
The Book of Leviticus

Introduction to the Book of Leviticus

Leviticus 1	Leviticus 2	Leviticus 3	Leviticus 4	Leviticus 5
Leviticus 6	Leviticus 7	Leviticus 8	Leviticus 9	Leviticus 10
Leviticus 11	Leviticus 12	Leviticus 13	Leviticus 14	Leviticus 15
Leviticus 16	Leviticus 17	Leviticus 18	Leviticus 19	Leviticus 20
Leviticus 21	Leviticus 22	Leviticus 23	Leviticus 24	Leviticus 25
Leviticus 26	Leviticus 27			

An Introduction to the Book of Leviticus

Introduction: Let me quote from p. 127 of Barthel's *What the Bible Really Teaches: The contents of the Book of Leviticus are so dry and technical that the ability to read a passage from it served as the standard test of literacy in the Middle Ages. This was particularly important because priests, or persons claiming to be priests, who were accused of serious crimes were allowed to go free if they could successfully invoke the "benefit of clergy"—that is, if they could read through a line or two of difficult liturgical Latin without stumbling over too many of the words.*¹ The introduction to Leviticus in *The New American Standard Study Version* says, on the other hand, *Leviticus is today the least appreciated portion of the Pentateuch.*

In working through the exegesis of this book, I have found it to be one of the more poorly translated books of the Bible (in the KJV as well as in most other translations, a conspicuous exception being *Young's Translation*). There are very different Hebrew words which are translated alike; there are a host of Hebrew words which could be translated uniformly, yet the translators unnecessarily give them a variety of different translations. It is as though the translators picked the least qualified team to handle Leviticus. I feel it is one of the most neglected portions of God's word myself. For those who carry a red-letter edition of the Bible, note that Leviticus is spoken to Moses directly from Yahweh Elohim, the revealed member of the Godhead, Who is also Jesus Christ. In other words, almost all of Leviticus should be in red letters.

General content: The name *Leviticus* implies that this book is predominantly the rules and regulations which are part and parcel to the operation of the Levitical priesthood; however, this is only partially true. First of all, when those of the priesthood are addressed, as in Lev. 1–9, 21–22 and 23, it is not the entire tribe of the Levi's but those who are descended directly from Aaron. Not even Moses's sons were considered. Furthermore, the remainder, which is the bulk of the book, is directed toward all Jewish believers of that time (and all believers in Israel for the next several centuries). As we will see, these are not just a collection of old, unimportant, antiquated laws, but the regulations will have a two-fold purpose to believers today: (1) An outline of holiness and correct behavior is presented; (2) the future of Israel is predicted throughout several chapters of this book (particularly Lev. 23); and, (3) a complete Christology is given in OT shadow form (particularly in the sacrifices and the feast days). When we exegete this book, it will be clear that the true Author knew exactly what would occur on the cross and revealed this to the people of Israel in shadow form. The images and the parallels are too great in number for this to all be a happy coincidence. And considering that we have a Greek translation of the entire Old Testament preceding the writing of the New Testament by at least 100 years, this indicates that Leviticus could not have been written after our Lord suffered on the cross. It is my personal opinion that throughout the Old Testament we have our Lord's suffering revealed in shadow form, enough so that anyone who would be positive toward God's Word could be saved by the revealing of the gospel and the regeneration of their souls. In such cases, they may not be able to verbalize just exactly what it was that took them from death to life, however God redeemed them with their one decision of positive volition toward the work of Christ on the cross.

The name of this book is quite the misnomer. The tribe of Levi is mentioned twice by name in the same passage (Lev. 25:32–33). The Levites were to help out the priests, but they themselves were not the priesthood. Again, the priesthood, as we have seen, is a very small subset of the Levite tribe—those who are descended from Aaron.

L.S. Chafer once remarked in his great *Systematic Theology* that the gospel and every aspect of the gospel is more clearly revealed in the New Testament than it is in the Old. Let me explain why: God would use Satan to take our Lord to the cross. The betrayal and brutality that our Lord faced, the courts which tried and convicted our Lord, and the suffering which He endured prior to the cross were things that He endured at the hand of Satan. Satan put our Lord on the cross. Had He known what He was actually doing, Satan would have in any way possible tried to prevent Jesus Christ from going to the cross. However, in his scheming to place Jesus Christ under the greatest of human suffering, he inadvertently placed out Lord on the cross whereupon our Lord paid

¹ p. 127.

for our sins in full. Satan's greatest act of evil up until that time resulted in the salvation of billions of lost members of the human race. Satan fell into God's plan because, even though millions upon millions of people were saved prior to the cross by believing in Jesus Christ as revealed by the animal sacrifices and the holy days, that information was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, as the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit never revealed the gospel to Satan and that is how God took the greatest acts of evil and transformed it into blessing for all of the human race. We are fortunate beyond our ability to express in words that our God has turned cursing into blessing, which is the story of every Christian's life.

Important Quotations: (1) And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying; (2) You will be holy [or, set apart] because I am holy; (3) I am Yahweh Elohim, the one taking you out of Egypt. These several verses help set the theme for Leviticus. God makes a distinction between the Jews and the surrounding Gentile nations. God has severed them from the Gentiles, just as we as believers are distinguished and separated from the unsaved world. Once man is redeemed (Lev. 1–16), then his life should reflect God's holiness and perfection. The latter portion of Leviticus is God speaking to Israel explaining how to distinguish themselves from the degenerate Egyptians from whom they were removed; and from the Gentiles in whose midst they would soon find themselves.

Outline of Leviticus:

Part One: the Approach to Yahweh (Lev. 1–16)

- I. Regulations Concerning Animal Sacrifices (Lev. 1–7)
 - A. Burnt offerings (Lev. 1)
 - B. Tribute offerings (Lev. 2)
 - C. Peace offerings (Lev. 3)
 - D. Sin offerings (Lev. 4)
 - E. Guilt offerings (Lev. 5:1–6:7)
 - F. Participation of priests in offerings (Lev. 6:8–7:35)
 - G. Summary (Lev. 7:36–38)
- II. Narrative (Lev. 8–10)
 - A. The consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8)
 - B. Aaron offers sacrifices to Yahweh (Lev. 9)
 - C. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, sin against God and are executed (Lev. 10)
- III. The Clean versus the Unclean (Lev. 11–15)
 - A. Which animals may be used as food (Lev. 11)
 - B. The cleanness of childbirth (Lev. 12)
 - C. Leprosy (Lev. 13)
 - D. Cleansing that which is leprous (Lev. 14)
 - 1. The leper (Lev. 14:1–32)
 - 2. A leprous house (Lev. 14:33–57)
 - E. Various discharges (Lev. 15)
 - 1. Menstrual uncleanness (Lev. 15:1–10)
 - 2. Men with a discharge (Lev. 15:11–17)
 - 3. Men and women (Lev. 15:18–33)
- IV. The Great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16)

Part Two: Holiness to Yahweh (Lev. 17–27)

- I. Laws Pertaining to the Sons of Israel (Lev. 17–20)
 - A. Proper procedures for sacrifices (Lev. 17:1–9)
 - B. Prohibitions against the eating of blood (Lev. 17:10–16)

- C. Prohibitions against immoral and incestuous relations (Lev. 18)
- D. Prohibitions against idolatry (Lev. 19:1–8)
- E. Being set apart in behavior (Lev. 19:9–37)
- F. Penalties for violating God's laws (Lev. 20)
- II. Law Pertaining to the Priesthood (Lev. 21–)
 - A. Regulations to avoid profaning oneself (Lev. 21:1–16)
 - B. Limitations on qualification for the priesthood and operation in the priesthood (Lev. 21:17–22:16)
 - C. Acceptable offerings from the priests (Lev. 22:17–33)
 - D. Regulations concerning the Sabbath and the religious feasts (Lev. 23:1–25)
 - 1. Unleavened bread (Lev. 23:5–8)
 - 2. First fruits (Lev. 23:9–14)
 - 3. Weeks (Lev. 23:15–22)
 - 4. Trumpets (Lev. 23:23–25)
 - 5. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26–32)
 - 6. Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–43)
- III. Responsibilities of the Priesthood (Lev. 24:1–12)
- IV. Penalties Outlined for Certain Violations of the Law (Lev. 24:13–23)
- V. The Sabbatical Year (Lev. 25:1–7)
- VI. The Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–55)
- VII. Blessings Which Accompany Obedience (Lev. 26:1–13)
- VIII. Penalties Which Accompany Disobedience—the Outline of Israel's Future (Lev. 26:14–46)
- IX. Appendix: Vows and Determinations of Value (Lev. 27)

Scofield groups these chapters slightly differently, and I provide his outline due to its brevity, an attribute of Scofield for which he was legend: I. The Offerings (Lev. 1–7). II. Consecration of Aaron and His Sons (Lev. 8–10). III. Law of Cleanliness and Holiness (Lev. 11–15, 17–22). IV. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). V. Laws Regulating the Personal Relationships of the Redeemed People (Lev. 18–20). VI. Law Regulating the Priesthood and the Seven Great Feasts of the Hebrew Calendar (Lev. 21–23). VII. Additional Laws, Promises, and Warnings (Lev. 24–27).

Authorship: Moses was not really the author of Leviticus, except for a few short portions of it, e.g., Lev. 9–10 and a part of Lev. 24. Moses was God's secretary and this book was given directly from God to Moses. For those of you who have red-lettered editions of the Bible wherein all of the words of Jesus Christ are in red—most of Leviticus should also be in red. The most oft-used phrase of Leviticus is *then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying...* (Lev. 4:1 6:1, 8 8:1 11:1 etc.). Leviticus is a fulfillment of a promise made by God in Ex. 25:22 *"And there I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel."* See also Ex. 29:43 40:34, which tell us that the presence of Yahweh came to dwell in the finished tabernacle and the very first verse of Leviticus tells us: *Then Yahweh called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying...* Essentially, what appears to be the case, is that God called Moses into the Tent of Meeting and began dictating to him, probably speaking from above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Whether the curtain was open between Moses and the Ark is not told to us (and that God spoke from above the Ark is an educated guess, not a stated fact of Scripture).

Our Lord gave a general witness as to the inspiration of Leviticus (and to the rest of the Law in Lev. 24:44–46: *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures and He said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah [or, Christ] should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day."*² Our Lord also said that the entirety of the Law and the prophets depend upon Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 (Matt. 22:40).³ Throughout this verse by verse study of the book

² Note that immediately after His resurrection, our Lord takes His disciples back to the Scriptures, which would become the foundation and the strength of their faith and doctrine.

³ Lev. 19:18 is quoted several times in the New Testament: Matt. 19:19 Mark 12:31 Luke 10:27 Rom. 13:9 Gal. 5:14.

of Leviticus, we will find several portions of it which are quoted authoritatively in the New Testament, another witness to their inspiration by God.

However, as God's secretary, Moses was the human author of Leviticus, and this is confirmed in the New Testament. Leviticus states this specifically in the Hebrew of Lev. 26:46, the literal rendering of which is: **These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which Yahweh placed between Himself and the sons of Israel by the hand of Moses on Mount Sinai.** Jesus Christ said to the cleansed leper, **"Go and show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."** (Matt. 8:4 Lev. 14:2).⁴ Paul writes: **For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law will live by that righteousness** (Rom. 10:5; paraphrasing Lev. 18:5).

Therefore, anyone who suggests that the human author of Leviticus was anyone other than Moses or that Leviticus is anything less than the Word of God, directly contradicts both the Old and New Testaments.

The primary reason authorship is attributed to authors other than Moses is (1) some liberal theologians do not like the idea that most of Leviticus is presented as a series of quotations from God to Moses. If authorship is laid upon someone or upon a group of people who came along much later in the history of Israel, then this as a quotation from God can be considered fanciful embellishment, thus demeaning its contents. (2) There are elements of prophecy in Leviticus: the cross and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ is foreshadowed throughout; the future history of the Jews is laid out for us in Lev. 26; and the liberal theologian does not like the idea that God has told us centuries in advance what would occur. This is way too supernatural for them. (3) Finally, we have some laws in here dealing with sexual morality, ethical behavior and crime and punishment which are stated in absolutes (Lev. 18–20). If these are direct quotations from God, then logically we are not allowed to do our own thing and engage in sexual immorality or unethical behavior without possible reprisal from the God of the universe. Some people despise the notion that God treats some groups of people as a cancer that should be removed; however, such a viewpoint is found in Leviticus and is expanded upon throughout the rest of the Old Testament. The NIV Study Bible comments: *During the last three centuries many scholars have claimed to find in the Pentateuch four underlying sources. The presumed documents, allegedly dating from the tenth to the fifth centuries BC, are called J (for Jahweh/Yahweh, the personal OT name for God), E (for Elohim, a generic name for God), D (for Deuteronomic) and P (for Priestly). Each of these documents is claimed to have its own characteristics and its own theology, which often contradicts that of the other documents. The Pentateuch is thus depicted as a patchwork of stories, poems and laws. However, this view is not supported by conclusive evidence, and intensive archaeological and literary research has tended to undercut many of the arguments used to challenge Mosaic authorship.*⁵ We have covered this subject before in greater detail and for those with an interest, Josh McDowell covers the arguments in great detail in his book, *Evidence Which demands a Verdict*, Vol. 2.

Time of Writing: As has been discussed previously, Leviticus was written by Moses and not as the result of several people writing the Pentateuch centuries after these events took place. The actual time spent on Leviticus was short; just four weeks, or possibly less. The few events which took place and the dictation occurred after the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:17 Lev. 1:1) and prior to the departure from Mount Sinai two months later (Num. 1:1 10:11). Ex. 40:17 and Num. 1:1 place the writing between the first day of the first month of the second year and the first day of the second month of the second year. Therefore, Leviticus was written in approximately May of 1445 BC (Scofield gives a wider range, between 1450 and 1410 BC).

Synopsis: The bulk of Leviticus is a direct quote from Yahweh to Moses. There is only a small amount of narrative in Lev. 9–10 and 24:10–23 (which is interspersed by directives from God). The great emphasis of the book of Leviticus is that God spoke this directly to Moses. No less than 50 times do we find this particular fact recorded in this book.

⁴ Our Lord in Mark 7:10 could either be quoting Lev. 20:9 or Ex. 21:17.

⁵ p. 2 of the NIV Study Bible.

The Title of Leviticus: The Septuagint titled this book Levitikon (Λευιτικόν) [pronounced *lyoo-IT-ee-kon*], which means pertaining to the Levites.⁶ The Levites were descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. At the beginning, the Levites were not given a place in the worship of Yahweh, but Aaron and his sons were. Whenever some information was convey by God to Moses concerning the offerings or the function of ceremonial worship, we find either the phrase, *then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron saying...* (Lev. 13:1 14:33 15:1) or *then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and to his sons..."* (Lev. 17:1–2 21:1 22:1, 18). Aaron and his sons are properly Levites, but they are a small subset of the tribe of Levi. The actual tribe of Leviticus is only alluded to but once in one small portion of all of Leviticus (Lev. 25:32–33). In other words, this title is a misnomer—it is not a good title for the book of Leviticus. The title given this book by the Jews was different. The Hebrews entitled this the same way we name most of our hymns; the first line of our hymns are often the name of the hymn and the first word in Leviticus is the Hebrew designation for this book: Wayîq'râ' (וַיִּקְרָא) [pronounced *wa-yee-q'-RAW*]⁷ and it means *and He called*, which is a much better title for this book. From the beginning of the book until the end, it is God calling to us, particularly in Lev. 26 with His impassioned warning to the Jews, a warning to follow them throughout their entire history.

Least Known Linguistic Fact: We will see a lot of similarities in the vocabulary of Leviticus and Ezekiel (and occasionally Numbers)—and more similarities than we would find in the vocabulary of the rest of the Pentateuch and Leviticus. There are some words found only in two or three of these books throughout the entirety of the Old Testament. This is due in part of subject matter, but more so because much of both books were spoken by the same person: Jesus Christ, Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel. Furthermore, I would not be surprised if Ezekiel primarily studied Leviticus. A similarity in vocabulary does not have to mean, as some have claimed, that Leviticus and Ezekiel were written by the same person.

Themes: Throughout the beginning of Leviticus, we will find the sacrifice of various animals. Every one of these animals must be innocent, without spot and blemish, a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sins of the Jews were transferred to these animals just as the sins of all mankind were placed upon our Lord. The shedding of their blood, which is their life, is analogous to the spiritual death of our Lord (and using this expression does not minimize the pain and sacrifice involved on the part of our Lord).

Holiness plays a prominent part in the book of Leviticus. Yahweh demands perfect animals for His sacrifices, the priests must be without physical defects. Several chapters are devoted to what is clean and not clean, therefore, what is holy and what is not. The NIV Study Bible points out that just as Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden due to their sin, a person with a skin disease is banished from the camp of God, and the unregenerate man, who has not taken upon himself the covering or shield of Jesus Christ, will be banished from the presence of God forever.

Israel became God's representative here on earth, just as the church presently represents Jesus Christ here on earth in this dispensation. God demanded that they be holy, even as He is holy. The book of Leviticus, among other things, sets a standard of behavior and laws which separated or, better yet, distinguished the Jews from the heathen world around them.

Separation is a key theme of Leviticus. The Jews were not just to be separated away from the Gentiles as separation has a two-fold connotation—not only are you separated away from something, but you are separated to something else. The Jews were to separated unto God, and this was to be revealed in their ceremonies (Lev. 17), their daily living (Lev. 18–22), their worship (Lev. 23–25), and their future was tied directly to their relationship with God (Lev. 26). When our Lord summed up the Law in one sentence, He quoted from Leviticus and from Deuteronomy: *And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and*

⁶ You will note that we did not even do a very good job transliterating it, as the Greek *u* was treated as a *v*.

⁷ I am not 100% positive about the emphasis.

with all your sould and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. And a second is like it: 'You will love your neighbor as yourself' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:35–40 Deut. 6:5 Lev. 19:18).

Narrative Content: The bulk of Leviticus is Law; that which is to separate the Jews from the Gentiles around them. There are regulations dealing with the ceremonial laws of Israel, such as the sacrifices, the holy days, the feasts, etc. Every ceremony in Leviticus is backed by solid reality and fraught with meaning. There are laws concerning what is clean and unclean, there are laws which deal with ethical behavior, sexual morality and the proper treatment of slaves, Gentiles, and fellow Jews. The brief portions of Leviticus which are narrative were likely episodes which occurred chronologically between the sessions of God's dictation to Moses and serve as a backdrop. We have the various sacrifices that the Jews were to make, led by their priests; and we have the responsibilities of the priests; and this is followed by the sloppiness and imprecision of Aaron's two oldest sons, who were executed by God for their lack of personal integrity in spiritual matters. We may view their transgression as minor; however, when it comes to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should never be sloppy or imprecise. They were in a position of great spiritual authority and responsibility and they did not take seriously their office before the Lord. God executed them under the Law.

The second narrative is found in Lev. 24:10–23 where Israel is commanded to stone a man guilty of blaspheming. All of the Jews had witnessed their deliverance at the hand of God. Only the most irreverent would take God's omnipotence lightly. His execution was demanded by God and carried out by the people.

The New Testament View: One of the major pitfalls of people who are involved in self-study and who begin with the Law, is that they become confused as to what God's program is. When our Lord was resurrected from the dead, He immediately began to teach the Scriptures; that is, the Old Testament (Luke 24:25–32, 44–48). Every pastor should teach the Old and New Testaments. Although the Old Testament primarily deals with the Age of Israel when Israel was under the Law, this does not mean that we should not study it. We need to know how the gospel was presented to our Old Testament brothers. It is in studying the Old Testament that we develop a full appreciation for God's Word and a much deeper understanding. What occurs in the Old Testament helps us to fix our place today in the New Testament Church Age. Finally, we are awed by the prophecies which are found throughout the Old Testament, those which deal with our Lord's death on the cross and the future of Israel, found in Leviticus 1400 years prior to their fulfillments. It is these prophecies which aide some in solidifying their faith in God's Word, realizing that not every religious book is God's Word, but that we can determine whether it is from God or not because when He speaks, we can see that it will come to pass.

Leviticus 1

Leviticus 1:1–17

Outline of Chapter 1:

- vv. 1–9 **The procedure for the offering of a bull**
- vv. 10–13 **The procedure for the offering of a goat or a sheep**
- vv. 14–17 **The procedure for the offering of a dove or pigeon**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 2 **Minchâh**
- v. 2 **T°rûmâh**
- v. 2 **Qorbân**
- v. 8 **Fire, in Scripture, Refers to God's Holiness in Judgement**

Doctrines Covered

Burnt Offering

**Types of Animal
Sacrifices in the Law**

Doctrines Alluded To

Introduction: In Exodus 40, Moses saw to it that the tabernacle had been assembled. Now, in Lev. 1, he meets Yahweh in the tent of meeting and receives more instructions as to the ceremonial portion of worship. What should be kept in mind throughout is that the gospel will be presented through the sacrifices offered in this chapter. Lev. 1 allows a person making an offering to bring one of five kinds of animals, enumerated in three categories, depending upon his financial ability. This was an offering to God over and above tithing.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

The Procedure for the Offering of a Bull

Yahweh called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, [Lev. 1:1]

The order of the Hebrew is much different: it reads, *called to Moses and spoke Yahweh to him from the tent of meeting saying*. Because of the preposition preceding Moses, we know that Moses is not the subject the the object of the verb. The tent of meeting was a place set up for Yahweh to come and speak to Moses and occasionally to the priests. This was not a place of human contact. Our churches are not *tents of meeting*. But note, the first sentence in Leviticus tells us that God is speaking directly to Moses and we are given a direct quote from the God of the Universe, the God who created the heavens and earth. The great emphasis of the book of Leviticus is that God spoke this directly to Moses. No less than 50 times do we find this particular phrase recorded in this book. It is this relationship that Moses had with God, speaking with God face-to-face, which was not enjoyed by any prophet after him (Deut. 34:10). Prepositions are important; the concluding verse of Leviticus is [These are the commandments which Yahweh commanded Moses for the people of Israel at Mount Sinai](#) (Lev. 27:34). Owen's, NIV, *The Amplified Bible*, NRSV all translate this *on* Mount Sinai. The KJV and Owen's translate this last verse as *in* Mount Sinai. However, the preposition in question is the bēyth prefixed preposition and, although it can mean *in* or *on*; what is implied by this often used preposition is proximity. Moses receives this information *at, near or by* Mount Sinai.⁸ The whole point of the tent of meeting was so that Moses did not have to climb up Mount Sinai to meet with Yahweh; that God would come to him in the tent of meeting. The Jews have

⁸ I need to point out that the same preposition is used in Ex. 31:18, where Moses is *on* Mount Sinai.

moved somewhat, as we have seen in Ex. 33; apparently, by Lev. 27:34, they are still within the sight of Mount Sinai or are walking around it and are still at its base. It is clear in this verse that God spoke to Moses **from** the tent of meeting. Here we use the *mîn* prefixed preposition, which is a preposition of separation, translated *out of*, *out from*, *from*. This verse and the last verse of Leviticus when taken with Ex. 33, indicate that the Jews have not traveled very far since Moses receive the Law from upon Mount Sinai.

There has been a change which has taken place. Back in Exodus, after the golden calf incident, the tent of meeting was outside the camp. Prior to that, God was removed, almost unreachable at the top of Mount Sinai; and He only allowed Moses to approach Him. Since the tabernacle was built, the tabernacle which speaks of His holiness and righteousness and foretells His plan, God now has a place to dwell in the camp of Israel. This is a matter of the Jews responding favorably to God's directions to bring offerings to Moses to build the tabernacle. When we listen to God and follow his directives, we are blessed. Israel was then blessed by having the tent of meeting, the tabernacle within their camp.

As has been discussed in the introduction, there is no objective reason for doing anything other than taking this book at face value as the writing of Moses.

"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: 'When any man from you brings an offering to Yahweh you will bring your offering of cattle from the herd or from the flock.' [Lev. 1:2]

To the reader in the English, nothing seems out of place here; however, we have a new word, not used before, and one which is generally translated *offering* or *oblation*. Qorbân (קָרְבָּן) [pronounced *kor-BAWN*] is firstly pronounced differently than I would have thought; this may have been a convention from transliterating it into the Greek later (or Aramaic), but we would expect because of its spelling that qorbân would be pronounced *qaw-r'-BAWN* instead. This word is found almost exclusively in Leviticus and Numbers (primarily in the first three chapters of Leviticus and the 7th chapter of Numbers) and then in Ezek. 20:28 40:43. That is it; we find it nowhere else. What I would like to do is put together another English word for it so that this is not confused with the two common words for offering, which are *minchâh* (מִנְחָה) [pronounced *min-KHAWH*] (Strong's #4503 BDB #585) and *t'rûmâh* (תְּרוּמָה) [pronounced *t'roo-MAWH*] (BDB #929 Strong's #8641). Let's see if we can possibly distinguish between these three words, all translated *offering* (this, by the way, excludes the word *sin*, which is occasionally translated *sin offering*).

Minchâh

- (1) This is the first word used for an offering, found as far back as Gen. 4:3–5.
- (2) This can refer to an offering of vegetables, which was rejected by God (Gen. 4:3, 5).
- (3) This word is often translated in the KJV as *meat offering* (e.g., Lev. 2:1, 3–9), which is very misleading (BDB p. 585), as it can refer to a *meal offering* or to a *grain offering* (Gen. 4:3 Num. 5:25–26).
- (4) Jacob, having swindled his brother Esau on two occasions, returned to his brother with many presents in order to placate Esau (thinking him to be as greedy and as unforgiving as himself). The word translated *present* or *gift* is *minchâh* (Gen. 32:13, 18, 20–21).
- (5) Therefore, it is used to mean a present or a tribute brought to someone out of respect in hopes of placating that person, doing obeisance to them, etc.
- (6) What would be nice is to be able to come up with a translation which could be used throughout the Bible which would (1) differentiate it from *qorbân* and *terûmâh*, (2) allow for some consistency when *minchâh* is found, and (3) to translate it without damaging its meaning. To be consistent, a good translation of this word would be a *tribute-offering*.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

T'rûmâh

- (1) T'rûmâh is related to several words which mean *to lift up*, *to raise*, *height*.
- (2) This word is first used with regards to bringing things to Moses for the purpose of building the tabernacle (Ex. 25, 29, 30).

T^erûmâh

- (3) This word is often translated *heave offering* in the KJV because it was lifted up before God (this is the word's relation to *height*) (Ex. 29:28 Lev. 7:34 Num. 31:41).
- (4) We find this word primarily in Exodus and Numbers, a few times in both Leviticus and Deuteronomy, throughout several other books, and quite often in Ezek. 45 and 48.
- (5) Most of the passages infer money and it is found in conjunction with the word *tithe*, meaning that it is not a *tithe* (2Chron. 31:12 Mal. 3:8).
- (6) Although most of the time, t^erûmâh refers to an offering to God, it can refer simply money which is given as a bribe (Prov. 29:4).
- (7) Although I have not examined every passage in which this word occurs, that this word could be reasonable translated *contribution* consistently without doing much damage to the meaning of the passages.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Qorbân

- (1) Finally, let's examine qorbân, the word introduced to us here (BDB #898 Strong #7133). This word is found almost exclusively in Leviticus and Numbers (the conspicuous exceptions being Ezek. 20:28 40:43).
- (2) According the Thieme and Rotherham, this word means *something brought near*.⁹ This word is often translation *oblation*, but few people have any idea what that means. It comes from the verb qârav (קָרַב) [pronounced *kaw-RAV*] (that is from Strong's; the vowel points are different in BDB); and it means *come near, approach* in the Qal stem. In the Hiphil, it is often translated *bring, offer*. However, there is no way one can get that meaning from Gen. 12:11 and Ex. 14:10, where the Hiphil perfect clearly means *to be brought near*. At this point, I am going to go out on a limb and **not** translate this word *offer*, as most translators have done throughout the book of Leviticus and Numbers, but retain the meaning *come near or brought near*. BDB seems to support this notion by not giving this as one of their primary definitions.
- (3) This appears to refer to an animal brought to be offered to God as a blood sacrifice or as a burnt offering. This is the animal before it is sacrificed (Lev. 1:3, 10 3:7, 12 Num. 4:28, 32).
- (4) We could get away with rendering this *[animal] offering* most of the time and be safe. However, a more literal rendering would be *that which is brought near*.
- (5) It is interesting that this word, although used very little in the Old Testament, was taken by the Jews, changed somewhat, and used as a gimmick in New Testament times. That is, it came to mean *given to God* and certain personal items could be declared *corban*, meaning that they did not have to be shared with anyone else. Some errant adult children would not help support their parents because the things that they owned were declared *corban* and therefore could not be given away to just anybody.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

A fourth word could be added to this list—ʿôlâh (עֹלָה) [pronounced *go-LAW*]⁹—a word which is related to the word for *climb, ascend* and it can be consistently rendered *burnt offering*.

A person has purposed in his heart to bring an offering to Yahweh. *From you* refers to from the person bringing the offering; this is pretty much exactly what Moses is to say to them. The offering first of all will come from their herd or flock. This is not going to be an offering of their favorite vegetables, as Cain brought before God. Most, but not all, offerings, were blood sacrifices.

⁹ *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 125

"If a burnt offering—his offering—[is] a male from the herd without blemish, he will bring it [near] at the door of the tent of meeting; he will offer it that he may be accepted before Yahweh. [Lev. 1:3]

Recall that right at the door of the tabernacle is the brazen altar. The animal brought is to be without blemish. This is not because we are bringing our very best to God. There is nothing in these sacrifices which indicate that is the criteria. What is expected, however, is an animal that is without spot and without blemish; this is Jesus Christ come in the flesh, a man without fault, without failing and without sin. The sacrifices brought before Yahweh had to be illustrative of our Lord. This is what it took to be *accepted before Yahweh*.

