



LEVITICUS

FOR BEGINNERS

TRAINING FOR HOLINESS

MIKE MAZZALONGO

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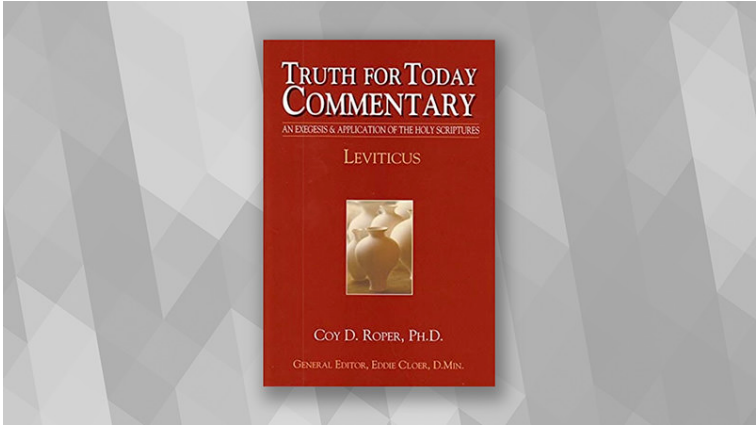
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1. Critical Introduction of Leviticus

The book of Leviticus is probably the least read or taught book in the church. Now, there is a reason for this, several I believe.

1. It is difficult to understand and relate to life today.
2. Many of the rituals and regulations found in it are not meant for Christians, so why study them?
3. The style of writing is repetitive and challenging so reading the book is difficult and simply becomes a necessary chore in the process of reading the Bible from beginning to end.



In preparing for this class, I relied on various resources but one commentary that was extremely helpful was the: **Truth for Today Commentary – Leviticus by Coy D. Roper**. This set of commentaries on the 66 books of the Bible are all well written and edited by scholars affiliated with the Churches of Christ. I highly recommend this series for reading and Bible study.

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I. Critical Introduction to the Book of Leviticus

Before we study the actual text, it is always helpful to do a "critical introduction" of the book – things like author, time, reason for writing, relationship to other parts of the Bible, theme, and outline, so we can establish context and purpose to better understand what the book is about and why it was written in the first place.

A. Pentateuch – Greek word meaning five books

This term (in the Greek language - five) was used to refer to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew language, these first five books were referred to as the *Torah*:

- The original meaning of the word *Torah* was – teaching, guidance, direction, or law.
- Eventually the word was exclusively used to refer to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.
- This is why the Jews often referred to these books as the books of the Law, or the *Torah*.

There were five books, and each had a particular focus in telling the story concerning the beginning of the relationship between God and His chosen people. For example:

1. Genesis

- a) God brings the creation into being.
- b) The need for salvation arises as a result of Adam's sin.
- c) God's plan for salvation is initiated through Abraham's family.

2. Exodus

- a) Abraham's family becomes the nation of Israel through its miraculous liberation from Egyptian slavery.
- b) God makes a covenant with the Israelites to be their God and they, His people.
- c) God anoints a leader, provides a law as well as religious elements to maintain an exclusive relationship with His chosen people.

3. **Leviticus**

- a) God provides a religious system and practice to cultivate the attitude and virtue of holiness among His people.
- b) God is holy and He requires that His people be holy, as well, in order to dwell in His presence.

4. **Numbers**

- a) God's people are identified and numbered.
- b) Israel fails to keep God's statutes.
- c) God, by grace, brings His people into the Promised Land.

5. **Deuteronomy**

- a) Israel is exhorted by Moses to keep all of God's laws in the future in order to be a holy nation and thus remain as God's people.

A summary of all five books is found in the book of Exodus as God addresses His people through Moses, the leader God has put over them.

³ Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

- Exodus 19:3-6

The book of Leviticus contains the system of sacrifice used in the practice of the Jewish religion. This taught them the meaning and ways to exercise and cultivate the virtue of holiness required of God's people.

B. Name - Leviticus

In the Hebrew Bible the name of each of the first five books is derived from the first word in the Hebrew text of each book. The book of Leviticus, therefore, was originally named after the first word of the text, *WAYYIQRÁ* = "...and He called out." (Leviticus 1:1) "Then the Lord called out to Moses..."

The present name, "Leviticus" comes from the Septuagint (70), which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament produced in 250 B.C. During that period, the Greek culture was so influential that many Jews became Hellenized, no longer able to speak or read the Hebrew language. In the third century B.C. Jewish scholars were given the task of translating the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The work was eventually finished in the second century B.C.

Some claim that there were actually 72 scholars used, 6 for each of the tribes of Israel. In the end, the translation was referred to using the Roman numerals LXX, which is the number 70 (a reference to the number of Jewish scholars used to translate the work). The Greek name given to the third book in the series (Leviticus) meant: pertaining to the Levites.

The Levites were one of the twelve tribes of Israel and the tribe from which both Moses and Aaron came. In Exodus 40:12 God tells Moses to anoint his brother, Aaron, as High Priest and his sons as priests. From this moment on, therefore, the role of High priest was only open to direct descendants of Aaron's family.

In Exodus 32:26 the tribe of Levi stood with Moses to put down a rebellion and God rewarded them with the task of caring for and moving the Tabernacle complex and furnishings while they were in the desert. Later on, when the people settled in the promised land and the Temple was built replacing the Tabernacle as the place of worship, the Levites were again charged with its maintenance and protection.

Therefore, the priests were all descended from Aaron's family who were part of the tribe of Levi. All of the caretakers of the Tabernacle and Temple were descended from other families in the tribe of Levi. Because of this special work, the Levites did not receive a tract of land for their own possession as the other tribes received, instead God gave them 48 cities to live in which were scattered throughout Israel. They also received a portion of the gifts and sacrifices brought by the people for the priests to sacrifice.

The book that bears their name (Leviticus) is a book full of laws whose purpose was to reveal God to His people and teach them what was required to be holy – what God wanted from His special people then and now.

C. Author

The book of Leviticus does not name its author except to say the laws contained in it were originally given to Moses by God, and he was to give them to the Israelites.

¹ Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ^{2a} "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them,"
- Leviticus 1:1-2a

Moses, therefore, has traditionally been credited with writing not only the book of Leviticus but all five books of the Pentateuch or Torah. There are many passages that say Moses wrote down the Laws and events found in the Pentateuch (i.e. Exodus 17:14; Numbers 33:1; Deuteronomy 3:19). There are also passages in the New Testament that claim the same fact, that Moses wrote the Books of the Law (i.e. Matthew 19:8; Mark 12:26; John 1:45; Romans 10:5);

DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

JULIUS WELLHAUSEN (1844-1918)

The Documentary Hypothesis was a liberal view which held that rather by than a single author (Moses), the Pentateuch was put together over a period of centuries by unknown editors (redactors) from a number of written sources which themselves were derived from various oral traditions. Wellhausen claimed that the Pentateuch's final form was derived from four major documents:

1. Document J – for *YEHWIST* (or *JEHOVAH*)
2. Document E – for *ELOHIST*
3. Document D – for Deuteronomist
4. Document P – for Priestly

Briefly stated, the Documentary Hypothesis gives Moses credit for recording the Law in Exodus 20, but claims that the majority of the material written in the Pentateuch comes from sources other than Moses:

- All of these patched together over the centuries by unknown editors.
- The prophets
- Written material from the time of the Jews' exile in Babylon
- Various codes of holiness contained in ancient manuscripts

The Documentary Hypothesis is a weak argument because:

- a. There is little evidence supporting the claim that the Pentateuch was written over centuries by many authors.
- b. In order to accept this hypothesis, one must reject God's role in the production and preservation of the material.
- c. The Documentary Hypothesis is based on an evolutionary view of the development of Israel's religion which has been proven to be false.
- d. There is evidence proving the early date of the writing of the Pentateuch (1450-1400 B.C.), which is 1,000 years earlier than the Documentary Hypothesis' date of 450 B.C.

The historical record claiming Moses as the author, along with Jesus' confirmation of this fact, enables Christians to confidently believe, claim, and teach that Moses is the sole author of the Pentateuch.

D. Date

Those who reject miraculous intervention and espouse the Documentary Hypothesis put the final formation of the Pentateuch, including the book of Leviticus, at about 500-400 B.C. – the start of the intertestamental period (the time from Malachi to John the Baptist). Conservative Christians who accept the full inspiration of scripture and God's dynamic interaction with mankind, date the book at the time the Bible describes its production, during the life of Moses, its author – 1445 B.C.

E. Historical Time Frame

Leviticus contains the laws and ordinances God gave the Israelites through Moses during the year the people spent camped before Mt. Sinai. It was written after the building and dedication of the

Tabernacle described in Exodus, and before their entry into the promised land described in the book of Numbers. Aside from the instructions about the priesthood and sacrificial system, it contains several historical notes:

1. The consecration of the priesthood – Chapters 8-10
2. The punishment of Aaron's sons – Chapters 8-10
3. The punishment of a blasphemer – 24:10-23

F. Theme/Purpose

The theme of the book of Leviticus, in a word, is "Holiness." Its purpose was to promote holiness so that Israel might become God's "Holy Nation."

...be holy, for I am holy.
- Leviticus 11:45

This theme of holiness is supported and applied in practical ways throughout the book. For example:

1. God's holiness required submission to His will. Failure to obey not only regressed one's growth in the virtue of holiness, but also had terrible consequences (i.e death of Nadab and Abihu, as well as the blasphemer).
2. Holiness among the Jews required them to carefully observe the rituals of the Law. God defined the elements of Holiness in every setting and society. For the Jews, a holy life was seen in the practice of the sacrificial system, as well as keeping the Law.

3. God charged the priests with the responsibility of providing instruction, assistance and an example of a holy life for the people to learn and emulate.
4. It was a combination of obeying the Law, observing the sacrificial system, and loving one's neighbor as oneself that produced the holy life pleasing to God.

We often fail to recognize the application of this book for our lives today since most of it deals with archaic rituals in the sacrificing of animals and food. However, the principles contained in Leviticus are timeless and quite pertinent for our lives as Christians. Dr. Roper lists five modern applications for today's Christian:

VALUE OF LEVITICUS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

1. The emphasis on "Holiness" is directly applicable for us today because this is what God is calling us to do.

¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
- I Peter 1:15-16

2. The sacrificial system (the shedding of blood to redeem the sins of the people) was a preview of what Christ would do for us today. Knowing more about these sacrifices helps us to appreciate and understand more perfectly Christ's sacrifice for us.
3. There is a relationship and similarity between the various sacrifices that the Jews offered then and the sacrifices we as Christians offer today:

- a. We offer our bodies as living sacrifices when we serve God with good deeds – Romans 12:1-2
- b. We offer a sacrifice of praise with our lips – Hebrews 13:15
- c. Our financial support of the church and its various works in preaching the gospel is a "fragrant aroma," an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God – Philippians 4:18

Today, we have different objects, different methods of offering, different rituals (we now serve as priests), but the same God, the same result, and the same motivation (love and holiness).

4. Leviticus should help us rethink our attitude about ritual itself. At times, we want to make church services more entertaining, less formal, dress up the rituals with music, drama, and emotion. Leviticus teaches us, however, that God gives the rituals, not man. Today, we only have two rituals and five practices given to us by God:

- **Rituals:** Baptism and Communion
- **Practices:** Praise, Prayer, Preaching, Teaching and Giving

Leviticus teaches us that we should follow God's instructions concerning these things and as the ones who want to be the holy people of God, we should also give ourselves over to these rituals and practices of the New Testament with heartfelt devotion and whole-hearted participation.

5. Leviticus reminds us that we become holy through a sacrifice of blood, and maintain that holiness through obedience to God's commands. The true requirement behind these commands is the same as it is for us today: that we love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- Galatians 5:14

H. Leviticus – Outlines

There are various ways that this book can be outlined. Remember that the overall theme is holiness, both God's intrinsic holiness and man's way to holiness.

Outline #1 – Harper Study Bible

1. The way of approach to a holy God – Leviticus 1-16
2. Maintaining fellowship with a holy God – Leviticus 17-27

The first part of this very brief outline explains how one finds forgiveness and a right relationship with God. The second part deals with the maintenance of that relationship.

Outline #2 – A More Expanded Outline

1. The Offerings (Leviticus 1-7)
 - a. General Regulations (1:1-6:7)
 - b. Priestly Regulations (6:8-7:38)
2. The Priesthood (Leviticus 8-10)
 - a. Consecration (8)
 - b. Installation (9)
 - c. Consequences of Disobedience (10)
3. Cleanliness and Uncleanliness – (Leviticus 11-16)
 - a. Regulations (11-15)
 - b. The Day of Atonement (16)
4. The Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-27)
 - a. The Sanctity of Blood (17)
 - b. Moral Laws (18-20)
 - c. Priestly Regulations (21-22)
 - d. Worship Calendar (23)
 - e. Oil, Bread, and Blasphemy (24)
 - f. The Sabbath Year and Jubilee (25)
 - g. Rewards and Punishments (26)
 - h. Vows and Tithes (27)

The theme of the book of Leviticus is centered on holiness, so the outline we will use for our study will be one that follows the general theme of holiness, outline number three.

Outline #3 – Training for Holiness (the subtitle for this series).

1. Attaining Holiness – (Leviticus 1-16)
 - a. Through Offerings (1-7)
 - b. Through a Consecrated Priesthood (8-10)
 - c. By Distinguished Between the Clean and the Unclean (11-15)
 - d. By Observing the Day of Atonement (16)
2. Practicing Holiness – (Leviticus 17-27)
 - a. Individual Responsibility to Keep God's Moral and Ritual laws (17-20)
 - b. Priestly Responsibilities (21-22)
 - c. The Nation's Responsibility to Promote Holiness (23-25)
 - d. Reasons for Practicing Holiness: Blessings and curses (26)
 - e. Evidence of Holiness: Vows and Valuations (27)

Of course, this is simply a general framework for the material contained in the book of Leviticus, a tool to help us know what we're talking about and where we are when we begin adding detail in our study. There are many more information points that we will add to each of the headings contained in the outline – so keep it handy as a general roadmap to navigate the book itself.



2. **Holy People Then and Now**

In our introductory chapter we reviewed the basic questions asked concerning any of the books of the Bible that we chose to study. Things like who wrote it, where was it written, and what is it about. We also looked at the Pentateuch or Torah, which are the first five books of the Old Testament, written, we believe, by Moses and of which the book of Leviticus is the third book in the series.

As the sub-title of this study on Leviticus suggests, we understand that the theme of this book is "holiness" and that in this book Moses spells out in specific terms what God required of the Israelite people in order to be considered the holy people of God. In this chapter we'll compare the demands of holiness then (Old Testament) and now (New Testament), review some reasons why we should study the book of Leviticus and note the different ways to holiness that God has provided then and now.

I. Holy People Then and Now

This idea of holy people first appears in the book of Exodus when God offers the descendants of Abraham a new covenant. At that time (Exodus 19:5-6) we saw Moses and the Israelites arriving at Mt. Sinai and camping before the mountain – three months after their departure from Egypt.

Starting with Moses' call by God at the burning bush, through the ten plagues and the people's freedom from Egyptian slavery, the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army, to the people receiving water and food miraculously while in the wilderness, God was in the process of fulfilling His first and original covenant made with Abraham and renewed with Isaac and Jacob. That first covenant was the promise to give the descendants of Abraham the land of Canaan as their own, multiplying his descendants, and from these people raising one up who would bless all the families of the earth (Messiah) – Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:1-8.

The second part of that covenant was fulfilled when Jacob and his family took refuge in Egypt under the protection of his son Joseph who had become second in command to the Pharaoh during the great famine. From the original 70 people, over the next 400 years the Israelites grew to a population of about 2 million at the time of the Exodus (Numbers 11:21). This fulfilled the second promise of the first covenant, "I will multiply you greatly" (Genesis 17:2).

We read in the book of Exodus that God fulfilled His first promise to Abraham which was to give them the land of Canaan or the Promised Land. Exodus describes the beginning of the journey that would eventually see the Israelites, after forty years of wilderness wanderings, finally enter and take possession of the Promised Land described in the book of Joshua. Also, the first two promises of the

covenant with Abraham were ratified by circumcision. Therefore, two promises were fulfilled:

1. Received the land of Canaan as their own.
2. Multiply their numbers.

The third promise was in the process of being fulfilled:

3. The families of the earth blessed.

We know that this third promise would be fulfilled 1500 years later as Jesus was born from a tiny remnant of Jews living under Roman rule on a small strip of land in Judea/Galilee some 145 miles long and 50 miles wide. While this covenant was being fulfilled, God established a second covenant with the Israelites which was more demanding of the Jews but offered greater physical and spiritual blessings.

¹ In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. ³ Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

- Exodus 19:1-6

The great difference between these two covenants was the issue of holiness, which the people were now going to make as a central part of their relationship with God, faith being the substance of the first (Genesis 12:1-3).

A. God's Holy People Then and Now

The actual meaning of the word holy (*Quadosh* – Hebrew) means "separate" or "set-apart" or "sacred". It has a highly religious connotation in that it was not a common word used in regular conversation but put into use for religious purposes and used from earliest times in a religious context – Exodus 3:5 (first time used) – Where God said to Moses from the burning bush that he was standing on "holy ground."

In one sense, the word describes an object, a place, or a day which is to be considered holy – meaning devoted or dedicated to a particular purpose. Holiness, as I have said before, appears as the main theme of the book of Leviticus:

- The word holy appears 90 times and is used in 76 verses of the NASB's version of Leviticus.
- The following is a list of what and who are described as being holy:
 1. The Lord God of Israel, His name, how He is treated – Holy, holy, with holiness – Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 20:3; Leviticus 10:3
 2. The people of God are holy – Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 19:2
 3. The Tabernacle complex is holy – Leviticus 16:2

4. The priests and the garments that they wore were holy – Leviticus 8:9; Leviticus 16:4; Leviticus 21:6
5. The sacrifices offered were holy – Leviticus 14:13
6. The feasts they observed were holy – Leviticus 23:2
7. That which was given or offered to God was holy – Leviticus 19:24; Leviticus 27:9

Both the priests and the people had to make the distinction between the holy and the profane (common), as well as the clean and the unclean in life and worship as God's people, the holy nation of God. In practical terms, however, being a Holy Nation required the Israelites to be holy and separate in two particular ways:

- A. Being separated from other nations.
- B. Being separated for God's use.

1. Separated from Other Nations

⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ 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."
- Leviticus 11:44-45

God did not free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage simply as an act of mercy for an oppressed people – because he pitied them. Delivering them to the Promised Land where they could live freely and plentifully as a free nation on their own land was not a final

result in itself. God had a higher spiritual purpose for the Israelites which was their becoming His people and thus a holy nation. Yes, they needed a place to live and land to support their physical needs, but this was secondary or in service to their primary role and associated tasks that came with being the people of God, a holy nation among all the nations around them.

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."

- Leviticus 18:30

"When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations."

- Deuteronomy 18:9

Being God's people, a holy nation, required them to avoid the common practices of the "unholy" nations that came before them and surrounded them now. They had to practice the lifestyle and worship of a Holy Nation that God, through Moses, would now give them.

Being a holy nation required that the Israelites make no arrangements or compromises with the nations around them in order to secure peaceful relations. This invariably led to intermarriage and eventually the introduction of pagan gods, worship and practices. Compromise was Satan's most effective strategy in his effort to destroy God's people – and ruin their holy status.

It is not that they would abandon God altogether, it is that they would mix pagan worship with the worship of the Lord, thereby invalidating it. In doing so, they would eventually fail the first test of holiness, keeping themselves separate from other nations and the worship of other gods.

2. They Were Separated for God's Use

The first aspect of holiness is what you won't do, or what you'll stop doing – mix with unholy, pagan people and practice pagan ways and worship. The second aspect of holiness is what you will do as a holy nation who are the people of God, and that is follow and obey God's commands and instructions for holy living. God is the one who dictates what is holy, acceptable, and clean by the expression of His will.

For example, there is nothing innately better between destroying a sheep by burning it with fire or killing a mule by slitting its throat. Both are simply different ways of killing different animals. However, killing a sheep and then burning it by fire becomes a "holy" act of devotion to God when God Himself gives instructions to do so in the process of worshipping Him. Some thing, action, or person becomes holy only when God deems it or him/her so. This is the essence of holiness – God separating or instructing a particular thing, action, or person for His own purpose or use.

In the case of the Israelites, they were expected to keep themselves separate/holy for God's purpose. There was nothing about them as a people that made them innately/ automatically holy. The fact that God chose them for a special purpose is what made them a holy people, the holy nation of God.

Now, as the holy people of God, the Israelites were to live their lives according to God's will and thus fulfill His ultimate purpose for them:

- A. Be a witness (light) of His existence to the pagan world they lived in.
- B. Be the nation/people through whom the Messiah would come.

In a sense, they were to be the historical, cultural, social, and religious stage upon which the Son of God would make His appearance in the physical world.

The information in the Pentateuch teaches us the source and development of the Israelites.

- **Genesis** = Abraham – Jacob – 12 tribes.

The manner in which they became God's chosen people and how they came to settle in the land of the Canaanites.

- **Exodus** = Moses (Egypt) – The Covenant – Book of the Law (Become God's Holy nation).

The manner of life they were to live and worship as the holy people of God.

- **Exodus / Leviticus** = Law – Tabernacle – Rules for Holy living (Concrete and detailed instructions for holy living and worship).

The wilderness wanderings and the division of the Promised Land as well as the final instructions for entering in.

- **Numbers / Deuteronomy** = History of 40 years – Tribal boundaries – Summary of Moses' instructions.

Our study in Leviticus, therefore, demonstrates to what degree Israel was to be dedicated to the Lord.

Leviticus will show us that according to its instructions, the Israelites were not only separated unto God by their worship practices and observances along with adherence to festivals and food laws. Every facet of their lives (marriage, work, social interactions, parenting, etc.) was to be governed by God and His instructions. Being the holy people of God meant that God's will informed every aspect of their lives – not just worship rituals and practices, but their daily lives as well. There was to be no separation between the two.

