (only here and Deut. 28:22)
  - c. fever (only here and Deut. 28:22)
    - (1) affect the eyes
    - (2) cause the soul to pine away
2. their enemies will occupy their land and eat their crops (cf. Deut. 28:22,27)
3. they will be struck down by their enemies
4. YHWH uses the idiom of “punish you seven times more for your sins” (cf. Lev. 26:18,21,24,25; see Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4, at Lev. 4:6)
5. YHWH will destroy their pride
  - a. no rain, Lev. 26:19 (cf. Deut. 28:12,23-24)
  - b. no crops, Lev. 26:20
6. YHWH sends a plague, Lev. 26:21 (cf. Deut. 28:61)
7. YHWH will loose the wild beasts, Lev. 26:22 (opposite of Ps. 107:38)
  - a. kill children
  - b. kill livestock
8. the land given to them by YHWH will be taken by invaders
9. Israeli cities will be besieged and pestilence will result (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 915, suggests “bubonic plague” because of 1 Samuel 5-6)
10. YHWH will take away their agricultural blessing
11. Israelis besieged in cities will eat their own children, Lev. 26:29 (cf. Deut. 28:53-57)
12. Israeli idolatry (Lev. 26:1) will be completely destroyed, Lev. 26:30-32
13. Israelis will be taken into captivity, Lev. 26:33 (cf. Deut. 28:36-37, 63-64)
14. the few who remain
  - a. YHWH brings weakness to their hearts, Lev. 26:36
  - b. they are terrified and skittish
  - c. they will “rot away” (BDB 596, KB 628, twice)

**26:18,21,23,27 “If also after these things”** The judgments listed here which would fall upon God’s people were meant to be disciplinary, not just punitive (cf. Heb. 12:5ff). He wants them to repent and return (cf. Lev. 26:40-45).

### **26:19**

**NASB, NRSV,**

**NJB, REB** “sky”

**NKJV, Peshitta** “heavens”

This is the Hebrew word “heavens” (BDB 1029). It was viewed as a hard dome over the earth. See Special Topic: Heaven (OT). It had windows to let out rain or to store it up.

A good parallel to this imagery is Deut. 28:23; no rain, no plowing.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: HEAVEN (OT)**

The Hebrew term (BDB 1029, KB 1559, translated “heaven,” “sky,” “firmament,” “air”) can refer to several things (i.e., a series of domes or spheres of initial creation):

1. In Gen. 1:8-20 it refers to the atmosphere above the earth where clouds move and birds fly.
2. This dome (cf. Gen. 1:6,20; Isa. 40:22; 42:5) above the earth is where God sends the rain (i.e., “windows of heaven,” cf. Ps. 78:23-29; Mal. 3:10 or “the water jars of heaven,” cf. Job 38:37).
3. This dome is where the stars dwell and planets move. It could refer to all the created cosmos (billions and billions of galaxies).
4. Above this dome is the abode of God (i.e., the third or seventh heaven; see Special Topic: The Heavens and the Third Heaven). It is the highest heaven (e.g., Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27,30,32; Ps. 2:4; 148:4; Isa. 66:1).
5. The theological emphases
  - a. God is the creator of everything.
  - b. He controls creation (i.e., light and dark, rain and drought).
  - c. He creates and places the heavenly lights (sun, moon, stars, planets, comets).
  - d. There are spheres or realms of reality:
    - 1) earth
    - 2) above the earth
    - 3) invisible/angelic (cf. Col. 1:16)
    - 4) God’s presence and abode
  - e. they are all connected and controlled by His will

## **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:21-22**

<sup>21</sup>“If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. <sup>22</sup>I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.”

**26:21 “walk”** This is biblical imagery for lifestyle attitudes and actions (cf. Lev. 26:21,23,24,27,28,40,41).

## **NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:23-26**

<sup>23</sup>“And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, <sup>24</sup>then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. <sup>25</sup>I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. <sup>26</sup>When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.”