A burnt offering was to be brought before Yahweh every morning and evening throughout Israel's history (Ex. 29:39–42). As the NIV points out, double burnt offerings were brought on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9–10) and additional burnt offerings were brought on feast days (Num. 28–29). The offering in this verse is in addition to those offerings. The offering had to be male, without blemish (see Mal. 1:8); the rich brought a bull, the average person brought a sheep or a goat; and the poor brought a dove or a pigeon. The giver always placed his hand upon the head of the animal to transfer his sin to the innocent animal (Lev. 1:4). And, one of the more interesting aspects of this burnt sacrifice is that the fire was never to go out (Lev. 6:13), speaking of God's continual and unending justice, which necessitates a continual and unending Lake of Fire. Further pointed out in the NIV, is that the entire sacrifice was to be burned (Lev. 1:9); hence it was sometimes designated the holocaust offering (*hole* means *whole*, and *caust* means *burnt*). The priest was allowed to retain the hide of the animal (Lev. 7:8), as the hide speaks of the covering (or, atonement) of our sins. See the **Doctrine of the Burnt Offering**. Not finished yet!!

"He will lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering and it will be accepted for him to make atonement for him. [Lev. 1:4]

In Ex. 29:33 we covered the doctrine of atonement. This was a covering of the sin until our Lord came and bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). What is being done is the sins of the man bring the offering are being laid upon the head of his animal; they are transferred from his hand to the animal and then the animal is sacrificed on his behalf. The hand lain upon the head indicates identification. The sinner is identified with the animal, whose sacrifice covers his sin, just as our Lord was identified with us and our sins (Isa. 53:4–6 Rom. 6:3–10).

"Then he will kill the bull [lit., son of the herd; often rendered one of the herd] before Yahweh and Aaron's sons, the priests, will present the blood and throw the blood against the altar round about [the altar] that is at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 1:5]

The primary sacrifice is a blood sacrifice. This is not a function of the day and time; blood sacrifices go all the way back to the first couple, Adam and the woman (recall their clothing was made from animal skins; an animal had to die first and the hide was used to cover them up). A blood sacrifice is the way that God the Father pointed forward in history to the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf. The priests present the blood and the offering to God. We had to learn immediately that there would always be an intermediary between us and God. This intermediary began as the priests; however, the true mediator between God and man is the man Christ Jesus; the priests themselves were shadows of the One to come. Peter called the recipients of his first letter *sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:2).

Notice the order in which these things are done. First the offerer brings the bull and slays it. Before all else, Jesus Christ must die on behalf of sinners. This is the first place that the unbeliever must go to. The primary nature of this act applies both to man and to God. Then, the priests spring into action. They, representing man to God, place this offering before God the Father, just as Jesus Christ, after His death on the cross, presented Himself to God the Father. The resurrection indicates the acceptance of His atoning work on our behalf. This is the smoke, the tranquilizing scent, which is lifted up toward heaven.

Heb. 9:19–23 reads: **For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both**

the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God command you." And in the same way, he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels for the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

"And he will flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. [Lev. 1:6]

I am not certain if there is any symbolism involved when the body of the animal is cut into pieces here. It could be simply a matter of practicality; that is, there is no way that they could pick up the entire animal and lay him upon the altar. It would require them to cut the larger animals into pieces.

"And the sons of Aaron, the priest, will place fire on the altar and lay in order wood upon the fire. [Lev. 1:7]

So, what we have so far is that the animal has been sacrificed by having its little wooly throat cut. Now Aaron's sons place a fire upon the altar. Now I would think that it would be ideal if the top of the brazen altar was grating, but I don't think that it was. The word *flay* here is ideal. It means *to strip off* and has a variety of applications. The hide was stripped off the rest of the body, which was cut into pieces. The hide was saved for the priests, as a covering.

"And Aaron's sons, the priests, will lay in order the pieces: the head and the fat upon the wood that is on the fire, upon the altar. [Lev. 1:8]

As Paul said in I Cor. 14:40: **But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.**

Fire, in Scripture, Refers to God's Holiness in Judgement

- (1) God first appeared to Moses as a burning bush (Ex. 3:2) and later guided Israel at night as a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21).
- (2) When God judged degenerate Sodom and Gomorrah, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven (Gen. 19:24).
- (3) The day of the Lord, when Christ returns and removes the unbelievers from earth by fire, speaking both of His righteousness and His judgement, is mentioned in Mal. 3:2: [Yahweh is speaking] **"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like a laundryman's soap."** A refiner's fire removes the dross (the impurities) from the metals under fire. The impurities of the earth, those not covered with the blood of Jesus Christ, will be removed from this earth.
- (4) Fire speaks of testing by God (which removes impurities (I Peter 1:7)).
- (5) I Cor. 3:12–14 speaks of our human good being judged and burned in the evaluation judgement by Jesus Christ; again, an illustration of God's holiness, righteousness and judgement.
- (6) God is a consuming fire in Heb. 12:29.
- (7) Our Lord speaks of hellfire as judgement in Mark 9:43–50.
- (8) Finally, we have the sobering warning that **If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire** (Rev. 20:15).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

"But its entrails and its legs, he will wash with water and the priest will burn the whole on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a tranquilizing smell to Yahweh. [Lev. 1:9]

The entire animal is offered upon the altar and it is offered as cleansed. Our Lord offered Himself on the cross as absolute human perfection. Since we see this phrase, *a sweet savor or a pleasing odor* to Yahweh throughout

the Pentateuch, we should attempt to discern its meaning. There are, obviously, two Hebrew words here. We have the neutral word *rêyach* רֵיחַ [pronounced *RAY-ahkh*].¹⁰ We find it used primarily with a modifier (Gen. 8:31 Ex. 29:18); however, it does occur apart from a modifier (Gen. 27:27 Ex. 5:21). In Gen. 27:27, it speaks of old, blind Isaac smelling the smell of who he thought was Esau. This odor may have been offensive to some, pleasing to others; and it was quite pleasing to Isaac. In Ex. 5:21, however, the Jews are castigating Moses because he has made their smell displeasing to Pharaoh, a phrase meaning Pharaoh came to be very displeased with the Jews. Because this word can be used in both a positive and negative sense, using *odor*, *savor* or *fragrance* to translate tend to slant its meaning; *smell* or *scent* are good neutral translations. The next word is our all important modifier: *nîchôach* נִיחֹחַ [pronounced *nee-KHO-(w)ahkh*]. Unfortunately, it does not occur apart from *rêyach* and is found nowhere in the Bible but in the Pentateuch (only once in Genesis, twice in Numbers and not at all in Deuteronomy) and in Ezekiel 6:13 16:19 20:28, 41. It is said to mean *tranquilizing*, *soothing*, *quieting* by BDB and this would be a better rendering than *sweet* or *pleasing*. The reason for this is that each sacrifice of an animal speaks of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and the judgement for our sins by God the Father on the cross. This cannot be a *pleasing*, *pleasant* or *sweet* odor to God; however, because it does speak of our Lord's efficacious work on our behalf, it is a *tranquilizing and quieting smell*. Rather than looking down upon our sins and evil nature and wanting to judge us for this, God is tranquilized by this odor. It is all very anthropomorphic. **Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up on behalf of us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma** (Eph. 5:1–2).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

The Procedure for the Offering of a Goat or a Sheep

"If his gift from the flock, from the sheep or the goats; he will offer for a burnt offering a male without blemish. [Lev. 1:10]

We will see this phrase over and over: *without spot and without blemish*. The animal brought to the altar was perfect, to illustrate the perfection of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

"And he will kill it on the north side of the altar, before Yahweh, and Aaron's sons, the priests, will throw its blood against the altar round about. [Lev. 1:11]

I am not entirely certain as to the reason for the North side; maybe when I draw a picture of the tabernacle and its furniture, this will become more clear. There is an audience observing what is occurring here and with every sacrifice, they see the blood of the sacrifice scattered around the altar to God.

"And he will cut it into pieces with its head and with its fat and the priest will lay in order these pieces [lit., them] upon the wood that is on the first upon the altar. [Lev. 1:12]

As before, the animal is cut up and burned.

"But the entrails and the legs, he will wash with water and the priest will offer the whole [animal] and burn a burnt offering on the altar; it [is] an offering by fire, a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 1:13]

With every offering that was burnt, the judgement of this animal in their stead was a sweet savor to God. This represents the propitiation (covering) of our sins. We are presented to God perfect not because we have tried really hard to be good but because He has covered our sins with the blood of Christ and has judged our sins in Christ with fire. The reason the legs are washed is because these are what have come into contact with the earth,

¹⁰ I do need to investigate the pronunciation of words like this; once in a great while, the vowel point will be under the last letter; this may have more to do when it comes to placing the yod in the translation than it does when it comes to pronouncing the pattach. However, I wonder if it should be pronounced *RAY-khah* instead.

which is unclean, as it is the devil's world. The entrails are washed because they represent the old sin nature (what better portion of the animal?).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

The Procedure for the Offering of a Dove or Pigeon

"If a burnt offering of birds—his offering to Yahweh—then he will bring his offering from turtledoves or from young pigeons. [Lev. 1:14]

Not every person had money or great herds and flocks. However, salvation is open to anyone, rich or poor. A person with very little could bring as little as a bird as a blood sacrifice to God. Turtledoves are common to the Palestinian area at all times of the year, although there is a preponderance of them during the times of migration. It appears as though they were domesticated and only the domesticated birds were used as sacrifices to God. In the Bible, all uses of the word *turtledove* refer to sacrificial purposes, except in SOS 2:12 and Jer. 8:7. In Song of Solomon, their use is a matter of referring to a certain time of year, a little after the springtime. In Jeremiah, the built-in migrating clock of the turtledove is spoken of. Other than that, these turtledoves were easily obtained birds. We will cover the pigeon later.

"And the priest will bring it to the altar and wring off its head and burn on the altar and its blood will be drained out; its blood on the side of the altar. [Lev. 1:15]

Notice that the bird is not cut into pieces, indicating that it was a practical matter in sacrificing a large animal and unnecessary with a bird. However, the blood of the sacrifice was again emphasized.

"And he will take away its crop with the feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side in the place of the ashes. [Lev. 1:16]

A crop is a digestive organ of the bird. I don't know why this was removed with the feathers and cast on the side. However, we do not even know if this is what the Hebrew word means; it is uncertain (NIV Study Bible, p. 147).

"And he will tear it by its wings, but he will not divide [it]. The priest will burn it on the altar upon the wood that is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 1:17]

The tearing apart of the bird speaks of a violent, awful death. Our Lord's death on the cross on our behalf was more painful, more violent, than anything that we could imagine. It was the equivalent of enduring a multitude of hells for all eternity. How you can take infinity and somehow shrink it into a point of time is a matter of mathematics and God's grace.

See **The Doctrine of the Types of Animal Sacrifices in the Law**

Leviticus 2

Leviticus 2:1–16

Introduction: Lev. 2 covers the grain offerings, which represent what happens after atonement and salvation. This chapter will have a rather sparse outline. This could have easily been a portion of chapters 1 or 3. There will be further regulations regarding offerings of fine flour in Lev. 6:14–23 7:9–10.

Outline of Chapter 2:

Vv. 1–16 **Regulations concerning grain offerings**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

v. 16 **A Summary of the Grain Offerings**

Regulations Concerning Grain Offerings

When anyone brings near a [freewill] offering, a tribute of fine flour to Yahweh, he will pour oil upon it, his offering and place frankincense upon it. [Lev. 2:1]

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When anyone offers a cereal offering...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But when any person would bring near as an oblation, a meal-offering,...
KJV	And when any will offer a meat offering...
NASB	Now when anyone presents a grain offering...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And when a person bringeth near an offering, a present...

We have already examined the word qorbân (קֹרְבָן) [pronounced *kor-BAWN*], which is used as a freewill offering; one which is not required (that is, volition is involved). Similarly, we have examined the word minchâh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced *min-KHAWH*], which does not mean *cereal offering* or *meal offering*, but properly is a present or a tribute (see Gen. 4:3–5 32:13, 18 2Sam. 8:2). Out of the eight translations which I regularly consult, only one, Young's, had this verse correct. We are told in context just what kind of an offering this is. Ç ôleth (סֹלֶת) [pronounced *SO-leth*] is consistently rendered *flour* or *fine flour* in Scripture. Minchâh became so closely identified with this offering of fine flour that it became the word for a *grain offering*; however, this is not its original meaning, nor should we necessarily take it for the meaning here in context. We can allow the context of the passage to guide us in the type of minchâh, or tribute or present, that is alluded to.

This is the offering of a believer. A bloodless sacrifice does not save. **Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness** (Heb. 9:22b). This is a believer who is bringing near to God an offering which speaks of his thankfulness to God. The offering is a tribute to Yahweh and His provision. It is unfortunate that this passage is incorrectly translated so often is that it blurs the meaning and interpretation of the verse.

At the end of this chapter, we will examine the doctrine of the grain offering.

"And he will bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, and he will grasp from it a handful of fine flour and oil with all of its frankincense and the priest will burn as its memorial portion upon the altar, an offering by fire, a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 2:2]

The word which I translated *burn* is not really *burn*; it is the 3rd masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of qâṭar (קָטַר) [pronounced *kaw-TAR*] and it is the word used to burn incense. In other words, whatever is burned is caused to smoke. It might not really catch fire and burn, but it can be caused to decompose, the smoke being a sign of that chemical decomposition. All of the flour along with the oil and frankincense represent God's blessing and graciousness to the believer. This believer brings back some of this to God, recognizing the source of his blessing.

"And the remainder of the tribute offering [will be] for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy portion [lit., the holy of holies] of the altar fire to Yahweh. [Lev. 2:3]

Aaron and his sons worked full-time in service to God. They required food and clothing and shelter, as did anyone else. They had to be remunerated for their time and dedication. We will later learn that the priests were to eat this only in the tent of meeting, the tabernacle, and were not to use this to feed their families (Lev. 6:16–18).

"And when you bring a tribute offering—[it will be] baked, of fine flour; unleavened cakes mixed with oil or unleavened wafers, spread [lit., anointed] with oil. [Lev. 2:4]

The fine flour is an evenness and stability in one's life; a balance of character. There is no quality in excess and no quality of character which is missing. The oil is the Holy Spirit and the frankincense is the fragrance of his life. There is no leaven, as that speaks of impurities (false doctrine) and there is no honey mixed in (honey speaks of sweetness; and, in this context, it would be unbearable sweetness). See **the Doctrine of Olive Oil—not finished yet!!**

"And if a tribute is baked on a griddle, [then] your offering is to be of fine flour, mixed with oil, and unleavened. [Lev. 2:5]

The pan mentioned here was a clay pan which sat on top of a stone which was heated by a fire; not unlike our frying pans today. According to the NIV notes, iron pans were used later.

The difference here is in the cooking. When baked in the oven, the oil goes on top and when baked upon the griddle, the oil is used actually in with the bread. Even though the church age is well hidden from those in the Old Testament, it sounds an awful lot like v. 4, with the oil spread on top of the unleavened cakes, deals with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is Old Testament spirituality; and that v. 5, where the oil is mixed in with the cakes, deals with the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is New Testament spirituality. It is not necessary that all of the symbolism be completely understood by those in the Old Testament.

"Having broken it into pieces, you will pour oil upon it; it [is] a tribute. [Lev. 2:6]

I am doing my best to give these verses a literal rendering, as most translations do a very poor job with Leviticus. The breaking of the bread into pieces is the scattering of Israel and it also represents the church, the body of Christ, which is broken into pieces and spread out throughout the world, as it must be for any evangelism to take place.

"And if a tribute [offering] of a pan—your offering of fine flour—it will be made [lit., constructed] with oil. [Lev. 2:7]

I am praying that God will raise up a man, who knows the original languages much better than I do, to put together a literal translation of the Old Testament, with his eye toward consistency, differentiation and accuracy. It would be marvelous to have such a Bible, with a side-by-side less literal interpretation, where idioms are translated as per their intended inference rather than as per their literal meaning. Note here the importance of the Holy Spirit; all the offerings of flour speak of the spiritual life after salvation (as if there is one prior to) and the importance of the filling of the Holy Spirit. The offering of our lives and service to God are meaningless apart from His gracious provision of the Spirit.

"You will bring the tribute [offering] which is made [lit. constructed] of these [things] to Yahweh; furthermore, he [the giver] will approach [with] it [or, bring it near] to the priest and he will bring it near to the altar. [Lev. 2:8]

In this verse, Owen's translates three different words by the word *bring*. The first word is *bôw'* (בֹּא) [pronounced *bo*] which means, in the Qal stem, *come in, go, go in*; however, in the Hiphil, the causative stem, it means *to take in, to bring, to come in with*; and, surprisingly enough, it is translated quite consistently by the KJV when found in

the Hiphil stem. It generally requires a direct object, as it is the object which is being brought somewhere. Qârav (קרב) [pronounced *kaw-RAV*] means *come near, approach* in the Kal stem. We have already examined this particular word in Lev. 1:2. In the Hiphil, it is **often** translated *bring, offer*. However, there is no way one can get that meaning from Gen. 12:11 and Ex. 14:10, where the Hiphil perfect clearly means *to be brought near, to approach*. At this point, I am going to continue to **not** translate this word *offer*, as most translators have done throughout the book of Leviticus and Numbers, but retain its actual meaning *approach, come near or brought near*. BDB seems to support this notion by not giving this as one of their primary definitions. In this verse, qârav does not mean offer because the person with the tribute is the giver and the person receiving it is the priest; it is presented or brought near to the priest; it is actually *offered* to Yahweh. In this verse, qârav is in the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 3rd person feminine singular suffix (referring to the tribute offering). In terms of differentiation, we have a tough one coming up next. The word is nâgas (נגס) [pronounced *naw-GAS*] and it appears to have meanings almost identical to qârav; this is, it means *come near, draw near, approach, come hither* in the Kal stem; and *bring near, bring hither, brought* in the Hiphil. It is parsed the same as qârav; nâgas is in the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 3rd person feminine singular suffix.

"And the priest will lift up its memorial portion out from the tribute [offering] and burn on the altar a fire-offering, a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 2:9]

In general, I have a great and abiding respect for those who translated the KJV. It is a scholarly and relatively literal translation into the King's English. However, Leviticus is a mess and other translators seemed to have followed suit. The portion of God's Word which speaks continually of our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf was given to the hacks of the translating committee. The Book of Leviticus is almost in its entirety a direct quote from God to Moses as recorded by Moses. You would expect that in a case like that, the translators would go out of their way to be as accurate as possible.¹¹ The verb is the 3rd person, masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of rūwm (רום) [pronounced *room*] and it means *to exalt, to lift up* and even *to offer up*.

"And the remainder of the tribute [will be] for Aaron and his sons; [it is] a holy of holies fire-offerings to Yahweh. [Lev. 2:10]

A portion of this tribute to Yahweh is to be burned to Yahweh; and the remainder is given to Aaron and his sons. Note that these works, this life of the believer, as represented by the unleavened bread—it is most holy to God.

"All of the tribute which you bring near to Yahweh will not be made with leaven, for all of leaven and all of honey you will not burn out of it a fire-offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 2:11]

There was no sugar in that portion of the ancient world, so all sweetening was done with honey or boiled concentrated grape juice. There are several examples in the Bible where honey is obtained from wild bees (Deut. 32:13 Judges 14:8–9 Luke 24:41–43). Bee had been confined to hives in Egypt and Assyria by that time so that honey could be obtained.

There are other interpretations given to the exclusion of honey from its use in the grain offering. It was used to help the fermentation process in brewing beer. However, I don't think that the use of honey in that process was so exclusive as to not be used in other areas as well. Maimonides said that only idolators used leavened bread smeared with honey as a sacrifice to God. Another interpretation is that honey was used in some unspeakable way in some Canaanite religious ritual; however, the Jews were only slightly familiar with the Canaanites, and less so with their cultic practices. Furthermore there is nothing in the Scriptures that I am aware of which suggests some sort of inherent evil tied closely to honey. Now let me give you the correct interpretation:

Leaven speaks of corruption of doctrine and honey speaks of sweetness. The offering of our Lord on the cross was not sweet; it was an experience beyond all imaginable horror. Our lives are not to be characterized by a saccharine sweetness, that phoney behavior which causes most intelligent unbelievers to grimace and find another

¹¹ This in no way implies that the Book of Leviticus is any more inspired than any other book of the Bible; see the study of Inspiration concerning this notion.

place to be, but a lifestyle dedicated to God, free of phoniness. Scofield writes: *Honey is mere natural sweetness and could not symbolize the divine graciousness of the Lord Jesus.*¹² In other words, sweetness is a personality trait and some are and some aren't. This is not a trait which is exclusively Christian; in fact, some Christians, filled with the Spirit, are not sweet. This does not mean that we will be less than gracious nor does it mean that we speak our personal opinions, no matter how offensive. Proper training in manners precludes us from saying any damn thing which comes into our mind. A young person without training says the first thing which comes to their mind; they have a thought and some of them feel that they must express it before it's gone ("That's an ugly shirt"). Part of being civilized is learning not to say everything that pops into your head; it is a matter of consideration to others and a matter of minding our own business. A Christian should show signs of being civilized and gracious, without having to resort to a phoney sweetness. Our phoney sweetness does not cut it with God and He wants no part of it.

Now, together, the leaven **and** honey speak of corruption because together they were used in the fermentation process of both beer and wine. So together, they do symbolize the corruption of that which is true; that is, the corruption of Bible doctrine. Paul helps us to interpret the concept of leaven: **Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth** (I Cor. 5:8). If necessary, review the doctrine of leaven from Ex. 12:15.

"An offering of first fruit—you may approach with them [i.e., the honey and the leaven] to Yahweh, but they will not lift [them] up on the altar for a tranquilizing scent [Lev. 2:12]

At this point, we need to examine the **Doctrine of the Firstfruits—not finished yet!!** The firstfruits are not things which are sacrificed to God. They speak of the prosperity with which God has given us; this is not a sacrifice on our side or from God's side. It is blessing to us from God. Therefore, we do not associate it directly with the cross. These things come as a result of the cross. As Thieme was wont to say, "What does God do for us after doing to most for us on the cross? He does much more than the most."

"And all of your approachings of your tributes you will season with salt and you will not case the salt of the covenant with your God from your tribute; with all your offerings, you will approach [with] salt. [Lev. 2:13]

Salt is a preservative and it is the nation Israel which preserved the ancient world and today, it is the church, the body of Christ which preserves the earth. It is also salt which gives a real taste or a spice to some things, and it is our lives, not as self-righteous, prissy boys and girls laced with phoney sweetness, but our lives in a dedicated to God lifestyle. Salt, in the ancient world, is also closely associated with signing a covenant. See **the Doctrine of Salt—not finished yet.** Num. 18:19 2Chron. 13:5 Ezek. 43:24 Col. 4:6 It is equivalent to signing a covenant between two parties (in this case, warring parties between whom peace is made). Today, salt is a relatively inexpensive condiment; however, in the ancient world, it was an expensive spice, necessary to the diet.

"And if you approach with a tribute of firstfruits to Yahweh, then you will approach with green ears [of corn] dried by the fire, the tribute of firstfruits. [Lev. 2:14]

I am not certain whether we are speaking of grain or of corn here. In any case, the grain or corn was dried or roasted by fire; our grace from God on earth is a portion of our eternal inheritance, as God has given His tacit approval to. This prosperity in no way compromises His integrity and justice.

"And you will place oil upon it and frankincense; it [is] a tribute [offering]. [Lev. 2:15]

This is **not** a grain or a cereal offering; whether we are speaking of corn or grain here, this offering is a tribute to the grace of Yahweh.

¹² Scofield's Reference Bible, 1967 edition, p. 129

"And the priest will burn a portion of the crushed grain as its memorial portion and out of the oil upon all of its frankincense a fire-offering to Yahweh." [Lev. 2:16]

Again, this does not exactly burn, but it is placed into the fire until it chars and smokes.

A Summary of the Grain Offerings

When anyone offers an offering of a meal offering to Yahweh, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. He shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and he shall take his handful of its fine flour, and of its oil, with all its frankincense; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Yahweh (Lev. 2:1–3).

That which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is a most holy thing of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. "When you offer an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. If your offering is a meal offering of the baking pan, it shall be of unleavened fine flour, mixed with oil. You shall cut it in pieces, and pour oil on it. It is a meal offering. If your offering is a meal offering of the frying pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. You shall bring the meal offering that is made of these things to Yahweh: and it shall be presented to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar. The priest shall take from the meal offering its memorial, and shall burn it on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Yahweh. That which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire (Lev. 2:4–10).

No meal offering, which you shall offer to Yahweh, shall be made with yeast; for you shall burn no yeast, nor any honey, as an offering made by fire to Yahweh. As an offering of firstfruits you shall offer them to Yahweh: but they shall not come up for a sweet savor on the altar. Every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt; neither shall you allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your meal offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt (Lev. 2:11–13).

If you offer a meal offering of first fruits to Yahweh, you shall offer for the meal offering of your first fruits grain in the ear parched with fire, bruised grain of the fresh ear. You shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it: it is a meal offering. The priest shall burn as its memorial, part of its bruised grain, and part of its oil, along with all its frankincense: it is an offering made by fire to Yahweh (Lev. 2:14–16).

Scripture	Offering	How Prepared	What was Done	Meaning
Lev. 2:1–3	Grain offering	Fine flour with oil and frankincense	Offering by fire which results in smoke	The even flour speaks of the evenness and balance of Christ's character; the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit and the frankincense means that He is acceptable to God (sweet smelling)
Lev. 2:4–10	Baked grain offering	Made without leaven, with oil throughout and on top	Broken into bits with more oil poured upon it; offered by fire resulting in smoke	This speaks of Christ's body, which was broken for us. No leaven means that there is no mixture of false doctrine; oil means that He was empowered by God the Holy Spirit.
Lev. 2:11, 13	additional commands for grain offerings	It cannot be made with honey or leaven; must be made with salt		The lack of leaven means that it has not been corrupted; the lack of honey means that this was not sweet to Jesus Christ. His pain and suffering was much greater than any man has known before.

Scripture	Offering	How Prepared	What was Done	Meaning
Lev. 2:12	Firstfruits offering		The directions seem a little contradictory*; the first fruits were not to ascend as a soothing aroma	This applies to all firstfruits offerings, which may or may not be those in vv. 1–10. The firstfruits are brought to the Lord but not offered by fire. This appears to be an offering which is utilized by the priests, just as we give a portion of our money to a church.
Lev. 2:14–16	A grain offering from the early ripened fruits; fresh stalks of grain	Oil is poured upon it as well as incense	Offered by first to Jehovah; smoke ascends from this offering	This speaks of Christ, the firstfruits of the resurrection; after dying for our sins, God the Father resurrects Him from the dead, giving approval to His work.

These are bloodless offerings. It is not clear to me whether or not they could be offered apart from sacrificial offerings. In Num. 28:3–6, they are offered with animal sacrifices; however, that does not mean that they would always be offered that way. Perhaps, God gave people the choice? When someone offered a grain offering alone, it was essentially saying “Thanks, God, for taking care of me as an Israelite.” Maybe it was just a ritual (obviously, this would be the case with any offering). Perhaps the person who offered the sacrificial animal knew, on some level, that this sacrifice was a necessary part of his offering. On the other hand, Num. 28:12–13 seem to give us a clear indication when we would use this or that grain offering.

The person offering the grain offering could not eat of it (the priests could). However, the priests could not eat of their own grain offerings (Lev. 6:22–23).

* The word for *firstfruits* in v. 12 is entirely different from the word for firstfruits in v. 14. In v. 14, in the NASB, they are called *early ripened things* instead of *firstfruits*. We may not have a good handle upon how vv. 12 and 14 are differentiated, but we do know that they are different.

Scotfield's summary: *The meal-offering. The fine flour speaks of the evenness and balance of the character of Christ; of that perfection in which no quality was in excess, none lacking; the fire, of His testing by suffering, even unto death; frankincense; the fragrance of His life Godward (see Ex. 30:34). The absence of leaven: His character as "the Truth" (see Ex. 12:8). The absence of honey: His was not that mere natural sweetness which may exist quite apart from grace. The oil mingled: is Christ as born of the Spirit (Matt. 1:18-23). The oil upon: is Christ as baptized with the Spirit (John 1:32–6:27). The oven: the unseen sufferings of Christ; His inner agonies; (Heb. 2:18 Matt. 27:45-46). The pan: His more evident sufferings (for example, Matt. 27:27-31). The salt: this is the pungency of the truth of God—that which arrests the action of leaven.*¹³

¹³ C. I. Scotfield, *Scotfield Notes from the Scotfield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Lev. 2:1. Some minor editing was done.

Leviticus 3

Leviticus 3:1–17

Introduction: Lev. 3

Outline of Chapter 3:

- Vv. 1–5 **The instructions concerning a peace offering from the herd**
- Vv. 6–11 **The instructions for offering a lamb from the flock**
- Vv. 12–17 **The instructions for offering a goat from the flock**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 17 **What About the Blood?**

The Instructions Concerning a Peace Offering from the Herd

"And if a sacrifice of peace offerings: if he offers his offering from the herd, whether male or female, he will approach with it before Yahweh without blemish. [Lev. 3:1]

We have a new word for offerings here: shelem (שֶׁלֶם) [pronounced *SHEH-lem*]; and, if you know no other word of Hebrew, you likely know shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], a word for *peace and prosperity*. Other than the vowel points and wâw cholem, ם, which acts like a vowel, we have the same word, which often means that the meanings are closely related. Since we find this word used nowhere else except with regards to specific offerings, it is reasonable to translate shelem as peace-offering. However, this word is more encompassing than simple peace with God. It refers to prosperity, as in prosperity from God; to an alliance, as in an alliance with God; and fellowship, because through the blood of our Lord, we have fellowship with God. Peace is our reconciliation with God (Col. 1:20). Future from this time, peace proclaimed by our Lord would include peace between Israel and the church, two entities used mightily by God during two different time periods; and this peace includes peace with God (Eph. 2:11–18). Because this particular sacrifice speaks of fellowship, Aaron's sons, the priests, would participate in the eating of a portion of the sacrifice (Lev. 7:31–34), as eating and drinking is a portrayal of fellowship (Luke 22:30). Strong's #8002 BDB #1023.