II. Holy People Then and Now

Being God's people today, God's holy people (the church, the kingdom, the saints, the saved, etc.) means the same today as it did in the Old Testament.

- **Old Testament** – *Qadosh* (Hebrew) – separated from sin/consecrated to God – Sacred/Holy
- **New Testament** – *Hagios* (Greek) – Saint/ holy/separated

Like the Israelites, Christians are to be separated from the world (in the world, not of the world – John 15:19) and separated from the world for God's purpose and plan. For the holy people of God today, this means:

1. Christians are separated from the world.

This literally takes place when we are converted:

¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- Colossians 1:13-14

Before, we are alive physically and mentally, but dead spiritually since we are separated from God (i.e. dead branches cut away from the tree of life by sin).

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- Ephesians 2:1-2

We become the holy people of God in Christ Jesus.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- I Peter 2:9-10

Just as the Israelites were not to mix with the surrounding pagan nations for fear of falling into their sinful practices and idolatry (worshipping other gods), Christians also come out of the world and its practices, values, and vices: and what does this new life of holiness mean?

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Romans 12:2

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

- James 1:27

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

- I John 2:15

¹⁴ Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." ¹⁷ "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you."

- II Corinthians 6:14-17

To be holy, therefore, means that we are separate and distinct from the world in our speech, actions, values, and priorities – people can't quite put their finger on what is different about us – the difference, in a word, is holiness. We are God's holy people.

Like the Israelites, being God's holy people today also means that...

2. We are Separate from the World for God's Use

This means that we are completely dedicated to Christ who leads us. Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Christ leads us to heaven, the heavenly kingdom, and eternal life with God. We are separate from the world to become disciples of Jesus.

So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.
- Luke 14:33

Disciples separate from the world by doing away with sin in their lives as an on-going exercise. This is in cooperation with the Holy Spirit who leads the believer in this endeavor.

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
- Romans 8:12-14

As a human being I work, I build a family, I enjoy the blessings God has provided in this world. As a Christian and disciple, I cooperate with the Spirit of God in the transformation of my inner man to live a holy life growing more obedient to God and more Christ-like until my final transformation when I am resurrected.

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of

an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- I Corinthians 15:51-53

I do this privately as I live out my life of faith. I also do this publicly and corporately as I meet regularly with other saints for worship, fellowship, witness, and service. Just as God provided instructions for the Jews in how to balance and maintain their holiness in the Old Testament period by providing the Law and ordinances found in the Torah (Pentateuch), Jesus provides the information to become and maintain holy (and live as the holy people of God) today through the gospel and New Testament writings.

Studying Leviticus, even though it contains laws and rituals that don't pertain to us today, will help us to understand the essence and practice of holiness, a spiritual condition that all people of God seek to attain, no matter what era or time in which they live.

3.

Attaining Holiness

Burnt Offerings

LEVITICUS 1:1-17

If you remember this book's first chapter, you will note that we will be following the outline for Leviticus provided by Dr. Roper in his commentary – it is simple to follow and well organized:

Outline: Leviticus Training in Holiness

1. Attaining Holiness – (Leviticus 1-16)
 - a. Through Offerings (1-7)
 - b. Through a Consecrated Priesthood (8-10)
 - c. By Distinguishing Between the Clean and the Unclean (11-15)
 - d. By Observing the Day of Atonement (16)
2. Practicing Holiness – (Leviticus 17-27)
 - a. Individual Responsibility to Keep God's Moral and Ritual laws (17-20)
 - b. Priestly Responsibilities (21-22)
 - c. The Nation's Responsibility to Promote Holiness (23-25)
 - d. Reasons for Practicing Holiness: Blessings and curses (26)
 - e. Evidence of Holiness: Vows and Valuations (27)

Each of these headings have sub-divisions, but if you stay focused on the outline you'll know where we're at and the context of each subject.

Exodus was mainly a narrative about Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery into freedom and a covenant relationship with God.

Leviticus is a book of instruction explaining in detail how the Israelites would become a holy people/nation (by obeying God's laws concerning worship) and how to maintain holiness (personal conduct in keeping God's laws concerning ritual and religious responsibilities).

Again, it's worth repeating - their entire lives were affected by their status as God's holy nation - there was no compartmentalization - my religious life on the Sabbath and other holy days, my regular life is my own to do as I wish! Their religion affected every part of their lives as does ours - a point that we readily see as we study their lives but are not always quick to acknowledge and practice as God's holy people today.



I. Attaining Holiness – Through Offerings – Leviticus 1:1

In Exodus we read about the building of the Tabernacle complex and the fabrication of the furnishings that the priests would use, and the garments they would wear in carrying out their duties in the sacrificial system which was to be the central feature of the Jewish religion. These would be the manner by which they were to become and maintain their holy status before God.

Offering sacrifices was not a new way to interact with God, it was as old as Cain and Abel who each sacrificed to God with animal and produce offerings. We see the patriarchs build altars and pillars and offer animals and oil to God as praise and thanksgiving.

- Noah – Genesis 8:20-22
- Abraham – Genesis 12:7-8
- Isaac – Genesis 26:25
- Jacob – Genesis 35:7

What was new was that God now mandated that these offerings and sacrifices were to be made at the Tabernacle and mediated by the priests appointed by God in the manner commanded by God for the reasons given by God. What made the practice holy was that God appropriated it for his own use, meaning, and purpose.

¹ Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ² "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.
- Leviticus 1:1-2

The source of the information and instructions for the sacrificial system comes from God Himself in the same way that the instructions for the Tabernacle were given, from God to Moses and then to the people for implementation. In 20 of the 27 chapters of Leviticus, the chapter begins with words that say, "Now the Lord spoke to Moses."

The first seven chapters deal with laws pertaining to five kinds of offerings to be made at the Tabernacle:

1. Burnt offerings – 1:1-17; 6:8-13
2. Grain offerings – 2:1-16; 6:14-23
3. Peace offerings – 3:1-17; 7:11-36
4. Sin offerings – 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30
5. Guilt offerings – 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7

There are two sections of instructions for each of the five offerings (seems repetitive), however, the first section (i.e. burnt offerings – 1:1-17) is the ritual requirement described from the standpoint of the one making the offering; the second section (burnt offerings – 6:8-13) describes the same sacrifice but this time from the priest's perspective and how he was to deal with this offering.

Therefore, chapters 1-6 describes the five basic sacrifices from the Israelites' perspective and chapters 6-7 from the priests' perspective. There is, however, overlap in each but this is how the material is divided in chapters 1-7.

The book of Leviticus was considered a manual for the work of the priests and high priest since it contained exact instructions for the priests and high priest to follow in their service at the Tabernacle, however, it also provided valuable information for the individual

Israelite in giving him the reason and manner to present his sacrifice to the priests.

Let's review these five basic offerings looking first at the initial offering brought to the priest at the Tabernacle and then examine the priestly responsibility for that particular offering.

A. Burnt Offering

1. The Herd (Cattle - Leviticus 1:3-9)

³ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces.

⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

- Leviticus 1:3-9

This is a voluntary offering ("If his offering..." - vs. 3) it was to be consumed by fire and ascended to the Lord in smoke. The idea was

that the sacrifice was pleasing to God. The one bringing the sacrifice had seven steps to follow:

1. Select a male animal without defect, best of his herd. – 1:3a
2. Present the animal to the priest for inspection. – 1:3b
3. Lay his hand on the head of the beast. – 1:4
This signified:
 - acceptance of the animal
 - acceptable to make atonement
 - symbolized transfer of sins from the offerer to the animal
 - slaughter of the animal made atonement with God for sins
4. The Israelite would himself kill the animal before the Lord (probably in a ritualistic manner) inside the Tabernacle complex near the altar of the burnt offering – 1:5a
5. The priests were to sprinkle blood from the dead animal on the altar of the burnt offering. – 1:5
6. The one who brought the offering had to skin the animal and cut it into pieces. So, killing, skinning, and butchering the animal to be sacrificed was the responsibility of the worshipper. – 1:6
7. The 7th step was for the priest to actually make the sacrifice since they (priests) alone were authorized to put the offering on the altar. They had to keep the fire going 24/7

and clean the various parts of the animal before putting it on the altar. – 1:7-9

Done correctly, this sacrifice produced a soothing aroma pleasing to the Lord - language that is "anthropomorphic" (attributing human qualities to God) in order to convey that the sacrifice was acceptable and pleasing to God.

In chapter 6:8-13, the same sacrifice is referred to but this time from the priest's perspective.

⁸ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ⁹ "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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. ¹² 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. ¹³ Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out.
- Leviticus 6:8-13

Note that before, in the Leviticus 1, God said to Moses, "Speak to the sons of Israel," in giving instructions to the people about burnt offerings.

In chapter 6:8-9a, the Lord directs His instructions to Aaron and his sons - speaking about the same burnt offering, but this time outlining the priestly responsibilities in offering this sacrifice.

Vs. 9b-11 – The Instructions deal mainly with the removal of the sacrifice from the altar.

- The sacrifice was to be left all night until it was reduced to ashes.
- The ashes were regarded as holy, not treated as refuse and thus handled in a way befitting a holy object.
 - Priests wore a special linen robe when removing the ashes.
 - Once removed from the altar the priest would change back into his regular clothes and carry the ashes to a ceremonially clean place and deposit them there.
 - Ceremonially clean meant a place where no dead human body or carcass of a dead animal had previously been found there.

Vs. 12-13 – We also learn from these instructions that the fire of the altar was not go out, and so keeping the fire continually lit was another duty of the priests.

2. Burnt Offering – From the Flock – Leviticus 1:10-13

The instructions for a burnt offering from the flock (a sheep or a goat) were similar for the worshipper offering the sacrifice (7 steps), as well as the priest who placed the animal on the altar and removed its ashes. It was a sacrifice pleasing to God.

3. Burnt offerings – Birds – Leviticus 1:14-17

¹⁴ '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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward, to the place of the ashes. ¹⁷ 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.

- Leviticus 1:14-17

Note that the priest does all of the work in offering the bird(s) as a burnt offering:

- Break its neck.
- Pour the blood on the side of the altar.
- Remove its feathers and crop (pouch in the throat where the bird stores food).
- Tear its wings without splitting its carcass.
- Burn it to ashes on the altar.

Birds were allowed as a burnt offering so that even the poor, who could only afford a single bird, could still offer this type of sacrifice as a sin offering. Only turtledoves or young pigeons were acceptable since most birds were considered "unclean."

Leviticus chapter six only adds that the ashes of these sacrifices were to be disposed of in a clean area outside the camp. Unlike other types of sacrifices, the priests derived no benefit from burnt offerings since the entire animal was destroyed by fire. Only the hides, which had been skinned for the offering, were left.

B. The Significance of the Burnt Offering

There were five different kinds of offerings one could, and at times were obliged to make, with each having its own significance and purpose.

Burnt offering:

1. Signified total surrender since the animal was completely destroyed down to ashes...except for the skin or hide which was kept by the priest.
 - No redeeming price to save potential profit from future use or sale.
 - No food left for use by priest or one offering the sacrifice.
2. Burnt offering resulted in atonement for the sin of the worshipper (Leviticus 1:4), as well as a sacrifice pleasing to God (Leviticus 1:9; Leviticus 13:17).
3. A vision of God's call for believers to offer themselves completely to God (Romans 12:1-2) in both the Old and New Testament.
4. The required sacrifice in various instances:
 - Free will offering = burnt sacrifice (Leviticus 22:17-19).

- Fulfilling a vow (votive) = Burnt sacrifice (Leviticus 22:17-19).
 - Daily morning /evening sacrifice/Sabbath Day/special request from God (Numbers 28-29; I Samuel 13:12; II Samuel 24:21-25; Psalm 66:13-20).
- All of these required a burnt sacrifice.

The whole burnt offering was the most common and repeated sacrifice among the five types described.

C. The Burnt Offering and Christ

Each sacrifice described in Leviticus has three elements:

1. The Offeror – The Israelite
2. The Priest – mediator appointed by God
3. The Offering – animals, produce, oil, wine, bread

Christ fulfills all three roles on our behalf:

1. He is the Offeror

- a. He came as a man to do God's will.
- b. He stood under the same law as an Israelite man and had to fulfill it, yet He was without sin.

2. He is the Priest Appointed by God

- a. Not only as a priest, but a special high priest not limited by sin and death as were the Jewish priests.

²³ The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, ²⁴ but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- Hebrews 7:23-25

3. He is the Offering

- a. An animal without defect (sinless) is killed in order to make up for a person's sins.
- b. The process repeated because man continually sinned and the offering of animals only symbolized what was to come since their death could not in reality atone for the sins of men, could not in reality satisfy God's Laws and justice.

Death is the manner of transferring something from the physical realm to the spiritual realm.

³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵ Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me; ⁶ In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. ⁷ "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.'"

- Hebrews 10:3-7

They were the "type" preparing and pointing to the "anti-type" which was the real thing, not just a preview or shadow.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE IS BETTER/COMPLETE – WHY?

1. Both the offeror and offering are perfect, without sin and thus required no additional sacrifices.

He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God...

- Hebrews 10:12

2. The priest is the God/Man Jesus Who represents humanity (because as a human, He suffered and died as humans do – Isaiah 53:3; Hebrews 4:15).

3. The High Priest, Jesus, entered the heavenly Holy Place to offer the sacrifice (blood) of His life, thus actually making the atonement that fulfills the Law resulting in forgiveness – something that the offering of animal blood in the Holy of Holies could only symbolize, but not actually accomplish.

For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

- Hebrews 9:24

4. Because, with Jesus, the offeror, priest, and sacrifice were all divine (eternal) in nature (Hebrews 10:11-18), the innate value of His sacrifice is more than sufficient to forgive all persons of all sins for all time.

Once a person believes in Jesus as the Son of God and expresses that faith through repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38), he appropriates Christ's sacrifice as his own – it is as if the sacrifice that Christ makes is offered specifically for that person.

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.
- Matthew 10:32

4. **Attaining Holiness**

Grain and Peace Offerings

LEVITICUS 2:1-3:17

Let's briefly look at our outline for the purpose of review:

Outline: Leviticus: Training in Holiness

1. Attaining Holiness – (Leviticus 1-16)
 - a. **Through Offerings (1-7)**
 - b. Through a Consecrated Priesthood (8-10)
 - c. By Distinguishing Between the Clean and the Unclean (11-15)
 - d. By Observing the Day of Atonement (16)
2. Practicing Holiness – (Leviticus 17-27)
 - a. Individual Responsibility to Keep God's Moral and Ritual laws (17-20)
 - b. Priestly Responsibilities (21-22)
 - c. The Nation's Responsibility to Promote Holiness (23-25)
 - d. Reasons for Practicing Holiness: Blessings and curses (26)
 - e. Evidence of Holiness: Vows and Valuations (27)

We noted that there were five types of offerings:

- i. Burnt offerings – 1:1-17 (previous lesson)
- ii. Grain offerings – 2:1-16
- iii. Peace offerings 3:1-17
- iv. Sin offerings
- v. Guilt offerings

I showed you that both the one making the offering and the priest presenting the offering to God had a role to play and tasks to perform in order to make what was being offered acceptable (Holy) before God. The book of Leviticus is the manual or book of instructions for the acceptable way of presenting offerings, keeping special days and maintaining one's personal state of holiness. Why was this important?

In choosing the Israelites to be His people God made this condition – they were to be holy because He, their God, was holy (Leviticus 11:44a). The book of Leviticus contained the information and instructions to both attain and maintain this holiness – something no other nation could aspire to even if they desired it.

I. The Grain Offering – 2:1-16

The second kind of offering was the grain offering of wheat and barley. The Hebrew term for this offering literally meant gift and was often used as a general term for offerings, however it eventually came to be used as a term for cereal or meal offerings. The term suggested an offering of thanksgiving.

The grain offering was like the burnt offering in that it was brought to the priest (however, prepared by the offeror) and a portion was

burned on the altar by the priest and was pleasing to God (a soothing aroma). However, it was different than a burnt offering in two ways:

1. It did not result in the atonement of the offeror's sins (Why? No blood/life offered).
2. Only a small amount of grain was burned on the altar, what remained was given to the priest for the burnt sacrifice of an animal, the entire animal (except hide) was burned to ashes – nothing was left for the priest.

The chapter on grain offerings has three sections:

1. Rules about offering uncooked grain.
2. Instructions about offering grain that had been cooked.
3. Instructions about how the first fruits of the grain must be offered.

A. Offering Uncooked Grain – Leviticus 2:1-3

¹ '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. ² 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. ³ The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the Lord by fire.

- Leviticus 2:1-3

Details concerning instructions:

- Grain offering was a voluntary gift to the Lord – vs. 1
- It served as a less expensive burnt offering for the poor or those who farmed and owned no sheep or cattle.
- The grain offering was enhanced by adding to the fine flour some olive oil and perfume (Frankincense) which were expensive, making the grain offering something that cost the offeror something (It wasn't without cost to give, just like the burnt offering of an animal).
- As always, the priest placed the portion to be burned on the altar and this portion was referred to as the "memorial portion."
- Some scholars think that since this was a "thanksgiving" offering the memorial portion referred to the original liberation of the Jews from Egyptian slavery by God's hand.
- Since the grain offering was holy, the part left was given to the priests who were holy and were required to eat it at a holy place – the Tabernacle.
- The portion of the grain sacrifice eventually became an important source of support for the priests and their families that qualified if they were ceremonially clean.

B. Offering Cooked Grain – Leviticus 2:4-10

There were also instructions for those who offered grain that had been cooked in some way.

1. Baked in an oven.
2. Prepared on a griddle (fried).
3. Cooked in a pan.

Offering the grain uncooked or cooked in various ways was left up to the one offering the grain sacrifice. Whether cooked or uncooked, these offerings had four things in common:

1. All were to be made into/with fine flour.
2. All to include oil in the mixture.
3. A memorial portion was to be burned as a pleasing aroma (acceptable) to the Lord.
4. Remainder given to the priest as a thing most holy.

C. Special Rules – Grain Offerings – Leviticus 2:11-16

¹¹ '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.

¹² 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. 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; with all your offerings you shall offer salt. ¹⁴ '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. ¹⁵ You shall then put oil on it and lay incense on it; it is a grain offering. ¹⁶ 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.

- Leviticus 2:11-16

Even though the offeror had many options when bringing a grain offering, there were some limits.

- Grain offerings cooked in advance could not contain honey or leaven.
- One reason for this was because pagan sacrifices often used these elements in their worship.

Newly ripened grain (first fruits) were not burned on the altar, but given to the priests. Only a token portion was burned after oil and incense were added. Every cooked grain offering had to contain salt which symbolized the preservation of the covenant between God and His people. This was done because salt was used as a preservative for food in ancient cultures.

D. Significance of the Grain Offering

It was a "gift" offering used primarily to show gratitude for God's favors and to remain in a favorable relationship with Him. In Numbers 15:4-10 you have instructions as to how much grain was to be offered along with animal sacrifices since grain offerings were rarely presented by themselves. It was usually accompanied by a drink offering when animals were offered (Numbers 15:4-10).

Therefore, an animal was offered as atonement accompanied by a grain offering which served to give thanks and show appreciation. Wine or water were also poured out before the altar (not on it) to signify honor and gratitude. Thus, a single sacrifice with various elements conveyed several meanings and thoughts – acknowledgement of sin, repentance, thanksgiving, faith and praise, solidarity, and permanence (salt).

The sacrificial system was a kind of spiritual language where the offeror learned to communicate with God on God's terms using language given to sinful man by God, mediated by the priests. It was where the person coming before God was sure that what he wanted to say was heard and, more importantly, accepted by God.

1. Faith

Sacrifices were physical actions symbolizing unseen things which were accepted by faith. The acceptance of forgiveness for sins passed on to an animal which was then burned by fire, required faith if one was to experience relief and peace once the sacrifice was offered.

2. Sacrifice

It wasn't any old animal sacrificed in any way. Not just some grain hauled in a sack. Whether it was an animal or farm produce it had to be the "best" of what you had and it needed to be prepared for sacrifice in a very precise manner. Whether you were offering a bull or a lamb, a pigeon or grain from your fields – it cost you time, effort, and a financial sacrifice to be able to come before God and make an acceptable offering.

Compare Cain and Abel's sacrifice in Genesis 4:3-4 and you will see why Abel's was accepted and Cain's was rejected – it wasn't because God liked animal sacrifices better than farm produce, after all Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd – they offered what they had.

Look at the real differences:

- a. So, it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground (Genesis 4:3)

- Cain brought "some" of his produce. Not the first, best, ripest, but some, a sample, a portion – nothing special.
- b. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. The Lord, however, had regard for Abel and for his offering (Genesis 4:4).
- Abel brought the "firstlings," the fat portions of his flock.
 - In other words, he offered the firstborn of the flock, but also burned the best parts of the animal (as far as eating and taste are concerned).
 - He would have killed the animal and put the head, legs, entrails, liver, and stomach on the fire and kept the edible parts for himself, but he put the best part of the animal on the altar for God's portion.

God didn't simply consider the value of what was on the altar, but the sacrifice required to make that particular offering. The acceptable offering pleasing to God was the one that left you poorer or less wealthy because of what you had given.

The sacrificial system required the same things from each one who offered something, regardless of the type of sacrifice made – Faith, personal sacrifice and...

3. Piety

Piety is an attitude of respect and reverence, not only for God, but also for the things of God – and in this case it was the instructions for the offeror in preparing and offering a sacrifice. A pious person respected the Divine instructions because they were given by God

and as such were holy and rendered holy (set apart) those who carefully obeyed and followed His commands. This was not legalism (obedience to rules to make oneself acceptable to God).

Pious men carefully followed God's instructions for offering sacrifices so that God would be pleased with the offering – they wanted to thank and please God, not justify themselves.

Today's worship is no different in what it requires of the worshipper, even if the manner of worship is different and the meaning has changed. Worship still requires:

1. **Faith** – "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)
2. **Sacrifice** – "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord." (II Corinthians 8:3).
3. **Piety** – "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension." (I Timothy 2:8).