**26:23** This verse clearly shows that the purpose of YHWH’s judgments is restoration. YHWH desires a people who reflect His character to a pagan world.

**26:25-26** In the OT there are three things that YHWH sends as judgment (i.e., 1 Chr. 21:11-12; 2 Chr. 20:9).

1. the sword (i.e., warfare, invasion)

2. pestilence (i.e., disease normally from a siege)
3. famine (no stored foodstuffs, nor growing crops, cf. Ps. 105:16)

Often the “wild beasts” are mentioned as returning!

**26:26 “staff of bread”** In the OT, this Hebrew NOUN (BDB 641), which means a part of a tree from which a staff, rod, or scepter is made, has several meanings.

1. a way of referring to a tribe
2. Moses’ shepherd staff or rod, which was a symbol of YHWH’s power
3. Aaron’s tribal banner pole
4. a metaphor for that which the outstretched arm gives; here it refers to bread rations (cf. Ps. 105:16; Ezek. 4:16; 5:16; 14:13)
5. scepter (cf. Ezek. 19:11)
6. wooden carrier of bread (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 38)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:27-33**

**<sup>27</sup>“Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, <sup>28</sup>then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. <sup>29</sup>Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. <sup>30</sup>I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. <sup>31</sup>I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. <sup>32</sup>I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. <sup>33</sup>You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.”**

**26:29 “you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters”** This refers to siege warfare where cannibalism and disease were rampant (cf. 2 Kgs. 6:28-29; Lam. 2:20).

**26:30 “high places”** This is the characteristic place of *Ba’al* worship (cf. Hos. 4:11-14; Jer. 3:6-10). Connected with the uplifted stone, which was the symbol of *Ba’al*, was also either a live, planted tree or a carved stake which was a symbol of *Ashtoreth* (cf. Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:21). We also learn from this chapter about the incense altars which were connected with the *Ba’al* altars (cf. 2 Chr. 34:4,7). See Special Topic: Fertility Worship in the ANE at Lev. 19:29-30.

▣ **“My soul shall abhor you”** This chapter must be viewed in anthropomorphic terms. The author is attributing human emotions to Deity. See Special Topic: Anthropomorphic Language to Describe Deity at Lev. 25:24-25.

Notice the number of “I’s” in this chapter (similar to Ezek. 36:22-36).

**26:31 “I will not smell your soothing aromas”** This is a metaphor of God receiving their sacrifices. As the smoke from the altar arose it went symbolically before God. See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Lev. 1:9b.

**26:32-33** This is a specific reference to the exile, which would occur if they practiced the same abomination as the Canaanites did (cf. Gen. 15:12-22). We know from history that this is exactly what happened to the northern ten tribes by Assyria in 722 B.C. and to Judah by Babylon in 586 B.C.

26:32 One VERB (BDB 1030, KB 1663) is used in two senses.

1. *Hiphil* = “be desolate”
2. *Qal* = “be appalled”

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:34-39**

<sup>34</sup>“Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. <sup>35</sup>All the days of *its* desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. <sup>36</sup>As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. <sup>37</sup>They will therefore stumble over each other as if *running* from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have *no strength* to stand up before your enemies. <sup>38</sup>But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies’ land will consume you. <sup>39</sup>So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.”

26:34-35 Notice the personification of the land of Canaan. It will enjoy the sabbaths promised it in chapter 25 (cf. the JUSSIVE of “pleased” [??] in Lev. 26:43).

26:36-37 There are two possible groups: (1) those who remained in the land and (2) those who remain alive in exile.

26:39 There are two very specific reasons why exile and fear will come upon the people of God.

1. because of their iniquity
2. because of their fathers’ iniquity

This same dichotomy is also represented in Lev. 26:40. Confession will involve personal sin as well as corporate sin.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:40-45**

<sup>40</sup>“If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— <sup>41</sup>I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, <sup>42</sup>then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. <sup>43</sup>For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. <sup>44</sup>Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. <sup>45</sup>But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.”