Gower's *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible* succinctly explains: *The Selamim, or peace offering, was a fellowship meal in which the worshiper and his friends sat down to a meal with God in peace. After confession and sacrifice, God's portion of the meal—the fat—was burned upon the altar. The remainder was eaten by the worshiper, his family, and friends (Lev. 3; 7:11–21, 28, 34). This offering could be used to express thanks, to accompany a vow, or to be a freewill offering.*¹⁴

Peace offering can imply all of that; unfortunately, it rarely does to the average reader. In fact, too often, all the carnal man thinks of is inner peace when the peace offering is mentioned. This is typical of man-centered thinking; what will this do for me in relationship to me? In some cases, an inner peace will result from salvation and its perpetuation is only possible through rebound and doctrine.

We are, because of our old sin nature, at enmity with God; we are at war with God. Because of our old sin nature, our actual sins and Adam's original sin, God is at war with us. His perfect righteousness demands justice, which is a demand for our condemnation. We need peace between ourselves and God. This peace offering illustrates our Lord's death for our peace. **"And a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us...and His name will be called...Prince of Peace** (Isa. 9:6). **Therefore, having been justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** (Rom. 5:1).

¹⁴ p. 362.

The peace offering is the offering where the offerer could eat a portion of the sacrifice. This eating is what implies fellowship with God (Lev. 7:15?). During the three annual feast events, or festivals, thousands of animals were sacrificed in peace offerings and other offerings (Ex. 23:14–17). Solomon himself offered 20,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep during one 14-day period (1Kings 8:63–65). Further regulations concerning the peace-offerings can be found in Lev. 7:11–21, 28–34.

"And he will lay his hand¹⁵ upon the head of his offering and kill it at the door of the tent of meeting and Aaron's sons, the priests, will throw the blood against the altar round about.

[Lev. 3:2]

For one who does not understand the reasons why this is all done, this would appear to be a very gruesome religion. But we know that the hand upon the head transfers the sin from the owner to the animal; that Jesus Christ was killed where God came to meet man, on earth, in Israel, at the door of the tent of meeting, if you will. The blood signifies the spiritual death of our Lord on the cross on our behalf. It is hard to relate to all of this in the Old Testament unless you see its fulfillment in the New Testament.

"And he will approach from the sacrifice of the peace offerings—an offering by fire to Yahweh; the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails. [Lev. 3:3]

It is this animal sacrifice which is the approach of the offerer to God. I do not fully comprehend the fat and the entrails thing, however.

"And the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the appendage of [or, the fatty mass next to] the liver with the kidneys he will remove it. [Lev. 3:4]

The kidneys are often related to human emotion (Job 19:27 Psalm 7:9 73:21 Prov. 23:16); fat to prosperity (Gen. 45:18 Num. 18:12); I am going to pass over this word for *loins* (also translated *flanks*) temporarily, as it can vary a great deal as to its meaning and usage (compare this passage to Job 31:24 Psalm 49:13 78:7 Prov. 3:26 Ecc. 7:25; ten to one that you cannot even figure out which words in the English represent this word in this passage). The word translated *appendage*, *midriff*, *caul* is found only in relationship to these offerings. Liver is also associated with emotions (Lam. 2:11), although not as closely as kidneys are. The word for *liver* is the same as the adjective for *heavy*, *difficult*, *oppressive*. The emotions of the animal are laid bare before all when they are offered to God. We are told that our Lord continually, in the thick darkness, screamed **"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"** (Psalm 22:1 Matt. 27:46)

"Aaron's sons will burn on the altar against the burnt offering [or, ascending offering] which is upon the wood on the fire, a fire-offering, a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 3:5]

The fire is judgement, and the tranquilizing scent is God being appeased. I realize that this is repetitious, but that was the intention of the continual sacrifices—they were repetitious in order to teach the gospel. Recall that these ascending offerings were offered every morning and evening by the sons of Aaron (Ex. 29:38–42); the fellowship offerings were offered with them on the brazen altar (Ex. 24:5).

The Instructions for Offering a Lamb from the Flock

"And if his offering from the flock, a sacrifice of a peace-offering to Yahweh, a male or female, he will approach with it without defect. [Lev. 3:6]

We have the continual theme of the animal being without blemish, or defect; as our Lord was perfect. **As Pilate said, "I have found no guilt in him [requiring] death."** (Luke 23:22b)

¹⁵ This is plural in the Septuagint; however, I would personally stick with the singular as the correct rendering of the original.

"If he approaches with a lamb for his offering, then he will approach with it before Yahweh.
[Lev. 3:7]

We have almost a play on words in this verse. The Hebrew for *approach, come near* is used twice and the word for offering is the noun cognate of that verb.

"And having lain his hand¹⁶ upon the head of his offering, he will kill it before the tent of meeting and Aaron's sons will throw its blood against the altar round about. [Lev. 3:8]

The hand on the head—transference of sin; the sprinkling of the blood—the cleansing of our sins through Christ's death for us on the cross.

"Then he will approach from the sacrifice of the peace offering, a fire-offering to Yahweh; its fat, the entire fat tail close by the backbone, taking it away and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails. [Lev. 3:9]

Just as the animal is completely exposed before man, our souls are ocmpletely exposed before God. We are an open book entirely before Him and our lives are entirely exposed to the angels and demons, who daily observe us. According the the NIV Study Bible, there is a breed of sheep, still found in the Mideast, whose tail has a great deal of fat.¹⁷ This fat tail was often fried and eaten.¹⁸

"And the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the appendage of the liver with the kidneys, he will remove. [Lev. 3:10]

These things are being removed from the animal by the offerer.

"And the priest will burn it on the altar as food, a fire-offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 3:11]

I believe what is being burned upon the altar is the remains of the beast, after these things have been removed. Maybe the judgement for our sin is done apart from prosperity, apart from emotion (?).

The word translated *food* here is *lechem* (לֶחֶם) [pronounced *LEH-khem*] actually means *bread* literally. However, it often has the wider application of being translated *food*. Strong's #3899 BDB #536. This verse is a prime example.

In other cultures, sacrifices offered up were to be eaten by the gods (Ezek. 16:20); Yahweh does not eat these sacrifices (Psalm 50:7–13). The only way in which Yahweh partciplates in the eating of these sacrifices is symbolically, as a representation fellowship, or peace, between the offerer, the perfect priest who offers the sacrifice and Yahweh (Lev. 21:21 22:25). It is not until God takes upon Himself the body of a man that we may eat and drink with Him. **And when the hour had come, He reclined [to eat]; and the Apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you befor I suffer, for I say to you, I will never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And having taken a cup, when He had given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves, for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." And, having taken bread, when He had given thanks, He broke [it]and gave [it] to them, saying, "This is My body which is given on behalf of you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way, the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant by means of My blood."** (Luke 22:14–20).

¹⁶ Plural in the Septuagint, as was v. 2.

¹⁷ p. 148.

¹⁸ Gower's *The New Manners and Custom sof the Bible*, p. 134.

The Instructions for Offering a Goat from the Flock

"If his offering is a goat, then he will approach with it before Yahweh. [Lev. 3:12]

This is the scapegoat, who takes the sin upon itself.

"And he will lay his hand upon its head and kill it before the tent of meeting and the sons of Aaron will throw its blood against the altar, round about. [Lev. 3:13]

The sins are transferred to the animal and the blood atonement is performed.

"Then he will approach from it as his offering, a fire-offering to Yahweh; the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails; [Lev. 3:14]

The animal's body is laid bare as our souls are laid bare.

"And the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver with the kidneys, he will remove it. [Lev. 3:15]

It seems to refer to the goat. The sacrifice will be just the opposite from the offering of the lamb.

"And the priest will burn them [lit., cause them to smoke] on the altar as food offered by fire—all the fat [is] for a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh.¹⁹ [Lev. 3:16]

It appears here that the goat is removed from the innards and the innards are burned upon the altar whereas with the lamb, the innards were removed and the lamb was burned upon the altar.

"[This is] a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all of your dwelling places: neither fat nor blood will you eat." [Lev. 3:17]

The health benefits are obvious; a lot of diseases are avoided by not partaking in either of these things, and God will preserve the Jews partially by their diet. On the spiritual level, we should take this in points:

There are a lot of bloody sacrifices in the Old Testament. This leads us to ask...

What About the Blood?

1. The life of the animal is in the blood (Gen. 9:4 Lev. 17:11).
2. The blood represents the spiritual death of our Lord (Matt. 26:28 Mark 14:24).*
3. When an animal is sacrificed and his blood poured out on the altar, this represents the death of our Lord when His life is sacrificed and His human spirit—His life—is judged by God and suffers hell on our behalf. This is an analogous situation (Mark 14:22–24 John 6:51 Heb. 9:22).
4. We do not take part in the spiritual death of our Lord in any way. We do not, with the pain and suffering that we have in our own lives, become a part of this spiritual death and help God in any way. All of the work done on our behalf on the cross is done 100% by our Lord Jesus Christ; we can only appropriate this on our behalf through believing in Him (Eph. 2:8–9).
5. What our Lord did for us upon the cross was substitutionary; He suffered spiritual death, the equivalent of an eternity of hell for every single one of us (Matt. 26:28 Heb. 9:12 9:22).
6. Therefore, we do not drink the blood or eat of the flesh any more than we help Jesus Christ die for our sins. Our participation in this regard is a matter of faith in Him and not a matter of assistance (John 6:35)

¹⁹ The western Samaritan and Septuagint codices had *unto Yahweh*, changing the translation to *"And the priest will burn them [lit., cause them to smoke] on the altar as food offered by fire—all the fat [is] unto Yahweh as a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh."*

What About the Blood?

Titus 3:5).

* It should be obvious in these two passages that our Lord did not give His disciples His literal blood; they drank unleavened wine (grape juice) with Him; it represented His blood, which is the analogy between His death on the cross and the death of the animals on the altar.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Leviticus 4

Leviticus 4:1–35

Outline of Chapter 4:

- Vv. 1–2 **A summary of chapter 4**
- Vv. 3–12 **The offering of a priest who has unknowingly committed a sin**
- Vv. 13–21 **The offering on behalf of the congregation of Israel which has unknowingly sinned**
- Vv. 22–26 **The offering of a man of prominence who has sinned unknowingly**
- Vv. 27–35 **The offering of a common man who has sinned unknowingly**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 4 brings up the issue of unknown sins. The more doctrine that you know, the more you are cognizant of a variety of sins which many believers are unaware. For instance, some believers might become a conscientious objector or admire someone who is a conscientious objector, because they do not realize that is a sin. Others may be involved in sex outside of marriage (presumably because they are in love) or believe that a homosexual union is as valid before God as a heterosexual marriage, and this is due to their lack of knowledge. Not only does God tell us that "[My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge](#)", but ignorance of sin is no excuse. We cannot become Christians and then ignore God's Word and do whatever we want; this will place us under serious discipline. It does not matter one whit whether we commit these sins in ignorance or with full knowledge of what it is that we are doing. These sins were paid for by our Lord on the cross and this must be symbolized by the death of a sacrifice.

A major difference between this chapter and the previous three is that the sacrifices offered in the other chapters were voluntary. They represented fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ after salvation, which is an option to all believers (as opposed to a life of discipline). However, the sacrifices herein contained are mandatory offerings.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

A Summary of Chapter 4

[And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,](#) [Lev. 4:1]

Again, God is speaking directly to Moses. Had I been breaking up the chapters, I probably would have placed chapters 1–3 together as one chapter and, throughout this book, allowed *Yahweh speaking to Moses* to accomplished the chapter divisions.

["Say to the people of Israel, saying, if any one unknowingly deviates \[or, sins\] from any of the commandments of Yahweh and does any one of them which should not be done;](#) [Lev. 4:2]

Two words should be examined here. Yahweh is delivering to Israel the Law where everything that they need to know about transgressing against God can be found. Because they have a portion of the Law and will soon have the Law in its entirety, we can now have the word *sh'gâgâh* (שִׁגְגָּה) [pronounced *sh'gaw-GAWH*], found in this passage for the first time in God's Word. This is a noun which modifies either the word *sin* (Lev. 5:15 Num. 15:27) or a particular sin (Num. 35:11, 15). *Unknowingly* is a good translation, but not exactly fit several passages, such as Num. 35:11, 15 Joshua 20:3, 9. When we speak of unintentional manslaughter (as the passages named do), a good translation is *unwittingly, unintentionally*. However, we should stick with *unknowingly* when dealing with

committing sins when we do not realize that they are sins. You may wonder why I have taken this stance when my preference is to go with a consistent and accurate translation whenever possible. This is because when it comes to committing a sin, we intend to commit that sin, whether we recognize that it is a sin or not. Our volition is involved. Some force of evil does not cause us to sin against our own volition. What is unintentional, at times, are the results of the sin. Some people, because of pre-marital sex, become involved in an horrible abusive marriage where both the husband and the wife are unhappy and the children are caused daily grief do to their parent's behavior. At the time of committing sex outside of marriage, their intention was some self-satisfaction, either sexual or emotional; or it was a pay back or a reward. In any case, the results were unintentional, although the sin which precipitated the results was very intentional (even if the people involved did not realize that pre-marital sex is wrong in all instances). The point that I am trying to make in the translation of this word is that volition should not be removed from the picture in all instances by using the word *unintentional* except with regards to some of the results being unintentional.

The second word worth examining is *châtâ`* (חָטָא) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], the word for *sin*, which we have seen very little of until now. This word only occurs five times in Genesis (Gen. 20:9 39:9 40:1 43:9 44:32), which covers a period of time of over 2000 years; and only three times in Exodus prior to Ex. 32 (Ex. 5:16 9:27 10:16). After the Law, we find this word much more often—three times in Ex. 32 to describe the transgression of the Jews against God in the constructing of the golden calf (vv. 30–33), over fifteen times in Leviticus (a shorter book than Exodus or Genesis) and several times thereafter. It is not that there were not some laws of God which were understood and which could be transgressed. Job understood that there were certain laws of God, as did his friends, although they did not always agree on what these laws were or who had transgressed them. The most popular translation of this word is *sin*, however *transgress*, *miss*, *miss the mark*, *err* are also reasonable translations. However, it would be nice to update this word to a modern vocabulary, which will be difficult to do in this era of nonjudgmental everyone needs self-esteem mind set. When an object is given in context (such as, this particular verse), *deviate*, *stray from*, *go astray from* or *transgress* might be acceptable translations. When it comes to committing an act of sin, *commit a transgression* is wordy, but reasonable. Two other wordy, but good translations would be *subvert [God's Law]*, *transgress [the Law]*.

This verse deals with people who are believers, who are ignorant of a portion of God's Word, and have transgressed against God. They have unknowingly (but **not** unintentionally) deviated from the commandments of God. Examples of these transgressions are given in Lev. 5:15–18 22:14.

On the other end of the spectrum we have those who stand in defiance of God. *But the person who acts defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Yahweh; and that person will be cut off from among his people, because he has despised the Word of Yahweh and has broken His commandment, that person will be completely cut off; his iniquity on him* (Num. 5:30–31). This is an act which is greater than knowingly sinning; this is a person who stands up against God and sins to spite God's commandments.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Offering of a Priest Who Has Unknowingly Committed a Sin

"If it is the anointed priest who transgresses [against God] [or, sins], thus bringing guilt upon the people, then he will offer for the sins which he has committed, a young bull, without defect to Yahweh with regards to sin. [Lev. 4:3]

The word *sin* occurs twice in this verse; the second occurrence is generally translated *for a sin offering*. However, with the prefixed lamed preposition, I've given a very literal translation. Throughout the Old Testament, the word for *sin offering* and for *sin* are the same word. The offering for sin, identifying the sacrifice completely with the sin, is a type of Jesus Christ, being identified completely with our sins, as He was made sin for us (I Cor. 5:21). The death of the sacrifice is the death of our Lord and the tranquilizing scent is the acceptance by God the Father for His sacrifice on our behalf (Psalm 22 Isa. 53 Matt. 26:28). There are two slants on this: (1) the word for *sin* should only be translated *sin* and not *sin offering* (which is what I will attempt to do); or (2) that it can be translated

either way, allowing context to determine. I believe that the former is what was intended originally, but that the passage of time allowed this word to take on the additional meaning of *sin offering*. Taking either position should not do irreparable damage to the meaning of any passage in Leviticus.

Notice the first person mentioned who could commit a sin of ignorance, a priest—the high priest in fact—one who is knowledgeable in the Law. The priest, by his sin, bring guilt upon all the people. Why? He represents the people before God. It is because of the priest that we are acceptable before God. Jesus Christ had to offer Himself up as undefiled, unblemished, perfect in His humanity, otherwise, His atonement for our sin would have been worthless. Therefore, a priest must be in fellowship before God to perform his priestly functions. The analogy goes as far as the priest represents man before God and the priest must be perfect. The breakdown of this analogy is alluded to by the author of Hebrews, who wrote: **For it was proper that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the [sins] of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, [appoints] a Son, made perfect forever** (Heb. 7:26–28). This sin of the priest recognizes that the priest under the Law of Israel was only a man who not only was capable of sin, but did in fact transgress against the Law of God. In fact, there were instances where priests, even the high priests, were unbelievers (this is easily illustrated in the day that our Lord walked this earth).

For those who think they can attain, in this life, sinless perfection, take note: the person with the highest spiritual authority in the land, with the greatest spiritual responsibility by office, was only a man who sinned. **For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself is also beset with weakness; and because of it, he is obligated to offer [sacrifices] for sins, as for the people, so also for himself** (Heb. 5:1).

Next we must deal with the sin of the high priest bringing sin upon all men. The high priest is a man who represents all man before God. The Bible concentrates on the analogy of the high priest to the second Adam, Jesus Christ. However, the high priest is also similar to the first Adam, inasmuch as he does represent the nation Israel before God, just as Adam represented all of mankind to God. Adam as the federal head of the human race sinned knowingly against God, thus infecting his entire being with rebellion against God, and placing all of us under guilt. **For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive** (I Cor. 15:22). **For if by the transgression of the one, the many dies, much more did the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many...So then, as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the man were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous** (Rom. 5:15b, 18–19).

"And he will bring the bull to the door of the tent of meeting before Yahweh and lay his hand on the head of the bull and kill the bull before Yahweh. [Lev. 4:4]

The priest was forgiven in the same way as anyone else. Even though the priest represented man before God and was a type of Jesus Christ, he was still a man who sinned and he still required the forgiveness of God, based upon the death of the One he represented.

As the NIV study Bible puts it, all three principles of atonement are found in v. 4: (1) substitution of the bull for the offerer; (2) identification of the sins of the offerer with the sacrifice; and, (3) the death of the animal brought before God on behalf of the offerer.²⁰

"And the anointed priest will take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting; [Lev. 4:5]

²⁰ NIV Study Bible, p. 148.

As the Apostle John tells us, **The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin** (I John 1:7b). Or as the writer of Hebrews wrote, **And according to the Law, almost all things are cleansed with blood; and without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness** (Heb. 9:22). And Paul writes **In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace** (Eph. 1:7).

"And the priest will dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle out from the blood seven times before Yahweh in front of the veil of the sanctuary. [Lev. 4:6]

This is the index finger on the right hand of the priest (Lev. 14:16). Seven times speaks of perfection; the blood of our Lord is alluded to twice by the apostle Peter: **[the] chosen, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, because of obedience to Jesus Christ; and be sprinkled with His blood. May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure** (I Peter 1:1b–2). And again, **Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your empty manner of life inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless; [the] blood of Christ** (I Peter 1:18–19).

"And the priest will put some of the blood on the protrusions of the altar of fragrant incense before Yahweh which is in the tent of meeting; and the rest of the blood of the bull he will pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 4:7]

The blood of the sacrifice is put everywhere around there to cleanse the priest of his sin, albeit an unknown sin. When the blood was sprinkled, it was sprinkled on the protrusions of the altar of incense and around the base of the brazen altar; however, on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat, the covering of the ark of the covenant. The protrusions of the altar were related to atonement made by Aaron or his sons (Ex. 30:10).

"And all the fat of the bull of the sin—he will take from it the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails. [Lev. 4:8]

The fat here is the choicest portion of the bull. Most Bibles render the word *chatâ`th* (חַטָּאת) [pronounced *khat-TAHTH*] as *sin offering*; but it is the simple word for sin; the sin and the offering for sin are so closely related that this word is often rendered *sin offering*.

"And the two kidneys and the fat that is on them at the loins and the appendage of the liver with the kidneys, which he will take away. [Lev. 4:9]

Much of the insides of the animal are removed.

"Just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace-offering; and the priest will burn them upon the altar of burnt offering. [Lev. 4:10]

The insides of the animal are burned upon the brazen altar. Recall that the peace offering is one of peace with God, prosperity, and fellowship.

"But the skin of the bull and all its flesh with the head, its legs, its entrails and its dung; [Lev. 4:11]

The other portions of the bull will have a different end. For this offering, the insides are burned upon the brazen altar and the bulk of the beast is burned outside the camp of Israel. This animal is not eaten as a part of the sacrifice.

"And he will carry forth the whole bull outside the camp in a [ceremonially] clean place where the ashes are poured out and he will burn it on wood on the fire and it will be burned where the ashes are poured out. [Lev. 4:12]

Because a thick darkness hung over Golgotha when our Lord died for our sins, no one ever saw Him actually bear our sins—even those who were there at the time; even so, in this way, the public does not see part of the sacrifice being burned. The writer of Hebrews draws an additional analogy: **With reference to the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest for sin, they are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach** (Heb. 13:11–13).²¹ We find other instances of the sacrifice being slain outside the camp in Ex. 29:14 Lev. 9:11 16:26–28 and Num. 19:3.

The interest in cleanliness for a place outside the camp was not a matter of physical cleanliness (Mark 7:1–4). Cleanliness has a two-fold emphasis: upon the purity of our Lord Who gave Himself for us (I Cor. 5:21 I Peter 2:22) and upon our cleanliness as a result of salvation (Lev. 11:45 20:7). Throughout the Old Testament, there is an emphasis upon things which are clean as versus things which are unclean. In life, there are issues which are black and white and there are issues which allow for graduations of gray. When it comes to salvation, you are either saved or unsaved; there is no in-between. This is the contrast between clean and unclean (which we will study more of in Lev. 11–15). However, when it comes to spiritual growth, we have people who behave like unbelievers (I Cor. 3:3) to people who are called *friend of God* (James 2:23) and all points in between.

Now, what we do have in these previous verse is also an analogy. We have the anointed priests with their personal sin or sins, bringing guilt upon the whole people, followed by the appropriate sacrifice. Adam, by his personal sin, brought guilt upon all mankind. Jesus, the second Adam, by His blood sacrifice, took it away. It is difficult to put together a perfect analogy, as the human High Priest would undoubtedly sin, and actual provision should be made for that. However, the High Priests are simply men, and men sin. Each High Priest represents the Messiah to come. So the sin of the High Priest (as men) brings guilt upon all of Israel; the sacrifice they offer and their office as High Priest, represents Jesus, and the sacrifice takes away this sin.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Offering on Behalf of the Congregation of Israel Which Has Unknowingly Sinned

"And if the all of the congregation of Israel commits a sin unknowingly and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly and they do any one of the things which Yahweh has commanded which are not to be done and are guilty; [Lev. 4:13]

This is the protasis to a conditional statement. The first verb sounds like a verb, a noun and a modifier (*commits a sin unknowingly*); however, it is the single word *shâgâh* (שָׁגָה) [pronounced *shaw-GAWH*] and it is the verb cognate for *shêgâgâh*. It is translated *to err, to go astray*; the context of this verse (see Lev. 4:14), it implies that this is an unknown sin; hence the translation.

"When the sin becomes known which they have committed against it [the Law], the assembly will offer a young bull with regards to sin and bring it before the tent of meeting. [Lev. 4:14]

This tells us that the sin in question is an unknown sin and helps to pin down the meaning of *shâgâh* for us (and its adjective cognate *shêgâgâh*). *Becomes known* is the 3rd person feminine singular, Niphal perfect of *yâda'* (יָדָע) [pronounced *yaw-DAH*], and this is the common word for *know*, used a thousand times in the Old Testament.

"And the elders of the congregation will lay their hands upon the head of the bull before Yahweh and he will kill the bull before Yahweh. [Lev. 4:15]

²¹ As an aside, the point to this passage in Hebrews was not just to draw an analogy, but to encourage the Jews who receive this letter to go outside the gate of Judaism and Jewish traditions to where our Lord Jesus was sacrificed on their behalf. As Scofield so aptly put it on p. 130: *The cross becomes a new altar in a new place where, without the smallest merit i themselves, the redeemed gather to offer, as believer-priests, spiritual sacrifices.* See also I Peter 2:5.

This is a sin committed by most or all of Israel. An example of this from the past was their involvement with the golden calf idol. In the future it will be cowardice in war and failure to destroy the entirety of an enemy when so instructed. The elders of the congregation represent the entire congregation before God, just as rulers will have to give an account before God for the rulership which¹ was entrusted by God to them.

"Then the priest—the anointed—will come out from the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting.
[Lev. 4:16]

Because the life of the animal is in the blood, the blood of the animal sacrifice is continually emphasized in every sacrifice of a live animal.

"And the priest will dip his finger out from the blood and sprinkle [it] seven times before Yahweh in front of the veil. [Lev. 4:17]

My attempt here is to improve the accuracy of the translation, which is why some of the verbs and prepositions are different from what you have in your Bible.

"And he shall put out from the blood on the protrusions of the altar which is before Yahweh in the tent of meeting and the rest of the blood he will pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 4:18]

It is about time that we examined **the Doctrine of Horns (or Protrusions)—not finished yet!!** They symbolize the power and the mercy of the one in power.

"And he will take all its fat from it and burn [it] upon the altar. [Lev. 4:19]

And since this term occurs so many times, we need to look at **the Doctrine of Fat—not finished yet!!**

"Thus he will do with the bull as he did with the bull of the sin [offering]; so the priest will do with this and he will make atonement for them and they will be forgiven. [Lev. 4:20]

Literally, we have the *bull of the sin* here and it is possible that we can continue to translate *chatâ'ch* as *sin*, *transgression*, *offense* rather than as *sin offering*.

"And he will bring out the bull to the outside of the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull—it [is] the sin of the assembly. [Lev. 4:21]

With a corrected translation, the meaning becomes more clear. The sin is closely identified with the bull and the bull is removed from the camp and judged, just as Jesus Christ hung between heaven and hell, away from the camp of Israel, and died for our sins. Also, God has removed our sin from us. **The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"** (John 1:29). **And you know that He was revealed in order to take away sins and in Him there is no sin** (I John 3:5). **"Your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."** (Isa. 6:7b). **As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us** (Psalm 103:12).

Again, we have this careful mixture of actuality and analogy is continued. If the entire congregation of Israel commits sin (which, obviously, they have to as individuals, being human), then one anointed priest makes an offering for all of Israel. As you have read, we do not have a plurality of priests in this function. One priest offers the sacrifice and that priest goes through all the rituals to atone for the sin on behalf of the entire congregation. Now, although it is possible for all of Israel to commit a sin (such as the demanding that Saul be their king), this is a pretty rare situation. Still, a ceremony which covers this sin is put together for us, because what it represents is much more important than the actual ceremony itself.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)
[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Offering of a Man of Prominence Who Has Sinned Unknowingly

"When a ruler sins, unknowingly doing any one of all of the commands of Yahweh, his God which [thing] was not to be done and he is guilty; [Lev. 4:22]

This reminds me of the story of David and Bathsheba. David takes this beautiful woman—his right woman, in fact—from a faithful and loyal soldier and then has the soldier killed in battle; he suffers a great deal of discipline. However, he is so taken by Bathsheba that he never thinks to confess his sin to God. Finally, Nathan the prophet speaks to him and relays to him a parable, a story of a poor man who had but one ewe lamb, which he bought and took care of; a lamb which grew up with him and his children, eating from the table scraps. Then a rich man, with a great many flocks and herds comes along and takes the lamb away from the poor man. As David's anger burns against the rich man, Nathan tells him, "You are the man!" David was so far gone in reversionism,²² that he lost his spiritual compass (2Sam. 11–12). For those of you who are married and you think that you have spotted your right woman on the arm of someone else, keep in mind that David's sin and rebuke take up two chapters; his discipline takes up the next five or six chapters.

"When his sin, which he has committed, is made known to him, he will bring as his offering a male goat, a kid, without blemish. [Lev. 4:23]

The payment for sin is basically the same for men of all walks of life, whether priests, the entire congregation or a man of great prominence. The reason something like this is mentioned is that the sins of the priests and a man of great prominence are going to be more noticeable than the sins of anyone else. For those who recall the transgressions of Jimmy Swaggart; for most people, what he did was a sin, but not all that serious a transgression; however, given his position and notoriety, it became, for a few weeks, a media circus. He was forgiven by God the way anyone else is forgiven; the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and wrongdoing.

"And he will lay his hand upon the head of the goat and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before Yahweh—it [is] sin. [Lev. 4:24]

The goat took on the sin of the prominent official; it became his sin and received the punishment deserved by the official, just as **He made Him, who knew no sin, sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him** (II Cor. 5:21).

"Then the priest will take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the protrusions of the altar of burnt offering and the [remainder of its] blood he will pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. [Lev. 4:25]

Again, the blood of our Lord cleanses us from all sin. This particular offering, and the ones that follow until Lev. 5:13, are eaten in part by the priests (Lev. 6:19–20). The reason that the sacrifice on behalf of the high priest was not eaten was that was the point at which the analogy broke down. Our Lord, our High Priest, is perfect and required no sacrifice for Himself; however the human high priest does. When we deal with many of the sacrifices which deal with salvation, they are eaten just as eating, in the New Testament, often illustrates faith in Jesus Christ (John 6:31–58). Therefore, the eating takes place when the type is apt.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)
[Return to the Chart Index](#)

²² A term taken from R.B. Thieme meaning someone who has been out of fellowship for a long time (that's the short explanation).

The Offering of a Common Man Who Has Sinned Unknowingly

"And he will burn all of its fat on the altar like the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings. So shall the priest make atonement for him for his sin and he will be forgiven. [Lev. 4:26]

All of this is simply the way that men of those days observed God's grace by laying one man's sin upon an innocent animal and then the innocent animal is slain.

"And if any soul of the people of the land sins unknowingly in doing it—any one of the commandments of Yahweh which should not be done, and is guilty; [Lev. 4:27]

Notice we have a repeat of the same scenario given us three times before.