Piety today is seen in the church's careful adherence to the instructions given to us in the New Testament about worship as far as who does what, the things we do to worship God according to His instructions, and the proper demonstration of faith, sacrifice and piety in order to offer what pleases Him.

II. Peace Offerings – Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:12; 16

Peace offerings (from the Hebrew root word *SHALOM* = health, prosperity, peace with God, salvation, wholeness) were offerings meant to strengthen this wholeness. The instructions for the peace offering were similar to those for the burnt offering except for the following:

1. The animal sacrificed could be a male or female unlike the burnt offering, which required a male animal.
2. Only certain parts of the animal were sacrificed leaving the rest to be eaten mainly by the one offering the animal or shared with family and friends – this is why it was sometimes referred to by different terms:
 - Sacrifice of well-being (NRSV)
 - Fellowship offering (NIV)
 - Shared offering (REB)
 - Communion sacrifice (NJB)

The burnt offering required the entire animal reduced to ashes – nothing left to eat.

3. These kinds of animals could be used – cattle, lambs, goats – male or female without blemish. The primary goal was to share a meal, so the offering of birds or grain would not be sufficient.
4. Certain parts of each animal were always to be placed on the altar to be burned.

¹ '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. ² 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.

³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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.

- Leviticus 3:1-5

In the description of the sacrifice of the lamb and the goat, the same parts are always mentioned:

- Fat covering the entrails, etc.
- Two kidneys with fat on them.
- Lobe of the liver, etc.

Some believe it was God's way of helping Jews eat healthy by avoiding fat. Another idea is that since fat was considered a delicacy, offering the fatty portion was giving God the tithe of the animal (the best part off the top) in sacrifice, and the rest in most offerings (except burnt offerings) were shared by the priest and the worshipper. In other words, God was offered the first and best portion, the priest and worshipper shared what was left.

In verse 17 God confirms that the Israelites were not to eat the blood of the sacrifice (life is in the blood which belongs to God) or the fat of the sacrifice (because it is His portion of the sacrifice).

5. Peace offerings were free will offerings not required by God (unlike burnt offerings required each morning and evening). These were offered by one with a generous heart who was at peace with God, others, and himself. This individual wanted to maintain and strengthen his feelings of contentment.
6. Chapter 7:12;16 describes three types of peace offerings:
 - a. **Thanksgiving** – offered in thanks for blessings. Many times, a peace offering was made when a family would gather and eat a fellowship meal near the sanctuary.
 - b. **Votive offering** – this meant that when one had fulfilled a vow made to God, a peace offering was made to celebrate the completion of the commitment in a successful manner.
 - c. **Freewill offering** – Was made to give thanks and celebrate the fellowship enjoyed with others in the Lord.
7. Peace offerings were used to celebrate public occasions.

I Kings 8:63 recounts how Solomon offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep in peace offerings at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

⁶² Now the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord. ⁶³ Solomon offered for the sacrifice of

peace offerings, which he offered to the Lord, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. ⁶⁴ On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord, because there he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings; for the bronze altar that was before the Lord was too small to hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵ So Solomon observed the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt, before the Lord our God, for seven days and seven more days, even fourteen days.

⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the king. Then they went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to David His servant and to Israel His people.

- 1 Kings 8:62-66

This was the highest point in Israel's history as a people united with their God, their human leader, Solomon, and each other as a nation.

III. Peace Offerings Today

We no longer use animal sacrifice in our pursuit of peace in the Christian age, but we still want/need:

1. Peace with God

We cannot be at peace or ease inwardly unless we know that we are at peace with Him, and that He is not simply waiting to judge and punish us. God knows this and has secured, on our behalf, a peace for us with Him that settles our minds and hearts with a true and

lasting peace. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1

In other words, our salvation through Christ not only brings us peace with God concerning our salvation, but also maintains our peace of mind as we live in this turbulent world.

2. Peace with Ourselves

Despite the anxiety and fear that is often experienced because we live in a sinful and dark world as believers, as sheep among wolves and outsiders and pilgrims never quite fitting in, Jesus gives us a special kind of peace of mind.

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 4:6-7

God's peace of mind is not based on logic or things we can see (I'm healthy, solid job, fat savings account, they can't fire me, etc.) this is understanding, logic and what is tangible. God's peace is beyond understanding in that it is spiritual in nature. The peace He gives is based on our access to Him in prayer guaranteed by our faith in Christ. What greater peace can one have than knowing God hears and answers our prayers? This knowledge from above guards our hearts and minds from the fear and anxiety produced by the people, situations and things from below.

3. Peace with Others

When we are at peace with God and ourselves we can have peace with non-believers because we can deal with them on the basis of love as Christ has done with us. We also have peace with believers because we share Christ's love with them in the fellowship of the church.

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- John 13:35

5.

Attaining Holiness

Sin and Guilt Offerings - Part 1

LEVITICUS 4:1-5:13

We have noted that the book of Leviticus provides instruction for training in holiness, specifically through the proper manner of offering sacrifices to God by an anointed priesthood. The book itself is conveniently divided into two sections:

I. Attaining Holiness

- a. Through various practices and people.

II. Practicing Holiness

- a. By maintaining one's religious obligations.

The reason for all of this was that if Israel was to be the exclusive people belonging to a holy God, they themselves had to be holy. Leviticus was God's instruction in how to go about doing that. So far in our study we have looked at the first manner in which one attained holiness and that was through various types of sacrifice. There were five types described:

1. Burnt offerings
2. Grain offerings
3. Peace Offerings
4. Sin offerings
5. Guilt offerings

We have looked at the first three types of sacrificial offerings, in this chapter we will begin to examine the sin offering and the requirements expected from the different people offering it.

I. Sin Offering – Leviticus 4:1-5:13

At this point (sin and guilt offerings) things tend to become repetitive or confusing because there seems to be several kinds of sacrifices for – all the same thing – sin! Here is a way to differentiate each sacrifice or offering and its relationship to sin:

1. Peace Offering
 - Not mandatory
 - A request for God to look favorably on the weak and dependent worshipper. (i.e. Lord have mercy on us...)
2. Burnt Offering
 - Not mandatory
 - A petition for the forgiveness and mercy in general (i.e. The Our Father prayer)
3. Sin Offering
 - Mandatory
 - A petition for forgiveness of a particular sin (i.e. a particular lie)
4. Guilt Offering
 - A petition for the forgiveness of a particular kind of sin (dishonest character, lustful heart, lazy, attitude)

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "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,
- Leviticus 4:1-2

God introduces the next category of offerings, the sin offering, to be required where a true sin has been committed and specifies in vs. 2 that this sacrifice is required even for unintentional sins:

- Sin committed in ignorance.
- Sins which were not premeditated.

Sin was breaking God's laws and commands, even if done without knowledge or done on the spur of the moment or as a result of provocation. However, the sin offering was not sufficient to forgive capital offenses like blasphemy, murder, or adultery for which the penalty was death (Leviticus 20:10-12; Deuteronomy 22:22).

Once God establishes the need to deal with sin through sacrifice to atone for sin, He does not provide a list of the sins that require a sin offering (after all, breaking God's laws/disobeying His commands - each instance of these is sin and requires atonement and forgiveness).

A. Sin Offering for the Anointed Priest - Leviticus 4:3-12

This referred to the High Priest himself whose sin brought guilt and condemnation on the people he represented (vs. 3). The priest had to offer the most expensive offering, a bull without defect and he followed the procedure we have already looked at in studying the steps in preparing a burnt offering.

1. He brought the animal to the entrance of the tabernacle.

2. He laid his hands on the bull signifying the transfer of his sin to the animal.
3. He killed the bull.
4. He sprinkled the blood of the bull 7 times in front of the veil of the Holy of Holies; also put blood on the horns (corners) of the altar of incense; poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard.
5. He was then to burn the fat parts of the animal on the altar of Burnt Offerings.

Unlike other burnt offerings where edible parts of the animal were left on the altar of burnt offerings, for the priest's sin offering only the fat parts were burned on the altar – the hide, head, flesh, legs, entrails, and refuse were all taken to a ceremonially "clean" place outside of the Tabernacle complex and burned to ashes. The idea here was that the priest would not profit in any way (i.e. keep the hide, eat the flesh) from the offering of the animal for his sin. The symbolization of the sin offering for the Holy Priest:

- a. Laying on of hands
 - Transferred sin
 - Identified with doomed animal as doomed sinner
- b. Death of the animal represented death of sinner whose sin is not forgiven.
- c. Sprinkling of blood was an appeal to God to accept the sacrifice for sin.
- d. Burning the animal outside the camp signified that the sin had been removed from the priest as well as the people.

B. Sin Offering for the Congregation

- Leviticus 4:13-21

¹³ '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;

¹⁴ 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.

- Leviticus 4:13-14

There would be times when the nation as a whole would disobey God's commands (idolatry) or fail to carry out their duties (neglect the Sabbath or worship). In cases like this God would raise up a prophet or leader to exhort the people and part of the repentance process would be to offer a sin offering on behalf of the nation. The leaders would bring a bull to the entrance of the Tabernacle and the same procedure would be followed as the sin offering for the priests.

C. Sin Offering for a Leader of the People

- Leviticus 4:22-26

²² '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, ²³ if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect.

- Leviticus 4:22-23

The value of the animal sacrifices correlated to the ability of the one offering the sacrifice to provide, as well as the impact of the sin on

the nation. Individual leaders were important (male goat without defect), but their influence was not equal to the nation as a whole or the High Priest.

The offering of the animal was similar to the previous examples except for following:

- No blood was taken inside the Holy Place.
- Both the fat parts and the remaining parts were put on the altar of burnt offering – nothing was taken outside the camp.

This suggests that the priests could eat the parts of the animal placed on the altar of burnt offering.

D. Sin Offering for the Common People - Leviticus 4:27-35

²⁷ '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, ²⁸ 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.

³² 'But if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring it, a female without defect.
- Leviticus 4:27-28; 32

The common people (not priest or leader) who repented from sin had a choice of bringing a female goat or lamb without defect as a sin offering. This animal was less expensive than the bulls and goats required from priests and leaders. The offering followed the same procedure as the male goats where the entire animal was placed on

the altar of burnt offering, this allowed the priests to eat part of the animal.

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. ⁶ 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.

- Leviticus 5:1-6

This section elaborates on the kinds of sins that required a sin offering. Three examples are given:

1. Someone fails to act as a witness (speak up) when they know the truth of a matter, which is being judged and witnesses are sought. No matter how they acquire the information, if they refuse, neglect, or forget to come forward, they are guilty of sin.

2. A person becomes "unclean" by touching something unclean (i.e. dead body, grave, etc.) and neglects or forgets to do what is necessary to become ceremonially clean again. The sin was not being unclean, the sin was neglecting to deal with the situation.
3. Not fulfilling a vow because it was made in haste, or forgotten once made, or broken for whatever reason, would be guilty of sin. All three of these examples have the common feature of unintentional sin. Sin through neglect or forgetfulness, but not premeditated.
 - A person may not have been aware that his witness was necessary.
 - Or that he had become unclean somehow.
 - Perhaps he made a hasty promise which was as quickly forgotten.
 1. The person was still required to offer the appropriate sacrifice for atonement and forgiveness.
 2. A female lamb or goat was offered in the same manner as the offering of the common people (Leviticus 4:27-35).

E. Sin Offering for Poor People – Leviticus 5:7-10

Poor people commit sins similar to common or rich folks, but couldn't afford the required animal sacrifices, so they could offer less expensive creatures (turtledoves) which were a smaller species of doves whose name was derived from the sound made when calling out. Two birds or two pigeons were required, one partially sacrificed leaving a portion for the priest and the other totally burned up leaving nothing for the priest. In this way a sacrifice made with a

larger animal was duplicated using two small birds. Each followed the order of sin offering made for common people.

F. Sin Offering for the Poorest People - Leviticus 5:11-13

Those too poor to obtain two turtledoves or pigeons, still had to make an offering for their sins. God permitted this group to offer "fine flour" made from barley grain – 1/10 of an ephah = 6lbs. of flour. No oil or frankincense was added since this was an offering for sin (not a grain offering for peace or thanksgiving). A handful was thrown on the altar with other sacrifices burning (called a memorial offering). The rest was kept by the priest for his use.

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."

- Leviticus 5:13

Note that when done properly, the same result of atonement and forgiveness for the sinner were achieved. Whether it was a 1,000lb bull ox without blemish or a handful of baking flour – when offered by a repentant heart, according to God's command – atonement for sin was made and forgiveness for the sinner was the result.

II. Applications

We've reviewed the six different groups of people who would offer "sin offerings" said to be required as a petition to God for a particular sin. We noted that the type and manner of sin offering differed based on the category of the person offering the sacrifices – priest, leader, common, poor and poorest, were the five categories we looked at. In

the end, Paul's statement in Romans 3:23 describes the situation quite clearly, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*"

This elaborate, complex, and cumbersome system was only a preview of what was to come – a way that would accomplish the same results (atonement and forgiveness) but accomplished it in a more dynamic way and for a greater number of desperate people, not just for a single nation. In the next chapter we will examine the fourth type of offering made for sin, the guilt offering.

As we close out this chapter, I'd like to make a few observations about the sin offering.

1. The "Sin Offering" was a new development in the religion of Israel – introduced in Exodus 29:14. 36; 30:10.

- Prior to this, the burnt offering was used for sins (i.e. Job made burnt offerings in case his children may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts (Job 1:5).
- The burnt offering was an ancient practice that was used for thanks (Cain and Abel) and other communication with God (Abraham – Genesis 22).

Now that God's laws were codified (10 Commandments and Book of the Law) and a formal place and method of worship given, a distinct and clearer instruction was needed, not only to determine what sin was – a distinct way was necessary for the people to deal with corporate and personal sin. God calls upon the people to be holy as He is and gives them the Law, which will reveal their sins, unholy practices and behavior. There needed to be a way for them to unburden themselves of the sure guilt and personal suffering this knowledge would bring. God provides the sin and guilt offering

system as a temporary way to deal with sin (atonement and forgiveness via sacrificial system) until He brings about the final solution through Jesus Christ.

2. No Excuses; No Exceptions

When it came to sin there were no excuses, whether done knowingly, by mistake, through negligence or forgetfulness – when a sin occurred privately or nationally, it had to be atoned for and forgiven. The one who presented a sin offering did so by first acknowledging responsibility for the sin. (i.e. "Lord, I am guilty and I am sorry").

Note also that there were provisions for everyone in the sin/guilt offerings – from the king and nation to the High Priest, local leaders, common people, as well as the poor and poorest of citizens. As Paul said, "*All have sinned...*" and the sin and guilt offerings made provision so that all could make atonement and all could receive forgiveness and the blessings that come with forgiveness.

6.

Attaining Holiness

Sin and Guilt Offerings - Part 2

LEVITICUS 5:14-7:10

We are looking at the various types of sacrifices made by the priests, first at the Tabernacle and later on when settled in the promised land, the same sacrifices/offerings made at the temple. The five were:

1. Burnt offerings
2. Grain offerings
3. Peace offerings
4. Sin offerings
5. Guilt offerings – which we will look at in this chapter.

I've mentioned various features that we need to keep in mind that were associated with the different kinds of offerings:

A. Offering physical sacrifices according to instructions was a way of attaining and maintaining a holy status before God.

"I am holy; therefore you must be holy before me."

(Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 11:44).

- One way to attain holiness was to offer sacrifice in the proper way.

B. Each type had a specific purpose:

- Burnt = forgiveness and mercy in general.
- Peace = request for God to bless the offeror.
- Grain = to show gratitude.
- Sin = atonement and forgiveness of a particular sin.
- Guilt = atonement and forgiveness of a sinful attitude and a type of ongoing sinfulness.

C. The requirements for the various offerings were based on wealth.

- The priest would offer a male bull without defect for his sin offering whereas a very poor man would offer 6lbs. of fine flour.
- Bull = \$5,000 today / 6lbs of flour = \$6.00 - \$10.00 today.
- Note, however, that both sacrifices, properly offered, produced atonement and forgiveness for sin.

I. Guilt Offerings – Leviticus 5:14-6:7

Things get a little confusing here since only a portion of the instructions are given – the reason for the guilt offering and what is supposed to be offered. How this guilt offering is to be made is only provided in chapter 7.

In the meantime, Moses provided more information about various types of guilt offerings and their significance.

A. The source of the Law regarding the guilt offerings

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,"
- Leviticus 5:14

This formulaic introduction not only provides the source for what is to follow (God, Himself a Divine source), but also indicates that a new topic is about to be introduced. The new topic will be the Guilt Offering (5:14-6:7).

Various translations have this as "Guilt Offering," "Trespass Offering," "Separation Offering, or "Sacrifice to make things right." The guilt offerings were prescribed for two types of sin:

1. Sins against the Lord's holy things or breaking His commands.
2. Sins where someone's property was taken or damaged.

Unlike the other types of sacrifices, the guilt offering included some manner of restitution or compensation to the injured party.

B. Guilt Offerings for sins against God's holy things.

¹⁵ "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.
¹⁶ 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."

- Leviticus 5:15-16

Holy things could be sacred property or tithes, things associated with the building itself (Tabernacle or Temple). The person could have acted unfaithfully (like Nadab and Abihu who offered strange fire, or unintentionally by forgetting to offer something in the proper way.

- Forget to bring first fruits as a sacrifice for the benefit of the priests.
- Unintentionally eaten the priest's portion.
- Made a vow to God and forgot to honor it.

The guilt offering required that the guilty party determine the value of what he forgot to do, or the value of the portion he took or used by mistake and then add 20% value in compensation – in other words, the value of what he took or neglected to give plus 20%. In addition to this, he was obligated to offer a ram to make atonement and receive forgiveness. The manner in which this was to be done is only given, as I said, in following chapters.

C. Guilt Offerings for other sins requiring sacrifice.

¹⁷ "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.

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ It is a

guilt offering; he was certainly guilty before the Lord."
- Leviticus 5:17-19

This referred to sins which were forbidden in God's Law but were done in ignorance or unintentionally. Breaking God's law, even if done unintentionally or in ignorance, still made the person guilty and subject to punishment. Ignorance was no excuse. Forgiveness still required an animal sacrifice (a ram without defect) offered in an appropriate way (Leviticus 7:1-7) in order for atonement and forgiveness to be received. No compensation is mentioned for this type of offense since the individual is not aware of what specifically he did wrong, only that his conscience is aware that he has fallen short somehow.

D. Guilt Offerings that involve the property of others (Leviticus 6:1-7)

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ^{2a} "When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord, and deceives his companion
- Leviticus 6:1-2a

Unlike previous offenses which are said to be against God's holy things and unintentional in nature or due to neglect or forgetfulness, the following sins are against God Himself, and the victim is a companion, neighbor – someone close to the person who has sinned knowingly and deliberately.

^{2b} in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, ³ 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; ⁴ 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,^{5a} or anything about which he swore falsely;
- Leviticus 2b- 5a

This passage describes how one can take another's property sinfully and unlawfully:

1. He held another's goods or property as a deposit or security but failed to give it back.
2. He may have taken something by robbery.
3. He may have taken money by extortion (threat).
4. He found something lost by another and kept it. He did not report that it was found or lied about its recovery (usually by swearing falsely to cover the theft).

So, the sin of stealing broke God's 8th commandment (Exodus 20:15), violated one's neighbor, and also sinned against God in making a false vow to cover the original sin.

^{5b} 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. ⁶ 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, ⁷ 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."
- Leviticus 5b-7

Note that two actions were necessary in order to receive forgiveness for the stealing and lying to cover it up.

1. **Restitution** – the guilty party had to give back to the victim the value of what he stole plus 20% of the value of what was stolen in addition to his restitution.
2. **Sacrifice** – he had to bring a ram without defect to the priest for sacrifice for his sin to God to be forgiven.

You'll notice that the sins mentioned here assume that the guilty party is revealed and the sin acknowledged when he realized what he had done in ignorance was wrong, or once having had done wrong confessed his sins because of a guilty conscience or the desire to be right with God or at peace with the neighbor he wronged in some way – in either case, he comes seeking to make things right.

This is why their restitution was only giving back the value of what was stolen plus 20% of its value. In Exodus 22:4-9 we read that if one is accused of stealing and found guilty at trial, he had to pay double the value of the goods or animal stolen.

II. Burnt Offerings: The Priest's Responsibility – Leviticus 6:8-13

When we arrive at this section it seems that the text repeats itself by going back over the burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt offerings. However, the difference is the following – chapters 1:1-6:7 contain the Lord's instructions to the average Israelite who brought his offerings to the be sacrificed for various reasons; chapters 6:8-7:36 provide the details and responsibilities of the priests who offered the sacrifices, as well as the privileges associated with their work.

Aside from the task of making the burnt offerings brought to the Tabernacle/Temple from day to day, the priests had other duties related to the altar itself.

1. The fire had to burn at all times – Leviticus 6:8-9.
2. The ashes that had built up from burning various sacrifices needed to be removed. The priest would wear his under garments and put on a linen robe to remove the ashes and put them next to the altar, after which he would change out of these garments and wear other clothing to transport the ashes outside the camp to deposit them in a clean place.
3. He would make sure new wood was added to the altar of burnt offering and begin the day by offering the morning sacrifice.
4. He made sure that morning and evening sacrifices were offered and the fire of the altar of burnt sacrifice never went out.

III. Grain Offerings: The Priest's Responsibility – Leviticus 6:14-23

In Leviticus 2 we have the instructions for the people and how they are to proceed in making a grain offering, here God provides instructions for how the priests will handle the offering of grain and gives rules for what to do with the balance. The offeror brought about 5-6lbs of white flour, the priest took only a handful mixed with oil, incense, and salt, and threw that on the altar, keeping the rest for himself.