26:40 “If” The Hebrew text does not have the conditional textual marker (but there is, in 26:41), but there is an obvious contrast between Lev. 26:14-39 and 26:40-45.

However, the JPSOA starts a new paragraph at verse 39 (Lev. 26:39-42). It assumes the necessary repentance is expected, not conditional.

▣ “confess” This VERB (BDB 392, KB 389, *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*) has two connotations in this stem.

1. confess sin
  - a. connected to guilt offering, Lev. 5:5; Num. 5:2
  - b. High Priest on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16:2
  - c. leaders confess corporate sin
    - (1) Hezekiah (without using this stem) – 2 Chronicles 29
    - (2) Daniel – Dan. 9:3,4,20
    - (3) Ezra – Ezra 10:1
    - (4) Nehemiah – Neh. 9:2
2. give thanks – 2 Chr. 30:22

The *Hiphil* stem is used in Solomon’s great prayer for the dedication of the Temple in 1 Kgs. 8:33,35; 2 Chr. 6:24,26; also note Ps. 32:5. Here, this confession of sin is a prerequisite for forgiveness and restoration.

The Greek term has a similar usage. See Special Topic: Confession/Profession at Lev. 5:5 and Special Topic: Repentance (OT) at Lev. 10:11 and Repentance (NT).

### SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE (NT)

Repentance (along with faith) is a covenant requirement of both the Old Covenant (*Nacham*, BDB 636, KB 688, e.g., 13:12; 32:12,14; *Shub*, BDB 996, KB 1427, e.g., 1 Kgs. 8:47; Ezek. 14:6; 18:30; see Special Topic: Repentance [OT]) and the New Covenant.

1. John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3,8)
2. Jesus (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3,5; 15:7; 17:3)
4. Peter (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 2 Pet. 3:9)
5. Paul (Acts 13:24; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 2:9-10)

But what is repentance? Is it spiritual sorrow? Is it a cessation of sinning? The best place in the NT for understanding the different connotations of this concept is 2 Corinthians 7:8-11, where three related, but different, Greek terms are used.

1. “sorrow” (*lupeō*, cf. 2 Cor. 7:8 [twice], 9 [thrice], 10 [twice], 11). It means grief or distress and has a theologically neutral connotation.
2. “repentance” (*metanoēō*, cf. 2 Cor. 7:9,10). It is a compound of “after” and “mind,” which implies a new mind, a new way of thinking, a new attitude toward life and God. This is true repentance.
3. “regret” (*metamelomai*, cf. 2 Cor. 7:8 [twice], 10). It is a compound of “after” and “care.” It is used of Judas in Matt. 27:3 and Esau in Heb. 12:16-17. It implies sorrow over the consequences, not over the acts.

Repentance and faith are the required covenant acts (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38,41; 3:16,19; 20:21). There are some texts which imply that God gives repentance (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). But most of the texts see this as a necessary human covenantal response to God’s offer of a free salvation.

The definitions of both the Hebrew and Greek terms are required to grasp the full meaning of repentance. The Hebrew term demands “a change of action,” while the Greek term demands “a change of mind.” The saved person receives a new mind and heart (cf. Ezek. 36:26-27). He thinks differently and lives differently. Instead of “What’s in it for me?” the question is now “What is God’s will?” Repentance is not an emotion that fades or a total sinlessness, but a new relationship with the Holy One that transforms

the believer progressively into a holy one. It is not so much what one ceases doing or gives up but a new focus or direction in life. The Fall causes us all to face self, but the gospel allows us to face God. Repentance is the turning from and faith is the turning to!

▣	
NASB, NKJV	“unfaithfulness”
NRSV, REB	“treachery”
TEV	“rebelled against”
NJB	“infidelities”
JPSOA	“trespassed”

This is the Hebrew NOUN “unfaithful” or “treacherous act” (BDB 591 I; cf. Josh. 22:22; 1 Chr. 9:1; 2 Chr. 29:19; 23:19; Ezra 9:2,4; 10:6). YHWH’s great love and mercy toward Israel magnifies their rebellion against Him! They were a “stiff-necked” people (cf. Exod. 32:9; 33:3,5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6,13; Acts 7:51).