"When his sin, which he has committed, is made known to him, he will bring for his offering a female goat without blemish, a kid, for his sin which he has committed. [Lev. 4:28]

Economics never prevented anyone from participating in the worship of Yahweh. The high priest and the entire congregation sacrificed a bull for their sins (Lev. 4:3, 14). A ruler, or civic leader, brought that which was a bit less expensive, a male goat; and the average person brought a female goat. However, the common person, if he was poor, could have brought instead, a dove or a pigeon (Lev. 5:7–8 12:6, 8); or, if he were really poor, he could bring the equivalent of two quarts of flour (Lev. 5:11).

"And he will lay his hand on the head of the sin and kill the sin at the place of burnt offering. [Lev. 4:29]

The animal is closely identified with sin and most translations render *sin* here *in offering* both times.

"And the priest will take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the protrusions of the altar of burnt offering and [the rest of] its blood he will pour out at the base of the altar. [Lev. 4:30]

Whether rich or poor, a man of prominence or a man known by few, the payment for sin was the same—our Lord's death upon the cross.

"And all its fat he will remove as the fat is removed from the peace offerings; and the priest will burn it upon the altar for a tranquilizing scent of Yahweh; and the priest will [thus] made atonement [covering] for him and he will be forgiven. [Lev. 4:31]

Every time a priest slays an animal or burn portions of the animal or takes the animal outside the camp for burning, each of these acts speaks of a different aspect of salvation and our Lord's work upon the cross. It was in this way that salvation was taught to unregenerate man. The human spirit of the unregenerate man was not alive; so God the Holy Spirit acted as the human spirit for many of those observing sacrifice after sacrifice and made these things real to them; some believed in Yahweh and some became terrific legalists, attempted not only to do the Law, but to supplement it with their own works and ideas.

"If he brings a lamb as his offering for sin, he will bring [it] a female without blemish. [Lev. 4:32]

Again, the common person brings a female. I am confused here; I thought a lamb was a female goat; I guess it must be a difference of age. A common man is given an option here as he may not have access specifically to a goat, so he is allowed to instead bring a lamb.

"And he will lay his hand upon the head of the sin and kill it with regards to sin at the place where they kill the burnt offering. [Lev. 4:33]

The ritual is basically the same, whether a female goat or a female lamb.

"Then the priest will take some of the blood of the sin with his finger and put it on the protrusions of the altar of burnt offering and the whole of the blood he will pour out at the base of the altar.

[Lev. 4:34]

A small portion is used to cover the protrusions of the altar but the bulk of the blood (referred to as the *whole of the blood*; here the whole refers to the greater part) is poured out at the base of the altar.

"And he will remove all its fat, the fat of the lamb, from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priests will burn it on the altar upon the fire-offerings to Yahweh, and the priest will [in this way] make atonement for him for the sin of his which he has committed and he will be forgiven.

[Lev. 4:35]

This is one of the many offerings which was laid next to the morning and evening burnt offering and burned. **For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** (Heb. 9:13–14)

In addition to the offerings herein enumerated, the high priest also made an offering to Yahweh once a year for the unknown sins of Israel as well as for his own unknown sins (these are the unknown sins which were not later known). **The priest are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship; but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance** (Heb. 9:6b–7). This was known as the Day of Atonement.

Further regulations concerning sins committed unknowingly are found in Num. 15:22–28.

Leviticus 5

Leviticus 5:1–19

Outline of Chapter 5:

- Vv. 1–4 **Four areas of guilt**
- Vv. 5–13 **His sin/guilt offering**
- Vv. 14–19 **A guilt offering and restitution**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Whereas Lev. 4 dealt with the offerings made in regards to sin, Lev. 5 and 6 will deal with offerings made with regards to guilt.

Four Areas of Guilt

"If a soul sins in that [lit., and] he hears a voice of an obligation [or, solemn pact] and he [is] a witness whether he has seen or come to know, yet [or, and if] he does not speak[reveal this], he will bear his guilt [or, iniquity; or punishment for iniquity]. [Lev. 5:1]

As with much of Leviticus, we have our own vocabulary here; a vocabulary which is not entirely unique, but one which is concentrated in Leviticus (and often in Numbers also). We have the common word for *sin* (or, *to go astray, to miss the mark, to commit a transgression*), *châtâ'* (חָטָא) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*] and the subject for this word is *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced *NEH-fesh*], the word for *soul*. This is followed by the common verb for *hear* in the Qal perfect. This is a completed action. He heard and understood. This is followed by the masculine singular construct of *qôwl* (קוֹל) [pronounced *kole*], the common word for *voice or sound* (context determines which).

Then we have the most interesting word *'âlâh* (אָלָה) [pronounced *aw-LAW*], commonly translated *oath, curse, or execration*. We might also think to translate this as *attestation, solemn oath, statement under oath, vow, guarantee, pledge, judicial oath, solemn declaration, solemn promise*. We first find this word used in Gen. 24:41, and although most translators use the word *oath*, even a superficial examination of that context finds that this is not the best rendering of *'âlâh*. An *oath* is something that you make to someone else. This is a *solemn promise* which the speaker extracts from the listener. Therefore, in this context, it is more of *an agreement, a pact, an obligation, a commitment, a verbal contract*. The speaker lays out the pact and the listener agrees to it. There is a word by which the listener *swears or gives an oath* to the first person, but that is a different Hebrew word altogether. That is the word *shebû'âh* (שָׁבַע) [pronounced *sheb-oo-AH*], which is not a synonym for *'âlâh* (although they are obviously related words as we find the former in Gen. 24:8 (with its verb cognate in v. 9) and the latter in Gen. 24:4. Obviously *cursing* has nothing to do with either of these passages. Abraham first makes his servant solemnly agree to not take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites (Gen. 24:2–3, 7). Abraham's servant was sent to Laban to get a wife for Isaac and if one would not go with him, then the servant would be free of Abraham's *solemn obligation which he extracted from his servant*. This is the way this one word should be translated: *a solemn obligation extracted from or agreed to by the listener (or the second party)*. This reasonably fits the context of Gen. 26:28 1Kings 8:31. Recall that Israel has already told Yahweh that they would do all that he has spoken. Therefore, they had given tacit agreement to His pronouncements of right and wrong. Now for the problem passages: *'âlâh* is translated *curse* in Num. 5:21, 23, 27 Deut. 29:19–21 30:7 Neh. 10:29 Job 31:30. In Numbers, there is another word for *curse*, which is used; and our word, *'âlâh* could be translated *a solemn obligation* throughout, or *the result of a solemn obligation*., without doing damage to the gist of the passage (all of these words, including the word for *cursing*, will be examined again at that time). Deut. 29:19–21 is similar, inasmuch as God has set up a solemn pact or agreement with Israel—the Law—to which Israel has agreed; and in that pact are promises of cursing (or discipline) to those who disobey God's Word. There are promises in the Law which are positive and those which are negative; in Deut. 29, we can bear this in mind and not necessarily translate *'âlâh* as a *curse*. So it seems to be with all the passages where *'âlâh* is translated *curse*.

So, the person in question hears the sound of a solemn obligation; this is not necessarily a public proclamation. This is God speaking to him through His Word. This is followed with the conjunction *and*; the 3rd person personal pronoun, properly translated *he [is]*; and the word for *witness*.

In the previous chapter, we dealt with unknown sins which later became known. Someone sinned, realized it after the fact and offered a sacrifice to atone for that sin. In this verse, someone sins, and they realize at the time that they have sinned or they find out later, but they don't do anything about it. Hearing God's *voice* (in His Word) to the Law which he is a witness to, tells us that this person has come to know definitely that he has committed a sin. We have a conjunction used twice, meaning *whether...or...* And there are two ways that this person could have come to know that he has transgressed God's Law. He has either seen this fact (indicating that these laws would be disseminated in such a way that they could be read by Israel) or he already knew that he was transgressing God's Law. In the previous chapter, if this were something not known to the transgressor, and he found out, then he offered a sacrifice on his own behalf. However, this transgressor knows, either prior to or after the fact. The purpose of spending all this time with the original language is to ascertain just exactly what this person is guilty of. God has set up a solemn pact to which the transgressor has agreed to but then has broken this pact. He knew about it before he transgressed God's Law or came to find out about it later. However, he clearly knows that he has committed a sin.

Now for the person's reaction to his own person wrongdoing. We have the interrogative particle *if*, the negative, and the 3rd person singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAD*], which, although found only in the Hiphil (and a few times in the Hophal), is translated *told, shew, professed, declared, expounded*. In all of these cases, something is being revealed to someone else, usually verbally. With the negative, the subject keeps this information under his hat. He has sinned, he knows that he has sinned, and he does not reveal it in anyway (as though man is the judge and since no one seemed to catch him, he is going to just let this pass). However, God sees everything that we do and knows everything that we think.

The result of this behavior is the last phrase of v. 1. The conjunction, I believe, acts as the introductory word for the apodosis of a conditional statement; that is, it should be translated *then*.²³ This is followed by the Qal perfect of *nâsâ* (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*] which means *bear, carry, lift, take*. What he will bear is his own *iniquity, guilt or punishment for iniquity*. The latter word is *'âvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *aw-VONE*], a word which is pretty consistently rendered *iniquity* in the KJV. If *iniquity* is too old of a term for you, then *tresspass, offense, transgression, wrongdoing, or guilt* would be reasonable translations. I personally favor choosing between *guilt* or *punishment for wrongdoing*, depending upon the context. When *'âvôn* is used in conjunction with *nâsâ*, the person spoken of is *bearing the punishment for his iniquity*. (this is also found in Lev. 20:20 22:9 Num. 14:33 Isa. 53:4 Ezek. 23:35, 49 43:20). I need to differentiate between this word and *'âshâm* (אָשָׁם) [pronounced *aw-SHAWM*].

Vv. 1–4 give four examples of unintentional sin.

"Or if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast or a carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things and it is hidden from him, and he has become unclean and he is offensive [or, guilty]. [Lev. 5:2]

I was hoping that once we got started in chapter 5, that we would not become too bogged down; however, even v. 2 will require some exegesis. A word translated *will be guilty* is not related at all to *'âvôn*. It is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *'âsham* (אָשָׁם) [pronounced *aw-SHAWM*] and it is translated *to be guilty* or *to offend* in the Qal stem. Here we are not speaking of a great criminal act or some horrible act of immorality; someone has inadvertently (or possibly on purpose) come in contact with that which is ceremonially unclean. Ceremonially uncleanness is pretty much the same as coming into close contact with the old sin nature. There is not much else that could be read into this. It doesn't say how, except that *touch* could encompass a wide range of activities, including *eating*. For this reason, I like the word *offensive* more than *guilty*.

²³ I probably need to consult with an Hebrew grammar manuel here.

"Of if he touches uncleanness of a person in regards to the entire realm of uncleanness this one becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and he discovers [it] [lit., knows], then he becomes offensive. [Lev. 5:3]

Like much of Leviticus, this is a mess, and I may not cover the justification for the translation of everything here. *In regards to the entire realm* is the lamêd preposition (*in regards to*) and the masculine singular construct of kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] and this word means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. This word occurs too often for the *Englishman's Concordance* to list its appearances. In fact, its Chaldean equivalent occurs over a hundred times, even though there is only a small portion of the Bible written in Chaldean (Aramaic?). So what has happened, is this person has become ceremonially unclean unintentionally and then it is called to his attention in some way.

"Or if anone swears, making a rash oath with his lips to do evil or to do good, with regards to the entire realm of speaking that men by swearing [or, with an oath] and it is hidden from him, when he discovers [it], then he becomes offensive—in any of these. [Lev. 5:4]

Speaking a rash oath is two verbs, actually. The first verb is shâva' (שָׁוָה) [pronounced *shaw-VAH*] and it may be recognizable to some because it looks so close to the word for Sabbath and seven. It is a verb which literally means *to seven oneself* or *to bind oneself with seven things*. It is a verb for *swearing to something, binding yourself to something, giving your word on something, even taking an oath*. The Niphal stem means that shâva' is closely associated with another verb, rather than standing for the passive voice. The second is the rarely used bâṭāh (בָּטָה) [pronounced *baw-TAWH*] and it means *to speak rashly, to speak thoughtlessly* and it is found only in Psalm 106:33 Prov. 12:18 and twice in this verse.

Under emotional stress, some people make the statement, *I swear I am going to kick your butt* or, *God, get me out of this and I promise that I will...* Without thinking, someone binds themselves to a certain course of action by an oath; and, in this culture, such an oath was the equivalent of a verbal contract, even though made at the height of emotional duress. Today, a similar situation would be to bind oneself with a contract to something that, after thinking about it later, is not what you want to be bound by or it binds you to something which is wrong. In past times, such a thing could be done verbally and a person was bound to his word even more than a person today is bound by a written, notarized contract. An instance of this is when the daughter of Herodias danced before Herod and pleased him so much that **he swore to her, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you, up to half of my kingdom."** (Mark 6:23) Other examples of a hasty oaths are found in Judges 11:30–39 and 1Sam. 14:38–39, which could have resulted in the death of the speaker's daughter in the first case, and in the death of Saul's son, Jonathan, in the second. A person who swears to a particular action thoughtlessly was also under sin. So what we have here are four instances, one per verse, of people who have transgressed the Law, although they may not have realized it at the time; in any case, they were responsible for this transgression.

His Sin/Guilt Offering

"When it comes to pass that a man is offensive in any of these [examples], he will confess concerning that which he has sinned against it. [Lev. 5:5]

We have an unusual verb in this verse: yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced *yaw-DAWH*], which seems to have three different meanings. It means *to cast* or *throw* (Zech. 1:21 Lam. 3:53), a use not found too often in the Bible; it means, in the Hiphil, *to give thanks* (1Chron. 16:4, 7 23:30), and, in the Hithpael, *to confess* in terms of naming one's transgressions (Lev. 5:5 16:21 Prov. 28:13). The relationship between the meanings is that something is thrown or cast before God. In any case, forgiveness was achieved not by doing anything meritorious, but by naming one's sin to God—something which is true of both the Age of Israel and the Church Age.

Against is a preposition with a feminine singular suffix referring back to *these*, except as a singular. What follows are commonly known as the *guilt-offerings* or the *offense-offerings*.

"And he will bring his offense [offering] to Yahweh against his transgression [lit., sin] which he committed [lit., sinned]; a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid from the goats in regards to sin and the priest will make atonement for him [lit., the priest will cover him or shield him] away from his sin. [Lev. 5:6]

I realize that the prepositions are some of the wording is much different from what you read in your translation of the Bible. I have attempted, at least within the brackets, to give the most literal rendering of this verse that I could. However, for your benefit, to see the difference, I have included several translations below:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He will bring his guilt or trespass offering to the Lord for the sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for his sin.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and [he] shall bring in as his guilt-bearer unto Yahweh, for his sin which he hath committed, a female from the flock—a lamb or a kid of the goats—as a sin-bearer,—so shall the priest put a propitiatory-covering over him, because of his sin.
KJV	And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.
NASB	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.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and [he] hath brought in his guilt-offering to Jehovah for his sin which he hath sinned, a female out of the flock, a lamb, or a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering, and the priest hath made atonement for him, because of his sin.

You will notice that it is a matter of interpretation whether we are speaking of *sin*, *sin-bearer* or *sin-offering*. It is all the same word. The same goes for *guilt*, *guilt-bearer*, and *guilt-offering*. As Rotherham pointed out, the sin, the sin-bearer and the sin-offering are so closely associated that one word stood for all three. One portion of the verse where I could have been more literal would have been to say *and the priest will cover upon him away from his sin*.

The word for *guilt* or *trespass* is found here almost for the first time. It is the noun 'āshām (אֲשָׁם) [pronounced *aw-SHAWM*] is found once in Gen. 26:10, where its meaning is relatively well-defined, and now here else until this passage. Its verbal cognate is found prior to this passage in Lev. 4:13, 22, 27 5:2, 3, 5. Scofield says it appears that in the guilt-offering (or, trespass-offering), there is likely restitution involved (Lev. 5:16 6:5); however, the guilt offering is prominent in Lev. 5–6, 14, 19—yet we only find restitution in Lev. 5 and 6. This might be because the emphasis is upon forgiveness by God through a sacrifice as oppose to forgiveness by making restitution (which is works).

"But if his hand cannot afford [lit. cannot reach enough for] a lamb, then he will bring as his offense [-bearer] concerning which he sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons to Yahweh, one in regards to sin and one for a burnt-offering. [Lev. 5:7]

Forgiveness of sin was not dependent upon the financial status of the individual who has sinned; God forgives all who come to Him. However, in every case there must be a sin-bearer, a sin-offering, even if it is two very common and easy to obtain pigeons.

"And he will bring them to the priest and he will approach with the one in regards to the sin; first he will wring its head from its neck, but he will not sever [it]. [Lev. 5:8]

Anyone observing these sacrifices knows immediately that sin is not to be taken lightly; these cute, innocent little birds have their necks broken—and this is even for a person, for example, who has just sworn to do something which he later regrets swearing. These are not murderers, adulterers, child-beaters or drunkards; these are men

who have committed offense that would be largely overlooked today. Lev. 1:14–17 also deals with the sacrifice of doves or pigeons.

"And he will sprinkle some of the blood of the sin [-bearer] against the side of the altar while the remaining blood will be drained out in the direction of the base of the altar; it [is] a sin [-offering]. [Lev. 5:9]

Here, in both cases, it is quite reasonable to translate the word for sin in both places by *sin-bearer* or *sin-offering*. Obviously, the priest is not committing a sin but what is being offered is a sin-offering or a sin-bearer.

"Then the second he will offer a burnt-offering according to the ordinance and it will make atonement for him [lit., it will cover upon him] away from his sin which he has sinned and he will be pardoned. [Lev. 5:10]

The sacrifice of these birds atones for his sin or covers his sin. It is possible that the two birds here speak of Christ's two deaths on the cross; His physical death and His spiritual death, which was efficacious.

"And if one's hand cannot reach two turtldoves or two young pigeons, then he will bring as his offering concerning his sinning, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he will put no oil upon it and he will put on frankincense on it, for it [is] a sin [-offering]. [Lev. 5:11]

This offering reveals the death of our Lord for our sins. It is not an offering which deals with spirituality or with spiritual growth; therefore, there is no oil or frankincense involved. Furthermore, if this person is so poor as to only to be able to bring a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, then there should be no additional cost of the oil and frankincense. The amount of flour spoken of here is approximately two quarts. Since this was a bloodless sacrifice, it was offered on top of a burnt-offering in order that the meaning not be lost.

"And he will bring it to the priest and the priest will take a handful of it of the fullness of his hand as his memorial portion and smoke on the altar upon the offerings by fire to Yahweh; it [is] a sin [-offering]. [Lev. 5:12]

The priest takes a full handful of the flour as an offering on behalf of the transgression and it is placed with a burnt-offering so that it will burn. The first speaks of judgement and righteousness.

"Thus, the priest will shield away from him on account of his sin [or cover—away from him—upon his sin] which he sinned on account of any one of these things and he will be forgiven and the remaining [flour] for the priest as in the tribute-offering." [Lev. 5:13]

The priest, as the intermediary between the sinner and God shields or covers the sinner for his offense, against his offense. The preposition here is 'al (אֲל) [pronounced *al*] and it means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. When used with verse of covering or protecting, it means *above, upon*, even though the articles of clothing may be physically around the person. It can also mean *on the ground of (or upon the basis)* something is done (Deut. 17:11 Psalm 94:20) or, similarly, where the basis conveyed involves the ground; i.e., it involves the cause or the reason or the grounds for something (then, translated *on account of, because of* as in Gen. 20:2 21:12). The covering or shielding separates the man from his offense and also shields the man from the judgement due to him because of his sin. It is also because of the sin that the man requires shielding or covering from God's judgement.

A Guilt Offering and Restitution

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 5:14]

I have not literally translated this verse; we could go with **Then [continued] speaking Yahweh to Moses, to say:** *Speaking* is in the Piel imperfect, the Piel being the intensive stem, but also the stem in which this word most often occurs. The imperfect indicates that this was a continual process. In fact, God has never stopped speaking to man. Here, God speaks to Moses, and to the people through Moses. Then, when our Lord took upon Himself a body of flesh, God spoke to us primarily through His Son, the Living Word (Heb. 1:1–3) and now through the Bible, the written Word.

"If anyone that commits an infraction [even an] infraction and sins unknowingly away from any of the sacred things of Yahweh, he will bring his guilt [-bearer] to Yahweh, a ram without blemish out of the flock valued by you in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary; for a guilt [-offering]. [Lev. 5:15]

This verse introduces a new verb. Since God's Law has begun to be innumeraled, one could now break a law of God. One unschooled in the Mosaic Law could transgress a law unknowingly. The word here is the Qal imperfect of *mā'al* (מָאֵל) [pronounced *maw-AL*] and the KJV consistently translates this as *transgress* or *trespass*. Most of the time this transgression is specifically *against* someone, either God (2Chron. 28:19 Neh. 13:27) or one's spouse (Num. 5:12, 27). In this context, and because of the next verse, I would say that this infraction is committed against an individual, although that is not specifically stated, it is implied by the use of this particular word and the idea of restitution contained in the next verse. BDB, which occasionally does nothing more than list the various way a word has been translated, bypasses the KJV altogether and translates this as *act unfaithfully, act treacherously*. *Commit an infraction* might be a more updated version of this verb. It is followed by its substantive cognate, *ma'al* (מָאֵל) [pronounced *MAH-al*], which is *an act of unfaithfulness, a transgression, an infraction, or a trespass*. This is like saying someone has *sinned a sin*; they have *trespassed a trespass* or *transgressed a transgression*. This verb and noun, in a sense, are explained by this verse. The *and* explains what it means to *commit an infraction*. The preposition is the *mîn* preposition of separation or removal. They are separating or removing themselves from the sacredness of Yahweh.

What this person has done is committed a trespass or an infraction which goes against or separates him from the things separated to God. A ram without blemish is brought to the priest to bear his sins.

This may have been a good place for a chapter division, as this is a new kind of offering. Furthermore, this should have been continued into Lev. 6 (as the Hebrew Bible does).

Be that as it may, a trespass (or guilt) offering was different from a sin offering inasmuch as restitution could be involved (see v. 16). However, there are times when the words for sin and trespass (or, guilt), were interchanged. This will be continued in Lev. 6 where theft and cheating are dealt with; sins which obviously require restitution. So all offenses are sins, but not all sins are offenses. An offense is something which is done to someone else. All sin is against God, but we do not make restitution to God for what we have done. The implication here is that there has been a monetary loss taken by the victim and the criminal is to recompense the victim and pay an additional penalty of 20% on top of that.

Incidentally, the value of a sanctuary shekel referred to in v. 15 is 2/5 of an ounce of silver. I do not know the value of the ram, however.

"Also for what he has done wrong away from [that which is] sacred, he will make restitution [lit., make complete] and a fifth he will add to it and give it to the priest and the priest will make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering and he will be forgiven. [Lev. 5:16]

Done wrong is the Qal perfect of *sin*; and *sacred* is the singular of *sacred things* in the previous verse. The word for *make restitution* here (and *make amends* or *shall make good*) is the verb *shâlêm* (שָׁלַם) [pronounced *shaw-LEM*], which makes it very close to the words for *Sabbath*, *seven* and *peace*. This word means *to complete, to recompense, to reward*. The context here dictates the translation *make restitution*.

The thing which this person has done seems to be rather obscure except for the fact that this verse indicates that this was a matter of a transgression which caused property damage, monetary damage or the separation of someone from their money. It is some transgression or infraction for which the criminal can make monetary restitution. This is a principal almost totally ignored today in our Law. There are hundreds of thousands of criminals who serve abbreviated sentences and their victims are never compensated for the crimes committed against them. There are a tens of thousands of white collar criminals who defraud others and rob them of their fortunes; these people should be compensated by those who transgressed against them. Furthermore, an additional amount, over and above the loss, should be paid by the criminal—today, to our court system and at that time, to the priests, who acted as intermediaries, forgiving them of their sins.

"If anyone that sins doing any of all of the commandments of Yahweh which are not to be done, though he does not know it, still [lit., and] he is guilty and he will bear his guilt [or, iniquity; or punishment for iniquity]. [Lev. 5:17]

This is how chapter 5 began; we just lack the filler in the middle. This person basically has a choice; in this verse he may bear his own iniquity or he can follow the instructions in the next verse.

"He will bring a ram without blemish out of the flock valued by you at the price of a guilt [-offering] to the priest and he will make atonement for him for his error which he committed and does not realize; and he will be forgiven. [Lev. 5:18]

The offender carries his own guilt until he brings a ram to the priest and his sins are transferred to the ram and it is slaughtered.

"A guilt [-offering]—it [is] absolutely guilty [lit., in being guilty of being guilty] to Yahweh." [Lev. 5:19]

The first word in this verse is the noun for *offense* or *guilt* and the verb cognate is found twice thereafter, first in the Qal infinitive construct followed by the Qal perfect.

From here, we will begin Lev. 6, although in the Hebrew Bible, the next 7 verses are still in Lev. 5.

Leviticus 6

Leviticus 6:1–30

Introduction: Lev. 6, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, is actually a continuation of Lev. 5. Lev. 6:1–7 are Lev. 5:20–26 in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible actually has a better division. The first seven verses deal with a guilt offering, referring back to the final dozen verses from chapter 5. Then we cover a new topic entirely; what the priests do in the offering rituals.

Outline of Chapter 6:

Vv. 1–7	Offenses for which a guilt-offering is appropriate
Vv. 8–13	The burnt offering
Vv. 14–23	The tribute offering
Vv. 24–30	The sin offering

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Offenses for Which a Guilt-offering Is Appropriate

Lev. 5:14-19 7:1–6

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, " [Lev. 6:1 (5:20 in Hebrew Bible)]

My guess would be that every time we find this verse, Moses has taken a break and then has returned to have God speak with him. I don't believe that this is one long conversation, but several shorter ones. We don't have God telling Moses to write these things down because Moses knows enough now to record what Yahweh is telling him. As of now, I have no clue as to whether Moses took dictation in the presence of Yahweh or whether he wrote these things down later; I would personally opt for the former inasmuch as that is the way I would do it. In either case, Moses would have been guided by the Holy Spirit and there would be nothing lost in his recording of God's Word, whether in His presence or not.

"If any one subverts [the Law] [lit., sins] and commits an infraction [even] an infraction in the sight of [or, against] Yahweh even having defrauded [or, deceived] his associate in that being held in protective reserve or [rather], placed in [his] hand; or in extortion [possibly, violent robbery]; or if he has exploited [or, defrauded or oppressed] his associate. [Lev. 6:2 (5:21 in Hebrew Bible)]

We have got a lot of linguistic work to do in this verse. We begin with the Qal imperfect of *sins*, which I have translated as *subverts [the Law]*; this word encompasses many categories of wrongdoing. One category of wrongdoing is named here: we have the verb *mâ'al* (מָאַל) [pronounced *maw-AL*], which is consistently translated *commit a trespass* in the KJV; I have translated it *commits an infraction*, with the understanding that this is generally an infraction against someone. This is followed by its substantive cognate *ma'al* (מַאַל) [pronounced *MAH-ahl*], which is generally translated *transgression, faithlessness, trespass* and I will update it with the more modern *infraction*. These word do not have to be together, so this puts great emphasis upon this phrase.

The preposition used with Yahweh is not the common word used for *against* (כַּנִּי), but is the prefixed *bêyth* preposition *bê* (בֵּי) [pronounced *b'*] and it denotes proximity. The crimes here are defrauding a neighbor, yet these crimes are infractions in close proximity to Yahweh. Tradition translates this preposition *against*, although *in the sight of* would be a reasonable rendering.

The kind of infraction committed is specified even more by the word *kâchash* (כָּחַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHSH*], a word which indicates *lying* and *deception*. It is a word found primarily in the Piel (Joshua 7:11 24:27 Lev. 19:11

Zech. 13:4), however, it is only found twenty-two times in the Old Testament. The word found more often is the noun cognate of *shâqar*, *sheqer* Strong's #'s 8266 and 8267. I will need to differentiate between these at some time. I like the rendering *defraud*, however, the safer translation might be *deceive*. In this verse, it is in the Piel perfect.

The person he has deceived is not a neighbor, as most translations read, but this is a word almost unique to Leviticus: 'âmîyth (אִמִּיִּת) [pronounced *aw-MEETH*] and it means *associate*. It is simply a person the transgressor is associated with, meaning he could be Jewish or not. Outside of Leviticus, it is found only in Zech. 13:7 (there are a lot of words found in Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel and Zechariah, if memory serves; meaning not that they were written by the same person, but that the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah were well-acquainted with the books Leviticus and Numbers).

There are three illustrations of what it means to defraud or to deceive an associate. We have a rare word here: *pîqâdôwn* (פִּקְדוֹן) [pronounced *pik-kaw-DOHN*]. The dagesh in the pe makes it *p* rather than *ph*. The dagesh with the qof doubles the letter. We are given a good idea of its meaning in Gen. 41:36—it is a reference to grain which had been stored under guard, brought by the people to the government of Egypt to be sold back to them in times of famine. In other words, it is something stored for protection which will be needed at another date. A reasonable, but wordy rendering might be *a reserve held in protective reserve [or, storage]*.

The next phrase has a very obscure Hebrew word found only here and the word for *hand*. I will cautiously translate this *place in [his] hand* or *delivered to [his] hand*; but this is an educated guess.

Then we have a transgression which seems out of place. The official translation for *gâzêl* (גָּזַל) [pronounced *gaw-ZALE*] is *violent robbery*; however, I am going to go with *extortion* instead. It only occurs four times in the Old Testament (Lev. 6:2 Prov. 62:10 Isa. 61:8 Ezek. 22:29). It is the substantive cognate of a verb which might mean *to violently rob* which is found much more extensively in the Bible.

And finally we have a difficult verb, not because it rarely occurs, but because it occurs quite a number of times with three related but significantly different renderings. The verb is 'âshaq (אָשָׁק) [pronounced *aw-SHAK*] and it is rendered *oppressed*, *defrauded*, *deceived*. It is possible that we can combine these meanings into the rendering *exploited*.