The priest made unleavened cakes with the rest of the flour in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. It was a holy offering because the grain

not burned was handled by the priest who was holy. In verses 19-23 the Lord adds another offering of grain, this time to be done by the High Priest:

- It was to be done when a High Priest was consecrated/anointed (Aaron - vs.20).
- Eventually it was referred to as the "ordination offering" (Leviticus 7:27).
- A cake was made on a griddle using fine flour.
- It was broken into two parts – one offered by the High Priest in the morning with the morning sacrifice and one with the evening sacrifice.
- The cake was completely burned up with no portion left for the priest.
- This sacrifice was offered up on behalf of all the priests.

IV. Sin Offerings: The Priest's Responsibility – Leviticus 6:24-30

Priests were not allowed to eat the flesh of sin offerings made for a High Priest or for the congregation since the blood of the animal was poured next to the altar on which it was sacrificed and some of the blood was also brought into the Holy Place and sprinkled seven times before the veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. He also put some blood on the horns of the altar of incense which stood before the veil leading to the Holy of Holies.

Therefore, because of the extreme holiness of these two sacrifices (for High Priest/God's people) and (the blood came into the presence of God) the entire animal was offered up with nothing left but ashes. Other sin offerings involving animals left various edible parts of the animal for the priests (it was how they and their families were supplied with food). Two boundaries were set:

1. He had to eat his share within the confines of the Tabernacle/Temple complex.
2. He couldn't eat the meat of any animals whose blood had come in the Holy Place.

These types of sacrifices (blood poured and sprinkled in the Holy Place) also had additional rules:

1. If a drop of blood had stained the priestly garment it had to be washed off immediately.
2. Blood carried about in an earthen vessel required the it to be destroyed afterwards, less some blood seep into this kind of porous container.
3. Silver or bronze vessels had to be thoroughly scoured before re-use.

Why? The sacrifice became extremely holy since it came into the presence of God at some point in the ritual.

V. Guilt Offerings – The Priest's Responsibilities – Leviticus 7:1-10

Chapter seven continues the instructions for priests concerning their responsibilities, this time for the guilt offerings and peace

offerings. The main emphasis here is on the food that the priests were to receive from the sacrifices offered. It details what could or could not be eaten by the priests, as well as the rest of God's people. The guilt offering was performed much like the sin offering except parts of the animal could be eaten.

'Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy.'
- Leviticus 7:1

Since the sacrifice was "most holy" the parts eaten were eaten in a holy place (Tabernacle/Temple courtyard). Unlike the sin offering the blood of this sacrifice was sprinkled around the altar, not on its horns and none was brought into the Holy Place. The meat was shared with every male in the priest's family.

The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it.
- Leviticus 7:7

Both sacrifices were similar and questions about one would be answered by examining the details of both.

⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.
- Leviticus 7:8-10

These verses provide information about what portions of the animal and grain sacrifices that the priests could keep for themselves and share with others in the priestly clan. We'll stop here before we discuss Peace Offerings, which can become quite involved, so we will start with that in the next chapter. I'd like to finish this section with a few comments on the food regulations and supportive nature of the sacrificial system.

VI. Food Laws

We note as we study the sacrificial system and review passages about clean and unclean as well as what could and could not be eaten, that one way the Israelites separated themselves from the pagan nations around them was to eat differently than they did. The Jewish food laws, in the type and preparation of food, served that purpose, just as keeping the Sabbath meant that God's people were on a different weekly "rhythm" than their pagan neighbors. The idea of being holy unto God was made evident by these visible differences. This was necessary, in part, because the Jews themselves had been heavily influenced by the pagan, polytheistic religion of Egypt for four centuries.

Therefore, as we study these prohibitions and regulations about Jewish food laws, I want you to keep in mind that as Christians we are completely free from these or any other food regulations anyone would try to impose on us today. We have various teachings on this:

1. Jesus

¹⁴ After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:
¹⁵ there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of

the man are what defile the man. ¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. ¹⁸ And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus, He declared all foods clean.) ²⁰ And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

- Mark 7:14-20

2. Peter

⁹ On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; ¹¹ and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, ¹² and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" ¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." ¹⁵ Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

- Acts 10:9-16

God declares food laws now removed in Christ.

3. Paul

¹ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

- I Timothy 4:1-5

For Christians, this is how all food is rendered clean – a prayer of thanksgiving. Freedom in Christ is freedom from food laws.

VII. Sacrificial System – Support

As we continue through Leviticus we will read more about the portions of the animal, grain and wine offerings that were kept by the priests, their families, as well as the Levites who assisted the priests in their work. The sacrificial system was a self-supporting system.

- When the Israelites arrived at the promised land it was divided among the tribes according to their size (population).
- Every tribe received a portion of land (tribe of Joseph two portions – one for each of his sons – Manasseh and

Ephraim) but no land for the tribe of Levi from which came the priests – from the family of Aaron and the Levites.

- The Lord Himself was to be their portion (Deuteronomy 18:2) and they were given 48 cities among the tribes in which to live (Joshua 21:1-42).

The priests, therefore, were supported by the sacrifices brought by the people, a portion of which they kept. The Levites and maintenance of the Tabernacle/Temple were supported by the 10% tithe the people donated of which the Levites gave 10% to the High Priest. (10% of the 10% received).

When the people were faithful, the sacrificial system supported their place of worship along with those chosen by God to minister to their spiritual needs by the offering of various sacrifices and officiating at the different holy days and festivals throughout their religious calendar. If the people were unfaithful, the system and its ministers fell into disuse and decay, and the people were cut off from God since there was no other way to approach and connect with Him at the time, except through the sacrificial system. It was the spiritual lifeline between God and His people.

7.

Attaining Holiness

Peace Offerings and Summary

LEVITICUS 7:11-38

In our previous chapter, I explained that Leviticus is a book of instruction about the Jewish sacrificial system providing information for both the one offering the sacrifice and the one presenting the sacrifice which would be the priests. When explaining the responsibilities from the one offering, the sacrifices are listed in the following order:

1. Burnt offerings
2. Grain offerings
3. Peace offerings
4. Sin offerings
5. Guilt offerings

However, when Moses, the inspired writer of Leviticus, explains the presenter or priestly responsibilities and manner in presenting the sacrifice to God, the list of the types of sacrifice is listed in a different order:

1. Grain offerings
2. Sin offerings
3. Guilt offerings
4. Burnt offerings
5. Peace offerings

No reason for this change is given.

In this chapter we will look at the instructions for the priests concerning the peace offering and then review a summary of all the offerings to familiarize ourselves with these sacrifices which were the key elements of Jewish worship.

I. Peace Offering – Priestly Responsibility – Leviticus 7:11-36

'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the Lord.'
- Leviticus 7:11

As we read on, we will see that the rules here mostly have to do with what part of the sacrifice the priest could keep and eat or not eat, as well as who else could share this food.

¹² 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.
¹³ With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. ¹⁴ 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.
¹⁵ '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.
¹⁶ But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary 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; ¹⁷ but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. ¹⁸ So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings is ever eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, and it will not be credited to him. It will be an unclean thing, and the person who eats it shall bear his punishment.

- Leviticus 7:12-18

The rules were very specific.

In this passage the reader learns for the first time that the peace offering could be used for three purposes:

1. As a **Thank** offering expressing a gratitude for deliverance (from illness, enemies, adversity, etc.), blessings granted, or prayers answered.
2. As a **Votive** offering – when a blessing had been granted or deliverance given in response to a vow made in connection with the answered prayer (i.e. I'll do this, God, if you do that...).
3. As a **Freewill** offering – simply to express one's joy and gratitude towards God with no specific reason or occasion – spontaneous joy (i.e. I want to do something!).

Therefore, the instructions for peace offerings were tied to the type of peace offering that was being made:

1. Thank Offering

The animal was presented, accompanied with a grain offering done in one of several ways.

- A. Worshipper could present unleavened cakes or wafers (thin cakes – like thin crust pizza) which were made with fine flour, spread with olive oil.
- B. The presenter could also bring regular cakes made with leaven.
- C. Part of every element offered (i.e. animal, various grain products) were given to the priest.
- D. "Heave" offerings were the parts that were ceremonially offered up to God (by lifting the sacrifice up towards God in the air as a symbolic offering but which were kept for the priest's personal use). These were left for the priests as opposed to the portions left for the one offering the sacrifice.
- E. The part of the animal left after the sacrifice had been made, had to be eaten on the same day the animal was sacrificed.

This was to encourage fellowship and sharing as family, friends, and the poor were invited to attend the sacrificial ritual and share in the meal afterwards. It is a joyful event meant to be shared – meant to be a blessing.

2. Votive and Freewill Offerings

These followed the same procedures except for one exception.

A. The food belonging to the offeror had to be eaten on the same day or the following day, but not on the third day.

- If food was eaten on the third day, the benefit of the sacrifice was annulled and became a sin.
- An extra day was given since votive and freewill sacrifices were more personal in nature and a smaller number of people accompanied the one offering the sacrifice thus more time to eat and reflect.

¹⁹ '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. ²⁰ But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the Lord, when he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people. ²¹ 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.'"

- Leviticus 7:19-21

Here we have negative rules concerning the eating of the meat from the animal that had been sacrificed as a peace offering. There were general rules about clean and unclean:

- A. Meat/flesh that had touched anything unclean were not to be eaten. This is because by touching something unclean, the meat being offered also became unclean and then eating that meat would make the person unclean. That unclean meat was to be burned with fire.

- B. A person who was unclean for whatever reason could not eat the meat from the Peace offering no matter the reason it was offered.

- C. The reason for these prohibitions was that the animal in question, along with the person offering it, were devoting something to the Lord, as they and what they offered had to be holy – as the Law defined holiness. Remember, the sacrificial system was designed to create "holiness" in God's people and the rules were there to help them separate themselves from the world, what was holy from unholy, and what was clean from unclean – according to God.

- D. Anyone who violated these rules knowingly were to be cut off from their people. What did that mean? There is much speculation about the exact meaning of this term:
 - 1. Ostracized by the people (Israelites).
 - 2. Capital punishment.
 - 3. God sending premature death.
 - 4. God would exterminate the person's lineage (for example the lineage would not be included in the genealogical record).

Consensus and context fits the first view best.

²² Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall not eat any fat from an ox, a sheep, or a goat. ²⁴ Also the fat of an animal which dies and the fat of an animal torn by animals may be put to any other use, but you certainly are not to eat it. ²⁵ For

whoever eats the fat of the animal from which an offering by fire is offered to the Lord, the person who eats it shall also be cut off from his people. ²⁶ And you are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷ Any person who eats any blood, that person shall also be cut off from his people."

- Leviticus 7:22-27

There were prohibitions regarding fat and blood, not only in the context of the following, but also in the regular management of livestock, and handling various animals and birds.

A. They were not to eat the fat of animals whether they were slaughtered for food or died in some other way. When animals were sacrificed, and meat was left to eat (as in the Peace offering) the fat was not to be eaten under the punishment of being cut off from the people. If you are cut off from God's people, you no longer belong to God and enjoy the blessings and protection that come with that relationship.

B. They were not allowed to eat the blood of the animal.

- This law had originally been given to Noah – Genesis 9:24.
- This rule also held for private consumption or eating the blood of an animal sacrificed.
- The "life" was in the blood and so by sprinkling some upon the altar where the sacrifice was burned and at times (sin offering) sprinkling blood before the veil of the Holy of Holies – the blood was used to signify that a life was being both offered in death and specifically offered to God.

- To eat the fat was presumptuous in that it was taking God's portion for oneself; to eat the blood was sacrilegious because it contained the essence of life which could only be offered to God – it was a spiritual matter.
- A reminder that one who had violated these rules unintentionally could offer sin and guilt sacrifices to be restored.

²⁸ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁹ "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. ³⁰ His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the Lord. He shall bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before the Lord. ³¹ And the priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and to his sons. ³² And you shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. ³³ 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. ³⁴ For I have taken from the sons of Israel the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sacrifices of their peace offerings and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their allotted portion forever from the sons of Israel. ³⁵ '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. ³⁶ 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."

- Leviticus 7:28-36

There were also positive provisions for the priests, not only negative prohibitions.

A. The breast of the animal sacrificed as a Peace offering belonged to the priest. It was lifted up (wave offering) as a way to present it to the Lord (since the sacrifice was His), but not on the altar, instead kept for the priest as God's representative. The fat of the animal, however, was burned on the altar.

B. In addition, the right thigh (where the meat was) was also given to the priest. It was stipulated that the breast and the right thigh of the Peace offerings were to be their provision forever, along with the major portion of all grain offerings.

1. Sin, guilt, and burnt offerings left no portions for the priests since the entire animal was burned to ashes.
2. Priests were due their portions from the day they were ordained.
3. They were to receive these forever, meaning as long as the Law of Moses was in effect and practiced, or for the rest of the age.
4. The priests shared these provisions among themselves so there was to be no hoarding or priests in need.

Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.

- Leviticus 7:10

³⁷ This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering, and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings, ³⁸ which the Lord commanded Moses on Mount Sinai on the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai.
- Leviticus 7:37-38

This summary statement concludes the instructions for the sacrificial system to be practiced by God's people. God names each sacrifice and adds the "ordination offering" which may refer to the grain offerings made by and for the High Priest on the day he was anointed or consecrated.

Moses also states when these were given by God – Mt. Sinai, and when the people began to offer them – while they wandered in the wilderness. He emphasizes that the practice of the sacrificial system was not a suggestion or optional – it was a command of God, and we know that there were consequences.

II. Summary and Review – Sacrificial System

We have looked at the sacrificial system given as the core element of Jewish worship. It was an all-inclusive religious and spiritual system that consumed time, a person's wealth, and careful observance in order to comply. However, when fulfilled:

- A. It created a truly distinct religious experience unlike anything practiced by surrounding nations.
- B. It brought the individual before God and interacted with Him in a sure (the worshipper knew what to do and why to

do it) method – he had no doubt that what he did was what God wanted and the way He wanted it.

- C. The worshipper had concrete blessings as the result of his worship – forgiveness, peace of mind, satisfaction, joy, and hope.

No other religion provided these features because no other system or religion provided holiness as its goal (gratification, awe, fear, relief, mystery, celebration – yes) but holiness and nearness to the true and living God – No!

Since these sacrifices were at the heart of Jewish worship and a preview of the ultimate sacrifice and salvation to come, I'd like to finish out this chapter with a brief review and summary of each sacrifice/offering in the system before we move on to other features of the Jewish religion, including the priests, their garments, the place of worship and various festivals, observances, as well as rules of conduct for the people.

Review and Summary of the Various Offerings/Sacrifices:

The Jews did not begin offering sacrifices at this time, they had been building altars and offering sacrifices since the time of Cain and Able (Genesis 4:1-8). God provided the instructions about sacrifices to instruct how the people were to offer sacrifices in the Tabernacle, which they had recently built, and the role of the priests, which He had just anointed (Exodus chapters 25-40).

As I have said there were five major kinds of offerings:

1. Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1-17; 6:8-13)

An animal was offered (bull, sheep, birds) and the one offering would lay hands on the animal's head, thus identifying with it. The worshipper would slaughter the animal (except birds offered by the poor, which the priest would kill) after which the priest would place the animal on the altar and burn it completely to ashes. The burning of the complete animal signified an offering totally consecrated to the Lord and by virtue of bringing the animal and laying hands on its head, the worshipper was also signifying his complete devotion to the Lord. The burnt offering was a way the worshipper expressed his desire to be wholly devoted in every way to God. A great act of piety.

2. Grain Offerings – Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23

Grain or cereal offerings consisted of:

- Fine flour with oil or frankincense (offered this way).
- Or baked into bread or cakes or wafers also offered with oil or frankincense.
- Only a small portion put on the altar, the balance given to the priests.
- Most offerings were made without leaven, but seasoned with salt as a reminder of the covenant they had made with God.
- Grain offerings, usually given along with animal sacrifices, were offered as burnt or peace offerings.

3. Peace Offerings – Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-36

- The word for peace offering is related to the Hebrew word "Shalom" – peace, well-being.

- This sacrifice was shared by the Lord, the worshipper, and the priest in that each received part of the animal. Fat, liver, kidneys – Lord
- Breast, right thigh – priest
- The rest of the animal was given to the worshipper.
- The nature of sharing in this sacrifice was to celebrate and maintain peace between God and man, as well as peace between man and man.

Three types of Peace offerings:

1. Thanksgiving – express general gratitude
2. Votive – related to the completion of a vow.
3. Freewill – celebrate and thanks for fellowship with other believers.

A unique feature of the Peace offering was that the worshipper had to eat his portion on the day or the day after the sacrifice was made. This led to the Peace offering becoming an occasion for a fellowship meal with the worshipper along with family and friends.

4. Sin Offering – Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30

The sin offering was made for the following reasons:

1. If the anointed priest sins.
2. If the whole congregation sins.
3. If a leader of the people sins.
4. If one of the common people sins.

Some elements of the sacrifice remained the same no matter who was making a sin offering:

- A. The sin was done in ignorance or unintentionally. There was no sacrifice for sins done in defiance or rebellion. These sinners were cut off from the people (Numbers 15:30).
- B. An animal without defect was sacrificed. The poor could offer birds instead of animals.
- C. If the sacrifice was done correctly, the atonement was made and the sin forgiven.

5. Guilt Offerings – Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7

Guilt offering is also called the trespass offering (KJV) or the reparation offering (REB; NJB). It was similar to the sin offering in that it was for unintentional sin and the procedure for offering was similar. The main difference was that restitution of some kind was added to the sacrifice – this suggests that the sin offerings were for offenses against God and His holy things and guilt offerings were for offenses against other people or their possessions.

It seems like the first three kinds of offerings (Burnt, Grain and Peace) were voluntary, but the sin and guilt offerings were required to atone and receive forgiveness for sins against God and other people.

III. Our Offerings Today

¹⁶ Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food and drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon, or a Sabbath day— ¹⁷ things which are only a shadow of

what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.
- Colossians 2:16-17

Paul is denouncing false teachers who were trying to impose various observances of the Law on Christians. He says that the things of the Law (including the sacrificial system we are studying) were merely a shadow – a preview of what we would have in Christ.

For example:

1. **Sacrifice** – not animals, but the Son of God sacrificed His perfect human body (blood) to pay for the sins of everyone once for all time.

²⁶ For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷ who has no daily need, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because He did this once for all time when He offered up Himself.
- Hebrews 7:26-27

2. **Offerings** – Christians now offer themselves as living sacrifices through holy living and Christian service.

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- Romans 12:1-2

3. **Incense** – Our prayers go up before God as the sweet aroma.

When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

- Revelation 5:8

4. **Sacrifices of Praise** – The singing of the saints in worship.

Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name.

- Hebrews 13:15

5. **Sacrifice of Service** – The good deeds done in the name of Christ rise up to God as acceptable and pleasing offerings.

And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- Hebrews 13:16

6. **Giving Money** – This, if done sacrificially and cheerfully, are like a fragrant aroma.

But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

- Philippians 4:18

7. **Self-Sacrifice** – There was no provision for this in the Law or sacrificial system, but today with Christ's sacrifice as an example,

Christians can be called upon to lay down their lives in martyrdom for the faith, the church, their brethren, and their Lord.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters.

- I John 3:16

Today, unlike the past, we can be like Jesus our Lord, and be both the one who offers the sacrifice, as well as the sacrifice being offered like Peter, Paul, and countless other martyrs throughout history.

I quote the conclusion by Coy Roper – the author of my resource commentary.



To be God's holy people, the Israelites had to separate themselves from the world and dedicate themselves to God, and so do we. They had to remove uncleanness from the camp, and we must abstain from sins of the world. They were called to become a community that was centered on worship of the Lord God and so are we. Further, they were to become a people who gave to God by presenting sacrifices to Him. So must we! We don't offer animals and grain – we offer our bodies, voices, deeds, money, and at times, our lives!

8. A Consecrated Priesthood

Part 1

LEVITICUS 8:1-9:24

Let's take a look at our outline for Leviticus to see where we are in our study.

Outline: Leviticus: Training in Holiness

1. Attaining Holiness – (Leviticus 1-16)
 - a. Through Offerings (1-7)
 - b. Through a Consecrated Priesthood (8-10)**
 - c. By Distinguishing Between the Clean and the Unclean (11-15)
 - d. By Observing the Day of Atonement (16)
2. Practicing Holiness – (Leviticus 17-27)
 - a. Individual Responsibility to Keep God's Moral and Ritual laws (17-20)
 - b. Priestly Responsibilities (21-22)
 - c. The Nation's Responsibility to Promote Holiness (23-25)
 - d. Reasons for Practicing Holiness: Blessings and curses (26)
 - e. Evidence of Holiness: Vows and Valuations (27)

As you can see, we've done the first section of part one (offerings), which is the longest of the various sections as well as key to understanding these other sections. The offerings demonstrate and describe the duties of both the offeror and the priest in presenting a sacrificial offering to God. This section also explains the reasons and results for each offering, the type of offerings, and when parts of the offering were held back, and how it was to be divided between the one offering the sacrifice and the priest.

We now move on to examine the process of consecrating men to serve in the priesthood.

I. Attaining Holiness Through a Consecrated Priesthood - Leviticus 8-10

To better understand this section, we need to use a timeline that begins in the book of Exodus, which overlaps some of the events taking place in Leviticus.

1. The construction of the Tabernacle complex is completed - Exodus 40

Materials were donated by the people and instructions for the design and furnishings were given to Moses by God, and the Lord empowered several artisans to fabricate His exact plans so that all was done according to Divine instruction. God's chosen people had a place where they would interact with the living God - next came instructions on how and when that could and would be done.

2. Sacrificial System – Leviticus 1-7

Offering sacrifices of animals and produce was not new, however, going forward, this process was going to be regulated by God for those sacrifices offered at the Tabernacle. Sacrifices were no longer to be offered by a variety of people on hills or under trees in different ways to different gods.

From now on, certain sacrifices for certain reasons would be offered in only one place (the Tabernacle) and offered to only one God – the true and living God who had saved the Israelites from Egyptian bondage exhibiting incredible signs and wonders proving that He was the true God with power. He had set aside (consecrated) Moses and Aaron as leaders and His spokesmen.