**26:41 “if their uncircumcised heart”** Circumcision became a symbol for that which is dedicated to God, therefore, in the Old Testament, there is the uncircumcised heart (cf. Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4), lip (cf. Exod. 6:12,20), and ear (cf. Jer. 6:10). Here, it became a metaphor for humbleness and openness toward God (i.e., 2 Chr. 7:14).

**26:42 “I will remember My covenant with Jacob”** Here we have an affirmation of God going back to His original covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 (cf. Lev. 26:45). It was the original covenant whose stipulations guided God’s dealing with the people of God. When God speaks His words can be trusted. His promises are unconditional (i.e., His redemption plan for all humans), but they are conditional on every individual and generation responding to them appropriately. See Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Lev. 11:44.

**26:45 “in the sight of the nations”** It must be remembered that Israel was to be a kingdom of priests to bring all of the world to God (cf. Exod. 19:4-5). The people of the world knew of God from Israel but the problem was that when Israel sinned, God was revealed only in judgment and not in love and blessing. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan at Lev. 11:44d.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:46**

**<sup>46</sup>These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.**

**26:46** The covenant originated with a sovereign God, but it was a conditional covenant!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Lev. 26:1 reflect Exodus 20?
2. Why was Israel's idolatry so theologically significant?
3. Explain the significance of the four "My's" in Lev. 26:2-3.
4. How is Leviticus 26 related to Hittite treaties? How does this help us date Moses' writings?
5. Explain the theological significance of the VERB in Lev. 26:11a.
6. Explain why the "if's" in this chapter are so significant.
7. Can humans break YHWH's covenant? (Lev. 26:15)
8. Explain the idiom "My face" in Lev. 26:17.
9. Do the prophets use the material in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28?
10. What does "the land will enjoy its sabbaths" mean? (Lev. 26:34)
11. To whom does Lev. 26:36 refer?
12. Why is Lev. 26:40-45 so theologically significant?
13. How does Lev. 26:42 relate to Genesis?

# LEVITICUS 27

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Rules Concerning Valuations	Redeeming Persons and Property Dedicated to God	An Appendix Dealing with Religious Vows	Laws Concerning Gifts to God	Appendix: Tariffs and Valuations
27:1-8	27:1-8	27:1-8	27:1-7	a. Persons 27:1-2 27:3-4 27:5 27:6 27:7 27:8
27:9-13	27:9-13	27:9-13	27:9-13	b. Animals 27:9-13
27:14-15	27:14-15	27:14-15	27:14-15	c. Houses 27:14-15
27:16-25	27:16-25	27:16-25	27:16-21	d. Fields 27:16 27:17-18 27:19-21 27:22-25
27:26-27	27:26-27	27:26-27	27:26-27	Particular Rules for Redemption a. of the firstborn 27:26-27
27:28-33	27:28-33	27:28-29 27:30-33	27:28-29 27:30-33	b. of things vowed unconditionally 27:28-29 27:30-31 27:32-33
27:34	27:34	27:34	27:34	27:34

### READING CYCLE THREE (from "[A Guide to Good Bible Reading](#)")

#### CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Brief outline of Leviticus 27
  - 1. the monetary evaluation of vows concerning:
    - a. human beings, Lev. 27:1-8
    - b. animals, Lev. 27:9-14