I think what is key to this passage is that we are dealing with monetary gain by one who has taken advantage of someone else by exploiting them; or has legally (or, illegally) taken money from them. The possible infractions are continued in the next verse:

"Or has found what was lost and lied in this; swearing in accordance with deceit in any of all the things which men manufacture [or, do] and sin therein. [Lev. 6:3 (5:22 in Hebrew Bible)]

This verse won't be as difficult as the previous verse. Here something was lost and another found it and either kept it or sold it. Furthermore, if questioned about any of these acts of deception for capital gain, he swears that he is innocent of any wrongdoing.

"And it comes to pass when one sins and has become guilty, he will return that which he seized having stolen [it] or that which he got by exploitation having exploited [someone] or the item(s) held in protective reserve or that which was committed to him or the lost thing which he found. [Lev. 6:4 (5:23 in Hebrew Bible)]

In any matter of defrauding, extortion or exploitation, the offender is to restore to the victim what has been taken. This should be a part of our judicial system.

"Or anything about which he swears in accordance with deceit, he will complete his due [lit., his head] and his fifth he will add upon it; to whom it belongs [lit., to whom it his] he will give it on the day of his guilt [for his offense]. [Lev. 6:5 (5:24 in Hebrew Bible)]

We have a very unusual use of the word *head* (or *top*) here. By extortion or defrauding, the victim has become incomplete and the offender completes his fortune by returning it. What is being completed is *his top, his head*, which is translated in other Bibles as *principal, in full* or *in its sum*. The verse ends with the feminine of 'âshâm (אֲשָׁמָה) [pronounced *aw-SHAWM*], which means *guilt, offense, guilt for an offense, or offensive*. The word found here is 'ashemâh (אֲשֵׁמָה) [pronounced *ash'-MAWH*]. The feminine of a word usually softens the word somewhat. The first time we find this word, the priest has sinned, bringing *guilt* or *offensiveness* upon the people (Lev. 4:3). Temporarily, I am going to go with the word *offensiveness*; and here, it is not the day this person sinned and was offensive but the day when this was officially recognized by his offering.

This person may have sworn not to have done such a thing; however, when he confesses or is found out, he must recompense the victim plus 20%. Interestingly enough, the additional 20% appears to go directly to the victim in this situation, rather than to the priests, as in Lev. 5:15. The chief difference seems to be one of cognizance; in the case at hand, there is every indication that the offender knew exactly what he was doing when he defrauded the victim. Therefore, God's Law does take into consideration motive, but the additional 20% penalty goes to someone no matter what the motive.

"Furthermore, his guilt [-offering] he will bring to Yahweh, a ram without blemish out of the flock valued by you at the price for a guilt [-offering] to the priest. [Lev. 6:6 (5:25 in Hebrew Bible)]

On top of restoring that which he defrauded and the 20% penalty, the offender had to bring in an innocent ram to be sacrificed because restoration did not cover his guilt. We may do a number of things which are wrong and run all over town apologizing and restoring and making good on the wrong that we did; but we are still guilty before God. The penalty still must be paid. The 20% is nothing more than a usage fee, an interest, but it is not the full penalty. The penalty is the ram dying on behalf of the offender for what the offender did.

All offerings are brought before Yahweh; the priest represents Yahweh to the people, as Jesus Christ represents God to man. Therefore, in bringing these offerings to a priest, the people were bringing these things to Yahweh.

"And the priest cover over him [or, make his propitiation] before Yahweh and he will be forgiven for any of all which he did to [become] offensive therein." [Lev. 6:7 (5:26 in Hebrew Bible)]

Even here we do not find complete and absolute forgiveness of sin. The sin is covered before God; his offensiveness and guilt are covered before Yahweh so that God does not see the sin. It is like a bandaid which fixes nothing, it just covers it.

The Burnt Offering

Lev. 1 8:18–21 16:24

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 6:8 (v.1 in Hebrew Bible)]

Both the Hebrew and the English Bible opted for a chapter break at this verse; the English Bible did it back in Heb. 5:20 (that's in the Hebrew Bible) and the Hebrew Bible does it here.

"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, this is the law of burnt-offering [lit., the offering which rises]; this burnt offering [is to be placed] upon the altar all night until the morning and the fire of the altar will be kept burning on it. [Lev. 6:9 (v.2 in Hebrew Bible)]

This is a new topic. Yahweh has resumed speaking to Moses at a different time on a different subject. We have already been told that a burnt offering would be given in the morning and in the evening and that the fire of the brazen altar was not to go out.

Many of the things which will be discussed through to the end of Lev. 6 and into Lev. 7 deal with what happens to the sacrifices after they have been sacrificed; are they eaten, are they not eaten? What if blood splatters on

the clothes of the priest? Here we are dealing with potentially confusing symbology, being unclean due to having blood on one's own clothing to be cleansed by the blood of the lamb. So, when dealing with types and symbols, we cannot expect each and every little thing to line up just as we would expect from the first double readings.

"And the priest will put on his linen garment and he will put upon his body his linen undergarments and he will take up the fat ashes which the fire has consumed—the burnt offering—upon the altar and place them beside the altar. [Lev. 6:10 (v.3 in Hebrew Bible)]

The ashes temporarily remain in full view of the people as a remembrance of the burnt offering given in their stead. They will not remain there for a long time because they will see hundreds of more sacrifices.

"And [then] he will remove his garments and put on other garments and carry forth the fat ashes outside the camp to a clean place. [Lev. 6:11 (v.4 in Hebrew Bible)]

The priest is a type of Jesus Christ. The putting off of the old garments and putting on of the new garments is putting off the old human body and taking up a new, resurrection body, which our Lord did after dying for our sins and being raised by the Holy Spirit. **So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable and it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a soulish body, it is raised a spiritual body...For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on the immortality** (I Cor. 15:42–44a, 53). Our Lord's body was sown and carried forth out of the camp into a clean place. **...Both their master and yours in heaven...** (Eph. 6:9b).

"Furthermore, the fire upon the altar burning against it will not be extinguished and the priest will burn on it every morning [lit., morning morning] and he will lay in order on it the burnt offering and he will burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. [Lev. 6:12 (v.5 in Hebrew Bible)]

As was mentioned, the fire of judgement on the altar is an eternal fire which was to never go out. This is because judgement for sins is everlasting and God's offer of salvation is open to us throughout our entire lives. It is because of the burnt offering that we can have peace with Him.

"A fire will be kept continually burning upon the altar; it will not go out. [Lev. 6:13 (v.6 in Hebrew Bible)]

The judgement for our sins is eternal; it never goes out. We can take the substitutionary death offered us by God or we can die in our own sins. *The NIV Study Bible* has a different, but reasonable slant on this: *The perpetual fire on the altar represented uninterrupted offering to and appeal to God on behalf of Israel.*²⁴

The Tribute Offering

Lev. 2

"Now this is the law of tribute-offering: the sons of Aaron offer it before Yahweh in front of the altar. [Lev. 6:14 (v.7 in Hebrew Bible)]

As I have mentioned before, this is now a *meal* or a *cereal* offering, but a tribute offering. The first time this word is used, it is Cain's offering of produce from the ground; however, the second time it is used, it is used of Abel's offering from his flock (Gen. 4:3–4).

²⁴ p. 152

"And one will take from it in his first from the fine flour of the tribute offering and from its oil and all the frankincense which is on the tribute offering and burn [it] upon the altar, an altar-flame²⁵ tranquilizing scent as its memorial portion to Yahweh. [Lev. 6:15 (v.8 in Hebrew Bible)]

The tribute offering is the only bloodless offering made to Yahweh. It is a tribute to Him for what He has done on our behalf. We don't offer Him a blood offering, but an offering of tribute and of thanks.

"And Aaron and his son will eat the rest of it; it will be eaten unleavened; they will eat it in a holy place in the court of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 6:16 (v.9 in Hebrew Bible)]

The unleavened bread speaks of fellowship between man and God and fellowship between man and God can only occur in a holy place. Part of the remuneration that the priests received came from these offerings. Paul uses this fact to illustrate why those who labor in the Word should be reimbursed for that endeavor: **Don't you know that those who perform sacred services eat that from the temple; those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel** (I Cor. 9:13–14).

"It will not be baked with leaven; their portion, I have given it out of My altar-flames.²⁶ It [is] holy of holies, like the sin [-offering] and the sin [-offering]. [Lev. 6:17 (v.10 in Hebrew Bible)]

It is because of the offering by fire, Christ's death on the cross, that this fellowship offering can be given; it is given out of those offerings. Being the holy of holies, it speaks of fellowship between man and God, only possible through the burnt offerings.

"Every male from among the children of Aaron may eat from it as a decree forever throughout your generations from Yahweh's offerings by fire. Whoever touches them will become holy [or, set apart]." [Lev. 6:18 (v.11 in Hebrew Bible)]

What is emphasized here is the familial relationship in order to have fellowship with God. We become family of God through faith in Jesus Christ. **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus** (Gal. 3:26).

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 6:19 (v.12 in Hebrew Bible)]

This begins a new topic.

"Aaron and his sons will offer to Yahweh on the day when he is anointed a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a continual tribute offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. [Lev. 6:20 (v.13 in Hebrew Bible)]

Fellowship with God between Himself and the members of the family of God is not to be disregarded. Even though burnt offerings are given continually, tribute and fellowship offerings should continue just as regularly.

"It will be made well-mixed on a griddle with oil. You will bring it in baked pieces like a tribute offering of pieces you will offer it [as] a pleasing odor to Yahweh. [Lev. 6:21 (v.14 in Hebrew Bible)]

The unleavened flour is the humanity of Jesus Christ and well-mixed with oil speaks of the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit; when filled, God the Holy Spirit directs us entirely in God's plan for our life under the directive category of His will. Baked speaks of being tested in His body and broken into pieces was the cross and our Lord's death where the separation of His soul, spirit and body occurred.

²⁵ The western Samaritan and Septuagint codices add the word *altar-flame*.

²⁶ The w. Samaritan, Septuagint and the Vulgate read *the altar-flames fo Yahweh*, rather than *My Altar-flames*.

"And the priest who is anointed to succeed him [Aaron] from among his sons will do it as decreed forever to Yahweh. The whole of it will be burned. [Lev. 6:22 (v.15 in Hebrew Bible)]

Several translations read *his sons will offer it*; however, the word offer is not here, but, rather, the word 'âsâh, which means *do, manufacturer, make or construct*. It is Aaron's uniquely-born son who offers this body to Yahweh forever. The burning of the body is the judgement of God of Jesus Christ on the cross.

"Ever tribute offering of a priest is [burned] entirely; not eaten." [Lev. 6:23 (v.16 in Hebrew Bible)]

Being burned entirely is the judgement for the entirety of our sins; and **He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but for the entire world** (1 John 2:2).

The Sin Offering

Lev. 4:1–5:13 8:14–17 16:3–22

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 6:24 (v.17 in Hebrew Bible)]

We will now return to the sin [-offering]:

"Say to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the law of sin [-offering?]: in the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin [-offering or sin-bearer] will be killed before Yahweh. It [is] the holy of holies. [Lev. 6:25 (v.18 in Hebrew Bible)]

The sin-bearer and the guilt offering are identified with one another, as they are slain in the same place. This place where they are slain is considered extremely holy to Yahweh.

"The priest who offers it for sin will eat it in a holy place; it will be eaten in the court of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 6:26 (v.19 in Hebrew Bible)]

The priest eating the offering speaks of believing in Jesus Christ; his faith appropriates our Lord's death on his behalf.

"Whoever touches its flesh will be holy and when any of its blood is sprinkled on a garment, that [garment] whereon it was sprinkled you will wash in a holy place. [Lev. 6:27 (v.20 in Hebrew Bible)]

Identification with the sin-bearer makes one holy. The garments were washed, but they were washed in a place set apart to God. **Happiness to those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city** (Rev. 22:14).

"And the earthen vessel in which it [i.e., the flesh of the previous verse] is boiled will be broken; but if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, that [bronze vessel] will be scoured and rinsed in water. [Lev. 6:28 (v.21 in Hebrew Bible)]

And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you." (1 Cor. 11:22)
The earthen vessel speaks of our Lord's humanity and the breaking of it refers both to the judgement for our sins and the separation of the body, soul and spirit at His physical death; the bronze of His resurrected body.

"Every male in the priests may eat of it; it [is] holy of holies. [Lev. 6:29 (v.22 in Hebrew Bible)]

This is referring back to the sin-bearer.

""And no sin offering from which any of the blood is taken into the tent of meeting to make a propitiatory-covering in the sanctuary shall be eaten; with fire it will be consumed"". [Lev. 6:30 (v.23 in Hebrew Bible)]

The blood propitiatory-covering speaks of our Lord's death on our behalf. I don't quite follow why this sacrifice is not eaten and another is. The writer of Hebrews alludes to this verse: **For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach** (Heb. 13:11–13). The writer of Hebrews was imploring the Jews to go outside the camp of Judaism, outside the religious constrictions of Judaism, and seek the Lord Jesus Christ outside that camp.

Leviticus 7

Leviticus 7:1–38

Outline of Chapter 7:

- vv. 1–7 **The offering for offensiveness (or, the guilt-offering)**
- vv. 8–10 **The priests' portion**
- vv. 11–15 **The peace offerings**
- vv. 16–27 **Uncleanness**
- vv. 28–36 **The portions for Aaron and the priests**
- vv. 37–38 **Conclusion of the offering protocols**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 7 probably should have been combined with Leviticus 6; it is a continuation of instructions about the various offerings; in chapter 7 Yahweh covers the guilt-offering and the peace-offering.

The Offering for Offensiveness (Or, the Guilt-offering)

"This [is] the law of [or, this is the protocol of] [or, more freely, these are the regulations concerning] the guilt [-offering]; it [is] most holy [holy of holies]. [Lev. 7:1]

Throughout Leviticus, I have been translating the word *tôwrâh* (תּוֹרָה) [pronounced *to-RAW*], which is its correct meaning. However, here, and throughout most of Leviticus, the context would indicate just a slightly different emphasis, perhaps better expressed by *these are regulations concerning*. This is a much freer translation here, as *law* is in the feminine singular construct. *Protocol* would be a good one-word rendering here which remains consistent with regard to number. Strong's #8451 BDB #435.

In examining this verse, it leads me to an hypothesis; I wonder if the definite article preceding *sin* and *guilt*, in general, indicates that we are speaking of the *sin-bearer* or the *guilt-offering*? There are times when context would make it undeniably *sin-offering* instead of *sin*; however, in the realm of Leviticus and Numbers, when offerings are being dealt with, it is likely that this definite article would be the deciding factor when one is uncertain.

Another point of syntax; I am pretty confident when the 3rd person singular pronoun *hûw'* (הוא) [pronounced *hoo*] should automatically be assumed to come with the verb *to be* in instances like this, even though there is no verb. Because it is in the masculine gender, *it* is a reference to the *guilt-offering* rather than to *law* (or, *protocol*).

"In the place where they kill the burnt-offering they will [also] kill the guilt [-offering or -bearer] and one will sprinkle its blood on the altar, round about. [Lev. 7:2]

The burnt-offering and the guilt-bearer are the same things; they are the same person; therefore, they are killed in the same place.

"And all of its fat he will offer from it; the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails. [Lev. 7:3]

We know that *fat* at the beginning of the verse is the direct object and not the subject of the verb because it is preceded by the untranslated word *êth* (את) [pronounced *ayth*]. *Êth* is the mark of a direct object (it can also be used as a preposition denoting *nearness*). Context determines the usage. *It* refers back to the burnt offering.

"And the two kidneys and the fat that is on them at the loins and the appendage of the liver with the kidneys—he will remove it. [Lev. 7:4]

This is our Lord's body which is broken in judgement for our sins and then separated from the soul and spirit of our Lord. The *it* here at the very end is difficult to match up with its antecedent. It is in the singular feminine gender; therefore it is not the same as the *it* in v. 3 (which is in the masculine). *Fat* at the beginning of v. 3 is also in the masculine. The words in the feminine singular are *appendage* and *fat tail*.

"The priest will burn them on the altar as a fire-offering to Yahweh; it is the guilt [-offering].
[Lev. 7:5]

Them is a collective term referring to the items removed from the guilt-offering.

"Every male from among the priests may eat of it; it will be eaten in a holy place; it [is] extremely holy [lit., holy of holies]. [Lev. 7:6]

The priests were partially remunerated at the altar where they were allowed to eat from the offerings made to Yahweh.

"As [it is for] the sin [-offering], so [it is] for the guilt [-offering] [lit., as the sin, as the guilt]—one protocol [more freely, one set of regulations] for them. The priest who makes atonement with it for him it will be. [Lev. 7:7]

We have the repetition of the preposition *kē* (כֶּ) [pronounced *k'*], which is sounds to me as though a comparison is being made; therefore, I have translated it slightly differently when it is repeated. Owens calls this a preposition, and BDB lists it as properly a substantive. Here I think its double usage is as much a function of syntax as anything else.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Priests' Portion

"And the priest who offers any man's burnt offering; the hide of the burnt offering which he has offered, for the priest for him it will be. [Lev. 7:8]

Against, this is a portion of the priests remuneration (although, also the priest must be covered by the hide, which is analogous to being covered by our Lord Jesus Christ in atonement).

"Furthermore, every tribute offering which is baked in the oven and all that are made on a pan or a griddle, to the priest offering it, to him it will be. [Lev. 7:9]

There were at least two types of ovens in the ancient world in the East. One was a simple hole dug in the ground, four or five feet in diameter and approximately three feet deep. The sides and bottom were lined with a mortar. Bread, rolled out to the thickness of a finger, was placed against the sides of the heated oven and instantly baked. A second kind of oven was simply a very large stone vessel. A fire is made at the bottom of this vessel and bread dough is placed on the outside and cooked. It is thought that the latter type of oven is in view here. The pan mentioned here is a deep iron vessel with a lid, as versus the griddle which is a thin plate of iron which does not have a lid.²⁷ Again, those things offered on the altar were also partaken by the priests.

"And every tribute offering mixed with oil or without [lit, or dry] to all of the sons of Aaron; it will be [to] one as [to] his brother. [Lev. 7:10]

²⁷ Most of this information came from Freeman's *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 89.

The last phrase here is a bit confusing. My educated guess is that this is an idiom meaning that they share in this equally.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Peace Offerings

"Now these are the regulations concerning [lit., and this is protocol of] the sacrifice of peace offerings [with] which one approaches to Yahweh. [Lev. 7:11]

Again, we have the word for *law* here, which I will translate as *regulations* or *protocol*. Lev. 3 covered peace offerings; however, this section will categorize these peace offerings as offerings of thanksgiving, of vows and of freewill offerings. With regards to these offerings, we will begin to see what is clean and unclean (vv. 22–27) and what the priests will be able to have as their remuneration (vv. 28–36).

"If he approaches with it concerning a thanksgiving, then he will approach [or, draw near] with the sacrifice of thanksgiving—unleavened wafers mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread [lit., anointed] with oil and cakes [of] fine flour well-stirred having been mixed with oil. [Lev. 7:12]

Whereas most translations use the word *offer* twice in this verse, the word is qârav (קָרַב) [pronounced *kaw-RAV*], which is better translated as *draw near, approach, come near*. Owens has two different words, both translated *mixed* (one of the words occurs twice with basically the same morphology); the original RSV translates the one word correctly in both places with the word *mixed* but in the NRSV, for some inexplicable reason, the second place where we are to find the word *mixed*, they insert the word *soaked* instead. I have attempted to be fairly literal with this translation.

Once one is saved, one has a great deal to be thankful for. Certainly, we think a new car, a new house, a beautiful wife or handsome husband, along with a whole host of transitory things which we leave behind at death; however, after salvation, we have an eternal union with God, a place in the heavenlies, and blessings which are unimaginable to us. For these things, things which we take by faith, are the things for which we should be thankful. True thanksgiving can only occur following salvation, and notice that this offering follows the offerings which indicate Christ's death on our behalf and our appropriating that by faith. The NIV Study Bible has the note: *Thank offerings were given in gratitude for deliverance from sickness (Ps. 116:17), trouble (Psalm 107:22) or death (Psalm 56:12), or for a blessing received.*²⁸

"With cakes of leavened bread he will approach; his offering in accordance with the sacrifice of his peace-offerings of thanksgiving. [Lev. 7:13]

There are certain laws and standards which the person approaching is aware and observes. You may be surprised about the leavened bread as opposed to unleavened bread; however, here we are dealing with someone who is already ostensibly a believer in Jesus Christ (or, in that time, in Yahweh Elohim), and the presence of leaven in this case refers to the fact that he still carries within himself an old sin nature. Furthermore, as the NIV Study Bible points out, this leaven (or yeast) in the bread did not violate the prohibitions found in Ex. 23:18 or Lev. 2:11 because this was not an offering which was burned at the brazen altar; in other words, it did not represent Christ's death upon the cross. Jesus Christ had no old sin nature, so anything offered in conjunction with the brazen altar had to be without leaven. However, when the offering speaks of us and our fellowship with God, we do carry an old sin nature within us and therefore should be offering up bread with leaven.

"And he will approach out from this one [cake] from each offering as a contribution to Yahweh to the priest who throws the blood of the peace-offerings, to him it will be. [Lev. 7:14]

²⁸ p. 153.

Owens takes four different words in this verse and renders them all *offer* or *offering*. The NASB gives a more literal translation and I have given an even more literal rendering above.

"And the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace-offerings on the day of his approach shall be eaten and he will not leave any of it until the morning. [Lev. 7:15]

Since this speaks of the death of our Lord, the sacrifice was not left until morning. *His corpse will not hang all night on the tree, but you will certainly bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is curse by God), so that you do not defile your land which Yahweh your God give so you as an inheritance (Deut. 21:23).*

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Uncleanness

"But if a vow or a freewill offering on the day that he approaches with his sacrifice, it will be eaten and on the next day following and what remains of it will be eaten. [Lev. 7:16]

A vow, not an action to be taken lightly, is a deal one strikes with God. One asks for something from God and pledges something in return. The first use of the verb for vow is found in Gen. 28:20–22;²⁹ Jacob vowed to God that if God gave him basic provisions and allowed him to return to his father's home (he was on the run from Esau), the Yahweh would be his God and he would give a tenth of his wealth to God. We must recall that Jacob was not the most spiritually evolved man at this point in time. In fact, he was on the run because of the fact that he had just defrauded his brother Esau, blind-siding Esau for the second time. Other than Gen. 31:13, which looks back on this incident, this is the first mention in the Bible of a vow since then.

Almost everyone is familiar with the concept of a vow because almost everyone has made a vow to God before at some time or another. And our vow, whether we knew anything about Jacob or not, was often one made prior to regeneration or while in a state of either spiritual immaturity or reversionism, and we asked God to get us out of some jam and then we would promise God that we would do something which would be painful to us but seemed like it would be a spiritual thing to do (such as attend church every Sunday for the next two months or give a specified amount or pray more often). This is typical and often even agnostics and atheists have made vows to God at one point or another in their lives. Very often God does answer our vow and give us at least the desire behind the vow (although we may or may not get the specifics of our vow answered) and there is every indication that God remembers our vows and expects us to fulfill our part of the bargain (Gen. 30:13). A vow which an unbeliever should take is, *Speak to me, God, and I will listen to Your gospel*. The unbeliever will not hear an audible voice, but the next time the gospel is presented to him, he will realize, possibly as never before, that he is at a crossroads.

This offering does not speak of our Lord hanging on the cross between heaven and hell, dying for our sins. This offering is one where the offerer is making a vow or he has brought this as God has directed his heart. Such offerings should spill into the next day and their blessings still enjoyed.

"But what remains from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day will be burned with fire. [Lev. 7:17]

There are two things in view here; the meat would spoil after three days and not be safe. Once the meat has spoiled, it is ceremonially unclean. Furthermore, the meat will have been dead for three days and therefore the analogy between its sacrifice and Jesus Christ breaks down; therefore it is no longer considered clean for that reason. The sacrifice was eaten on day one, they ate leftovers on day two, and on day three the remaining offering is to be burned.

²⁹ Notice how Genesis contains the seeds for many of the things which we encounter later.

"And if the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering is eaten on the third day, he who approached with it will not be accepted, neither will it be credited to him; it will be an abomination [lit., a refuse-like smell] and the person eating of it will bear his iniquity. [Lev. 7:18]

The word translated *abomination* here and *unclean* in some translations actually means neither of those things. The word is *piggûwl* (פִּגְגוּל) [pronounced *pig-GOOL*], a rather onomatopoeic word, from an unused root meaning *to stink*; we are talking about an *incredibly foul, fetid odor* here.

"And the flesh that touches any unclean thing will not be eaten; it will be burned with fire; and the [clean] flesh—anyone [who is] clean may eat [that] flesh. [Lev. 7:19]

This helps to confirm that uncleanness is the problem with meat in the third day. Ceremonial uncleanness makes it something that we are not to partake in. The analogy is to being filled with the Spirit or not; being in fellowship or not. When we are out of fellowship, then everything that we do and everything that we participate in is unclean.

As a diversion, allow me to point out that the figure of speech found here is called epanadiplosis [pronounced *EP-an-a-di-PLO-sis*] (or encircling) and a sentence begins and ends with the same word; in this case, *flesh*. Hereby a complete circle is made, completeness is expressed, and attention is drawn to the solemnity and importance of this statement. In subsequent verses, we will see how important this prohibition was. However, this verse tells us how important it is syntactically.

"But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings of Yahweh while an uncleanness is on him—that person will be cut off from his people. [Lev. 7:20]

When unclean, we are out of fellowship with God and we are cut off from God and His people. Whereas this could include expulsion from Israel or ostracization, what is actually in view here is being removed, or cut off, from the promises of Yahweh to Israel. A person who was not circumcised would find himself cut off from Yahweh's covenant to Abraham (Gen. 17:14). We have the example of being cut off from one's inheritance in Ge. 31:14 and when the decalogue is introduced, one who worked on the Sabbath was cut off and executed (Ex. 31:14).

"And if any one touches an unclean thing, whether the uncleanness of man or in the proximity of the unclean beast or any unclean abomination,³⁰ and then eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings of Yahweh, that person will be cut off from his people." [Lev. 7:21]

As for what detestable things the Jews were not allowed to eat, we are not told in this context. Some of the dietary laws were simply laws provided for the good health of the Jews in that day and age. It is likely that they knew what kinds of things were excluded, even though we do not. However, breaking the dietary laws meant eating that which was unclean, and would cause one to be cut off from God's promises and provisions for Israel.

All of this is analogous to remaining in fellowship. Once we are saved (which is analogous to being an Israelite through regeneration), we have a Christian life to lead, just as the Jew had a life related to God. The Jew who continues in his life apart from uncleanness participates in the blessings and promises of God. The believer in the church age who grows and remains in fellowship also participates in both eternal and temporal rewards. The believer who becomes unclean by falling out of fellowship has eternal life with God, but his rewards are minimal (1 Cor. 3:8–15). Once we are saved, one of the most important things for us is to remain in fellowship. Apart from fellowship with God, our life as Christians is meaningless.

The Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 7:22]

The new topic to be covered is uncleanness and what makes something unclean.

³⁰ The western Samaritan and Syriac codices and the Targum of Onkelos all have *unclean reptiles* here.

"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, 'Any fat of ox or sheep or goat you will not eat...' [Lev. 7:23]

Here we have stopped mid-sentence and why anyone would do that makes no sense to me. It is obvious that the Jews could eat oxen, sheep and goats. However, they were not allowed to eat the fat, the portion which was God's (Lev. 3:14–17 4:26).

""The fat of a corpse, and the fat of one torn by beasts may be made for every kind of workmanship, but you will definitely not eat it [lit., in eating, you will not eat it]. [Lev. 7:24]

There was no superstition involved here. The animal was not going to come back alive or be a place of spirits or anything. This is a dietary law. If an animal has died of itself or if it is so weak that it has been killed by other animals (or it could become infested after its death), the meat is not what should be eaten; and therefore, God declared it unclean. However, this does not mean that the rest of the animal couldn't be used for other non-food purposes (e.g., the hide could be taken and tanned and used).

""For every person who eats from the fat of [such] an animal from which is he approaches from it a fire-offering to Yahweh, that person will be cut off from his people; [that is] the person who eats. [Lev. 7:25]

Again, we are now dealing with fellowship and not salvation and the person involved with uncleanness on any level is cut off from fellowship with God and with God's people. Further application goes to one attempting to be saved in some other method other than that which is prescribed by the Word of God; there is no salvation apart from faith in Yahweh, Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, the Creator of the Universe.

""And you will not eat any blood in any of your dwelling, whether of fowl or of animal. [Lev. 7:26]

Not only is this a point of sanitation, but we are not saved by the literal blood of Jesus Christ any more than any one in Israel was saved by the literal blood of the blood sacrifices. It was what they represented and it is the spiritual death of our Lord on the cross which is in view for salvation. This verse makes the distinction between eating the literal flesh and drinking the literal blood of our Lord and believing in Him, which is what it all means. This prohibition is repeated several times (Deut. 12:15–16).

""Whoever eats any blood will be cut off—that person from his people."" [Lev. 7:27]

This is an important point and it is driven home by repetition.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Portions for Aaron and the Priests

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 7:28]

I must admit ignorance concerning the exact content of many of the world's *great* religious books; however, I doubt that any of them have the specific claims to inspiration which we see continually in God's Word the Bible. Over and over again, God, the creator of the Universe, is speaking directly to Moses, who is recording His words.

"Speak to the people of Israel, saying the one approaching with the sacrifice of his peace-offerings to Yahweh will bring his offering to Yahweh from the sacrifice of his peace-offerings. [Lev. 7:29]

We are no longer dealing with the subject of uncleanness, but we have moved on to peace-offerings. Recall that this has nothing to do with world peace or peace with one's neighbor or even with being at peace with oneself, but this is peace with God and subsequent prosperity and well-being.

"With his own hands, he will bring [lit., his hands will bring] the fire-offerings to Yahweh, the fat with the breast he will bring it—the breast—to be waved as a waved-offering before Yahweh. [Lev. 7:30]

The wave offering means that this offering is waved before Yahweh. God is to see the offering and not the man. The breast and the thigh were then bestowed upon those in the priesthood as their due for their spiritual service (Ex. 26:26–28 Lev. 10:14–15).