Now it was time to set aside or consecrate not only the place where the people were to come before God with their offerings (Tabernacle), but also the men who were to serve as mediators between the people bringing their offerings and God Who would receive these. The men who would serve in this capacity would be the priests (at this time, these were to be Aaron, the High priest and his four sons).

3. The Priesthood – Leviticus 8-9

In Exodus 28-29 God gave Moses the instructions for making the special garments for the priests as well as how to prepare the anointing oil that was to be used exclusively for holy purposes such as consecrating (setting aside for God's use) the Tabernacle, its furnishings, as well as the priestly garments and the priests themselves when the time came.

In Exodus 40:17-33 we read about the completion of the Tabernacle and then how God descended upon it to demonstrate that they had completed it according to His will and that, as promised, He was now

with them, dwelling among His people by being present in the Tabernacle.

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ Throughout their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; ³⁷ but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. ³⁸ For throughout their journeys, the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.
- Exodus 40:34-38

What is left to do is prepare the priests for their constant interaction in close proximity to God by consecrating them (setting them apart for His service) through a special ceremony given to Moses to carry out for this very purpose.

II. The Consecration Ceremony

- Leviticus 8-9

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "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, ³ and assemble all the congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting." ⁴ So Moses did just as the Lord commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, ⁵ Moses said to the

congregation, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded us to do."

- Leviticus 8:1-5

Note that the Tabernacle complex, the priestly garments, the priests and anointing oil, as well as the animals for sacrifice and baskets of bread have all been mentioned and prepared in advance for the coming of this day in various passages of Exodus (garments - Exodus 28; oil - Exodus 30; animals and bread - Exodus 29).

Note that the Pentateuch is one book with five volumes and not five separate books. All five volumes are interconnected. As God's chosen representative, Moses serves in God's role for these proceedings. It will be God Himself acting through Moses who will be the One who is actually consecrating the Tabernacle, the priests, and their garments to the service of the Lord.

Note that after Moses will have offered the sacrifices and consecrated the people and objects with the holy oil - he will no longer be allowed to offer sacrifice or enter the Holy place or Holy of Holies. Despite his leadership of the people and direct relationship with God, after their consecration, only the priests will be able to offer sacrifices or enter the Holy Place and only the High Priest will be allowed to enter the Holy of Holies - once per year.

Note also that Moses is instructed to gather the people (probably the leaders of the tribes) to witness the consecration since the people, as well as the priests, would participate in the offering of sacrifices to God. It was their Tabernacle too!

A. Dressing Aaron with the Priestly Garments - Leviticus 8:6-9

Moses' first action is to wash the priests (Exodus 29:4) probably in the water of the laver situated in the courtyard and symbolizing their cleansing from sin and purification.

- Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar (High Priest and priests - Exodus 28:1).

This act, as well as the sacrifices to follow, emphasized the fact that the priests chosen by God to preside at ceremonies designed to deal with the people's sins, had to first have their own sins acknowledged and removed. As the High Priest, Aaron had a more elaborate attire than his sons who wore linen garments tied with a sash worn over underwear (like shorts) along with a head covering (like a cap).



Aaron's clothing placed on him by Moses:

1. **Tunic** – linen under garment (Exodus 28:39; Exodus 39:27) - Worn by all priests.
2. **Sash** – length of cloth made of fine, twisted linen – used like a belt (Exodus 28:39; Exodus 39:29).
3. **Robe** – worn by the High Priest over his tunic as a sign of his office – blue in color, sleeveless. Made of beautiful material, woven from a single piece of cloth without a seam. A series of small, golden bells and pomegranates were sown to the hem of the robe. The bells signified the presence of the High Priest in the Tabernacle before God, the pomegranates were a symbol of righteousness as well as knowledge since it was believed that this fruit, when opened contained 613 seeds, the same number of laws contained in the Torah. (Exodus 28:31-35; Exodus 39:22-26).
4. **Ephod** – was like an apron and made of blue, purple, and scarlet material with designs of golden thread woven into the fabric. It was attached to the shoulders with golden chains and the patches on the shoulders to which the chains were connected each held an onyx stone with the names (six on each stone) of the tribes engraved in alphabetical order (Exodus 28:6-14; Exodus 39:27. These symbolized the burden of responsibility for the people's spiritual welfare carried by the High Priest.
5. **Breastpiece** – a square pouch folded over on itself so something could be carried inside its pocket. It was made with the same material as the Ephod and adorned with 12 precious stones, each with the name of a tribe of Israel. Symbolically these testified to the fact that when the High Priest entered the Holy

Place, he took the entire nation with him. He represented all the people.

6. **Urim and Thummim** – Two stones that could be cast like dice in order to produce a yes, no, or neutral answer to a question. It was believed that if used properly by the High Priest that the answer came from God (Exodus 28:30). These stones were kept in the pocket of the breastpiece.
7. **Turban** – cloth made of fine linen wrapped about the head of the High Priest. Only the High Priest wore a turban, the other priests wore a cap (Exodus 28:29; Exodus 39:28; Leviticus 8:13). A golden plate (holy crown) was attached to the turban, and it was inscribed with the words, "Holy to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36-38; Exodus 39:30-31).

This uniform worn by the High Priest was impressive. It was designed to make men marvel, made for glory and beauty (Exodus 28:2). The High Priest's garments reflected the significance of the work he did, and the greatness of the God served.

B. Anointing the Tabernacle and Priests

- Leviticus 8:10-13

¹⁰ Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it and consecrated them.

¹¹ 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. ¹² Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him. ¹³ 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.
- Leviticus 8:10-13

Moses uses the special oil to sprinkle/anoint/set apart the Tabernacle and all of its furnishings and utensils. He anoints the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard seven times (7 = perfect or complete – a combination of 3 = God + 4 = creation / North, South, East, West). The altar is, therefore, completely, and perfectly consecrated for its intended purpose, which will be to offer sacrifices to God by fire.



Moses anoints Aaron as High Priest and then dresses his sons as priests with more simple garb and consecrates them as well. In Exodus 28:41 Moses was commanded to do the following to prepare Aaron and his sons for the priesthood:

1. **Anoint** – to set apart for God's purpose.
2. **Ordain** – appoint to a special task or role, in this case as priests.
3. **Consecrate** – this means to be assigned to "holy" positions used by God for His purpose.

Aaron and his sons have been anointed in that they have been set apart from the rest of the Israelites to serve God in a special way; they have also been ordained to serve as priests on behalf of the people before God, and have received the special clothing as a sign of this role with Aaron wearing the elaborate clothing signifying his special role as High Priest.

C. The Consecration Ceremony – Leviticus 8:14-9:24

Now begins the longest part of the preparations for the priest to begin their ministry – the sacrifices that Moses and then the priests themselves will offer in order to make their transition from individuals who are part of the Israelite nation to anointed, ordained, and consecrated priests of the Most High God.

For the purpose of brevity, I will list the steps that Moses performs and commands to be done in their order of appearance:

1. A Sin Offering – Bull – Leviticus 8:14-17

We have previously reviewed this type of sacrifice (sin - one of the five). This time it is Aaron and his sons who place their hands on the bull signifying that they transferred their sins onto the animal. After it was killed, Moses dabbed the bull's blood on the horns of the altar and poured the rest at its base, thus cleansing both the altar and the priests of uncleanness and sin, rendering both the altar and priests ready to offer sacrifice on behalf of the people and their sins. Moses

completes the sin offering by burning the fat parts of the animal on the altar and the rest at a "clean" place outside the camp. As in all sin offerings, no part of the bull was kept for food – it was completely burned up.

2. A Burnt Offering – First Ram – Leviticus 8:18-21

Burnt offerings were made to signify the dedication that the offeror had towards God. In this case it signified the dedication Aaron and his sons had toward the ministry which they had been given.

3. Ordination Offering – Second Ram – Leviticus 8:22-29

This offering was not among the five regular offerings that would normally be made by the priests. It was part of their ordination process:

- a. Moses served as priest and presented the ram.
- b. Aaron and sons again placed hands on the animal.
- c. Moses slaughtered the animal.
- d. He then placed some of the animal's blood on Aaron's right ear lobe, his right thumb, and on the big toe of his right foot; he then repeated the procedure for his sons.
- e. The symbolism here was that the priest's entire body (head to foot) was consecrated to the Lord's service and the priest accepted his ordination into ministry.
 - He was to use his ears to hear and understand God's commands.
 - His hands to do God's work.
 - His feet to go where God directed.

- f. Aaron and sons took parts of the animal and the grain elements and made a "wave offering," lifting them up in the air to symbolize that they (not Moses or the people) were the ones making the offering.
- g. Moses then took these from them and burned them on the altar.
- h. Moses took the remaining breast of the animal and made a "wave" offering with it (symbolically offering it to God) but kept this part for himself which was custom for priests to do for offerings which were not meant to be burnt or sin sacrifices (i.e. peace offerings).

4. Anointing Aaron and Sons

Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons' garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.
- Leviticus 8:30

This was the second time Moses anointed them. The first time (Leviticus 8:10-13) was at the very beginning before the consecration ceremony began. Differences this time:

- a. 1st – oil only – 2nd – oil mixed with blood.
- b. 1st – oil poured on Aaron's head – 2nd – oil sprinkled on Aaron and his garments.
- c. 1st – only Aaron anointed – 2nd – anointing includes Aaron's sons and their garments.

The main difference between these two anointings was that the first prepared Aaron (purified him) to make his offerings before God with his sons; the second was to confirm that the rituals had accomplished their purpose and the anointed ones were now considered to be priests in service to God.

5. 7 Day Waiting Period – Leviticus 8:31-36

After the consecration/ordination rituals were performed (before the leaders of the people gathered at the entrance of the Tabernacle complex) the newly ordained priests kept a seven day vigil remaining in the Tabernacle complex day and night. This was under pain of death. Each day Moses would offer the sacrifices of ordination and Aaron and his sons would eat of it along with the grain offering (unleavened bread) – burning up whatever was not eaten. This process was repeated seven days.

Why seven days?

- To fully atone for their sins (vs. 34) and demonstrate the absolute purity and holiness of the priests (their ordination repeated 7 times = perfection).
- A witness to the people concerning the holiness of their priests.
- A time for the priests to reflect on their unique and demanding role in God's service.

6. Activities on the 8th Day – Leviticus 9:1-21

As the seven days are winding down, Moses gives instructions for what will happen when the vigil is over and the priests will begin their official duties. He instructs Aaron and his sons, as well as the people, to each prepare the animals and grain for sacrifices that the

priests were to offer for the first time by themselves without his assistance. One sacrifice was to be for the priests themselves and the other for the people after which the Lord would bless them (Leviticus 9:1-7).

a) **Offering for the Priests** (Leviticus 9:8-14) – The first offering is a "sin" offering for Aaron and his sons, thus atoning for their sins and providing forgiveness. A second animal was offered as a "burnt" offering signifying their complete devotion to the Lord (since the animal was completely reduced to ashes).

b) **Offering for the People** (Leviticus 9:15-21) – Now that the priests have been fully ordained and have first offered sacrifices for their own sins and to demonstrate their complete devotion to God, they are ready to minister on behalf of God's people. Aaron and his sons make several kinds of offerings on behalf of the people:

1. A sin offering – atonement and forgiveness.
2. A burnt offering – complete devotion to God.
3. A grain offering – reinforcing the purpose and conviction of the worshipper, going over and above what was required.
4. A peace offering – celebrated and sought peace with God and joyful fellowship with other people.

At this point the priests have been officially ordained, have begun their duties in the recently constructed and consecrated Tabernacle where they have just completed offering various sacrifices for themselves and the people, the last of which calls on joyful fellowship with their brethren and even God Himself – everything done according to God's will and specific instructions.

7. Blessings from the Lord

²² 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. ²³ 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. ²⁴ Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.
- Leviticus 9:22-24



God confirms Moses' leadership and Aaron's new role by an appearance of His glory, not His person. Fire appears to burn up the sacrifice on the altar. The people recognize God's presence with a shout (of joy and awe) and fall on their faces in reverence and worship. God's appearance gives authority, credibility, and assurance that the sacrificial system and the priests who administer it effectively achieve its purposes:

- To atone and forgive sin
- To offer thanks in an acceptable manner
- To accept the devotion offered by worshippers
- To create joyful fellowship between man and God.

Moses and Aaron have jointly blessed the people as a sign of their solidarity, and God has provided a miraculous sign as approval of these men and their roles before the people, thus providing a high point in the history of the Jewish nation. Unfortunately, this success will not last long as we will see in the following chapter.



9. A Consecrated Priesthood

Part 2

LEVITICUS 10:1-20

Chapter 10 closes out the first section of Leviticus where the manner and regulations concerning the priestly duties of offering sacrifices for themselves and the people are explained in chapters 1 to 7.

In chapters 8 to 10 God provides the process in which the priests were consecrated and ordained into ministry on behalf of the people. As is the case when God prepares a setting and a life for His people, it isn't long before they fall into sin. The high points are followed by low points.

- God gives Adam and Eve Paradise, and they disobey (Genesis 3:1-6).
- Cain and Abel are living freely and in peace until Cain kills Abel (Genesis 4:8).
- God cleanses the earth and sets Noah and his family to restore it – Noah gets drunk and naked in his tent (Genesis 9:20-22).

- The Israelites are miraculously freed from Egyptian slavery and while Moses is receiving the Law directly from God, the people fall into idolatry and drag Aaron, the future High Priest, into their sin with them (Exodus 32:1-6).

The same cycle repeats itself as the period of preparation is completed, Aaron and his four sons are ordained and begin their ministry as priests at the Tabernacle of God on behalf of God's chosen people. Failure mars their first efforts of service.

I. Failures of the Priesthood – Leviticus 10:1-20

1. Failure #1 – Nadab and Abihu – Leviticus 10:1-15

¹ 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. ² And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. ³ 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.
- Leviticus 10:1-3

Note that less than a year has gone by since the Golden Calf incident took place and the familiar cycle had occurred.

- God delivered them from Egypt with mighty signs and wonders.

- God had safely led them to Mt. Sinai before bringing them into the Promised Land.
- God makes a covenant with them to be their God and they are exclusively His people – this was a situation that guarantees them safety and prosperity in a land that would be theirs.
- All of this for a people who lived as slaves, who had no national identity or leadership and were doomed to systematic extinction by a nation who feared and despised them.

God with Moses is preparing the plans for a place (Tabernacle) where they can worship Him and an acceptable manner to come before the living God who will dwell among them (sacrificial system). God also prepares the Law which will guide and purify their conduct, however, before any of these things can be given to them, they fall into idolatry which sparks a revolt that leads to the death of 3,000 men.

We read further on that Moses intercedes on behalf of the people, effectively turning away God's wrath where God was about to destroy the people and begin again His plan to save mankind, this time using Moses' descendants instead of Abraham's descendants. However, God hears Moses and his pleas on behalf of the people and the cycle turns favorably towards the Israelites once again and we see the signs of this uptick repeat itself. God renews the covenant, replaces the tablets of the Law, begins the building of the Tabernacle, and preparation of the priests for ordination starts in earnest as the work to complete these things is put into motion.

I review these events with you because this cycle is the pattern that continually dominates the history of the Israelites throughout the Old Testament, whether it's material from the Pentateuch (Genesis

- Deuteronomy); History (Joshua – Esther); Poetry (Job – Song of Solomon); Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel) or the Minor Prophets (Hosea- Malachi).

The cycle follows the same pattern:

- a. The people are in trouble or in disobedience to God and are crying out for help. Sometimes there is trouble or decline leading to eventual destruction, but no one is aware or calling out for help (i.e. Noah).
- b. God intervenes somehow, sends, or raises up a savior (Moses, Gideon, Esther, etc.) or He creates a miraculous situation (the flood) which saves the people or changes the situation eventually for the better.
- c. The people enjoy a period of peace, faithfulness, and prosperity for a time.
- d. Someone (a king or leader) or the people as a whole slowly drift back into sin, whether it's immoral behavior (i.e. David with Bathsheba) or the curse of idolatry where the Jews didn't abandon the true God altogether but practiced syncretism where they added the worship of local pagan gods (Baal) to their practice of Jewish Temple worship. Usually as an accommodation to spouses who were not Israelites.
- e. This usually led to more flagrant idolatrous practices, the lowering of moral standards, the loss of God's favor, blessings, and prosperity, which eventually resulted in a weak and unholy society, which God would punish with economic ruin, illness, war and dominance by neighboring countries.

- f. Someone would call out to God for help, or God would acknowledge the suffering and dire straits of his people and He, in some way, would intervene on their behalf to save and restore them and thus begin the cycle anew.

The differences between the various types of books is that the Pentateuch and history books told this story in real time (chronologically); the books of poetry examined the people and their various experiences and thoughts at different points in the cycle, and the prophets warned of the danger in heading towards the bottom point of the cycle (disobedience, lack of repentance and punishment) however, they always ended their prophecies with the promise of renewal and blessings at the top of the cycle.

Chapter 10 of Leviticus recounts another quick turn of this deadly cycle. Once again, God had renewed the people after the incident with the golden calf with the new tablets, the building and construction of the Tabernacle as well as the service of Aaron and his four sons as High Priest and priests. No sooner had their ministry begun when Aaron's two eldest sons disobeyed one of God's instructions concerning the offering of incense, and as a consequence were immediately put to death by God Himself for their disobedience!

1. WHAT WAS THEIR SIN?

Offering the burning of incense in front of the altar of incense located in the Holy Place before the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was acceptable and a normal task of the priests. There are many ways they may have knowingly disobeyed or dishonored God that day:

- A. They required burning coals in their fire pans in order to burn the specially prepared incense. The only coals permitted would

be from the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard which had been consecrated and considered holy. They may have obtained their fire or heating element from another source, thus making it unholy or profane in God's eyes.

- B. Usurping the authority of the High Priest. Some speculate that they performed a rite at a time when only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy Place, thus spoiling the offering.
- C. They offered unauthorized incense. The incense used for worship in the Tabernacle was made from a Divine formula (Exodus 30:34-38) which was not to be used for anything else but worship. Some believe that they substituted some other kind of incense to burn.
- D. Serving while intoxicated. In verses 8-9 God forbids the priests from drinking wine or strong drink while they are on duty so that they will be clear minded and obey the rules as to what is holy and what is profane. Some conclude that Nadab and Abihu may have been intoxicated, thus making their offering unacceptable.

Since the sin was called "strange fire" (in Hebrew the English word strange meant unauthorized, foreign, or profane) it would follow that the transgression had to do with the fire used to burn the incense. The conclusion is that it wasn't taken from the fire of the altar of burnt offering whose fire was kept burning 24/7 and considered holy. The fact that they were killed by some type of fire from God also points to the nature of their offense.

To help Aaron deal, not only with their deaths, but also how their bodies were disposed of, God confirms that their offense was serious in degrading and disrespecting the absolute holiness of God, thus truly meriting their punishment. In remaining silent, Aaron

demonstrated his own devotion and respect for God's holiness despite his own distress.

LEVITICUS 10:4-7

Moses enlists the help from Aaron's cousins to remove the bodies outside the camp because Aaron and his two remaining sons cannot leave the Tabernacle complex under pain of death. Aaron and his remaining sons were not to mourn (rip clothes, uncovering their heads) lest it be seen as questioning God's judgement; the people could mourn, but as a sign of grief over the sin committed.

Instructions Following the Failure of Nadab and Abihu – Leviticus 10:8-15

The Lord responded to this failure of the priests by producing further instructions to help them avoid sinning in the future as they carried out their duties.

A. What priests were forbidden to do. – vs. 8-9

They were not to drink alcohol when on duty since this would impair their judgement and be quite disrespectful to God who they were serving, and in whose presence they were ministering.

B. What priests were supposed to do. – vs. 10-11

They were to abstain from wine and strong drink while performing their duties so they would be clear minded in doing an important and complex work which God defined.

1. Distinguishing between what is holy and unholy on behalf of the people.

- Holiness was determined by how close to the Lord a person, action, or object was.
 - For example, God's people were holy; the Tabernacle where He dwelt was holy; the priests devoted to Him were considered holy; the sacrifices and incenses offered before Him was holy; all that came near or specifically devoted to Him were considered "holy."
2. Priests were to think clearly so they could determine what was clean or unclean.
- Cleanness of a person or thing related to a person or thing's ritual condition, which determined if someone or something could participate in worship.
 - Because God was perfectly holy, only those people and objects who were ritually clean could approach or be used before Him.
 - If something common (unholy – not consecrated by God – i.e. leader of the people, who was not a priest entered the Holy Place) sin would be the result and punishment the consequence. If someone unholy and not consecrated by God drew near to God without permission – sin and punishment resulted.
 - Nadab and Abihu – brought unholy/unclean fire into the Holy Place.
 - Uzzah – reached out to steady the ark as it was being transported and was struck dead for unlawfully touching it (II Samuel 6:7).

The point is that the rules for clean and unclean were quite numerous and complex, and the priests had to know these and apply them because a mistake could lead to serious consequences. The priests not only had the responsibility to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people and carry out this duty correctly, they were also responsible for teaching the people the differences between what was holy and what was profane, but also all the regulations that governed what was clean and unclean – as well as the procedure followed to make clean what had become unclean for one reason or another. All of these tasks required a sound and clear mind which was reflected in the command to avoid strong drink while on duty.

Therefore, after the strange fire incident God gives the priests further instructions that include:

A) Command forbidding drinking on duty. B) Instructions about additional duties – discern and teach the people concerning holy and unholy/clean and unclean. He then gives them a third instruction:

C. Information about what they were to receive. - vs. 12-15

Moses reassures Aaron and his sons that they would always be compensated and cared for in lieu of the difficult work they performed on behalf of the people.