- c. possessions, Lev. 27:14-24
    - (1) houses
    - (2) fields
  - d. things that belong to God
    - (1) firstborn of animals, Lev. 27:26-27
    - (2) tithes, Lev. 27:30-34
  - e. special category of vows called the *harem* (i.e., under the ban, Joshua 6-7), Lev. 27:28-29
- B. This chapter is contextually related to chapter 25, especially the sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee, in how a priest should evaluate the monetary value of a gift.
- C. The best outline, of the translations whose paragraphing is compared, is the NJB.
- D. There are several items taken into consideration when “evaluating” gifts to the sanctuary.
1. time to the year of Jubilee
  2. the age of the persons giving themselves for service
  3. the sex of the persons giving themselves for service
  4. the social status of the person forced into service
- E. In Israel vows were very important and highly regulated (cf. Lev. 7:16; 22:18-23; 23:38; Num. 30:3-16; Deut. 12:6-12; 23:19-24; Pro. 7:14; 20:25; Eccl. 5:1-7). In this chapter Israelites are instructed on how to give these freewill gifts and how the priest should evaluate their worth. Leviticus 27:30-33 are not voluntary.

## WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

### NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:1-8

<sup>1</sup>Again, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man makes a difficult vow, he *shall be valued* according to your valuation of persons belonging to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>If your valuation is of the male from twenty years even to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. <sup>4</sup>Or if it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels. <sup>5</sup>If it be from five years even to twenty years old then your valuation for the male shall be twenty shekels and for the female ten shekels. <sup>6</sup>But if *they are* from a month even up to five years old, then your valuation shall be five shekels of silver for the male, and for the female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. <sup>7</sup>If *they are* from sixty years old and upward, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. <sup>8</sup>But if he is poorer than your valuation, then he shall be placed before the priest and the priest shall value him; according to the means of the one who vowed, the priest shall value him.”

**27:2 “When a man makes a difficult vow”** This “vow” is not a typical promise to God but the monetary worth of the period of the agreement of service for a particular number of years.

The same VERB (BDB 810, KB 927, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is used of a “Nazirite vow” in Num. 6:2.

The word translated “difficult” is one connotation of the word for “extraordinary” or “wonderful.” See Special Topic: Wonderful Things (OT).

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: WONDERFUL THINGS (OT)**

This word (BDB 810, KB 927) denotes actions that humans cannot accomplish themselves or can even explain, acts which cause wonder and awe (cf. Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17,27; Zech. 8:6).

### The VERB

1. the Exodus, Exod. 3:20; 34:10; Mic. 7:15
2. plagues, Deut. 28:59
3. crossing of Jordan, Jos. 3:5
4. past events of God, Jdgs. 6:13; 1 Chr. 16:9,12,24; Neh. 9:17
5. birth of Samson, Jdgs. 13:19
6. David's love for Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26
7. often in Job, 5:9; 9:10; 10:16; 37:5,14; 42:3
8. thirty-two times in the Psalms
9. YHWH's counsel, Isa. 28:29
10. YHWH's acts, Isa. 29:14 (twice); Joel 2:26

### The NOUN

1. the Exodus, Exod. 15:11; Ps. 77:11,14; 78:12
2. in relation to the dead, Ps. 88:10,12
3. heaven praises YHWH's acts, Ps. 89:5
4. YHWH's laws, Ps. 119:129
5. YHWH's Messiah, Isa. 9:6
6. YHWH's acts, Isa. 25:1; 29:14
7. end-time actions, Dan. 12:6

God acts in powerful, redemptive ways to reveal Himself to His highest creation (mankind). He wants them to know Him and trust Him. His acts are revelation, the recording of those acts is inspiration, and the understanding of those acts is illumination. YHWH wants the world to know Him!

See the following Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Know
2. Special Topic: Inspiration
3. Special Topic: Illumination



**NASB, NKJV,**

**REB** "valuation"

**NRSV, JPSOA** "equivalent"

**TEV** "the official standard"

**NJB, LXX** "value"

**Peshitta** "price"

This NOUN (BDB 789) relates to the estimated price of something.

1. a person for service, Lev. 27:2-8
2. an animal to sacrifice, Lev. 5:15,18,25
3. a field to sell
4. priest's portion of sacrifices, Num. 18:1-13 (for "firstborn," Lev. 27:15-20)

**27:3 “the male”** The evaluation of a male depended on

1. his age (Lev. 27:5,7)
2. the time to the Sabbath Year or Year of Jubilee
3. social status (Lev. 27:8)

These values also relate to women (Lev. 27:4) and children (27:6). This evaluation had to do with how much work that person could perform.