"The priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast will be for Aaron and his sons. [Lev. 7:31]

The emphasis before was on the offerings; however, now that their purpose and meaning is clearer, there are certain ends which need tidying up; for instance, Aaron and his son had to be remunerated for their service.

"And you will give the right thigh as an offering to the priest from the sacrifice of your peace offerings. [Lev. 7:32]

Which priest this would go to will be explained in the next verse.

"He who approaches with the blood of the peace offerings and the fat among the sons of Aaron, the right thigh will be to him for a portion. [Lev. 7:33]

All the sons of Aaron had various functions around the tabernacle and some of them did the offering of the animals on the brazen altar.

"For the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered, I have taken from the people of Israel out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings and I have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons for a perpetual due from the people of Israel. [Lev. 7:34]

On one level, our Lord was taken out from the people of Israel; however, we have the more simplified interpretation that this is how God provided for the sons of Aaron.

"This is the anointing of Aaron and the anointing of his sons from the offerings made by fire to Yahweh on the day that they were brought near to serve as priests to Yahweh." [Lev. 7:35]

The common Hebrew words for *anointed* occur twice here, although there are several translations where you do not even find the word *anointed*. It also means *consecrated portion*; something which has been set aside, that something often being holy. The verb for *brought near* is the same one that I often translate *approach* and many other translators render as *offering*. *Offering* is not a bad rendering; it just isn't the most literal. Even here, in a sense, they are offering themselves before Yahweh. However, this is the Hiphil stem where they are *caused* to be brought near, whereas for them *to offer themselves* would require the Hithpael stem.

Yahweh has commanded this to be given to them on the day that they were anointed by the people of Israel; it is a perpetual due throughout their generations. [Lev. 7:36]

They are not given all of this on the day of their anointment; at that point in time, they were assigned those portions as being priests to Yahweh in the line of Aaron. The line of Aaron is consecrated or anointed; set aside in special service to the people of Israel and on behalf of the people of Israel; and, likewise, certain provisions are made available to them—anointed if you will.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Conclusion of the Offering Protocols

This [has been] the protocol for the burnt offering, for the tribute offering, and for the sin offering and for the guilt [or offensive] offering and for the installation offering and of the peace offerings... [Lev. 7:37]

This sums up the kind of offerings which were discussed in the previous seven chapters of Leviticus. Furthermore, this verse clearly indicates that the word for *sin* and for *offensive/guilty* could also stand for their respective *offerings*; and it again confirms my hypothesis of having a definite article in front of them. The installation offering (also called the ordination offering) was covered in Ex. 29 and will actually occur in Lev. 8:14–36.

...which Yahweh commanded Moses in the proximity of Mount Sinai on the day that He commanded the people of Israel to bring their offerings to Yahweh in the desert of Sinai. [Lev. 7:38]

Moses is no longer going to Mount Sinai to speak with God. For awhile, they had been a tent outside the camp and now there was the tabernacle inside the camp. The preposition used with Mount Sinai is one denoting proximity and they are still within the sight of the Mountain range of Mount Sinai, camped in the desert of Sinai. They have broken camp one time and have moved (this occurred at the beginning of Leviticus) but they are still close enough to the mountain to be in its proximity.

Now would be a good time to examine all of the different offerings in chart form. See the **Doctrine of Various Offerings—not finished yet!!**

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Return to Beginning of Chapter](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

Leviticus 8

Leviticus 8:1–36

Outline of Chapter 8:

- Vv. 1–5 **God speaks to Moses then Moses speaks to the people concerning the installation of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood**
- Vv. 6–30 **The installation ceremony**
- Vv. 31–36 **Moses commands the sons of Aaron**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Most of Leviticus has been direct instruction from God to Moses concerning the tabernacle worship which was to take place. This consisted of five categories of approaches (or, drawings near or offerings), or sacrifices, if you will. Lev. 8 begins with some actual narrative. Everything is in place and now the Aaronic priesthood (which is a more accurate designation than the Levitical priesthood) must be formally inducted into their positions. The ceremony here should speak of Jesus Christ and one of the aspects of His ministry, His function as our High Priest. We have already been given a rundown of what must be done in order to sanctify Aaron and his sons back in Ex. 29; this is simply a fulfillment of God's orders at that time.

This chapter and the next chapter, taken together, may seem confusing. Here, Moses is offering a bunch of sacrifices, and in the next chapter, Aaron offers a bunch of sacrifices. The idea is, first, Aaron and his sons must be consecrated, or set apart, for the priestly ministry. That is Lev. 8. In Lev. 9, they then offer up sacrifices for their sins and the sins of the people. Recall that when Moses went up to Mount Sinai, the people persuaded Aaron to revolt against God and to make a golden calf to worship. Well, this was a crappy thing for them to do, and if I were God, I would have killed all of them. However, if I were God, I'd probably have killed myself off for disobedience as well. Lucky for all of us that I am not God. But, the offerings made in Lev. 9 are sin offerings which Aaron makes for himself and the people. These sin offerings, as always, represent Jesus Christ dying for our sins on the cross.

God Speaks to Moses Then Moses Speaks to the People Concerning the Installation of Aaron and His Sons to the Priesthood

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 8:1]

There are almost 700 phrases which indicate direct verbal contact from God in the Pentateuch.

"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 a basket of the unleavened bread. [Lev. 8:2]

Sin here has a definite article, making it, in this context, the *sin-offering* or the *sin-bearer*. These are the supplies required for the installation of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. The oil speaks of the Holy Spirit and it was used to anoint the tabernacle, the furniture of the tabernacle and priests during their installation ceremony. Later it would be used to anoint leaders, as in 1Sam. 10:1 16:13.

"And assemble all of the congregation at the door of the tent of meeting." [Lev. 8:3]

These sacrifices were to be witnessed by the people. God had the individual Israelites witness hundreds upon hundreds of sacrifices in their life times. For us, it would be like hearing the gospel several hundred times throughout our lifetime (which most of us do).

And Moses did as Yahweh had commanded him and the congregation was assembled at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 8:4]

Notice that Moses does very little questioning of God as he did early on in his life (early on meaning age 80 when God first approached Moses).

And Moses said to the congregation, "This [is] the Word which Yahweh has commanded to be done." [Lev. 8:5]

Moses is not about to quote what God has told him to do; he is about to perform the ceremony of sanctifying Aaron's sons as priests. He is making the people aware that this is by direct commandment of God.

The Installation Ceremony

Ex. 29:1–27

And Moses [was caused to] approached with Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. [Lev. 8:6]

The verb here is the Hiphil imperfect of *qāraʿ* (קָרַע) [pronounced *kaw-RABV*] which is a word translated *offering* throughout many Bibles, but it means *come near, draw near, approach [with]*. Whereas it is improper to speak of Moses *offering* Aaron and his sons, he certainly does approach with them. Aaron and his sons must be ceremonially clean for this process. Jesus Christ could only function as our High Priest because he was uncorrupted humanity. The washing occurred at the brazen laver at the front of the tabernacle (notice that the brazen altar comes first, then the laver when it comes to placement). Moses must separate the priests in their service to Yahweh; this they cannot do for themselves.

And he put upon him the coat and girded him with the girdle and clothes him with the robe and put upon him the ephod and girded him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod, attaching it to him against him [or, with it]. [Lev. 8:7]

We have several different verbs for this clothing process and they were translated differently. The last word is the *vēyth* preposition with a masculine singular suffix. It means *by, with, against*; which accounts for the slightly different renderings.

And he placed upon him the breastpiece and he put in the breastpiece the Urim and Thummim. [Lev. 8:8]

The word for *placed* and for *put* in this and the previous verse are different words. Here we are told that Urim and Thummim are separate items from the breastpiece itself (which has a pouch; its name means *pouch*) and they are placed inside this breastplate. Additional information concerning the ephod, clothes, the breastpiece and Urim and Thummim may be found in Ex. 28.

And he placed the turban upon his head and he placed on the turban in front the golden plate, the holy crown, as Yahweh had commanded Moses. [Lev. 8:9]

This crown spoke of the royalty of Jesus Christ. These are the clothes which the high priest would wear when ministering on behalf of the people to Yahweh. These garments are discussed in detail in Ex. 39:1–39 40:12–16.

Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it and set them apart [or, consecrated them].³¹ [Lev. 8:10]

³¹ The western Jonathan and the Septuagint codices read *it* rather than *them*.

All of this must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit and what is revealed is done so through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we have seen, the oil speaks of God the Holy Spirit. Olive oil was absolutely necessary to the diet of the Hebrews. They used it in place of butter and it was used in their cooking. When boiled with soda, it became a soap, used for cleansing. It was also used to rub into the skin and for the hair to make both of them shine (I would assume it was used as a moisturizer here to combat the dryness of the desert).

And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the laver and its base to set them apart [or, to consecrate them]. [Lev. 8:11]

Seven is the number of perfection and of completeness; one ceases doing because something has been completed. We know this because the Hebrew word for *seven* [things] is *shâ'vû'a* (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced *sha(b)-VOO-ah*] and the word for *cease, rest* (because everything is finished) is *shâ'bath* (שָׁבַת) [pronounced *shaw(b)-VATH*]. *Shâbbath* (שַׁבָּת) [pronounced *shahb-BATH*] is the Hebrew word for Sabbath, their day of rest once everything had been accomplished or everything had been completed.

And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to set him apart [or, to consecrate him]. [Lev. 8:12]

No one can function in the Christian life apart from the Holy Spirit. This speaks of guidance, direction, filling and identification with the Holy Spirit. Scofield points out³² two of the differences between the ordination of the high priest and that of the priests: (1) Aaron is anointed prior to the slaying of the sacrifices; the priests are anointed afterwards. Aaron is a type of Christ and this passage looks forward to several characteristics of our Lord: Our Lord was chosen before the foundation of the world (as we are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world—Eph. 1:4). Jesus did not discover immediately prior to the cross of His mission and person; He knew those from eternity past in His deity and His humanity learned them early on, perhaps as early as age four or five, and at least by age twelve, as the only recorded incident that we have of those years is when Joseph and Mary thought they had lost our Lord, **and He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father?"** (Luke 2:49). Furthermore, (2) only Aaron is anointed with oil. **For He whom God has sent speaks to Words of God; for He [God the Father] gives the Spirit without measure** (John 3:34). **You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, You God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions** (Psalm 45:7 Isa. 61:1, 3 Heb. 1:9). As the one specifically designated as a type of our Lord to come, there must be certain things which set Him apart from the other priests.

And Moses brought Aaron's sons and clothed them with coats and girded them with girdles and bound on them caps as Yahweh had commanded Moses. [Lev. 8:13]

The word for *caps* here is inferior to the *turban* found in v. 9. Aaron is the high priest and his garb sets him apart from his sons. His sons are set apart from the rest of the congregation.

Then he brought the bull of the sin[-offering] and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bull of the sin[-offering]; [Lev. 8:14]

I have taken a slight liberty with the translation here; it should read: *and Aaron laid—and his sons—their hands upon the head of the bull of the sin[-offering]*. *Laid* is in the 3rd masculine singular and applies strictly to Aaron; however, his sons also join in. It might be more proper to infer and repeat the verb *laid* in italics or brackets following *and Aaron's sons*. Aaron and his sons will first be set apart to serve in the ministry to Yahweh on behalf of the Jewish people, then they will offer sacrifices for the Jews (Lev. 9:15–21).

And he slaughtered it and Moses took the blood and put it on the protrusions of the altar round about with his finger and purified the altar and he poured out the blood at the base of the altar and set it apart [or, consecrated it] to make atonement for it. [Lev. 8:15]

³² p. 136.

As we learned back while covering the Ten Commandments, there are several words translated *kill* or *murder* in the Old Testament. The word found here is *shâchat* (שחט) [pronounced *shaw-KHAT*] and it is used primarily for slaughtering animals for a sacrificial offerings (Gen. 37:31 Ex. 12:6 Lev. 3:2). There are a couple of noteworthy exceptions, however. When Abraham is about to kill Isaac, *shâchat* is used (Gen. 22:10). God did not *murder* the Exodus generation, He *slaughtered* them in the desert (Num. 14:16). When Elijah has the prophets of Baal killed, they are slaughtered as with a sacrificial knife (1Kings 18:40). We also find it used for humans in Judges 12:6 2Kings 25:7 Isa. 9:8 Jer. 39:6 49:37 52:10 Ezek. 16:21 23:39 40:41–42 Hos. 5:2.³³

The altar had not been used yet and had not been put into the service of Yahweh yet. This was a very solemn ceremony where all these articles of furniture and Aaron and his sons must be set apart from everything profane to be used of God. When we are saved, we are set apart from the world, we are set apart temporarily from our old sin nature and we are separated from the eternal penalty for our sins. God has a plan for our lives, which is a plan separate from the world, the flesh and the devil. Notice here that Moses, the father of the Jewish nation and therefore a representative of the Jewish nation, is the one who kills the first bull which represents Jesus Christ at the installment of the Aaronic priesthood.

And he took all of the fat that was on the entrails and the appendage of the liver and the two kidneys and their fat and Moses burned [them] on the altar. [Lev. 8:16]

No one actually saw our Lord die for our sins; even had Golgotha not been covered with a thick darkness, the unspeakable torment which He endured would have been unseen. Then, all those about the cross heard His continual screaming "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" These are the insides of the bull which stand for the unseen judgement of our Lord for our sins. For those reading this, you, particularly if you are from the *high esteem generation*, have no clue as to how undeserving we are of this. Our hearts are often filled with evil continually, in rebellion to God, even after having appropriated His perfect gift of Jesus Christ.

But the bull and its skin and its flesh and its dung he had burned with fire outside the camp, as Yahweh had commanded Moses. [Lev. 8:17]

Just as our Lord had been taken to the cross by the Roman's, *outside the camp*, if you will, so it was with the bull. We have quoted Heb. 13:11–13 several times with regards to this.

Then he approached with the ram of the burnt offering and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. [Lev. 8:18]

This indicates their identification with the ram, who took upon itself the penalty for their sins. The sins of Aaron and his sons are transferred to the ram by this act of laying on of hands.

And he slaughtered it and Moses threw the blood upon the altar round about. [Lev. 8:19]

All things are cleansed and sanctified by blood.

And when the ram was cut into pieces, Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat.³⁴ [Lev. 8:20]

The burning speaks of the everlasting judgement and the smoke which rises is what satisfies God the Father and causes Him to withhold our deserved judgement.

³³ This word is also used in two passages in the Qal participle to refer to *beaten* gold (1Kings 10:16–17 2Chron. 9:15–16).

³⁴ Rotherham footnotes here as *grease*; I don't know if it is a different word than usually used for *fat* or not.

And when the entrails and the legs were washed with water, Moses burned the whole ram on the altar as a burnt offering, a tranquilizing scent, a fire-offering to Yahweh, as Yahweh had commanded Moses. [Lev. 8:21]

The entrails and the legs speak of the putrification by association with the devil's world and these things must be cleansed in order for them to be offered upon the altar. Our Lord was perfect in His humanity in going to the cross. This perfection is continually noted in the Penteteuch.

Then he approach with the other ram, the ram of installments [or, settings], and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. [Lev. 8:22]

Unfortunately the words *consecration*, *ordination* and *installation* are thrown about in the KJV Bible almost as synonyms; they are related words, but let's concentrate on the one at hand. Millû' (מִלּוּ') [pronounced *mil-LOO*] is only found in a few passages, is only found in the plural and it has some very telling cognates. *The setting of a jewel* is the same word with an *ah* ending (Ex. 28:17, 20 39:12). It is also closely related to the verb for *fill* and the noun for *fullness* or *that which fills*. With this knowledge alone, I would be tempted to render this the *fulfillment-setting [of the office of priesthood]*. We first find this word in Ex. 25:7 for stones of the *settings* of the ephod (see also Ex. 35:9, 27 1Chron. 29:2). Then this word is found used in precisely the way as it is here in Ex. 29:22, 26, 27, 31, 34 Lev. 7:37 8:28, 29, 31, 33. I am a little confused; millû is found listed with the several groups of offerings in Lev. 7:37, although it is not alluded to elsewhere prior to Lev. 7. However, most of Lev. 8 speaks of this ceremony. A reasonable one-word translation would be *installation(s)*, *installment(s)*, as we are speaking of the installment of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood.

And he slaughtered it and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot. [Lev. 8:23]

The blood of Jesus Christ separates Aaron from the world. **For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced my hands and my feet** (Psalm 22:16).

And Aaron's son were brought and Moses put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the great toes of their right feet; and Moses threw the blood upon the altar round about. [Lev. 8:24]

And they dressed Him [Jesus] up in purple, and, after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on Him...and they kept beating His head with a reed...The other disciples were saying to him [after the resurrection], "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails and place my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not ever believe." (Mark 15:17, 19a John 20:25). When our Lord was crucified, almost 1500 years after Moses wrote these words, that we realize the significance of the blood on the head, the feet and the hands.

J. Vernon McGee gives a slightly different slant on this passage. *The blood-tipped ear symbolizes the ear that will hear the voice of God. Without that, friend, you are not going to hear Him. The natural man does not receive the things of Christ. The blood-tipped hand was essential for service. It is impossible to serve the Lord before one is saved. The blood-tipped foot was essential for the walk before God. All of this is symbolic of the fact that the total personality must be presented to God.*³⁵

In case you are concerned seeing two very different takes on this passage, many of the prophecies of the Bible have a near and a far fulfillment (e.g., Lev. 23); that is, they are fulfilled twice. Many passages can have several, non-contradictory interpretations, such as this one.

³⁵ Leviticus Volume I, J. Vernon McGee, p. 98.

Then he took the fat and the fat tail and all the fat that was on the entrails and the appendage of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat and the right thigh; [Lev. 8:25]

These are the items which will be burned upon the altar.

And out of the basket of unleavened bread, which was before Yahweh, he took one unleavened cake and one cake of bread with oil and one wafer and placed [them] on the fat and on the right thigh; [Lev. 8:26]

The unleavened bread speaks of the perfection of Jesus Christ in His humanity.

And he placed all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons and he waved them as a wave offering before Yahweh. [Lev. 8:27]

Waving these things before Yahweh is a very visual demonstration of believing in the God that they cannot see.

Then Moses took them from their hands and burned [these items] on the altar with the burnt offering as an installation offering, a tranquilizing scent, a fire-offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 8:28]

It is through the death of Jesus Christ that these men are set apart to offer their services to Yahweh.

And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave offering before Yahweh out from the portion of the ram of installation regarding Moses; it was for a portion as Yahweh commanded Moses. [Lev. 8:29]

Moses was the person that God set in charge of the installation of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.

Then Moses took some of [lit., out of] the anointing oil and out of the blood which was on the altar and sprinkled it upon Aaron and³⁶ upon his garments and also upon his sons and his sons' garments with him. He set apart [or, consecrated] Aaron and his garments and his sons and his sons' garments with him. [Lev. 8:30]

It is with the blood of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit that these were set apart for the service of Yahweh.

Moses Commands the Sons of Aaron

Now what Moses will do is speak to the sons of Aaron and to Aaron in the sight of all the congregation as a matter of ceremony, telling them all what is occurring and where Aaron and his sons will be for the next week.

And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the door of the tent of meeting and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of the installation offerings, as I have been commanded,³⁷ saying, 'Aaron and his sons will eat it.' [Lev. 8:31]

Eating the flesh and the bread are signs of appropriation of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This last quote is from Ex. 29:32.

"And what remains of the flesh and the bread you will burn with fire. [Lev. 8:32]

³⁶ As per almost every ancient codex.

³⁷ The Massoretic text reads *as I commanded*. The western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate read *as I have been commanded*.

Jesus was judged wholly for our sins.

"And out from the door of the tent of meeting you will not go out for seven days until the day of the completion of the days of your installation; for he will complete [or, ordain; lit., fill your hands] you in seven days. [Lev. 8:33]

As you will recall, seven is the number of perfection and completion. After seven days, the sons of Aaron and Aaron will be ordained as priests unto Yahweh. Recall that the verb cognation of the word for installation is *mâlê'* (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*] and it is the simple word for *fill*; as in the earth being *filled* with violence (Gen. 6:13) or *filled* with glory, mercy, goodness, knowledge (Psalm 33:5 119:64 Isa. 11:9) or to *fill* the earth with a population of something (Gen. 1:22, 28 2:1); to *fill* with anything (2Kings 4:6 2Chron. 7:1 Isa. 21:3), days or years have been *fulfilled*, *accomplished*, *filled* [with living] (Gen. 25:24 Lev. 25:30), or, *fulfilled*, in terms of *completing*, *finishing* with regards to time (Lev. 8:33 12:4 Esther 1:5 Jer. 25:12). This is the amount of time that Yahweh required for the completion and the fulfillment of their ceremonial induction into the priesthood.

"Yahweh has commanded to do as it has been done today, with regards to covering over you [or, making propitiation for you]. [Lev. 8:34]

Moses confirms to them that this ceremony is in accordance with the mandates of their Lord.

"You will remain at the door of the tent of meeting day and night for seven days observing [and obeying] what Yahweh has commanded you to observe³⁸ and you will not do for I was so commanded." [Lev. 8:35]

We find an oft used verb from the Hebrew: *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. It is used for observing or keeping Yahweh's commandments in Ex. 15:26 Deut. 5:29 Psalm 119:55. It is used for observing certain days as required by Yahweh in Ex. 12:17 23:15. It means to know the law, the precepts, the Word of God, to *observe* it and to *obey* it and to *guard* it. This word occurs approximately 500 times in the Old Testament. As each of the Levitical priests were in special service to Yahweh on behalf of the people of Israel, we in the church age are all in special service to God. We all possess specific spiritual gifts, are possessors of the Holy Spirit and God has a specific, unique plan for each of our lives. He are to obey God, to execute His plan. His mandates are not burdensome. Our greatest human happiness will be found in service to Him rather than pursuing the pleasures of life for a season.

And Aaron and his sons did all the things which Yahweh commanded [them] by the hand of Moses. [Lev. 8:36]

Throughout the end of Exodus and in Leviticus, it seems as though everything is on the right track. God sets up certain decrees and the Jews are obeying these decrees.

³⁸ *Commanded you to observe* is one word in the Hebrew.

Leviticus 9

Leviticus 9:1–24

Introduction:

Outline of Chapter 9:

- Vv. 1–7 **Moses gives the final directions for the initial sacrifices**
- Vv. 8–14 **Aaron's offering for himself**
- Vv. 15–22 **Aaron's offering for the people**
- Vv. 23–24 **The glory of Yahweh**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Moses Gives the Final Directions for the Initial Sacrifices

On the eighth day, Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. [Lev. 9:1]

Aaron and his sons have been in the tent of meeting all of this time. They have been set apart for their service to Yahweh.

And he said to Aaron, "Take a bull calf for a sin [-offering] and a ram for a burnt offering—without blemish—and approach with them before Yahweh. [Lev. 9:2]

Here, the word *sin* means *sin-offering* because of its context and the parallelism between the animal and the purpose, the animal and the purpose. However, it is not preceded by a definite article here. Once these animals are gotten, then are to come before Yahweh.

"And speak to the people [lit., sons] of Israel, saying, 'Take a male goat for a sin [-offering] and a calf and a lamb without blemish for a burnt offering; [Lev. 9:3]

Again, the parallelism indicates that the male goat is a *sin-offering*.

"And an ox and a ram for peace offerings to sacrifice before Yahweh and a tribute mixed with oil; for today, Yahweh will appear to you." [Lev. 9:4]

The initiation of the Aaronic priesthood is a momentous occasion in the spiritual life of Israel, setting up an institution which would legitimately last for another 1500 years (and still hang on beyond its time even till today in some religions).

And they took what Moses had commanded to the tent of meeting and all the congregation approached and stood before Y^ehowah. [Lev. 9:5]

Here, the word for *approach* is correctly translated in most Bibles. So we have had the ceremony of Lev. 8 and this is the culmination of this ceremony. It is possible that many of the people went throughout their week and gave little thought to Aaron and his sons; however, they were in the tent of meeting for seven days, so they thought about this every day.

And Moses said, "This is the word which Yahweh commanded you to do and it will appear to you—the glory of Yahweh." [Lev. 9:6]

Although this is not stated as such, this is not unlike a conditional statement—the Jews were to obey and Yahweh would appear to them. Since they had obeyed, then it did not have to be stated in just that way.

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near [or, approach] to the altar and offer your sin [-offering] and your burnt offering and make a covering [or, atonement] on behalf of yourself and on behalf of the people; and bring the offering of the people and make a covering [or, an atonement] on behalf of them, as Yahweh had commanded." [Lev. 9:7]

We have heard a preposition which is found thrice in this verse; therefore I would like to cover in some detail. Ba'ad (בְּאֵד) [pronounced *BAH-gad*] is one of those rare prepositions which does not take up five pages in BDB. In fact, it is explained in less than a full page. With a genitive, it generally connotes separation and is translated *from, behind, about, away from*; however, it can also mean *through* (as in *through* a window) and *on behalf of*, as we find it used here. Strong's #1157 (#5704 with נ) BDB #126.

Aaron's Offering for Himself

So Aaron approached in the direction of³⁹ the altar [or, drew near to the altar] and slaughtered the calf of the sin [-offering], which was for himself. [Lev. 9:8]

Jesus Christ is the high priest of our profession and He does not have to offer an animal for Himself. Therefore, his counterpart does not require a priest to run interference between himself and Yahweh. However, Aaron did possess an old sin nature and had committed personal sins, therefore he was required to be cleansed. However, he is one of the few people who would make an offering for himself. Aaron had to make an offering on behalf of himself because **every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weaknesses; furthermore, because of that, his is obligated to offer [sacrifices] for sins, as for the people, so also for himself** (Heb. 5:1–3).

And the sons of Aaron approached with the blood and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the protrusions of the altar and he poured out the blood at the base of the altar. [Lev. 9:9]

There is no preposition for *with* in this verse; however, the verb *approach* usually implies such a preposition. When we are saved, our Lord applies His blood to us; that is, His spiritual death is applied to us for our salvation. It is His death which saves us; without His spiritual death on the cross, taking upon Himself the judgement for our sins, there is no salvation.

But the fat and the kidneys and the appendage of the liver from the sin [-offering], he burned upon the altar, as Yahweh had commanded Moses. [Lev. 9:10]

The burning is the judgement of God.

But the flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside the camp. [Lev. 9:11]

Just as our Lord was crucified outside the camp; outside the gate of the city. Notice that these images are repeated hundreds of times every year for the Jews.

And he killed the burnt offering and Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood and he threw it on the altar round about. [Lev. 9:12]

³⁹ In the direction of the altar is the one-word preposition 'el (עַל) [pronounced *a*] in the Hebrew

This is the ram—the burnt offering—which we are speaking of now. In vv. 8–11, it was the sin-offering, the calf. Both of these offerings were on behalf of Aaron (v. 2).

And they delivered the burn offering to him, in regards to its pieces, along with [lit., and] the head; and he burned them upon the altar. [Lev. 9:13]

As we saw, the animal had to be cut up in order to lift it up and place it upon the altar.

And he washed the entrails and the legs and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar. [Lev. 9:14]

The entrails and the legs are unclean; the entrails for obvious reasons and the legs are in contact with the earth, making them unclean. What is offered on the altar on behalf of the sins of the people must be clean.

Aaron's Offering for the People

Then he approached with the people's offering and took the goat of the sin [-offering], which was for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin like the first sin offering. [Lev. 9:15]

Aaron will also offer an several animals on behalf of the people of Israel. Just in order to use the tabernacle in worship, to be able to bring offerings to God, the people had to be thoroughly cleansed with the blood of several animal sacrifices. Aaron was a type of Christ, as we read, **He had to be made like His brothers in all things, that He might become a mericiful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, tro make a covering [or, propitiation] for the sins of the people** (Heb. 2:18). And, we are fortunate to have a greater Hlgh Priest: **For it was fitting that we should have suhc a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavenlies, Who does not need dialy, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for [the sins] of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priest who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, a Son, made perfect forever** (Heb. 7:26–28).

And he approached with the burnt offering and made it according to judgement of God. [Lev. 9:16]

The burnt offering is the calf and the lamb. When it reads *he made it*, Aaron prepared the offering and placed it on the altar as per the instructions of Yahweh. Never forget, in the examination of this portion of God's Word that: **Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins** (Heb. 10:11).

And he aproached with the tribute offering and filled his hand [lit. palm] from it and burned it upon the altar besides [or, apart from] the burnt offering of the morning. [Lev. 9:17]

The wording here (particularly the two prepsositions and substantive, which becomes a preposotion, and are all translated by the word *besides*) it somewhat confusing. It sounds as though the tribute offering is made separate from the burnt offering and, at the same time, with the burnt offering. Besides which, flour is not going to burnt on the altar without something else being there. I believe what is being conveyed here is the tribute offering on behalf of the people was offered appart from the tribute offering which was offered with the evening and morning burnt offerings.

I don't know if this is related to the phrase *fill the hand*, which was continually mistranslated *installation*. Here it means that this is all that Aaron can hold in his palm. In any case, this one phrase herein used is not properly the installation of Aaron; here it simply refers to carrying the tribute offering in his hand.

He killed the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people and Aaron's sons delivered the blood to him, which he threw upon the altar round about. [Lev. 9:18]

These two offerings were mentioned prior to the tribute offering in v. 4.

And the fat of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and the fat-covering and the kidneys and the appendage of the liver; [Lev. 9:19]

I don't have a clue as to why those who separated the Bible into verses chose to let this phrase stand alone.

And they placed the fat upon the breasts and he burned the fat upon the altar. [Lev. 9:20]

These portions of fat refer to the items from v. 19. The word for breast here, incidentally, is used only of animals in the Old Testament.

But the breasts and the right thigh, Aaron had waved for a wave offering before Yahweh, as Moses commanded.⁴⁰ [Lev. 9:21]

This waving in front of Yahweh is a sign to the angels of the belief of the Israelites in what they do not see.