1. **Grain Offerings** – Aside from the handful of fine flour they threw on the altar, all the bread, cake, or other grain offerings were theirs to keep and eat. Since the grain offering was considered most holy, it had to be eaten in a holy place, so it was eaten beside the altar.
2. **Peace Offerings** – The animals sacrificed as peace offerings held back the breast and right thigh of the offering for the

priest. Since it was not categorized as a most holy sacrifice it didn't have to be eaten near the altar – a "clean" place would suffice, which meant that the priest could share this meat with his family at home. A "wave" offering is when the priest lifts up the breast or thigh symbolically offering it to God, but keeps these for himself.

These instructions showed that the work of the priest was quite demanding, but God provided assurance that the priests would be cared for throughout their lives.

2. Failure #2 – An Uneaten Sin Offering – Leviticus 10:16-20

¹⁶ 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, ¹⁷ "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. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ 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?" ²⁰ When Moses heard that, it seemed good in his sight.
- Leviticus 10:16-20

- A. **The Problem** – When a "sin" offering was made (for a personal sin) part of the animal was kept back for the priests to eat. Moses notes that Aaron's two remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithmar have offered a sin sacrifice but left the entire animal on the altar to burn without taking their portion to eat. It was a serious breach because the atonement and forgiveness of the sin was only completed once the priest had finished the process by eating his portion of the sacrifice. This meant that the sin of the individual (a congregation of people if it was offered on their behalf) was not atoned for or forgiven and a new sin was committed by the priests because of their negligence.
- B. **The Response** – Aaron acknowledges that they made the sin sacrifice but felt unworthy to eat the priestly portion, probably due to the fact that he was still feeling the effects of the death of his sons – perhaps also thinking he bore responsibility for their sin. His dilemma was that if he was not in favor with God – would eating the sacrifice just make things worse? Parental guilt is nothing new.
- C. **The Resolution** – It was Moses, not God, that was angry at the breach of protocol (God already knew Aaron's heart and that his failing was due to human weakness and not rebellion and carelessness like Nadab and Abihu). Moses, however, accepts Aaron's explanation, thus relieving him of any sin and guilt for this event. No further information is provided but from what we know about the sacrificial system, they could resolve this error by offering another sin offering, this time sacrificing one animal for the priest's sin and then a second animal for the original sin of the people and complete the process by eating the priest's portion next to the altar.

Note that the priest would not eat any portion of the animal offered for his own sin since he was not permitted to profit in any way from his sin. The animal was completely destroyed. He ate a portion of the animal he offered on behalf of someone else's sin.

This brings an end to the information concerning the sacrificial system and the ordination of the Jewish priesthood. In chapter eleven Moses provides another manner of attaining holiness – distinguishing between what is clean and unclean from God's perspective.

SUMMARY

As we close out this section, there are three lessons mentioned in my commentary resource book that I'd like to share before we move on to the next part of the book of Leviticus.

Lesson #1 **Leaders are Fallible**

Leaders do not equal perfect. God knows leaders sin because there were sacrifices especially designed for secular leaders (heads of families and tribes) as well as religious leaders (priests and High Priests). This obvious situation made it necessary that God send a perfect leader (King and Priest) to offer a perfect sacrifice (Jesus on the cross) to remove all sin forever.

Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

- Acts 22:16

Let us therefore pray for both our secular and spiritual leaders because, like us, they are weak and need Jesus to help to lead properly.

Lesson #2

Obedience is Essential for Holiness

God shows His love to mankind in many ways. However, He requires obedience as a Holy God. The first lie Satan told was that there were no consequences for disobeying God. That same lie is promoted and even celebrated today and like Adam and Eve, Nadab and Abihu, Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) we are repeatedly reminded that there are always consequences for disobedience. Those who strive to be holy as God is holy, do so consciously practicing obedience to God's commands. It's the first step.

Lesson #3

Innovation Can Be Dangerous

Innovation in the arts or engineering can be quite rewarding yielding newer, better, and more efficient or pleasurable results. It's part of God's command to multiply and subdue creation – God wants us to innovate in this area of life. When it comes to worship, however, the opposite is what He wants – stick to the instructions given.

Humans innovate in worship to please themselves, not God. In the Old Testament God provided exactly what He would accept as worship and has also done the same in the New Testament. The task is to maintain our obedience to His word concerning worship from generation to generation.

10.

Attaining Holiness

Distinguishing Between Clean and Unclean

LEVITICUS 11:1-15:33

This chapter's subtitle (Distinguishing Between Clean and Unclean) factors into every aspect of the entire book of Leviticus. God stated that He was Himself the holy God and this required that His chosen people be holy as well. Holiness, as far as God was concerned, meant that He was/is transcendent (glorious, incomprehensible, inscrutable) just to use one word to try to describe Him. Every characteristic of God is so uniquely glorious that it cannot be fully measured or grasped.

This means, for example, that we learn from the Scriptures that God is loving (John 3:16), that He is even the embodiment of love (John 4:7 - "God is love"), but even with this knowledge we still cannot accurately plumb the depths and heights of his capacity to love just ourselves, let alone every human since Adam.

The Jews used the word *QADASH* which meant sanctified, consecrated, or separated – in God's case it referred to His "otherness," His complete separateness from sinfulness and this sinful world. He was separate in kind and could not be measured – He would only be adored and obeyed, there was/is no other possible or acceptable reaction or interaction that one could have with a

being whose name was, "The Always Present One." The Holy God chose for Himself and His divine purpose a people from one man (Abraham) which He formed into a nation and revealed His holy self to them and commanded that they become a holy nation.

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."

- Leviticus 11:45

Of course, the nation could not be holy in the same manner that God was holy (He was divine, they were human), however, they could reach an attitude and practice that would make them separate and consecrated when compared to other nations, not when compared to God. One way to reach this state of holiness (separateness, consecration, glory) was to differentiate between what was "clean" and what was "unclean" according to God's command, not human wisdom, or desire. So, to put our study into context, holiness before God, or to be the holy people of God, the nation needed the following:

1. A holy manner of approaching and interacting with God in order to thank Him, ask for forgiveness, praise Him – the Tabernacle and the sacrificial system were given as the Holy Place and holy manner that a people could approach a holy God.
2. The individuals serving as intermediators between the people and God were also holy, having been consecrated and ordained as priests by God Himself through Moses.
3. And now the people themselves were to strive to become holy by learning to differentiate between what the holy God considered clean as opposed to unclean in five areas of daily living experienced by all Jews.

Knowing the clean from the unclean in these five areas led to personal holiness because it would separate the Jewish nation from all the nations around it.

I. Holiness and Cleanness - Chapters 11-15

Chapters 11-15 provide the details concerning clean and unclean in the following areas. In broad terms:

A. Clean and Unclean Living Creatures

Here, God defines which animals were clean, thus defining what His people could and could not eat. In this section, He also describes how His people could contract a state of uncleanness and what was to be done when such a thing happened.

In Leviticus 9:15-21, Aaron had offered sacrifice on behalf of the people to cleanse them of sin and the appearance of the glory of the Lord to the people confirmed that the sacrifice on their behalf was acceptable to God (just as the resurrection of Jesus proves that His sacrifice on our behalf was accepted by God).

The people were made holy by the sacrifice of the priest, the discerning of clean and unclean maintained that holiness and witnessed that holiness to the nations around them. The most obvious, visible witness was the food they ate and what they didn't eat. Because of time and space constraints, I will explain the divisions and reasons for various rituals which will enable you to read the details with a clearer understanding of their system.

If you want an in-depth explanation for each command and ritual, I encourage you to read the commentary which has nearly 600 pages

filled with details. What we're doing here is summarizing a complex set of regulations regarding food and other human behaviors.

There were four categories of creatures that could or could not be eaten.

1) Animals – Leviticus 11:1-8 - For an animal to be considered "clean" and thus allowed to be eaten were:

- It had a split hoof (divided into two toes)
- Chews the cud – ruminates - Chewing the food to soften it and produce additional saliva to aid digestion.

Animals had to have both of these features in order to be classified as clean and thus edible. Having only one feature rendered the animal unclean. If a person touched a living unclean animal (i.e. camel) he was not affected but if he touched an unclean animal that was dead he became unclean and had to undergo a process in order to regain his clean status (meaning his ceremonially clean status = able to participate in worship) once again.

2) Fish – Leviticus 11:9-12 - Fish also had to have both fins and scales to be considered clean.

3) Birds – Leviticus 11:13-19 - For birds, God simply listed 20 kinds of birds that were considered unclean leaving the remaining type as clean and edible. The common feature of unclean birds was that they were meat eaters (many of which were scavengers or birds that ate rodents – i.e. squirrels, mice, etc.).

4) Winged Insects – Leviticus 20-23 - Insects in general were considered unclean. The exceptions were various types of locusts and crickets (which had a long and ancient history of food among

Middle Eastern people). There was no penalty for eating unclean food, but if one did, he had to follow the procedure to remove this uncleanness from his soul.

B. Contracting and Dealing with Uncleanness - Leviticus 11:24-40

The various rules and procedures for ridding oneself of the uncleanness due to contract with unclean things or creatures that were dead or clean creatures that had died, could be summarized in three statements:

1. Touching the carcass of a dead, unclean animal made them unclean.
2. The remedy for uncleanness was washing with water and allowing a certain time to pass.
3. Dead animals contaminated things and those things had to be cleaned to be decontaminated. If that was not possible, the unclean items were destroyed.

Waiting until evening when a new day began. Unclean things touching working vessels required them to be washed (clothing, wooden objects, skin, or sacks), however, contact with an earthen vessel (bowl or cup) required the vessel to be destroyed (because of its porous nature).

C. Reason for Clean/Unclean Requirements - Leviticus 11:41-47

God reveals the reasoning behind these laws:

1. He, Himself was holy.

2. Because He was holy, He insisted that His people be holy.
3. Following these laws about clean/unclean would help them remain holy – meaning ritually clean so they could approach Him at the Tabernacle/Temple to worship and fellowship with Him.

Contact with unclean creatures did not make them sinful, but unclean for purposes of worship (no sacrifices were necessary to remove uncleanness) only washing and waiting, along with a denied entry to the place of worship. Some scholars have offered other reasons for the clean and unclean laws:

- Helped avoid practices connected to idolatry (i.e. eating of blood).
- To distinguish Jews from other nations that had no food restrictions at all.
- To promote general health and welfare (i.e. eating carcasses or certain insects, birds, or marine life that would lead to illnesses (unknown at the time)).

D. Uncleanness and Childbirth – Leviticus 12:1-8

In this chapter the focus is on the clean/unclean status of the mother after giving birth and the procedure to becoming clean (ceremonially) again.

1) Giving birth to a male child:

- She, not the child, was unclean (loss of blood) for 7 days.

- Anyone who touched her or anything she sat on would be unclean (need to be washed).
- She would have the baby circumcised on the 8th day.
- The 8th day would also begin her final 33 days of restricted uncleanness (would not contaminate others or things touched) but still not allowed to enter the Temple.

2) Giving birth to a female child. Same procedures except the time of uncleanness was doubled to 14 days and 66 days restricted from entering the Tabernacle or Temple to offer sacrifice.

3) After the period of the mother's ritual uncleanness was over the woman could come and offer sacrifice to remove her ritual uncleanness caused by the flow of blood connected to the birth process. Scholars suggest that the isolation of the mother with her baby, because of her ritual uncleanness, worked to her advantage.

- Lowered risk of infection and contamination by exposure to people and things.
- Provided a time of rest from daily chores and opportunity to bond with new baby.
- Protected her from premature return to conjugal life and duties.
- Double time for girls because they were believed to be more fragile and required more time to strengthen and stabilize.

We know, however, that if the rules were commands from God, they ultimately had the best interests of the mother and child at heart.

E. The Uncleaness of Leprosy – Leviticus 13:1-14:57

Chapters 13 and 14 deal with the diagnosing of the skin disease commonly known as leprosy and the response by the priests to the one who had this illness. Some background on the leprosy of that time:

a) The Hebrew word *TZARAATH* translated into the English word “leprosy” did not exclusively refer to what we know as Hansen's disease where people lose feeling in their extremities and become deformed as they lose body parts, which is highly contagious and was, until recently, incurable. The Hebrew word meant a lesion, plague, glow, itch, eczema. Like the word “cancer” it described a variety of ailments that had similar symptoms but degrees of severeness from benign lesions to chronic incurable leprosy.

b) God provided various ways to diagnose the different skin diseases and charged the priests with this responsibility – they were the first physicians of the Jewish nation, responsible for three tasks:

1. They diagnosed the illness (they didn't treat or dispense medicine to heal).
2. They quarantined people suspected of having a contagious illness.
3. They reexamined those in quarantine to determine if they could rejoin society or return to quarantine in order to protect the camp from infection.

1. General Instructions – Leviticus 13:1-8

The chapter begins with instructions for the priests when someone was brought to them suspecting that they might have leprosy. It was the priest's prerogative to determine what was clean or unclean

since a person with a temporary or non-malignant sore or condition either remained clean or went through a cleansing process after he healed. A person, however, found to have leprosy remained unclean for the rest of his life.

2. Examples Given – Leviticus 13:9-44

Several real-life cases are described:

- Vs. 9-17 – A swelling in the skin
- Vs. 18-23 – A boil on the skin
- Vs. 24-28 – A burn on the skin
- Vs. 29-37 – Infection on the head or chin
- Vs. 38-39 – Bright spots
- Vs. 40-44 – Infection on a bald head

3. Consequences of Leprosy – Leviticus 13:45-46

The consequences for the one infected was separation from the people and worship at the Tabernacle. Reinstatement was possible if the illness left the person, and he was verified by the priests (this is why Jesus sent the leper He healed to go show himself to the priests – Matthew 1:44).

4. Garments with Leprosy – Leviticus 13:47-59

Obviously, a piece of clothing could not contract a human disease but destructive mildew, fungus, or mold affected clothing as leprosy or other ailments affected the skin. The approach was the same in that the priests examined the garment and decided if it was simply to be washed, quarantined, and then re-examined or burned. Seeing that the Israelites did not have many changes of clothing, to destroy a

piece of clothing was a significant loss. The detailed guidelines, however, enabled the priests to judge if a particular piece of clothing was clean or unclean.

We need to remember that clean and unclean in the context of skin diseases or clothing infected with mold or other rot were not determinations of sinfulness, but rather pertained to ritual cleanness for the purpose of approaching God in worship.

5. Cleansing Process for a Former Leper – Leviticus 14:1-20

REQUIRED RITUALS – LEVITICUS 14:1-9

The priests would inspect the leper to render him free from illness. The ceremony of cleansing involved:

1. A cleansing ritual by the priest involving two birds.
2. Washing, shaving, entering the camp but not one's tent for seven days.
3. On the seventh day, he was to shave off all his hair, bathe his body, wash his clothes – then he was clean, and his cleansing was public knowledge.
4. Sacrifices had to be offered to complete the process (Leviticus 14:10-20). This was done on the eighth day of the process in order to purge his pollution from the sanctuary and give thanks to God for his healing.
5. Once certified as cleansed he was then required to make a guilt, sin, and burnt offering with a grain offering.

6. Provision for the Poor – Leviticus 14:21-32

God also instructed that a poor person could make a lesser offering but attain the same result – cleanness. The idea was that one who was financially disadvantaged was not to be spiritually disadvantaged. Poor people could still please the Lord.

7. Houses with Leprosy – Leviticus 14:33-53

These instructions are really meant for the future when the people will have entered and settled in the Promised Land and living in houses they will build or capture from the people they will displace (Canaanites, etc.). The laws are similar to those for cleansing garments from mold or mildew and referred to as leprosy.

- At first sign, the priest was called in to determine if the house was to be cleansed, stripped down and replastered or completely destroyed. This was based on the degree of infection and if it would be removed permanently.
- If a house could be repaired and restored without infection then the priest would perform a cleansing ceremony to render the house clean and thus its residents ritually clean, as well – so long as the house was unclean, so were the people who lived in it.

⁵⁴ This is the law for any mark of leprosy—even for a scale, ⁵⁵ and for the leprous garment or house, ⁵⁶ and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot— ⁵⁷ to teach when they are unclean and when they are clean. This is the law of leprosy.
- Leviticus 14:54-57

God confirms that these rules and regulations are His commands in dealing with leprosy on the body, clothing, and in their houses. This

is how to discern and deal with the command to be holy by discerning between clean and unclean in the matter of leprosy.

F. Uncleanness by Bodily Discharges - Leviticus 15:1-33

This chapter reviews ritual purity (clean and unclean) and those regulations related to human sexuality – to uncleanness caused by bodily secretions from both male and female sexual organs and the process of restoring ritual purity. The chapter is divided into five parts:

1. The uncleanness brought by a man's abnormal discharges - Leviticus 15:1-15

This would refer to a disease like gonorrhoea, which would produce the continual loss of whitish fluid over time. This would render a man unclean and anything he came in contact with was also defiled. This impurity was removed by washing and a day's quarantine until sundown. Once he was healed (infection and discharge stopped) he would:

- Quarantine for seven days.
- Wash his clothes and body.
- Offer two birds – one as a sin, and the other as a burnt offering by the priest.

He and the camp would then be ritually clean.

2. The uncleanness caused by a man's normal discharge.

¹⁶ 'Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁷ As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁸ 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.

- Leviticus 15:16-18

These instructions refer to involuntary nocturnal emissions, as well as normal intercourse with a woman (wife). The emission of seminal fluid rendered a man ritually impure and required that both he and his wife bathe before they could resume religious activity.

3. Uncleanness caused by a woman's discharge lasting many days - Leviticus 15:25-30

A woman was considered ritually unclean for seven days after the start of her periods. Anything she touched, anyone who touched her, or where she sat became impure. If she had sexual relations with her husband the both of them were considered unclean for seven days. At the end of her cycle, she was considered clean again since her menstrual flow stopped, no need for special offerings since this was a natural, monthly occurrence.

4. Uncleanness caused by a woman's discharge lasting many days - Leviticus 15:25-30

The reason (on-going discharge) for women to be unclean was the same as men. In a woman's case it was usually a problem with her cycle or some other illness whose symptom was a discharge of some

kind. To return to ritual purity was also the same as for men. Once the flow stopped:

- Quarantine for seven days.
- Wash clothes and body.
- Offer two birds at the Tabernacle.

This offering would signal her ritual purity and her thanksgiving and recommitment to God.

SUMMARY

To finish this chapter, section, and topic, which I have compressed into a single lesson, I quote Leviticus 15:31-33:

³¹ "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." ³² 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, ³³ 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.

- Leviticus 15:31-33

This explains the reasons that these laws were given:

- a. Preserve the holiness of the Tabernacle.
- b. Prevent anyone who was ritually impure from even approaching the Tabernacle.
- c. Avoid the serious consequences for the impure to approach God.



11. Observing the Day of Atonement

LEVITICUS 16:1-34

Let's look at our outline to fix exactly our position with regards to our study of the book of Leviticus.

Training for Holiness

I. Attaining Holiness – Leviticus Chapters 1-16

- a. Through offerings (Leviticus 1-7)
- b. Through a consecrated priesthood (Leviticus 8-10)
- c. Distinguishing between clean and unclean (Leviticus 11-15)
- d. By observing the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)**

II. Practicing Holiness – Leviticus chapters 17-27

We will list these sections when we begin these in the next chapter. For now, I want to review and comment on the clean and unclean section which we briefly covered (Chapter 11-15) in a single lesson.

There are a few points I'd like to make and clarify before we move on to examine the most important ritual done only once a year by the High Priest and that was the Day of Atonement described in chapter 16.

1. Uncleaness Did Not Equal Sin.

To be unclean meant that a person was not in a condition to come before the Lord at the Tabernacle and offer any type of sacrifice. The rules for clean/unclean in regards to food, leprosy, various bodily discharges for both men and women, and regulations for women after they gave birth were instituted by God to form a pattern of behavior that reflected and honored God's innate character of holiness (transcendancy, glory, inscrutability).

By accepting and willingly following these preconditions for coming into the presence of God, the Jews were following God's rules and procedures for being ceremonially clean/pure and thus able to approach the living God without danger or rejection because of some form of impurity. God gave the rules simply because humans would not know what was clean/unclean for God. Again, to be unclean was not a sin and did not require sacrifice in most instances (exception was when healed from leprosy). A person unclean for one reason or another was not ashamed or felt guilty, it was something that happened from time to time that needed to be remedied (usually through bathing and cleaning objects that had become contaminated).

2. There Were Some Advantages to the Clean/Unclean System

- A. **Theologically** – The people had a clear set of rules by which they could both please God and maintain the holiness of God's Tabernacle and nation.

- B. **Morally** – The rules encouraged behavior and respect consistent with God's broader teachings concerning moral conduct in matters of sex.

- C. **Practically** – This clean/unclean legislation led to a healthier lifestyle for the people.

3. Some Characteristics of "Uncleanness"

As Christians, we are not subject to these laws in order to come before God. Why? – Christ has cleansed and continues to purify us with His blood each day (Acts 2:35; I John 1:7-9) and in addition to this has put the Spirit of God within us so we don't have to go to a place to approach God – we are continually before Him and continually cleansed to do so by the sacrifice of Christ serving us through our faith in Jesus. However, this being said, the old system described in Leviticus had its own features. For example:

- A. Cleanness was not contagious, but uncleanness was. Just as one infected with a virus today can pass it on through contact with others, uncleanness could also be passed on through contact with things or people.

- B. Certain categories of animals and birds, etc. were considered unclean, but people were not (the poor, those who were uneducated, city vs. country folk, etc.)

- C. Uncleanness was a ceremonial condition not a moral condition. It was inconvenient and time consuming, but not shameful.

- D. Removing uncleanness mostly required quarantining, bathing, cleaning or disposing of various clothing or objects,

along with visits with priests or offering of sacrifices to publicly confirm purification.

E. However, indifference or ignoring the rules about clean and unclean normally led to sin and eventual punishment by God.

4. Basic Reasons for These Laws

"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."

- Leviticus 15:31

The primary reason for these laws was to protect sinful humans who were in close contact to God Who dwelled in their midst. They also helped the Israelites distinguish themselves from other nations who may have had different names, languages, and territories, but shared eating habits.