▣ **“the shekel of the sanctuary”** There were many different kinds of weights of metal in the ANE. This particular shekel is defined by its equivalent in Babylonian *gerahs* (cf. Num. 30:13). See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:9-13**

<sup>9</sup>“Now if it is an animal of the kind which men can present as an offering to the LORD, any such that one gives to the LORD shall be holy. <sup>10</sup>He shall not replace it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; or if he does exchange animal for animal, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. <sup>11</sup>If, however, it is any unclean animal of the kind which men do not present as an offering to the LORD, then he shall place the animal before the priest. <sup>12</sup>The priest shall value it as either good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. <sup>13</sup>But if he should ever *wish* to redeem it, then he shall add one-fifth of it to your valuation.”

**27:10,33 “He shall not replace it or exchange it”** One supposed reason for the writing of this chapter is to show that that which is consecrated to God should not be taken back. However, if it is taken back, a fifth part had to be added to it (cf. Lev. 27:13,19,27,31). Some things could not be exchanged at all (cf. Lev. 27:10,33). Also, that which was not treated properly became the full property of the priests at the year of jubilee (cf. Lev. 27:20-21).

**27:10** The word translated “exchange” by NASB (BDB 558, KB 560) is used six times in this chapter (vv. 10,33).

1. the IMPERFECT
2. the IMPERFECT with the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root

Some offerings could not be substituted or redeemed (cf. Leviticus 27:13,19; see Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem at Lev. 19:20b).

**27:11 “any unclean animal”** See Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

**27:12** The priest’s evaluation of the monetary worth of a person, animal, field, or house was final (cf. Lev. 27:12,14,17,27d). YHWH knew humans would argue over the value of people, animals, and property.

**27:13** If a person wants to exchange or substitute one animal for another he must add one-fifth more of value (cf. Lev. 27:13,15,19,31).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:14-15**

<sup>14</sup>“Now if a man consecrates his house as holy to the LORD, then the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. <sup>15</sup>Yet if the one who consecrates it should *wish* to redeem his house, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may be his.”

**27:14-15** This was a special gift to YHWH (cf. Lev. 27:21, “set apart,” BDB 356 I).

1. joy at answered vow (cf. Numbers 30; Deut. 23:21-23; Pro. 20:25; Eccl. 5:5)
2. sense of YHWH’s goodness
3. beneficial circumstances of life

This kind of gift is what Jesus accused

1. the Pharisees of exploiting (cf. Matt. 23:14)
2. Israelites (Matt. 15:5-6; Mark 7:11-13)

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:16-25**

<sup>16</sup>“Again, if a man consecrates to the LORD part of the fields of his own property, then your valuation shall be proportionate to the seed needed for it: a homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver. <sup>17</sup>If he consecrates his field as of the year of jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. <sup>18</sup>If he consecrates his field after the jubilee, however, then the priest shall calculate the price for him proportionate to the years that are left until the year of jubilee; and it shall be deducted from your valuation. <sup>19</sup>If the one who consecrates it should ever wish to redeem the field, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may pass to him. <sup>20</sup>Yet if he will not redeem the field, but has sold the field to another man, it may no longer be redeemed; <sup>21</sup>and when it reverts in the jubilee, the field shall be holy to the LORD, like a field set apart; it shall be for the priest as his property. <sup>22</sup>Or if he consecrates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not a part of the field of his own property, <sup>23</sup>then the priest shall calculate for him the amount of your valuation up to the year of jubilee; and he shall on that day give your valuation as holy to the LORD. <sup>24</sup>In the year of jubilee the field shall return to the one from whom he bought it, to whom the possession of the land belongs. <sup>25</sup>Every valuation of yours, moreover, shall be after the shekel of the sanctuary. The shekel shall be twenty gerahs.”