Then Aaron lifted up his hand(s) toward the people and blessed them and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. [Lev. 9:22]

In the Massoretic Text, it reads *then Aaron lifted up his hand*. However, when this is read, the plural, *hands*, is read.

One of the blessings of Aaron is found in Num. 6:24–26: "May Yahweh bless you and keep you; May Yahweh make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; May Yahweh lift up His countenance on you and give you peace." Paul often blessed those that he wrote to at the end of the epistle (I Cor. 16:23 II Cor. 13:14 Gal. 6:18 Eph. 6:23–24).

This helps us to understand the brazen altar. This descent indicates that Aaron was on a platform or a walkway around the brazen altar, since it was four and a half feet high.

The Glory of Yahweh

And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting and when they came out, the blessed the people and the glory of Yahweh appeared to all the people. [Lev. 9:23]

This was promised to them in v. 6. The description of what it means to see the glory of Yahweh is given in the last verse of this chapter:

And fire came forth from before Yahweh and it consumed the burnt offering upon the altar and the fat and when it was seen, all the people shouted and fell on their faces. [Lev. 9:24]

So we have the ox and the ram upon the altar, and God consumes them both with a burst of fire. Very likely, this was simply lightning from a cloudless sky, designed by God which consumed the sacrifices without harming the altar. A similar manifestation of the glory of God occurred in 1Kings 18:30–39, when Elijah was vindicated by the glory of God consuming the sacrifice that he had laid out for Yahweh.

This, compared to Ex. 40:34–35 indicates to us that to the Israelites, the glory of Yahweh was a sensory supernatural manifestation of his power. That is, something incredible that they would witness, and hear and even smell. We find similar manifestations in 1Kings 18:30–39 (just mentioned) and 2Chron. 7:1.

⁴⁰ The western Samaritan, the targum of Jonathon and the Septuagint read: *As Yahweh commanded Moses*.

Leviticus 10

Leviticus 10:1–20

Outline of Chapter 10:

- Vv. 1–3 **Nadab and Abihu both die the sin unto death**
- Vv. 4–7 **Moses instructs Aaron concerning this incident**
- Vv. 8–15 **Yahweh speaks directly to Aaron**
- Vv. 16–20 **Moses and Aaron speak**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: There is a right way of doing things and a wrong; God has prescribed exactly how He will present the gospel to the unbeliever and there will be no other way. There are times when religious intolerance is God's will. We saw such a thing when God did not have respect for the offering of Cain in Gen. 4. Cain brought Yahweh the efforts of his hard work and God rejected it. We will see here where the two eldest sons of Aaron will bring an unauthorized offering to God. There are things that an individual believer can do and things that they cannot. For instance, it was legitimate for Solomon to build a temple for Yahweh since the Jews were no longer wanderers but they lived in the promised land at its relative height during ancient times. However, God had just set up a list of specific sacrifices and offerings which were to be presented to God and two of Aaron's sons ignore this entirely and improvise. In their particular state, this was tantamount to rejecting God's Word and believing that their word was superior to Yahweh's. For this, they died the sin unto death. Even Aaron did not realize fully what tremendous responsibility they had taken upon themselves as priests to Yahweh.

Nadab and Abihu Both Die the Sin unto Death

Now the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took his censer and put in them fire and laid incense upon them and approached [with it] before Yahweh—strange [or unfamiliar] fire which he had not commanded them. [Lev. 10:1]

Although the literal translation of the Hebrew of the last few words does not sound very strong (*which He had not commanded them*), this is the use of antenantisios [pronounced *ANT-en-an-ti-O-sis*], which uses a negative for great emphasis. Bullinger gives the example *I praise you not* meaning that the person is held in derision; here, when Moses records that this was incense not commanded by God; it was, as a matter of fact, strictly prohibited (Ex. 30:9).

A *censor* is simply the container which is used to carry fire and possibly incense. The descriptor of the fire is the word זָרָה (zōr) [pronounced *zoor*] and this is a verb, used rarely so in seven instances, and primarily as an adjective as a verb in the Qal participle form. We have seen this word but three time prior to this passage: Ex. 29:33 30:9, 33. In two of these passages, it refers to a *stranger* someone with whom no one is completely familiar. However, Ex. 30:9 reads: "**You will not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or tribute; and you will not pour out a libation upon it.**" Strong's #2114 BDB #266.

The religion prescribed by Yahweh was not one of do whatever feels right. There were specific boundaries and limits and *strange* incense here is that which has not been specifically prescribed by Yahweh. This is an incense or a fire with which Yahweh is not familiar (I am speaking in an anthropological sense); that is, it is not what Yahweh has delineated in His laws to be used. If they believed God's Word, this is the last thing that these two men⁴¹ should have done, having already seen God destroy a large number of Israelites who worshipped a golden calf. Many times throughout Scripture, the burning of the sacrifice is said to be a *sweet aroma* to God. Nadab and Abihu took it upon themselves to add a little incense to the mix so that the aroma would smell sweet to them as well. What they had done was added works to grace. The animal sacrifices were God's grace. They brought

⁴¹ I almost said *young* men; however, since Aaron is about 84 years old, these sons are at least in their forties.

unblemished animals to God and sacrificed them, and the animals took upon them the sins of Nadab and Abihu (or of the people for whom Nadab and Abihu offered the sacrifice). When they added their incense, this was like adding works to grace—no one is saved by adding their works to grace. In doing this, Nadab and Abihu distorted the message of grace.

Just as God had no regard for the offering of produce by Cain, God does not honor those who come before Him with their own works. They were offering to God that which represented their works, their methods, their personal sacrifice. Those who come to God with their own works will spend all of eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11–15). Their deaths illustrate the great error of coming before God according to your own works, your own religion, with your own sacrifice, and your own incense. These things are unclean, they are abominable to God.

Furthermore, our works following salvation must be within God's will. We are to be filled with the Spirit at all times. *The Amplified Bible* gives the example: *And that does not mean first making an unholy alliance in marriage, or in business, or in thought, and then adjusting it to God's will.*⁴² All of our works should be offered while filled with the Spirit, so that they are not burned up at the judgement seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:11–15).

So Nadab and Abihu represent to us the destruction of the unbeliever who approaches God with his own works rather than with the finished work of Jesus Christ; and they represent the works that we as believers might bring to the judgment seat of Christ—works not done in the Spirit and works that will be burned—consumed, if you will—yet we will be preserved, so as through fire. God's plan incorporates all that is in the world and produces from it good. Even their sin produces for us an illustration by which we are instructed. Even when Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and set the wheels in motion for our Lord to be taken to the cross, he (Satan) had no idea that this would result in the eternal salvation of all who believed.

One is caused to recall a similar incident which took place in the book of Acts (specifically, Acts 5:1–11) when Ananias and Sapphira instantly suffered the sin unto death when they lied to the Holy Spirit. As Zodhiates put it, this *had a beneficial sobering effect upon all who heard about it.*⁴³ As a teacher, I have found myself in a position, particularly with a new group of students where I must make an example of one and come down hard on that one in order to preserve class order. When God is founding a new beginning in His plan—as He was with the Law and the nation Israel and as He was with the local church at the beginning of the church age—He had to be swift and severe.

Now, you may think that God's punishment was rather harsh. After all, all they did was toss in some incense into their fire pans in order to make the smoke sweeter (in their opinion) to God. There is nothing more important for the unbeliever to realize than the fact that his works mean nothing to God; the only thing that gains them access to God is the work of Christ. They stand 100% upon His work and 0% on their own works. When it comes to salvation, you do not bring to God your good intentions, your vows, your sad regret of the sins you have done, baptism, or anything else. You bring to God the finished work of Jesus Christ and nothing else. You don't add even the smallest amount of incense to His sacrifice. Every evangelist and every teacher who implies or outright teaches some system of works to be added to God's grace is a blasphemer. Had this been done earlier in the Church Age, they would have been struck instantly dead as well.

Now, some suggest the possibility that they approached Yahweh in a state of drunkenness. This can be possibly inferred by v. 9; v. 10 tells us that the priests were not to confuse the holy with the profane, which is something that they obviously did. However, this is not emphasized in this passage as a whole, so, even though drunkenness is certainly forbidden in tabernacle service, that is not the point of this passage. Furthermore, it's not much good to give the command after the incident. It's like God saying, "Oh yeah, I forgot; I don't like this either, and so I took out your two sons for doing it earlier this afternoon."

⁴² *The Amplified Bible*, The Lockman Foundation; ©1965 by Zondervan Publishing House; p. 31.

⁴³ Zodhiates, p. 289.

And fire came forth from the presence [lit., face] of Yahweh and devoured them and they died before Yahweh. [Lev. 10:2]

Devoured is a word for *eat*; however, when used of fire, it means *to consume, to devour, to destroy* (and it can be used that way apart from the subject fire). *Died* is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that this action is viewed a process and not as a completed act. They did not die instantly; they had time to think about what it was that they had done.

These men received a great deal of notoriety from God's Word and are mentioned on several occasions, including Ex. 24:1, 9 28:1 Num. 3:2–4 26:60–61 1Chron. 6:3 24:1–2, usually as the two who died before Yahweh, not having any sons. Their sin is used to instruct us.

Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what Yahweh has spoken, saying, 'Among those who come near Me, I am holy and before all the people I will be honored [or, glorified].'" and Aaron remained silent. [Lev. 10:3]

We have several translations of the last portion of this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...and before all the people I will be honored. And Aaron said nothing.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And before the faces of all the people must I get myself honour,—And Aaron was dumb.
KJV	...and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.
NASB	" '...And before all the people I will be honored.' " So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.
NIV	" '...in the sight of all the people I will be honored.' " Aaron remained silent.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'...and in the face of all the people I am honoured;' and Aaron is silent.

At the end of Lev. 9, we had the word *glory* used to describe a phenomenal occurrence in the presence of the people of Israel. This is the word *kâ^bvôwd* (כבוד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VODE*] and it refers to *glory, abundance, or honor*. The verb here is its cognate, the 1st person, Niphal imperfect of *kâ^bvêd* (כִּבֵּד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*] and this means *honor, glorify, be heavy, weighty, burdensome*. Strong's #3513 BDB #457.

The final verb in this verse is the Qal imperfect of *dâmam* (דָּמַם) [pronounced *daw-MAHM*] and it means *be still, silent, cease, cut off*. These are Aaron's sons, his first and second-born and certainly he is none too happy concerning the event which just transpired. However, he takes it in silence. Aaron certainly made some mistakes and was not the great man that Moses was, but he was light years of almost everyone else in that camp.

Moses Instructs Aaron Concerning this Incident

And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron and said to them, "Approach; carry your brothers out from before the sanctuary and in the direction of out of the camp." [Lev. 10:4]

Aaron is still going to be in some shock and choosing the other brothers would not have been the right thing to do; they were already shocked enough by what happened. Moses presses some other relatives into service to remove the bodies. The word for *approach* is the one which is too often rendered *offering*.

So they approached and carried them in their coats in the direction of out of the camp, as Moses had said. [Lev. 10:5]

This was a stubborn generation of Jews and God was required to take firm, if not drastic measures, in order to properly evangelize their descendants for the next 1400 years. It would be nice if God could have slapped some hands here and allowed the two brothers to live, but that would have only opened the doors to great apostasy and disobedience. This generation of Jews required a tight reign on them and they would not have responded to anything less. God had to work with this faithless generation and (1) plant the seed of the nation Israel;

(2) organize the feast days; (3) establish the proper sacrifices; (4) set up the tabernacle and design proper tabernacle worship; and, (4) to move toward Canaan, to conquer the land.

And Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "The hair of your heads do not let hang loose; and do not rend your clothes, so that you don't die and so that your wrath [i.e., the wrath that they would deserve] does not come upon all the congregation. But your brothers, the whole house of Israel, may bewail the burning which Yahweh has burned. [Lev. 10:6]

In most cases, it would be customary for the family of the deceased to go into deep mourning over their deaths. However, Aaron's sons were given tremendous responsibility in their position and in their service to Yahweh, and not only did they take this responsibility lightly, they outright disobeyed a specific ordinance of Yahweh from the outset as their first act following ordination. This indicates that they had absolutely no respect for God's Word and in the position they were in, they received immediate punishment for their sin. We are all exceedingly lucky that our punishment is not as swift and severe as was theirs. The congregation, however, was allowed to mourn their deaths. Aaron and his family could not because they held the same responsibilities as did Nadab and Abihu and mourning for them would be tantamount to sympathy for the mistake that they had made rather than recognizing it as a flagrant disregard for Yahweh's commandments. However, the congregation was allowed to mourn their deaths, keeping in the back of their minds that the same could happen to them.

Yahweh Speaks Directly to Aaron

"And from the door of the tent of meeting, do not go out, so that you don't die for the oil of the anointing of Yahweh is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses. [Lev. 10:7]

This oil is the Holy Spirit; and you will notice that they obey God's Word as given through Moses explicitly. They were told not to go out; i.e., to join the other mourners; with their office came great responsibility. These were the men who would evangelize Israel and the rest of the world for the next 1400 years. It is a responsibility not to be taken lightly.

And Yahweh spoke to Aaron, saying, [Lev. 10:8]

This is a real rarity; God thus far has spoken primarily to Moses and Aaron was only included on the insistence of Moses.

"Do not drink wine nor strong drink; [not] you nor your sons with you when you go into the tent of meeting, so that you do not die—[this is] a statute forever throughout your generations. [Lev. 10:9]

In this brief conversation with Aaron, God gives him specific laws and commandments directly pertaining to his office as high priest and to the office of priesthood held by his sons.

"You are to distinguish between the holy and the common; and between the unclean and the clean. [Lev. 10:10]

In God's laws, there is a right way of doing things and a wrong. The Lord Jesus had to go to the cross absolutely holy and absolutely clean; He had to be without spot and without blemish. This was the only way He could pay the penalty for our sins. **"Her priests have done violence to My Law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."** (Ezek. 22:26). **"Moreover, they [the priests] will teach between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."** (Ezek. 44:23).

"And you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which Yahweh has spoke to them by the hand of Moses." [Lev. 10:11]

Not only did the priests represent man to Yahweh, but they also presented God's Word to the people. With this kind of responsibility, it would have been meaningless to have God's Word presented by two who immediately disobeyed it. This is why certain televangelists and the like are put under such scrutiny. They might do things which we would excuse in our friends and even in our mates; however, as representatives of God, they are to be free of any tinge of wrongdoing. God recognized the impact of sin in the life of one who represents God.

Several translations do an injustice to that last phrase; NASB: ...the LORD has spoken to them through Moses. *The Amplified Bible*: ...The Lord has spoken to them by Moses. See also the NRSV. Yahweh spoke to them by the **hand** of Moses; Moses wrote these laws down as God spoke to him. There are times you wonder what was so difficult about a literal rendering here? It should have at least been specified in a footnote.

And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons who were left, "Take the tribute [-offering] that remains of the offerings by fire to Yahweh and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy." [Lev. 10:12]

Not only were the family of the deceased to not mourn, they were to partake in the portion of the offering which pays tribute to God; which shows respect to Yahweh. There will be times that those close to us will be taken out in the sin unto death and that those close to us will be disciplined; and some will suffer as part of God's plan, apart from any wrongdoing on their part. We must never become bitter because of what we go through or what any loved one must endure. By eating a portion of the tribute offering, Aaron and his sons are paying tribute of Yahweh.

"You will eat it in a holy place because it is your due [lit., statute] and your sons' due [lit., statute] from the offering by fire to Yahweh; for so I am commanded." [Lev. 10:13]

We have several words translated *laws, ordinances, commandments, statutes*. In order to get a grasp of these words, we need to examine the **Doctrine of the Word for Law, Commandments, Judgements, Statutes, Ordinances (NOT FINISHED YET!!)** The word found here is *chôq* (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*] and it is generally translated statutes and not really distinguished from the feminine form of the same word, which is *chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*]. However, I would think that there would be a difference between the two words. Both are related to the verb *châqâh* (חָקַה) [pronounced *khaw-KAWH*], which is translated *carve, cut*; and both have the verb cognate *châqaq* (חָקַק) [pronounced *khaw-KAK*], which means *to cut in, to decree, to inscribe*. Obviously, we will need to spend more time with all of these words. The word translated *due* is the word usually translated *statute* (this is also translated *portion*).

Moses is causing the family of Aaron to refocus upon Yahweh and His perfect justice to try to ward off the bitterness which would be natural in most people. *Fire-offering* is not a particular offering, but it is whatever has been placed on the brazen altar. Lev. 6:16 tells us that a portion of this tribute would be for Aaron and his sons to eat.

"However, the breast that is waved, you will eat in any clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you, because [it is] your due and your sons due; they are given [to you] from the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel." [Lev. 10:14]

The breast as being the portion for Aaron and his sons was previously mentioned Lev. 7:31, 34. However, this is the first place where the daughters are mentioned as having a portion of this. Obviously, it is possible that anyone in the family could feel bitterness toward Yahweh because of this incident, and we are warned in the New Testament: **See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness spring up causes trouble, and by means of it, many are defiled** (Heb. 12:15). What the entire family would partake in is a peace offering, which speaks primarily of peace between themselves and God. Yahweh is not in any way soliciting their forgiveness; members of their family given great responsibility have transgressed His Law; He is making it clear

that there is peace between Himself and the family of Aaron, that none of them need fear for their lives and that the transgression of Nadab and Abihu would not be imputed to anyone else.

"The thigh that is offered and the breast that is waved with the fire-offerings of fat before Yahweh; it is yours and your sons with you as a portion [lit., statute] of forever, as Yahweh has commanded." [Lev. 10:15]

The peace offerings belong to the priesthood. It is the priests who symbolize peace between Yahweh and man as they stand between Yahweh and man offerings sacrifices on behalf of themselves and the people of Israel. These sacrifices are not performed to placate God but rather to teach the gospel.

Moses and Aaron Speak

Now, Moses diligently inquired concerning the goat of the sin offering, and he saw [lit., behold] it was burned and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron who remained, saying, [Lev. 10:16]

The person offering the sin offering was to eat it (Lev. 6:25–26). This is a recognition of unknown sin in the life of the participants and the priest ate it as a sign of faith in his forgiveness. The goat is related to the scapegoat which takes upon itself the iniquity or guilt of the congregation. A priest will eat this goat to show his close association with the goat, all of which illustrates our Lord being the scapegoat for our sins and making atonement on our behalf. Another severe act of disobedience could mean the end of Aaron's family.

"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary since it is a holy of holies and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation to make a covering [or, atonement] for them before Yahweh? [Lev. 10:17]

All of the symbology had to ring true. The priest represented Yahweh, Who would die for the sins of the world. The goat represented Yahweh as the scapegoat for the sins of the congregation. The priest had to partake of this goat to be identified with the goat offered for the sins of the congregation.

"Look [lit., behold], its blood was not brought into the sanctuary towards the inside; you certainly should have eaten it [lit., in eating, you eat] in the sanctuary, as I had commanded." [Lev. 10:18]

If the blood was taken into the tabernacle, then the sin offering was not to be eaten (Lev. 6:30); and if it had not, then it was to have been eaten (Lev. 6:29). Moses is quite concerned about the proper procedure, realizing the dire consequences. He held Aaron responsible here and goes directly to Aaron concerning this matter.

Aaron's response to this would be of utmost importance, as two of his sons have just died the sin unto death for disobeying Yahweh. So let's examine a few of the translations below of what Aaron said to Moses:

The Amplified Bible

Behold, this very day in which they have [obediently] offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord, such [terrible calamities] have befallen me [and them]! If I [and they] had eaten the most holy sin offering today [humbled as we have been by the sin of our kinsmen and God's judgement upon them], would it have been acceptable in the sight of the Lord?

The Emphasized Bible

Lo! this very day when they had brought near their own sin-bearer, and their own ascending-sacrifice there befell me such things as these,—if then I had eaten of the sin-bearer this day would it have been well-pleasing i the eyes of Yahweh?

KJV

Behold, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and *if* I had eaten the sin offering today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

NASB	"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?"
NIV	"Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?"
NRSV	"See, today they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and yet such things as these have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been agreeable to the LORD?"
Young's Lit. Translation	'Lo, to-day they have brought near their sin-offering and their burnt-offering before Jehovah; the <i>things</i> like these meet me, yet I have eaten a sin-offering today; is it good in the eyes of Jehovah?'

This is obviously a difficult verse to render literally and to make sense from; so we will attend to the exegesis first, and then give a rendition and its interpretation:

The initial word, translated *behold*, *lo*, or *see* is a means of grabbing Moses attention and asking him to listen carefully to what will be said. The word for day (*yom*) is preceded by a definite article, means *this day, today*. The word for *offer* should really be *approach with* (as it was so translated in this chapter in vv. 4–5). *Approach* is in the Hiphil perfect, which is completed causative action. All the sons of Aaron were caused to approach by obeying God's Word in this offering. As we have seen, there is no word for *sin-offering* or for *sin-bearer*; that this must be clearly inferred by the context.

Yahweh is preceded by the prefixed preposition *lâmed*, which means *to, for* and direction is inferred. This preposition describes the direction of their approach. They are coming before God with their sacrifices. What we don't see in the English is that there is a play on words here. The waw consecutive (which is reasonably translated *yet* in these circumstances⁴⁴ followed by the 3rd person, feminine plural, Qal imperfect of *qâra`* (קָרָא) [pronounced *qaw-RAW*], which means *to befall, to come upon, to come out against*. *Qârav* means to approach in a positive sense and *qârâ`* means to have been overtaken or approached in a negative way. Translated this word as *being approached* is a bit of a fudge when it comes to general consistency, but it gets across the word play used here. The subject of that sentence is the word *`elleh* (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced *EEHL-leh*] and it means *these, these things*. The *bêyth* preposition indicates proximity. These things have befallen Aaron in his proximity.

We then have the simple word for *eaten* in the 1st person singular, Qal perfect, preceded by the waw conjunction, meaning *had I eaten the sin [-offering] this day...* This is followed by the *ha* (הָ) [pronounced *hah*] interrogative, which is used in a rhetorical question, expecting a negative answer.⁴⁵ In the translation I have given the literal along with the grammatical interpretation of this word *ha* which expects a negative answer. What the negative answer is expected to the verb in the 3rd masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *yâṭab* (יָטַב) [pronounced *yaw-TAB*] and it means *to make right, to make well, to be pleasing, to be good*.

And Aaron said to Moses, "See [lit., behold], this day they have [been caused to] approach(ed) [with] their sin [-offering] and their burnt offering before Yahweh; but yet these things have befallen [approached] me. Had I eaten the sin [-offering] today it [certainly] would [not] have been acceptable in the sight of Yahweh, [would it]?⁴⁶" [Lev. 10:19]

All the priests were to eat from this (Lev. 6:29); however, the circumstances were that, regardless of the wrongdoing, still Aaron's first two sons were slain before his eyes and the eyes of their brothers. The sin offering was one given which spoke of the forgiveness of unknown sins, or sins which became known as such after their commission (Lev. 4:1–2, 13–14). In this case, the sins committed were known and the ones who committed them were punished. Neither Aaron, nor his other sons, nor Israel participated in these sins and those that did were

⁴⁴ See Zodhiates *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, p.2283)

⁴⁵ BDB, p. 209

⁴⁶ **Or, would it have been acceptable in the sight of Yahweh [I don't think so]?**

removed like a cancer. The range of fire-offerings were observed; however, the unique circumstances surrounding Nadab and Abihu precluded Aaron and his sons from partaking of this sacrifice.

This is not unlike Hosea's condemnation of Ephraim in Hos. 9. Their sacrifices will not please Him; to them, the bread of misfortune; all of the ones who eat of it will be defiled (Hos. 9:4b). The sin offering was closely associated here with Nadab and Abihu so that all who would eat from it would be defiled as they were defiled.

And when Moses heard that, it was acceptable in his eyes. [Lev. 10:20]

Moses accepted Aaron's explanation.

Leviticus 11

Leviticus 11:1–47

Outline of Chapter 11:

Vv. 1–2	Introduction to Clean and Unclean Animals
Vv. 3–8	Clean and unclean mammals
Vv. 9–12	Clean and unclean water animals
Vv. 13–19	Clean and unclean flying animals
Vv. 20–25	Clean and unclean insects
Vv. 26–28	Clean and unclean land animals
Vv. 29–44	Clean and unclean animals in close contact with the earth
Vv. 45–47	Summation and reasoning

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: From a casual glance, it looks as though Lev. 11 will go fairly fast; we are examining animals for their *cleanness* or no. Primarily, these are dietary laws which blend into the spiritual life insofar as some things are strictly clean and some things are strictly unclean, as people are saved or not saved; you are filled with the Spirit or you are not; you are producing divine good or you are not. One detail which may occur to the reader is that much of this chapter is disputed when it comes to the translation of which animals are actually being spoken of in terms of being clean or unclean; why would God allow such a large portion of one chapter to become linguistically *lost*, so to speak? The answer is simple: we are not under the dietary laws of Israel so we do not need a lot more than the principals which we might gain here or there. For this reason, there will not be a lot of text accompanying each verse.

The concept of animals being clean or unclean did not originate with this chapter, but can be found back as far as Gen. 7:2.

Introduction to Clean and Unclean Animals

And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them: [Lev. 11:1]

This is one of the few times where it is said that Yahweh is speaking directly to Moses and Aaron. Aaron has weathered his loss dramatically well, which, in of itself, is a good sign concerning his spiritual life.

Now, this does make me ask—why is God speaking to both Moses and Aaron now and what are the circumstances? The biggest change in Aaron's life is that he has been consecrated into the priesthood (Lev. 8) and he has had offered up sacrifices for his many sins (Lev. 9). Also, his line has been cleansed as well (Lev. 10). Given these things, and given that Aaron, despite his many failings, is now a spiritual leader, God has apparently chosen to speak to him as well. If anything, this should give you pause, to thank God for His grace. When I look at Moses, and how great he was, I think, *there is no way; my life is so inferior to his*. On the other time, I look at Aaron, see him organizing the Jews to worship a calf, and think, *that is "a standard" I can meet*. This does not mean I aspire to be as crappy of a believer as Aaron is; I just know that I am. This gives me a great deal of hope.

"Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth [lit., 'This (is) the animal of which you may eat from among every beast which (is) upon the land]': [Lev. 11:2]

A heterosis [pronounced *HET-e-RO-sis*] is the exchange of one thing for another. Here we have the singular used when we would expect the plural. This is just a literary style which gives emphasis to what is being said.⁴⁷

For the rest of the chapter, God will enumerate what is clean and what is not. The purpose of these prohibitions was two-fold: (1) to illustrate certain spiritual truths and, (2) to help preserve the Jewish race from sickness and disease brought on by some of the unclean animals. Like the Sabbath, this was not something which was to be obeyed until the end of time. Mark 7:15, 17a, 18–23 reads: "There is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man." And when leaving the crowd, He had entered the house, His disciples questioned Him...and He said to them, "Are you too so uncomprehending? Do you not see that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heard, but into his stomach and goes out into the latrine?" (He [thereby] declared all foods clean. And He kept saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man, for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and the fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and whickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The notes on from *The Amplified Bible* are good here. God does not arbitrarily decree some law and then arbitrarily disregard it. When that which is complete has arrived, then the partial will be done away with (I Cor. 13:10). In His Word: new. He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is now to disappear. Nowe even the first had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the wroshiper perfect in conscience, since they only relate to food an drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the dispensation of the new order. He is the mediator of the new covenant. For the Law, since is contains a shadow of the good things to come, not the real image of things (Heb. 8:13 9:1, 9b–10, 15b 10:1). In the everyday Jewish life, even what they ate set them apart to their God, Yahweh. Today, this is not unilaterally done away with but recapitulated with greater force and meaning: Whatever then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). There are times that we will abstain from some foods because they are *unclean* at that time. I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, except to him who thinks any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food, your brother is distressed [or, distracted], you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. Therefore, do not let what is for you a good thing be slandered as evil. For the kindom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this serve Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the edification of one another. Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or [to do whatever] by which your brother stumbles (Rom. 14:14–21). So if eating steak around a vegetarian causes him to stumble or obscures the issue, refrain from steak. It is unclean in that instance. If you use your freedom as a Christian to, for instance, create a lot of wasteful trash and flaunt this before an environmentalist, you are not furthering the cause of Christ, you are causing this person to stumble by raising false issues. In this way, we are subject to a higher law, one greater than that presented here in the book of Leviticus. Our Lord said, "Do not presume that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17). I should point out that this is not a small issue. Not only does Paul spend most of a chapter on this in Romans 14, but he covers the same ground again in I Cor. 8:7–13.

I will let you determine how you are going to handle things when some lame believer comes up to you and tells you tath what you are doing is causing him to stumble; however, the point that is being taught here is that you do not allow false issues to crop up and cloud the gospel of God. You do not give the unbeliever a dissertation on every doctrine that you know because he is going to disagree with all or most of it. What the unbeliever needs is the gospel and all otehr peripheral issues, real or imaginary, should be pushed aside.

⁴⁷ To give you an idea: Bullinger devotes over twenty pages to heterosis and remarks on p. 524: *In most of these cases, the figure is correctly rendered in the A.V., so that we need only give a few examples [Emphasis mine] which are there passed over.*

Clean and Unclean Mammals

Deut. 14:3–8

""Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven footed, chews the cud among the animals, you may eat it. [Lev. 11:3]

V. 3 give us a generalization. The quadrupeds which have hooves which are split and chew the cud, and these are the acceptable ones in the diet.

""However, you will not eat the following [lit., these] from among those that chew the cud or part the hoof: the camel because it chew the cud, but does not part the hoof—it is unclean to you. [Lev. 11:4]

The camel is one of the wonders of the desert. It can carry as much as 400 lbs (although a conscientious owner would not permit but half that for a longer desert expedition) and they can go, if absolutely necessary, several days without water (although, this is not ideal). They can averages almost 30 miles a day, although a camel with a rider only can go over 100 miles in 13 hours (but not every single day).⁴⁸ They hooves are quite unusual, being broad cushions which function well on sand, gravel and rock. It is because of these feet, they are considered unclean.