5. Do These Laws Apply to Us Today?

They no longer apply to us, however, we can still learn from this teaching and the experience of the Jews.

A) We now know that none of these rules apply to individuals in the Christian age and we need to watch out for those who would try to impose them on us.

¹³ "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by

abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,"
- Ephesians 2:13-15

We can eat pork, any type of fish, and bodily discharges of any kind do not render one impure before God. We can associate with any person or culture for the purpose of the gospel – some people are lost and need the good news, but no one is considered automatically unclean. We know through Christ (Mark 7:19) and Peter (Acts 10:12-15) that no food is unclean and we can eat any food, and our prayer of thanksgiving to God is what purifies it (I Timothy 4:5). Our only restriction on food is when we hurt someone's weak conscience by eating what another brother believes is forbidden and move him to do the same against his conscience (I Corinthians 8:10-13).

B) Another valuable lesson and parallel is the pursuit of holiness by believers. The Jews did this by fulfilling the ordinances given regarding clean and unclean for the purpose of maintaining ritual cleanness/purity as they would interact with God at the Tabernacle. The New Testament does not require Christians to be ritually pure, but it does require us to be morally pure.

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.
- I Timothy 5:22

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- II Corinthians 7:1

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

- I John 2:15

We are God's holy nation and strive to be and remain holy and pure unto God, before Christ, in unity with the Spirit. How do we do this?

1) We distinguish between what is clean and unclean before we consume it. Not food, but the media (books, pics, music, images, entertainment) we consume:

- Porn is impure/unclean.
- Comedy that is filled with vulgarity, blasphemy – is unclean.
- Movies filled with unholy ideas, glamorize crime, use woman as objects, promote what God has described as an abomination are unclean.
- These are not things that Christians should be consuming if they are striving to be pure!

In other words, we don't need to be concerned for spiritual reasons, what food we consume, but rather what words, ideas, and images we consume and what words and ideas come out of our mouths.

¹⁷ Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

¹⁸ But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

- Matthew 15:17-18

We still pursue purity, but in a different way.

I. The Day of Atonement

- Leviticus 16:1-34

The Day of Atonement given by God at this point of Jewish history is at the center of Jewish Law. It was meant to be a permanent statute (Leviticus 16:34) and is still observed to this day known by its Hebrew name, Yom Kippur. It was about "atonement" – that which leads to or results in the forgiveness of sins.

The Hebrew word *KAPAR* translated into the English word "Atonement" (mentioned 15 times in Chapter 16) meant – cover over; atone; pacify; or propitiate. In other words, on the Day of Atonement, Israel's sins (all the sins of the nation) were covered, purged, or removed.

As I said, it was at the heart of the Jewish Law and appeared near the middle of the Torah in the middle of third of five books (chapter 14 is the exact middle – atonement is in chapter 16). God provides instructions about the Day of Atonement with appropriate warnings concerning the importance of careful observance of this feast.

¹ 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. ² The Lord said to Moses: "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.
- Leviticus 16:1-2

The idea here is that God controlled the times and manner that the priests could approach Him in the Tabernacle and used the recent

deaths of Nadab and Abihu as examples of the consequences for not doing so.

LEVITICUS 16:3-10

God first outlines, in general terms, the steps taken to accomplish the atonement/purification for the priests and his family, the people, and then the Tabernacle itself:

Step 1: The priest would bathe completely to insure ritual cleanness.

Step 2: He would only put on the basic clothing of his linen undergarment, linen tunic, his sash, and linen turban. These were his "working clothes." In coming before God, who appeared above the ark, covered by the Mercy Seat (with the two angels facing each other), the High Priest entered as a servant without the ornate trappings of the High Priest worn before the people (i.e. 12 precious stones on his chest piece, gold plate on his turban, all completed with his multicolored robe made with finely woven threads).

Step 3: He would bring various animals to sacrifice first for his own sins, then other animals for the sins of the people. These constituted a burnt offering and a sin offering for himself – bull/sin offering – ram/burnt offering (ram was a male sheep). He would then receive two male goats from the people – one for a sin offering and one as the "scapegoat."

Step 4: Once assembled, the procedure was as follows:

- A. The priest would offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, as well as the ram as a burnt offering for himself.
- B. The two goats were presented before the Lord at the Tabernacle as a sin offering for the people.

- C. The priests would then cast lots to determine which goat would be offered to the Lord and which would be the scapegoat.
- D. The goat chosen for the Lord would be sacrificed as a sin offering.
- E. The other goat was presented live before God, and then to make atonement, was set free into the wilderness as the scapegoat.

Step 5: Once the instructions were given, the actual sacrifices would be made (Leviticus 16:11-28). This passage describes in greater detail the offerings that were previewed in verses 3-10. However, the same order was followed:

- A. Offerings on behalf of the High Priest and his family of priests.
- B. Offerings on behalf of the people.
- C. Offerings on behalf of the Tabernacle and its contents.

All of these had to be atoned for, cleansed, and sanctified. This section provides additional details:

- A. The use of incense in offering sacrifices.
- B. The priest entering the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed bull on the Mercy Seat (cover of ark) itself.
- C. Only when the smoke of the incense covered the ark was the High priest to enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of the bull – if he entered before he would die. The idea was that the smoke from the incense masked the presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

- D. Sprinkling the blood seven times on the Mercy Seat, on top of the ark, and in the air in front of the Mercy Seat (where God was). By doing this he made atonement for himself and his family.

- E. The goat sacrificed and whose blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies served to atone for the people as well as purify the Tabernacle complex. It was thought that the Tabernacle, situated in the midst of a sinful, impure, unclean people, became unclean itself simply by being in proximity to these people. This was similar to one being close to a leper catching the disease by contagion. With this in mind, the blood of both the bull and goat were sprinkled on the altar of burnt offerings in order to purify it and in so doing, purify all the furnishings and elements in the entire Tabernacle complex.

- F. The High Priest would lay both hands on the head of the remaining live goat (a gesture signifying the transfer of the sins and transgressions of all the people of Israel). Then another person would lead this goat out into the wilderness and then release it to wander there. The significance here was that the sins of the people were atoned for by the death of one animal and they were removed from the people and sent away by the other animal led into the wilderness – out of sight out of mind.

Step 6: Once all the offerings for the Day of Atonement were completed, the normal activities of the Tabernacle complex would resume.

- A. Aaron would bathe his body and get dressed.

- B. He would resume his priestly duties.

- C. The men who had brought the live goat to the wilderness and had disposed of the sacrifices made in connection with the Day of Atonement, both had to wash their clothes, bathe themselves, and only then could return to camp.

Step 7: Making the Statute (Day of Atonement) permanent.

²⁹ "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; ³⁰ 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. ³¹ It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. ³² 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, ³³ 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. ³⁴ 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.
- Leviticus 16:29-34

These verses reveal four truths about this observance.

1. It was to be observed permanently – vs. 29; 31

- Tenth day of the seventh month – six months after Passover.

2. A day of rest and humility – vs. 29-31

- Time of fasting, prayer, devotion.

3. A responsibility of the High Priest – vs. 32-33

- Handed down from one generation to the next.

4. A day when atonement for sins was accomplished – vs. 32-34

- A time when the High Priest, the people, and the place of worship were purified.
- No matter where you were, it was a fresh start, a time for rejoicing.

We've read where the Laws were given, which naturally led to them being broken, and now, when and how those who broke those laws were forgiven and restored.

II. Comparison

In both the Old and New Testaments, purification required blood because it was the most precious substance available to man, since it contained life itself (Genesis 9:4). So far in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, we've reviewed the reasons and procedures for the sacrifice and offering of the blood of animals as atonement and for the forgiveness of sin.

These, however, were a preview or shadow preparing us for a far superior offering of blood to be made at the right time by Jesus Christ. I say far superior for five reasons:


1. It was the offering of One who was both human and Divine. Such an offering was far better than those of animals (Hebrews 9:13-14).
2. It was a willing sacrifice. Animals had no choice (John 10:14-18).
3. It was a sinless sacrifice, holy, innocent, and clean. Animals were only to be without physical defect (Hebrews 7:26).
4. It was a once for all time sacrifice. The sacrifice of animals was required on a daily basis at a minimum (Hebrews 9:28).
5. It would take away sins once and for all time. Animal sacrifices arrested sin and put it in a suspended state until Jesus' sacrifice completely eliminated sin since His blood was worthy to make proper atonement and secure eternal forgiveness for all sin (Hebrews 10:14).

In this way Jesus' sacrifice fulfills the purpose and promise of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

III. Conclusion

This concludes the portion of Leviticus dealing with the sacrificial system. Here, briefly, are a few lessons this teaches us:

1. God takes sin seriously. Being holy, He must punish sin.
2. The just punishment for sin is death since sin contaminates us and inevitably leads to both physical and spiritual death (Romans 6:23).
3. God graciously offers His own Son's blood/life to atone for our sins and obtain forgiveness for them.
4. We receive this atonement and forgiveness through faith expressed in repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).



12. Keeping the Moral and Spiritual Laws

LEVITICUS 17:1-20:27

We now begin the second major part of the book of Leviticus. The first part contained instructions on how to obtain holiness:

- Through offerings.
- By having a consecrated priesthood present the offerings of the people directly to God in a holy place (Tabernacle complex).
- By distinguishing between clean and unclean.
- By observing the Day of Atonement each year.

The second part of the book, which begins in chapter 17, provides the people with instructions about how one stays or maintains personal holiness.

The first section of the second part deals with one's personal responsibility to keep the moral and spiritual laws given by God in chapters 17-20. The first section (chapter 17) deals with issues related to blood.

I. The Sanctity of Blood - Leviticus 17:1-16

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.
- Leviticus 17:11

Since blood played such an important role in the sacrificial system, which in turn was used by God to sanctify His people, it is logical that it be the first topic to consider when reviewing various laws and regulations that helped maintain the holy nature given to the Israelites by God.

A. Only Domestic Animals Killed as Sacrifices - Leviticus 17:1-9

No animal was to be killed or sacrificed for food by any Israelite except at the Tabernacle. Slaughtering an animal for food without sacrifice was forbidden. Note that they had manna to eat and rarely ate meat since animals were so valuable and needed to begin breeding when they arrived at the Promised Land.

The main purpose of this rule was to centralize worship at the Tabernacle and to stop the pagan practice of sacrificing animals to pagan gods in open fields. Each territory had its local gods and people would offer sacrifices to appease these deities as they

travelled from place to place. The Jews had God dwelling among them within the Tabernacle and He led them from place to place, eventually to the Promised Land. This was a serious offense in that it denied the priests their portion of food and was punishable by being "cut off from the people," which could mean:

- The elimination of a line of descendants.
- Excommunication from the community.
- Execution by the Lord Himself.

This offense was considered as serious as killing a human – vs. 4.

B. Eating Blood was Prohibited – Leviticus 17:10-12

¹⁰ '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. ¹¹ 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.' ¹² 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.'

- Leviticus 17:10-12

This teaching quickly establishes three purposes:

1. Repeats and confirms the prohibition of against eating blood – Leviticus 3:17; Leviticus 7:26-27.

2. Gives the reason behind the rule. Life is in the blood and blood is used to atone for sin.
3. God will Himself punish those who violate this law.

The idea being that if you eat the blood, you may forfeit your own lifeblood for doing so.

C. Wild Animals Killed by Hunters - Leviticus 17:13-14

The Israelites could kill and eat a "clean," wild animal, but not its blood. The blood ban was for all animals since blood played the same part in every living creature's life.

D. Animals that Died from Other Causes - Leviticus 17:15-16

Again, this refers to the "clean" category of animals who died from illness, accident, or were killed by other animals. For the Jew, just touching an animal that had died in these ways made him unclean and he would need to quarantine until dark, bathe, and then return to camp. The carcass, however, could be sold to a foreigner (Deuteronomy 14:21).

The Bible permits a person to eat meat (New Testament permits all types of meat – Acts 10:9-16; Romans 14:2-3) and permits those who refrain from eating meat (Romans 14:3). It also makes the distinction between humans (made in the image of God – Genesis 1:27) and animals created by God but not in His image. There is a difference in the value of a human and an animal according to the Bible.

II. Forbidden Sexual Relations – Leviticus 18:1-30

For Israel to become a holy nation, deviant sexual behavior had to be identified and labeled as sin. This chapter can be divided into three parts:

1. Introduction – who gave the laws and why
– Leviticus 18:1-5.
2. The laws required to obey – Leviticus 18:6-23.
3. Summary and consequences for disobedience
– Leviticus 18:24-30.

A. Introduction

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am the Lord your God. ³ 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. ⁴ You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the Lord your God. ⁵ So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord.
– Leviticus 18:1-5

In the introduction there is the reminder that the laws about to be given come from God Himself and are given to Moses who will relay them to the people. These laws are part of the on-going process to transform these people into the holy people of God. The reward for

obeying these is not simply a holier life experience, but also a continuing life experience.

B. The Details of the Prohibitions – Leviticus 18:6-23

1. Sexual relations with relatives prohibited – Leviticus 18:6-18

This included a man having sex with:

- His mother – vs. 7
- His stepmother (father's wife) – vs. 8
- His sister or half-sister – vs. 9
- His granddaughter – vs. 10
- His step-sister – vs. 11
- His aunt – vs. 12-14
- His daughter-in-law – vs. 15
- His sister-in-law – vs. - 16
- A woman and her daughter or granddaughter – vs. 17
- A woman and her sister (while she is living) – vs. 18

This is not a complete list of possible incestuous relationships (father/daughter not mentioned) but is representative of the entire issue of incestuous relationships. These were now formally prohibited for two reasons:

A. The negative genetic effects of incest:

- Twice the risk of early mortality,
- Ten times the risk of suffering mental retardation or physical deformities.

B. The negative family and social conflicts as the result of incest.

2. Other sexual relations prohibited – Leviticus 18:19-23

These included:

- a. **A man having sex with a woman while on her period** – This had to do with the issue of blood, and it rendered one ceremonially unclean. It was also a consideration of love and kindness to the woman while she was indisposed.
- b. **A man having sex with a neighbor's wife** – Repeating the commandment from Exodus 20:14. This was a capital offense for both parties.
- c. **A man offering a child to the pagan god Molech** – This was idolatry and idolatry was considered spiritual adultery, hence the inclusion of this command in this list.
- d. **Sexual relationships with those of the same sex** – This activity was seen by God as both an abomination (disgusting) and detestable (filthy) – Leviticus 20:13. This was also a capital offense. Not all of these prohibitions were carried over to the New Testament (i.e. sex with a woman on her period) but homosexual practice was (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Widespread homosexuality is usually the marker used in the Bible to convey acute moral decay in a society and a precursor to its judgement (Sodom and the cities surrounding it – Genesis 19; the Roman Empire – Romans 1:26-27).
- e. **Sexual relations with an animal (bestiality)** – This was forbidden for both men and women. It was a practice of the Canaanites who drew pictures of their gods mating with

animals. This also was a capital offense where both the animal and the person were killed.

3. Punishments for Disobedience – Leviticus 18:24-30

The reasons and consequences for these prohibitions were quite simple:

- A. The people in the land where He was leading them to were all guilty of these sorts of sins and for that reason God was going to judge them and He didn't want His people to repeat this behavior and suffer the same consequences. "Being spewed out of the land" is a poetic way of saying they would be destroyed.

- B. Forty years later God would use His people led by Joshua to enter the land of Canaan and execute His judgement by annihilating the people and animals, and by completely taking over their land, houses, and cities.

God required His people to be holy in the Tabernacle when they came before Him in the rituals of worship, but He also required holiness in the intimacy of sexual relations as well – He was to be honored in every place.

Whether one was a Jew living in the Promised Land or a New Testament Christian living in America, it is not our country or society that dictates what is acceptable to God concerning our sexual behavior – His word sets the boundaries for what is sexually moral and nothing has changed from the beginning – the ideal we strive for is one man and one woman sharing sexual intimacy within marriage only, for life.

III. Social Regulations for God's People - Leviticus 19:1-37

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.

- Leviticus 19:18

So far in this book God has given the people regulations for how to deal with the most important Individual in their lives, Who was God Himself.

- The way to approach and worship Him.
- The building of the place to worship Him.
- The sacrificial system and priests who would offer sacrifices on their behalf.
- Maintaining holiness by discerning clean from unclean.

In chapter 18 we learn about how to maintain and honor the next important relationship in life which is with one's spouse. These are made up of laws prohibiting various sexual practices outside of marriage, promoting fidelity and the blessings that come with a unified marriage.

In chapter 19 God provides what seems like a variety of rules and regulations, but when taken together they serve to guide His people in their relationships with their neighbors. Therefore, all relationships are addressed in order to provide peace and satisfaction with God, marriage partner, and neighbor.

A. Introduction – The Giver of Laws

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² "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.

- Leviticus 19:1-2

As He has done before, God states the source of the Laws (Himself), which give them credibility. He also states the purpose of keeping these laws – to become and maintain holiness as the people of God. This chapter can be divided into three parts:

1. Keeping all of God's commandments – vs. 3-10
2. Loving one's fellow man – vs. 11-18
3. Maintaining the nation's distinctiveness – vs. 19-37

B. Keeping all of God's Commandments – Leviticus 19:3-10

Not all of God's commands are listed, but several are described to represent the whole:

1. Honor parents – vs. 3
2. Keep the Sabbath day – vs.3
3. Don't worship idols – vs. 4
4. Don't make idols – vs. 4
5. Follow the rules concerning Peace offerings – vs. 5-8.
 - A reminder that the meat from this sacrifice could not be eaten beyond the second day after it was

sacrificed. Some were hoarding meat, not trusting that God would provide.

6. Leave fields (after only one pass) so there would be something left for the gleaners and the poor – vs. 9-10.
 - A particular Jewish custom to differentiate themselves and their customs from other nations (2-3 passes for max harvest).

C. Loving One's Fellow Man – Leviticus 19:11-18

These laws dealt with how God's people were to deal with their neighbors, fellow human beings.

1. Not to steal from others – vs. 11
2. Don't deal falsely (lie) to others – vs. 11
3. Don't swear falsely by God's name – vs. 12
4. Don't oppress others (enslave) – vs. 13
5. Don't rob or withhold wages – vs. 13
 - Withholding wages was a form of oppression and theft.
6. Don't take advantage of the handicapped – vs. 14
7. Render a fair judgment (not favorite, favors, or feelings). Judge based on facts.
8. No gossip or slander – vs. 16
9. Don't endanger your neighbor with gossip or careless actions – vs. 16
10. Don't resent or hold grudges against another – vs. 17

- You can correct or reprove another but not in such a way that you sin in doing so (verbal attack).

11. No revenge, but love neighbor as self – vs. 18

Note that each command reflects one of the original 10 commandments and each is punctuated with the words, "I am the Lord" for emphasis and authority – these are not Moses' commands, they are the Lord's.

D. Maintaining the Nation's Distinctiveness - Leviticus 19:19-37

These various rules highlight Israel's distinct nature as God's holy people – separate in rule and lifestyle from the nations around them.

1. **No mixing of cattle, seed , or materials – vs. 19.**

- Could have been done to highlight that the nation of Israel was not to mix with other nations.

2. **Sexual sins need to be atoned for – vs. 20-22.**

- A man having sex with another man's slave girl was not a capital offense, but still had to be acknowledged and properly atoned for at the Tabernacle (public confession).

3. **Rules for planting trees for food (in Promised Land) – vs. 23-25.**

- To demonstrate their holiness by their absolute faith in God, they would allow fruit trees to mature three years, offer God the first edible crop the fourth year, and only eat the fifth year's crop. This

showed their reliance on God to provide in the meantime.

4. Jews were forbidden to partake in the pagan social/religious customs – vs. 26-28.

- a. Eat meat without first draining the blood of the animal.
- b. Practice divination and soothsaying to learn the will of their gods – Jews had God's word.
 - i. Divination = knowing the will of the gods using various methods, cards, incantations, and palm reading.
 - ii. Soothsaying = knowing the future by reading the stars, examining animal organs, etc.
- c. Cut their beards in certain ways to identify which pagan gods they worshipped.
- d. Make cuts on their bodies to entreat the help from the gods or the dead.
- e. They were not to mark their bodies with tattoos as a way to show their pagan religiosity. Jews showed their distinct religious belief with holy behavior and faithful practice of their religion.

5. Forbidden to sell daughters into harlotry (temple prostitutes), a common custom among pagans – vs. 29.

- Sons were valuable and could generate income that daughters could not. A man with many unmarried daughters might be tempted to monetize some of his daughters in this way.
6. **Keep the Sabbaths and maintain the place of worship – vs. 30.**
 - This would be more difficult once settled in the Promised Land (activities of normal life).
 7. **Mediums and Spiritists were forbidden – vs. 31.**
 - They already had God's word and God's priests to guide them.
 8. **Honor and care for the elderly – vs. 32**
 9. **Love the strangers (aliens/immigrants) in the land – vs. 33-34.**
 - They were once strangers in Egypt and that nation took advantage of them, don't do the same.
 10. **Be honest in business dealings with all – vs. 35-36**
 11. **Summary statement** – all the laws given are God's laws, not man's laws – they were to obey because He was the Lord.

By obeying these commands, the Jews witnessed two things:

1. Their God was a God of love, justice, and righteousness and this could be seen in what He had done for His people, as well as in the commands He gave them to follow.

2. His people were a reflection of the God they worshipped, and this was seen in the holy way that they lived – they were different (in a good way) than all the nations around them.

IV. Penalties for Breaking God's Laws – Leviticus 20:1-27

Chapters 18-19 contained various laws God gave to His people, chapter 20 focuses on the consequences for violating those laws. In a secular society all crimes might be considered as sins of one kind or another, but not all sins are crimes (i.e Adultery is a sin, but not seen as a crime).

However, in a Theocracy like Israel, the only laws that existed were God's laws so all sins were crimes (subject to punishment or making atonement) and all crimes were sins. The sins in chapter 20 are listed in a case basis and divided into two categories.