**27:16** Land was evaluated by the amount of seed

1. it took to sow it
2. yielded, which fits v. 30’s use of seed better (NIC, OT, Gordon Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 340, #8; and Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 168)

A specific price is given to a homer of barley.

**27:17 “the year of jubilee”** In Leviticus 25, “the year of jubilee” (every 50 years) is defined as that year in which the land reverts to its original owner (Lev. 27:24) and all slaves go free. From the history of the Old Testament, we do not have one account of either the Day of Atonement or the Year of Jubilee being observed.

**27:20-21 “Yet if he will not redeem the field”** An Israelite was expected to redeem his vowed field before the year of jubilee. If he did not do this, the land at jubilee reverted to the priests as a full and permanent possession (Lev. 27:21).

**27:25 “shekel. . .gerahs”** See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Lev. 5:15c.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:26-27**

<sup>26</sup>“However, a firstborn among animals, which as a firstborn belongs to the LORD, no man may consecrate it; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD’s. <sup>27</sup>But if *it is* among the unclean animals, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation and add to it one-fifth of it; and if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation.”

**27:26 “a firstborn among animals”** This verse deals with that which already belongs to God (cf. Exod. 13:2; 22:28-29; 34:19-20), therefore, it could not be dedicated to God, unless it was an unclean animal.

**27:27 “the unclean animals”** Although unclean animals could not be offered on the altar, they could still be given to God (cf. Exod. 34:20).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:28-33**

<sup>28</sup>“Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most holy to the LORD. <sup>29</sup>No one who may have been set apart among men shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death. <sup>30</sup>Thus all the tithes of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S; it is holy to the LORD. <sup>31</sup>If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. <sup>32</sup>For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. <sup>33</sup>He is not to be concerned whether *it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; or if he does exchange it, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. It shall not be redeemed.*”

**27:28-29** This deals with a very special kind of ban called the *herem* (cf. Lev. 27:21; usually things or animals or persons taken in battle, cf. Deut. 7:2; 20:17; 1 Sam. 15:3). It was something that was dedicated to God and became “holy” to such a degree that it could not be used by human beings ever again (i.e., Jericho of Joshua 6). Notice that someone who tried to ransom this or use it was worthy of the death penalty (cf. Lev. 27:29, cf. Joshua 7:19-21,25).

**27:30 “all the tithes of the land”** All the tithes belonged to the Lord but this seems to deal with the special case possibly delineated in Deut. 14:22-27. There are either two or three tithes in Israel (see footnote in NASB Study Bible, p. 172). The two tithes would be: one every year for the Levites (cf. Num. 18:21-29; Deut. 12:6-7; 14:22-27) and one every three years for the local poor (cf. Deut. 14:28-29). Some divide this into three categories making Numbers a separate tithe from Deuteronomy 14. See Special Topic: Tithing at Lev. 19:24 and Special Topic: Tithing in the Mosaic Legislation at Lev. 19:24.

**27:32-33** Flocks were counted when they were let out of the pen. The shepherds counted them as they passed under his outstretched staff (cf. Jer. 33:13).

The point of this paragraph is that every tenth one belonged to YHWH, whether it was a very good animal or a weak one. The shepherd could not exchange animals (see negative example in Mal. 1:13-14).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:34**

<sup>34</sup>**These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.**

**27:34** Leviticus was given to Moses by YHWH on Mt. Sinai (cf. Lev. 1:1; 7:38; 26:46; 27:34).

▣ **“Mount Sinai”** See Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai at Lev. 7:38.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is chapter 27 thought to be an appendix to Leviticus?
2. Are all of the gifts to the sanctuary voluntary in Leviticus 27?
3. What was the “standard” process for someone to redeem his gift?
4. How do the Sabbath Year and Year of Jubilee fit into the evaluation process?
5. Are the “firstborn” and “tithe” gifts or requirements?
6. Explain the difference between “a gift” and “a ban.”
7. Explain Lev. 27:28-29 in your own words.
8. What does “pass under the rod” mean?