1. Sins of a capital nature requiring the death penalty.
2. Less serious sins had lesser punishments.

1. Offering Human Sacrifice to Molech - vs. 1-5

This action disgraced both God and His sanctuary in that an innocent human life was offered to a false god like the way animals were offered to the true God. Punishment was death by the people (stoning) and if the people were unwilling, God would carry out the punishment Himself. The people would also be punished for their refusal to carry out the death sentence.

2. Other Capital Crimes – vs. 6-16

- A. Consulting mediums or spirits – vs. 6-8
- B. Cursing one's parents – vs. 9
- C. Adultery – vs. 10
- D. Incest (with stepmother or daughter-in-law) – vs. 11-12
- E. Practicing homosexuality – vs. 13
- F. Having sex with a woman and her mother – vs. 14
- G. Practicing bestiality – vs. 15-16

3. Crimes Calling for Other Types of Punishment – vs. 17-21

Non-capital crimes were punished by public disgrace and or banishment, as well as not having descendants listed, or other punishments from God.

- Sex with sister or half-sister – vs. 17
- Sex with a woman during her period – vs. 18
- Sex with an aunt – vs. 19-20
- Sex with a sister-in-law – vs. 21

The prohibitions against sex with an aunt or sister-in-law extended to marriage between these related people. The punishment if they married was that they would be childless (without descendants). Again, not a teaching for every possible breach of God's law, but a sample to use in judging these and comparatively similar cases. They had to use their knowledge of God's laws as well as personal judgement in order to arrive at a proper conclusion.

4. Summary and Exhortation – vs. 22-27

The chapter on laws and punishments concludes with an exhortation to the people to be careful to keep all of God's laws, and the reason why they should do so: to fulfill their unique role as God's holy nation.

A. There were responsibilities they had to meet in order to reach their goal of staying in the Promised Land as a holy nation.

- Keep all the commands – vs. 22
- Avoid the behavior of the pagan nations – vs. 23-24
- Make the distinctions between clean and unclean – vs. 25

B. God's Exhortation – vs. 26-27

The laws He gave them, if they obeyed, would guarantee that they would truly become a holy nation and for this reason they would experience a special relationship with Him. He finishes by reminding them once again of the inherent danger of consulting any other source (mediums and spiritists) in order to know things in the "spirit" world, things only God could know or reveal. The damage to their spiritual life would be great (plunged back into darkness) and the penalty to their physical lives was also great, death!

Chapter 20 addresses crime (sin) and punishment, and deals with three main ideas:

1. Crime/sin always leads to punishment.
2. God fits the punishment to the sin (crime).
3. God also provided a way for sins to be forgiven.



13.

Practicing Holiness

LEVITICUS 21:1-27:34

We have concentrated our study on the sacrificial system itself since most of the references in the future books of the Bible will mention the Tabernacle complex, its furnishings, and the priests. Being familiar with the types of offerings and their purpose will be useful along with the rules about blood and regulations about clean and unclean, which we read about all the way into the New Testament. We also finished the section about the laws for holy living in everyday life for the common Jew.

This final chapter will briefly review the priestly regulations for holy living, the responsibilities of the nation as a whole to witness its holiness, and finally the purpose behind these laws, the reward/punishment attached to them from God, followed by the vows to keep by the people.

I. Priestly Responsibilities

– Leviticus 21:1-22:33

These two chapters are often referred to as the Handbook for the Priests in that they deal with their daily work life experiences. In the nation of Israel, all were holy as God's people, but because they

served the people before God, the priests were more holy and held to a higher standard, and the High Priests who ministered in the Holy of Holies was considered the most holy and was judged against the highest of standards. These chapters provided the following guidelines for priests. They begin with rules that applied to all priests.

A. Mourning for the Dead – Leviticus 21:1-6

Basically, they were not permitted to mourn or do the things mourners did to express their grief. Things like:

- Touching the body.
- Shaving heads, trimming beards (pagan practice).
- Cutting their flesh (pagan practice).
- Tearing their clothing, putting ashes on their heads.
- Attending a funeral.

The exception was for nearest family – parents, children, brother, virgin (unmarried) sister, wife (not mentioned, but assumed). To mourn beyond these would be to profane himself. The idea was that as a priest, the constant requirement to mourn extended family, leaders of the people and friends would render him unclean too often and interfere with his more important daily tasks at the Tabernacle.

B. Marriage – Leviticus 21:7-9

No marriage to a divorced woman or a harlot because this would make him ceremonially unclean and thus unable to serve. Maintain the behavior of his children for same reason. People were to help the priests maintain holiness by considering and treating them as such.

C. Rules for High Priest – Leviticus 21:10-15

The rules for mourning and marriage are combined for High Priest.

1. He was not to mourn for anyone, including his wife. He couldn't leave the Tabernacle and interrupt his work if someone died while he was there. He could not express grief while at the Tabernacle complex.
2. He could only marry a virgin Israelite woman. This was necessary since the High Priesthood was hereditary and had to be handed down to a birth son, not adoptee.

D. Defects That Disqualified One from Priesthood

It was very simple – priests were to be perfect physically, just as the animals offered had to be without blemish. The list of imperfections are representative.

- A deformed limb – any limb
- Blind, deaf or speech impediment
- Any skin disease, deformation, scarring – anything not normal disqualified them, unless temporary like a cold or sprained ankle, etc.
- Being disqualified from the priesthood did not exclude them from the priestly family. The one disqualified still ate the priest's portion of sacrifices offered, and benefitted from the tithes paid to support the priest and his family.
- He could also do other priestly functions but could not enter the Holy place or the Holy of Holies.

The idea was that only those without physical impairments living under the highest moral standards could approach God with unblemished sacrifices and only for a moment with all things done according to strict rules under penalty of death. This was done to emphasize the holiness of God and the degree of holiness required by men in order to come before Him, only for a brief moment. All of this would eventually demonstrate the value of Christ's gift that would allow every man/woman to interact with God in ways the priests could not even imagine in their day.

E. Requirements to Eat the Priestly Portions – Leviticus 22:1-16

The priests who offered sacrifices received a share of the animal as a form of support for their work (Peace Offerings), however there were two regulations that limited them in doing so:

1. **They had to be ritually clean to partake** – Leviticus 22:1-9. People in the priestly family who were ritually unclean (i.e. touched a dead thing) had to first become ritually clean before they could eat of the meat sacrificed.
2. **They had to belong to the priest's family** – Leviticus 22:10-16. These included wives, sons, daughters living at home, or a slave bought by the family – all others were not permitted.

F. Requirements for Sacrificial Animals – Leviticus 22:17-25

This section is addressed to the people in general (including foreigners living among them). Verse 21 specifies that the Lord is referring to "peace" offerings of which there were three kinds (Thanksgiving, Votive/Vow, Free will) and which were shared with

the priests. Just as the priests who offered the sacrifices had to be without defect physically – so did the animals they sacrificed, otherwise they would not be acceptable to God. The only exception was for a freewill (offered as thanks and shared with others) offering where an animal with minimal birth defects were accepted.

G. Additional requirements – Sacrifices – Leviticus 22:26-33

1. Couldn't sacrifice a mother and its young together.

- A practice of some pagan religions.
- Depleted the herd/flock too quickly.

2. The animal offered was to be eaten by the people on the day that it was sacrificed.

- Doing so completed the offering and confirmed God's acceptance.

In verses 31-33 God reinforces the necessity to obey His commands because:

- The Lord is God.
- He is holy and thus they need to be holy.
- He both saved and made a covenant with them that He would help them keep.

II. National Responsibilities - Leviticus 23:1-25:55

After a brief introduction, God gives Moses seven "appointed" times or feasts to observe in various ways where both the priests and the people would make a united and public witness of their faith in order to both remember and teach what their Holy God had done for and with them. There were seven of these convocations, assemblies, feasts or appointed times and each one included three elements:

- A. A gathering of God's people for worship.
- B. An offering of sacrifice at the sanctuary.
- C. A day of rest where the people did no work.

The seven appointed days were the following:

1. **The Sabbath Day** – Leviticus 23:3 – Observed on the 7th day (Saturday); complete rest; time for assembly and worship; a day devoted to the Lord; observed by all.

2. **Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread** – Leviticus 23:4-8 – Passover is the first feast given to the Jews (Exodus 12:3-13) and is the first public feast to appear on its religious calendar (14th of Nissan / Abib). It is a remembrance of the final plague where God's angel took the life of every firstborn Egyptian both human and animal, but passed over every Jewish house that had sacrificed a lamb and painted its blood on the door frame of their homes.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the day after the Passover (15th of Nissan) and continued for seven days. The Jews had to follow these instructions to celebrate this Feast of Unleavened Bread:

- a. Not eat any leavened bread for seven days.
- b. On the first and seventh day, the people were not to do any laborious work.
- c. On the first and seventh day the people were to assemble and worship.
- d. On each of the seven days they were to offer a sacrifice burnt on the altar.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was one of three feasts where the men were to make a pilgrimage to the main sanctuary in Jerusalem.

3. Offering of the First Fruits – Leviticus 23:9-14 – Given as something the Jews would do once they were settled in the Promised Land (they had no crops while wandering in the desert). It was not a separate festival, but connected to the Passover and Unleavened Bread, occurred in the spring, which coincided with the early harvest period, which would be the barley crop. The Lord's instructions concerning the "First Fruits" were as follows:

- a. Each bought a "sheaf" (of barley) to the priest sometime before the Sabbath (The Sabbath Day after the Passover). This was represented the entire crop.
- b. This sheaf along with a lamb, grain, and wine was offered as a sacrifice to the Lord on the day after the Sabbath.
- c. The people would not eat of the harvest until this sacrifice of first fruits was made to God.

4. Feast of Weeks – Leviticus 23:15-22 – From the Sabbath day (after the Passover) seven weeks were counted off and then the

Feast of Weeks was celebrated the next day. This feast has been referred to in different ways:

- a. Feast of Weeks – Exodus 34:22 – Seven weeks after Passover.
- b. Feast of Harvest – Exodus 23:16 – Came at the beginning of Wheat Harvest.
- c. Day of First fruits – Numbers 28:26 – During Harvest Period.
- d. Day of Pentecost – *Pente* is Greek for 50 – 50 days after Passover.

It was observed in the following way at the Temple:

- a. Grain offering made (first fruits)
- b. Several animals, grain, and wine were sacrificed.
- c. No work on this day. Also, a feast requiring pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- d. Remember the poor – vs. 22.

'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleanings of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the Lord your God.'

- Leviticus 23:22

5. Feast of Trumpets – Leviticus 23:23-25 – This feast occurred on the first day of the seventh month. The people were called together by the blowing of trumpets (Numbers 10:10). The day was to be

observed as a day of rest. They also held an assembly and offered sacrifices. In later years, Israel's seventh month became the first month of its civil calendar and the Feast of Trumpets became its New Year's Day. They still keep the festival and celebrate the day under the name of "Rosh Hashanah" (head or first of the year).

6. The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 23:26-32 – We have reviewed this feast before in Leviticus 16, seeing the priestly responsibilities for this day. In this chapter, instructions are given for what the people are to do to observe this occasion. The feast was on the tenth day of the seventh month and the people were to humble their souls and make appropriate sacrifices. This usually meant a day of fasting and no work. This is when the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies (for the only time in that year) to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice above and in front of the Ark of the Covenant. All year, individuals brought sacrifices to atone for their personal sins, on the Day of Atonement the sins of all the people, including the priests and High Priest were atoned for.

7. The Feast of Booths (or Tabernacle) – Leviticus 23:33-44 – This was the last feast in the cycle – it began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and went on for seven days. No work during this period. There was an assembly on the first day as well as the eighth and final day. Different types and quantities of sacrifices were offered on each day the feast lasted. These were in addition to the regular sacrifices (AM/PM sacrifices).

The Jews were also required to build outdoor shelters (booths) from branches and leafy trees in which they would live for seven days – hence the name "Feast of Booths." This was done as a reminder of how they lived after God freed them from Egyptian slavery. The feast was held after the grape and olive harvests and was a time of great rejoicing as they thanked Him for present abundance, as well as His constant care and provision while they were in the wilderness –

often living in temporary shelters before entering the Promised Land.

These feasts generally followed the agricultural calendar of that time, but God combined these with spiritual elements that gave opportunity to give prayer and thanks for abundant harvests as well as recognize their unique status as God's holy people. Other nations had various religious feasts tied to the agricultural cycle but no one else had a Day of Atonement or a Passover acknowledging God's actual, personal involvement in a nation's life.

Israel's worship teaches seven basic truths about worship in general.

1. Worship creates a community distinct from the world.
2. Worship is about remembering and learning.
3. Worship is about praising and thanking God.
4. Worship is about giving.
5. Worship is about seeking and obtaining forgiveness.
6. Worship is about renewing our commitment to God.
7. Worship is about rejoicing.

These all factor into both the Jewish worship of God as well as the Christian worship to God. The methods are different but what links the two together is the common concept that both have been called upon to be the holy people of God and their worship is to reflect that.

III. Special Responsibilities for Priests – Leviticus 24:1-23

In a "Handbook for Priests" chapter 24 would have had the title "miscellaneous" since it deals with disparate things.

1. **(24:1-4)** The daily care of keeping the lamp stand within the Holy Place burning from evening to morning each day with specially pressed olive oil designed for this purpose. This was the responsibility of the High Priest.
2. **(24:5-9)** Instructions concerning the bread of presence on the table reserved for this purpose, situated in the Holy Place as well.
 - a. Twelve cakes of bread were made from fine flour, no leaven.
 - b. Placed on table of pure gold – two stacks of six cakes each.
 - c. Frankincense was put on the bread, however, when the bread was removed the Frankincense was burned as an offering to God.
 - d. New loaves were laid out every Sabbath Day, and this was to be done in perpetuity.
 - e. Only priests were to eat the old bread in a holy place.
3. **(24:10-16)** Instructions concerning Punishment (Blasphemy/Sabbath observance).
 1. A case of blasphemy (improper use of God's name) was brought to Moses for action. Moses sought God's will in the matter and He replied that the punishment of blasphemy or cursing God was death by stoning.
 2. The witnesses were to lay hands on the man's head (to confirm their witness) and the people would bring him outside the camp (not to defile it) and they would carry out the punishment.

4. **(24:17-22)** Punishment for other cases.
 1. Punishment for murder – death.
 2. Punishment for various crimes (killing an animal, injuring someone, etc.) each case was considered separately and a just compensation was calculated and paid by the guilty party.
 3. This was the idea of eye for eye/tooth for tooth = fair compensation.
5. **(24:23)** The punishment for the blasphemer is carried out as a warning and example.

IV. National Responsibilities – Continued – Leviticus 25:1-55

The previous chapter contained some miscellaneous information on consequences of breaking certain laws, but quickly returns to the main theme of this section of the book, the national responsibilities of a nation devoted to the pursuit of holiness. The special or appointed times to keep given previously, dealt with special days, weeks, and months. In this chapter the appointed times deal in years – the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee.

1. Sabbatical Year – 25:1-7

This meant that once they entered the Promised Land, they could cultivate the land for six years, but had to leave it fallow on the seventh year. They could eat and use whatever grew naturally, but were not allowed to cultivate or work land in any way. This demonstrated not only their submission and respect for the idea that

it was God's land, but also that He would provide for them even if they lost the produce of that resource for a season every seven years.

2. Year of Jubilee – 25:8-55

The Year of Jubilee occurred every 50 years (after seven cycles of Sabbatical years). The year was announced by blowing a ram's horn from which the term "jubilee" comes from. The jubilee had two objectives:

1. Returning land that was sold, lost, or transferred, somehow back to the individual from one of the twelve tribes who originally owned it back at the time the land was distributed by Moses and Joshua to the twelve tribes. The land belonged to God and portions were divinely distributed to each of the twelve tribes. Jubilee restored the original portions to the descendants of the original owners.
2. Israelites, not foreigners, who had become slaves by indebtedness (most common), war, or other means, were given their release and freedom along with a "stake" to help them start over and succeed as free men. These changes had enormous economic and social impact on the people, and chapter 25 provides details and instructions necessary to guide the people involved in land transfers or the release of slaves.

The year was announced by blowing ram's horns on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month in the last day of the seventh cycle of the Sabbatical years (49th year). The prime objective of the Year of Jubilee was to provide a 'release" to all of Israel – release of the land to its original owners, release of slaves back to their homes and families. Chapter 25 provides the details concerning how this was done, and practical details with proper

instructions to smooth out an orderly transfer of both land and people.

V. Reasons or Practicing Holiness: Blessings and Curses – Leviticus 26:1-46

As we near the end of the book, the author turns from his main teaching – that God is holy and His people must learn to be holy if they want to have a relationship with Him. Most of the book follows this theme and provides instructions on the what and how of holiness, this chapter focuses on the why of holiness. Why pursue holiness? Why obey God? Why follow the rules? The answer? Blessings if you do, curses if you don't. The chapter breaks them down in the following way:

A. Blessings – 26:3-13

1. Abundant crops (26:3-5) – Everything needed for this (rain, good weather, regular harvests).
2. Peaceful existence (26:6-8) – Eliminate harmful beasts, no threats of war, victory in war.
3. Growing population, abundant food (26:9-10) – Fertile women, food to sustain a growing population.
4. God's presence (26:11-13) – God would be with them to continue blessing them.

B. Curses – 26:14-43

The curses are progressive (you do...then I will do). Also, the curses were not only meant to punish but to lead the people to repentance and restoration as a result.

1. Disease, crop failure, and defeat – 26:14-17.
2. Drought and its consequences – 26:21-22.
3. A plague of wild beasts – 26:21-22.
4. War, pestilence, and hunger – 26:23-26.
5. Destruction, deportation, and desolation – 26:27-33.
6. Captivity and desolation – 26:24-39.

Taken together these curses would bring the Israelites back full circle into being a people with no leader, no land, no wealth, and no freedom – just as they were in Egypt, before God freed them from slavery.

C. Repentance – 26:40-43

God, the Holy God, still held out the possibility of saving them if they repented which included:

1. Confessing their sins and the sins of their fathers.
2. Humbling themselves before God – acknowledging that He was God, and they were in submission to Him.
3. Accepting their punishment and situation, and trusting God for liberation, deliverance, and reestablishment.

D. God's Promise – 26:44-45

44 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. 45 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."

- Leviticus 26:44-45

Despite all that had happened, God promised not to reject or abandon His people. Why?

1. The Covenant – He was true to the promises He had made, even if they were not.
2. He was the Lord – This was how the Holy God acted.

E. Summary – 26:46

The book closes with a summary of facts contained in Leviticus. He (the Lord) gave the statutes and laws to Moses (the human author), who gave them to the people on Mt. Sinai.

VI. Evidence of Holiness – Vows and Valuations – Leviticus 27:1-34

This final chapter deals with vows made to God. The large part of Leviticus teaches what God required of man. This section describes things that God did not command, but man wanted to offer to God anyways. A vow was a promise made by someone to give something to God if God would enable him to accomplish his objective. At that

time God had made no laws requiring vows, however if a person made a vow, he was bound to keep it. In most situations, the things or people vowed to the Lord were replaced by a money gift. This chapter provided guidelines in determining the value (in monetary terms) of what was being offered.

1. Valuation of persons dedicated to God – 27:1-8

The coinage used was the shekel of the sanctuary – to guarantee a consistent weight of silver which was kept by the priests. Money vowed was given to priests for ministry.

- Male – 20-60 years (50s); 5-20 years (20s); 1 month – 5 years (5s); 60 plus (15s)
- Female 20-60 years (30s); 5-20 years (10s); 1 month – 5 years (3s); 60 plus (10s)

Men were worth more for agricultural work because of their physical strength. There were discounts for the very poor.

2. Valuation of animals – 27:9-13

One could not exchange clean animals for money. An unclean animal could be exchanged for its value of 20% (a donkey or a blemished clean animal).

3. Valuation of property – 27:14-25

Vowing a house, property, or field was evaluated in two ways:

- a. Condition of house or production of land.
- b. Proximity to the Year of Jubilee (far/near).

4. Un-vowed Gifts (things/people) that God did not permit:

- a. Firstborn person or animal (already belonged to the Lord) 27:26-33
- b. People or property won in battle against pagans (unclean).
- c. The tithe (already owed to God).

These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.
- Leviticus 27:34

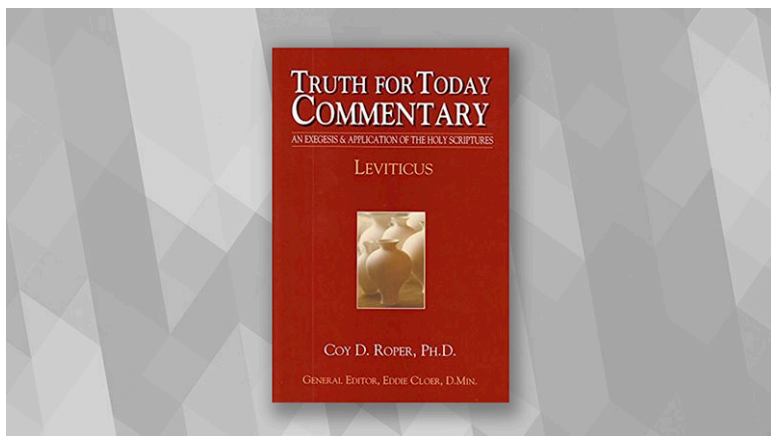
The final statement repeats that all the Laws previously recorded in this book are from God, given to Moses at Sinai. This means:

- 1. Moses wrote Leviticus at Sinai not long after they left Egypt.
- 2. They are God's commandments to the Jews as part of their covenant with God.
- 3. They were to be obeyed by the Jews under pain of punishment and death.
- 4. We, who are under the new covenant with Christ, are not subject to these laws.

²³ But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- Galatians 3:23-25

This completes our study on Leviticus. For more information on this book, please refer to **"Truth for Today" commentary on Leviticus by Coy D. Roper.**





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