""And the hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof—it is unclean to you. [Lev. 11:5]

The RSV and the NRSV render this as a *rock badger*; however, many of these animals are difficult to track down, as their names show up but once or twice in the Old Testament (case in point, the hyrax here and Deut. 14:7 Psalm 104:18 Prov. 30:26). The hyrax does not chew its cud, but chews with a cross-wise motion, making it appear as though it is ruminating. They are rock dwellers (with the exception of a species which has made its home in the trees in the tropical forest). They are about the size of a rabbit, but much different in appearance, classified near the elephants. They are a grey-brown vegetarians and the reason for their being forbidden as food is not altogether clear (and, again, we could have the name wrong). They are considered tough and dry by Arabs who eat them, although they are hunted regularly in Africa. The Syrian hyrax can still be found today in Upper Galilee.⁴⁹

""And the hare because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof; it is unclean to you. [Lev. 11:6]

According to ZPEB, Vol. 3, p. 33, the hare is known to practice *refection*; this is when the hare passes certain droppings of a different texture which are immediately eaten, so he appears to be chewing without taking greens into his mouth. This is so that the digestive bacteria gets another shot at the more indigestible vegetable matter which can be better assimilated this second time. Even though we think of *chewing the cud* as somewhat different (as it does not elave the animal's body); what is occurring here is the same principle. However, we actually do not know what kind of animal is found here. The Hebrew word for this animal does not necessarily correspond to the English hare.⁵⁰

""And the swine [pig] because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you. [Lev. 11:7]

The most well-known of the unclean animals is the pig. These animals were domesticated perhaps 1000 years prior to the time of writing of Leviticus throughout Greece, Hungary, Egypt and Mesopotamia. They were used for their skins and bristles and for food in the ancient world (along with some specialized uses in some countries);

⁴⁸ This information has come out of the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, p. 697 of Vol. 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 937, Vol. 1.

⁵⁰ Scofield Bible, p. 140.

but today they are used almost entirely for food. The pig is a potential carrier of several dangerous diseases, including trichinosis, caused by a tape worm which can cause great pain and even death to man and animal. Through proper preparation, this can be totally avoided in today's world; but then, this was not near as preventable. Also, pigs are omnivorous scavengers and will dig things up and eat them, passing on disease this way. Modern farming methods also preclude this as a problem today. Pigs are mentioned in Prov. 11:22 Isa. 65:66 Matt. 7:6 8:30, most of these references concern their uncleanness.⁵¹

""You will not eat of their flesh and you will not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

[Lev. 11:8]

These animals were obviously more common in the land of Canaan and the Israelites would have more opportunities to be in close association with them. One of the items which will come to mind is our responsibilities as Christians. When one studies the Old Testament, one tends to become a bit off balance if they have not been grounded in the New. We gain great understanding and can experience great spiritual growth from our examination of the Old Testament, as long as we understand that portions of it no longer apply. I Cor. 10:18–33 covers matters of diet. To give you a quick overview, what we eat today is no longer a matter of cleanness and uncleanness as it was to the Israelites. That helped preserve the race and illustrate the spiritual truth of cleanness and uncleanness; however, today, **all things are lawful** (I Cor. 11:23—the context here is food, lest you take this portion of the verse and run with it). However, there are circumstances where we choose not to eat something which is legitimate for us to eat, but causes someone else to be offended. As we are to be all things to all men, there are activities and choices that we as mature Christians will make that restrict what we eat and what we do, not because we are sinning, but because these things could seriously offend the unbeliever. As an illustration, I personally recycle a lot of my trash. It is partially because of the way I was raised and partially because it is well-thought of to do so; it is not Biblical and it is not divine good (except when performed in the Spirit); it is essentially a neutral action. However, the opposite tact of great waste can, under certain circumstances, cause the very *socially aware* unbeliever to stumble. When dealing with food, there would be circumstances when eating meat, although completely lawful, might not be expedient; or, in the case quoted, where eating pig would be ill-advised, although it is lawful for us to do so. **All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor** (I Cor. 11:23–24).

Clean and Unclean Water Animals

Deut. 14:9–10

""The following [lit., these] you may eat: from all that are in the waters, everything in it that has fins and scales in the waters, whether in the seas or in the rivers—you may eat them. [Lev. 11:9]

As a person who enjoys fish, I am glad to see that fish are considered to be clean.

""But anything that does not have fins and scales in the seas or in the rivers of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters—they are a detestable thing to you. [Lev. 11:10]

Not being a person who is fond of oysters, scallops or clams and being neutral concerning shrimp, I personally have no problems with this verse. However, we, as Christians, are allowed to eat of these unclean foods today.

""They shall remain a detestable thing to you; you will not eat their flesh and their carcasses you will consider detestable. [Lev. 11:11]

I am unfamiliar with diseases carried by these other creatures.

⁵¹ All of this from ZEPB, Vol. 5, p. 548.

""Everything that has not fins and scales in the waters [is] a detestable thing to you. [Lev. 11:12]

There are a couple of words here that perhaps we should examine in this chapter. Shâqats (שָׂקַט) [pronounced *shaw-KATS*] is found only in Lev. 1:11, 13, 43 20:25 Deut. 7:26 Psalm 22:24. It is variously translated as *detest*, *despised*, *is an abomination to you*. Anyone of these are good translations, the first two being preferred for a more uniform translation as they better fit both the passages in and out of Lev. 11.

The corresponding noun conjugate is shekets (שֶׁקֶט) [pronounced *she-KETZ*] and it is *an abomination, a detestable thing*. Both renders are perfectly good, although the latter for reasons of uniformity and to tie it to its verb cognate would be preferable.

Our next category to examine are the birds and the things which fly:

Clean and Unclean Flying Animals

Deut. 14:11–20

""And these you will detest: among the flying creatures, [the following] will not be eaten; they [are] detestable things: the eagle, the ossifrage [or, black vulture] and the osprey [or, bearded vulture]; [Lev. 11:13]

When examining these passages, we must keep a balance in our interpretation. First of all, the names of these birds and other animals were well-known to the Jews of that day, although we today can be only certain of a handful of the various species mentioned. We are not to find hidden meaning in the name of each and every bird. However, we are to draw general conclusions from the standpoint of the spiritual impact of this chapter just as well as the dietary and sanitary implications.

ʿŌwph (עוֹפ) [pronounced *ofe*] collectively stands for that which flies, and, although it is used primarily for birds, its use can include bats and flying insects.

The eagle is neshet (נֶשֶׁת) [pronounced *NEH-she*], a word which stands for both eagles and vultures in the Hebrew. Specifically a vulture is referred to in Micah 1:16, where Yahweh has admonished, **"Make yourselves as bald as an eagle"**; a reference to the Griffon vulture, whose head appears bald from distance, but is covered with a short, creamy down.⁵² There is an ancient proverb quoted in the Talmud, which reads a vulture in Babylon can see a carcass in Palestine. The corresponding Greek word also stands for both types of birds and specifically for the vulture in Matt. 24:28. According to ZPEB, other than naturalists trained in this area, few people today can distinguish between the birds, especially when viewed from a distance. Even as an unclean bird, the eagle is represented generally as a noble creature in the Bible (Ex. 19:4 Jer. 49:22).

An ossifrage is likely the kind of vulture which prays on the marrow once the flesh has been picked off a carcass. The root word means *breaker*; here, possibly of bones. Three species of vultures, still found in Palestine, are known for this. Two black vultures are collectively meant by this term and the third species is found below:

The *osprey* (as found in the KJV and others) is probably not the correct designation for this bird, but the *bearded vulture* instead. The Hebrew word comes from the word *goat* and therefore possibly means *bearded*. To give you an idea as to the differences of opinion, I have put together a chart listed several translations and their renderings of these various birds. See **Bird Chart—not finished yet!!**

""The kite, the species of falcon⁵³ [lit., the falcon, according to its kind]; [Lev. 11:14]

⁵² ZPEB, Vol. 2, p. 176.

⁵³ Several Bibles treat this phrase in different ways; I took this from *The Amplified Bible*, as it sounds updated, although it is not entirely literal.

To my knowledge, only one author, B. R. Driver, has written the only book dealing specifically with the classification of birds in the Bible; *Birds in the OT; 1 Birds in Law*, ©1955. According to ZPEG, even Driver's extensive study is not absolutely conclusive. For your edification, in ZPEG, Vol. 4, p. 555, there is a chart which compares some of the Hebrew words with the KJV, RSV and with Driver's conclusions.

The first bird in this verse is uncertain, but Driver guesses it is a kite, a bird of prey. The falcon is a generic term and it means *keen-sighted*. It could refer to a hawk, falcon or a kite.

"Every species of raven [lit., every raven according to its kind]; [Lev. 11:15]

To be honest, I don't grasp why we have the addition of the words *according to its kind*. The raven is one of the birds that we are certain about. The use of *raven* in SOS 5:11 (*black as a raven*) and Prov. 30:17 (where it speaks of the eye being picked out by ravens) confirms this. ZPEG goes into a fair amount of detail about the raven and the crow family, but suffice to say that the raven is not unclean because there is something inherently evil about it. It simply eats flesh of dead animals and contact with the dead makes one unclean. God did use the raven to bring food to Elijah and Noah sent out a raven from the ark to search for dry land.

"And the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the species of hawk [lit., the hawk, according to its kind]; [Lev. 11:16]

Four different Hebrew words are translated by the English *ostrich*. ZPEG claims that this is one place where it probably is not an ostrich because they were eaten generally by most ancient peoples and this likely included the Israelites. Rotherham says in the footnote for ostrich *daughter of a doleful cry*.⁵⁴ ZPEG claims that most authorities regard the nighthawk as a type of owl. Driver rejects *sea gull* as the proper translation, believing it to be a *long-eared owl* because Driver hypothesizes that the list is of birds of prey, which the gull is not. Cansdale (who wrote the article in ZPEG) points out that owls make up a very small and innocuous population which would not likely receive a separate listing; but the gulls are numerous in the Palestine area, with ten true gulls and another eight members of the gull family. Most gulls are scavengers, and this would label them unclean. BDB takes the Hebrew word for hawk as a general word for small birds of prey.

"And the owl, the cormorant, the great owl; [Lev. 11:17]

The Emphasized Bible names these birds as the pelican, gannet and bittern. Rotherham mentions that the gannet casts itself off of rocks to dive into the water after its prey.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Driver names quite a number of owls here, to which ZPEG objects to since they don't believe there was enough contact with owls to warrant the prohibition, claiming that some of these owls were pretty much unknown to the desert travelers. This objection is not necessarily valid, as these are the Words of God, not of some nomads wandering through the desert, so there may have been several owls named as unclean. The owl found here is perhaps the most common to the desert area.

Cansdale, in ZPEG Vol. 1, pp. 976–7, discusses the pros and cons to the translation *cormorant* in more detail than we need to look at here. If it is the cormorant, they have absolutely filthy community nests. RSV translates the last bird as an ibis and Driver and ZPEG disagree.

The NASB footnotes the great owl as being the great horned owl.

"And the water hen, the pelican, the vulture; [Lev. 11:18]

The KJV reads: *and the swan, and the pelican and the gier-eagle*. The water swan was a plant eating bird, so that is probably not the rendering of the first bird in this verse; however, we do not know what it actually is. The

⁵⁴ *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 135

⁵⁵ *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 135.

opinions range from water hen, swan, horned owl, Porphyrio to the Ibis. Driver renders *pelican* as a type of owl here; however, the pelican sounds plenty unclean to me; they feed their young partially regurgitated food from their mouths. Yuk.

""And the stork, the species of heron [the heron, according to its kind], the hoopoe and the bat.
[Lev. 11:19]

The KJV reads: *And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.* Because storks consist often on a diet of frogs and eat in muddy places, they are an unclean bird. Herons are found in the land of Canaan, but the translation here is disputed. Only the KJV renders the third bird of this verse as *lapwing*. It is very likely a hoopoe [pronounced *HOO-poo*], which, according to ZPEB, *hunts insects in all sorts of unsavory places, taking many dung and other beetles, and its nest gets into the most unsanitary condition.*⁵⁶ The translation *bats* is generally accepted (although Rotherham suggests *night-bird* in his footnote); their build-up of guano where they roost makes them unclean to me. There are some inhabitants of some countries which do eat bat.

Clean and Unclean Insects

""All winged insects [lit., all thriving things with wings] that go upon all fours are an abomination to you. [Lev. 11:20]

I do not have an explanation for this verse, even by giving an alternate translation of *all winged swarming things that go upon all fours*, except that perhaps *go upon all fours* is an expression meaning spends a lot of its time walking like a quadruped, rather than to the specific number of legs.

""Yet those you may eat among the winged insects [lit. all thriving things with wings] that go on all fours which do not have⁵⁷ bending legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth.
[Lev. 11:21]

Personally, I really didn't need to hear of any exceptions here. I don't know which kind of insects we are speaking of here nor do I really want to know.

""Of the following [lit., them] you may eat: the locust, according to its kind, the bald locust, according to its kind, the cricket, according to its kind, and the grasshopper according to its kind.
[Lev. 11:22]

I've never perceived myself as a finicky eater; however these do not interest me in the least. However, this was possibly a favorite of John the baptizer's (Matt. 3:4).⁵⁸

""But all [other] winged insects [lit., thriving things with wings] which [have] four feet are an abomination to you. [Lev. 11:23]

Here, the explanation of *four feet* is simple and different from v. 20: the hind legs of the insect are used for jumping and do not have the equivalent of a foot attached to them (that is, a joint and then a foot). To give you the heebie jeebies, let me quote from *The Bible Almanac*, p. 240: *For every star you can see in the sky on a clear night, scientists have estimated that there are 100 kinds of insects—a total of over 800,000 kinds.* Way too many.

""And by these you will become unclean; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening. [Lev. 11:24]

⁵⁶ ZPEB, Vol. 3, pp. 197–198.

⁵⁷ According to Rotherham, this is read *such as have legs upon their feet* but it is written as *have not*.

⁵⁸ Matt. 3:4 could refer to the locust bean as well.

Just as we are polluted by one tiny sin, the Israelites were polluted when they came into contact with any of these animals when dead. Their being unclean and their death together tie an act of uncleanness to death (whether it be eternal separation from God or temporal spiritual death).

""And whoever carries any part of their carcass will wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 11:25]

The animals mentioned, generally because of their eating habits, were considered unclean. They often carried diseases while alive and these sometimes killed them. Therefore, avoidance of these animals in terms of food and in terms of simple human contact was to be avoided and this preserved the Israelites for a great many diseases. These laws are both ceremonial and protectional.

Clean and Unclean Land Animals

""Every animal which parts the hoof but is not cloven-footed and does not chew the cud is unclean to you; everyone who touches them will be unclean. [Lev. 11:26]

These have already been enumerated at the beginning of this chapter.

""And all that go on their paws among the animals that go on all fours are unclean to you, whoever touches their carcass will be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 11:27]

This repeats the similar prohibition concerning insects.

""And he who carries their carcass will wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you. [Lev. 11:28]

The association with that which is unclean makes that person unclean.

Clean and Unclean Animals in Close Contact with the Earth

""And these are unclean to you among the thriving things that thrive upon [or, against] the earth: the weasel, the mouse, the great lizard according to its kind. [Lev. 11:29]

The NASB translates this as **the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard [or, horn-tailed lizard]**. Although I do not have a desire to eat either of the former two, when I first went to Costa Rica, one of the items for discussion was raising iguanas on a large scale for meat, as opposed to cattle. This was not an item for discussion among the Israelites, however.

""The gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. [Lev. 11:30]

Possibly these animals are unclean due to their close association with the earth. The land crocodile is only a wild guess on the part of the translators.

""These are unclean to you among all that swarm; whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening. [Lev. 11:31]

Again, this is ceremonial, illustrating that contact with sin pollutes the entire person. There is no such thing as someone being only a little out of fellowship because the sin they committed was relatively inconsequential. All sins place out out of God's fellowship.

""And anything upon which any of them falls when they are dead will be unclean, whether it is an article of wood or a garment or skin or a sack, any vessel that is used for any purpose [or, any article with which work is done] into water it must be put and it will be unclean until the evening—then it will be clean. [Lev. 11:32]

The time element concerns some. At that point in time, our Lord had not come to die for our sins. Our sins were only covered until then when God could fully forgive us and still retain His perfect righteousness. So the uncleanness which man suffered from would not be truly forgiven until our Lord came.

""And any earthen vessel which falls from them into its midst, all that is in it will be unclean and you will break it. [Lev. 11:33]

Here, the unclean animals have fallen into the vessel, causing it to become completely unclean. Their earthenware was porous, so it was capable of absorbing uncleanness, from a practical standpoint of bacteria, which washing, even scouring, would not remove. Freeman points out that this is why earthen vessels used in the sacrificial offerings were also destroyed, so that no unclean thing would be placed in them.

""Any of the food which may be eaten upon which may come [these] waters will be unclean and all drink which may be drunk from every such vessel will be unclean. [Ex. 25:34]

This is food which has come into contact with that which is unclean. This protected the Israelites from many infectious diseases for many years.

""And everything upon which falls any part of their carcass upon it will be unclean, whether oven or stoves, it will be broken in pieces; they are unclean and they are unclean to you. [Lev. 11:35]

The stove here is a hearth used to support two pots, and thereby economize the flame.⁵⁹ What God says to us throughout all of this is our contact with that which is unclean destroys our spiritual life and renders it worthless. All sin takes us out of fellowship. Our running with the fast crowd, the criminal element, can render our spiritual life worthless. Our refusal to cleanse ourselves renders our spiritual life worthless.

""Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern holding [lit., of a gathering of] water will be clean but whatever touches their carcass will be unclean. [Lev. 11:36]

In order to settle the dryer areas of Palestine, the Jews would use a waterproof sealant, like a plaster, to line cisterns which were dug in the ground to collect water. In case you don't quite follow this particular verse, when a person became unclean, he would have to clean himself. This means coming in contact with the water at a spring or a cistern. This did not make the spring unclean and thereby making them unclean. That is a dog chasing its tail. It is the water of the Word and the water of the Holy Spirit which cleanses us. By cleansing us, neither becomes unclean.

""And if any part of the carcass falls upon any seed for sowing, that is to be sown, it is clean. [Lev. 11:37]

There are two parts to this; a seed coming into contact with that which is unclean is highly unlikely to carry any disease or uncleanness of any sort into its eventual fruit. That is the practical view, the protection which God spread over Israel. On the symbolic side, our bodies of corruption when raised are raised free of the old sin nature. **But some one will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. However, God gives it a body just as He desired, and to each of the seeds, a body of its own...so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a**

⁵⁹ NASB, p. 110 and Freeman, p. 90.

perishable [body]; it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a soulless body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a soulless body, then there is also a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:35–38, 42–44).

""But if water is put on the seed and any part of the carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.
[Lev. 11:38]

Here we have a germinating seed. This is analogous to the newborn Christian; as soon as one sins after the new birth, they are corrupt until they rebound (name their sins to God).

""And if any animal dies of which you may eat, he who touches its carcass will be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 11:39]

Contact with sin in many of its forms makes us unclean. Even contact with Christians who are continually out of fellowship causes us to be unclean (in fact, separation is primarily taught as something which is applied to fellow believers as opposed to unbelievers who sin).

""And he who eats of its carcass will wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; he also who carries the carcass will wash his clothes and he is unclean until the evening. [Lev. 11:40]

We are unclean when in touch with spiritual death, which this verse illustrates. There does not appear to be sinfulness, per se, associated with the eating of the carcass of these things which thrive in close contact with the earth; just a temporary uncleanness; however, v. 42 clears up that misconception. This is why it is absolutely necessary to view a verse in context.

""And every thriving thing that thrives upon [or, against] the earth is an abomination; it will not be eaten. [Lev. 11:41]

In this verse, as well as in v. 29, we have the Qal participle of *shârats* (שָׂרָץ) [pronounced *shaw-RATS*], which is translated *creeping*; however this is used of fish and other aquatic creatures (Gen. 1:21), animals which are on the earth (Gen. 8:17), frogs which breed in the waters (Ex. 8:3), and even for mankind (Gen. 9:7). In all of these passages the key seems to be a population increase, if not an explosion. Gen. 1:21a reads: *And God created the great sea creatures, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed [or, the waters brought forth abundantly] after their kind...* *Infest* is a good word for this, except that it carries with it a negative connotation and it will be difficult to come up with a similar noun cognate in order to preserve continuity. *Thrive* is an excellent rendering of this, as it does not connote over-population, crowding, or anything negative; and it can be made into the adjective *thriving*. The word *permeate* seems to indicate too much or too concentrated of a population; and the words *teem* and *teeming* are wonderful translations, but they sound a bit archaic. The noun cognate for this verb is the very similar *sherets* (שָׂרֵץ) [pronounced *SHEH-rets*] and can be rendered *thriving thing*, *teeming thing*; although many Bibles go with *swarming thing*, *creeping thing*. The connotation is an animal in very close contact with the earth in this context due to the preposition (and the nearby Lev. 11:29); however, we cannot infer this in Gen. 1:20–21 because we do not have anything in close contact with the earth. This is why I have taken the translation which you see. The point of much of this is just to identify the creatures named in this verse, which would be a quotation from Lev. 1:29–30.

""[That is] whatever, goes on its belly and whatever goes on all fours or whatever has many feet; all the thriving things that thrive upon [or, against] the earth—you will not eat them, for they [are] detestable. [Lev. 11:42]

This does not repeat vv. 29–30, but it sums up this portion of God's Word.

""You will not make yourselves [lit., your souls] detestable with any thriving thing that thrives and you will not defile yourselves with them, so that you do not become unclean; [Lev. 11:43]

In context, defile or making oneself detestable includes eating an animal which comes in close contact with the earth, or touching the carcass of one of them. So that v. 41 was not taken out of context as permissive, v. 43 was added.

""For I [am] Yahweh, your God. Set yourself apart [or, consecrate yourselves] therefore and become set apart [or, holy] for I am set apart [holy]; you will not defile yourselves with any thriving thing that moves upon [or, against] the earth. [Lev. 11:44]

The analogy here is that God is above the earth, God is separate from the earth; the animals which are in close contact with the ground, which scurry across the earth, are ceremonial unclean in their close contact with the earth, which is the devil's world now; therefore, the Jews were not to come into close contact with those animals. Association with uncleanness makes them unclean. God is perfect, God is not unclean, God is holy and God is above all of the earth. The Jews are to be associated with a holy God and not with the things of the earth. This is a matter of what all of this symbolizes, as well as a matter of remaining free of diseases.

Summation and Reasoning

""For I am Yahweh Who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; you will therefore be set apart [or, holy] for I am set apart [or, holy]. [Lev. 11:45]

The word *holy* occurs more often in the book of Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible. In every aspect of the lives of the children of Israel, they were to exhibit holiness, being set apart to Yahweh. It was a mutual situation. Yahweh had chosen them from among all of the peoples of the earth and Yahweh had set Himself apart to them as their God, unique, inasmuch as He is the True God of the Universe.

Another running theme found in the book of Leviticus is *I am Yahweh Who brought you out of the land of Egypt*. This phrase occurs sixty times throughout the Old Testament and nine of these times are in Leviticus. This reinforces the reciprocal nature of the relationship of the Jews and Yahweh. God initiated and the Jews were to respond.

God is closely identified with the Jews. He reminds them that it was He Who brought them out of Egypt, another reason to be set apart from the world. It was He who pulled us out of the world when we believed in Him and he cleansed us with His blood. Paul wrote⁶⁰: **"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "Furthermore, do not touch what is unclean and I will embrace you."** (II Cor. 6:17 Isa. 52:11) We are closely identified with the one Who took us out of the land of Egypt, out of bondage to slavery and to this world. Peter writes, **But like the Holy One Who called you, be set apart [holy] yourselves also in all behavior; because it is written, You will be holy for I Am holy** (I Peter 1:15–16).

""This is the law pertaining to the beast and the bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that thrives upon [or, against] the earth... [Lev. 11:46]

This is a summation of this chapter in the last two verse.

""...to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten."" [Lev. 11:47]

God quotes Himself in Lev. 20:25–26, where Moses has written, **"You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you will not make your souls detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that thrives upon the ground, which I have separated for you as**

⁶⁰ As an aside, it appears as though the first half of the verse is not a direct quote from anything, but a summary of Exodus and the second part of the verse is a summary of the book of Leviticus.

unclean. Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

Leviticus 12

Leviticus 12:1–8

Outline of Chapter 12:

- Vv. 1–5 **The woman's uncleanness**
- Vv. 6–8 **Ceremonial purification of the woman**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Like the last chapter, this chapter is a self-contained unit. It deals with the the uncleanness of women.

The Woman's Uncleanness

The Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 12:1]

The majority of the verse in Leviticus are direct quotes from God to Moses.

"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, 'When a woman conceives [lit., has been caused to sow] and bears a male [child], then [lit., and] she will be unclean for seven days. (In [the] day of impurity of her menstruation, she remains unclean)." [Lev. 12:2]

This verse is a little difficult, as several Bibles throw in menstruation here and others leave it out entirely. The first verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *zâra'* (זָרָה) [pronounced *zaw-RAH*], a word used *for planting seeds*, as we find it poetically used when Yahweh plants Israel in the land (Hos. 2:23); however, it is usually used in its common meaning *sowing [seed]* (Gen. 47:23 Lev. 25:22); however, it can be used for *sowing iniquity* (Prov. 22:8). Here, in the causative stem, it can be reasonably rendered *conceive*.

The second phrase begins with the *bêyth* conjunction, which simply means *in*. It is followed by the construct of *yom*, the word for *day*. This is followed by the construct of *nîdâh* (נִדָּה) [pronounced *nid-DAWH*] and it means *impurity*, as in *abhorrent, shunned*⁶¹ and this is a word associated with menstruation (see Lev. 15:19–20, 24–26 Ezek. 18:6) and it is very likely that we could translate it *menstruation*. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *dâwâh* (דָּוָה) [pronounced *dawh-VAWH*] and it is a word found only one time in the Old Testament and that is here. Luckily, we have an adjective, *dâweh* (דָּוֶה) [pronounced *daw-WEH*, or, quite possibly *daw-WAY*] which is also a word associated with *menstruation*. It is found in Lev. 15:33 **20:18** Isa. 30:22 Lam. 1:13 5:17. *Her* is the feminine suffix of this word. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of a verb found twice in this verse, *ṭâmê'* (טָמֵא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*], the word for ceremonial uncleanness. When used of childbirth, it is in the Qal perfect, meaning it is seen as an entire finished process, whereas the second time it is used, it is in the imperfect, meaning that we have a continuing process; together they aptly describe childbirth as verses menstruation when it comes to uncleanness. I have translated the imperfect as *remains unclean*. Uncleanness due to menstruation will be covered in more detail in Lev. 15:19–24.

We get a better focus upon ceremonial uncleanness here. Every woman menstruates and God has commanded women from the dawn of time to bear children; so these things are not wrong. However, menstruation is closely associated with blood, which is unclean when it is the blood of something of this earth; and child birth makes a woman unclean because (1) she bleeds somewhat during childbirth, and (2) she has brought another old sin nature

⁶¹ From whence we get the often used KJV rendering *separation*

into the world. Neither is an act of sin, nor is the woman necessarily out of fellowship during either of these times (although, often she is); but these things make her ceremonially unclean and not unclean due to sinfulness.

"And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin will be circumcised. [Lev. 12:3]

This verse seems to indicate that the last sentence in v. 2 is parenthetical, which is why several translators have given v. 2 as one sentence, linking the two sentences with *as* or *as when*, which words are not found. *Circumcision* is in the Nlphal, which is the passive stem, which is what we would expect.

"For 33 days she will remain in the blood of her purification; she will not touch any set-apart [or, holy] thing and she will not go into the sacred place until the completion of [the] days of her purification. [Lev. 12:4]

This is a fairly literal rendering of v. 4. Because she has brought an unclean thing into the world (a child with an old sin nature—and notice that it is a male-child), she first sees that the child is set apart to God through circumcision, but she remains ceremonially unclean for 33 days.

"But if she bears a female child, she will be unclean two weeks as in her menstruation and she will remain in the blood of her purifying 66 days. [Lev. 12:5]

First what should be mentioned is the hypallage [pronounced *hy-PAL-la-gee*] which is found in this verse. Hypallage means *interchange*. In this verse, what is in the construct should not be and what is not, should. That is, this should not read *in the blood of her purifying* but *in her purification from blood*. Such an interchange draws attention to what is really said. This emphasizes that it is the blood of *man* which makes the woman unclean.

This verse is interesting; when bearing a male-child, she is unclean for one week and she remains in her blood of purification for 33 days and this is all doubled for a female child. The reason for this is that when a woman brought a female child into the world, the child had an old sin nature and it could not be Messiah. When a woman brought a male child into the world, 99.9999999999% of the time the child had an old sin nature and was not Messiah; but the hope was always there that the child would be the promised one.

The woman remaining in the blood of her purification has to do with refraining from going to the tabernacle. She remains in this state until the end of the 33 or 66 days and then she goes to the tabernacle, as is outlined below.

Ceremonial Purification of the Woman

"And when the completion of the days of her purifying, whether for a son or for a daughter, she will bring a lamb—a year old—for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering to the door of the tent of meeting to the priest. [Lev. 12:6]

The burnt offering is our Lord dying for our sins on the cross and the sin offering is for the forgiveness of sin.

"And he will approach with it before the face of Yahweh and make a covering [or, atonement] for her; then [lit., and] she is cleansed from the flow [lit. fountain] of her blood; this is the law for her giving birth, with regards to the male or the female. [Lev. 12:7]

I hope that someone who is reading or listening to this, noticing how different this text is from the many translations, would put together a modern English literal translation, with an eye toward consistency and accuracy, regardless whether a verse seems to make sense or not. This would be a phenomenal tool in the hands of the many pastors who do not have a full grasp of the languages. Owen's word-by-word *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* is close to what needs to be done, but it is definitely not consistent, nor is it always literal.

""However, if she cannot afford [lit., her hand cannot attain sufficiency of] a lamb, then she will take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering and the priest will make a covering [or, atonement] over her and she will be clean.""

[Lev. 12:8]

Now let's see if any of this sounds familiar: **And when eight days were completed so as to circumcise Him, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it stands written in the Law of the Lord: "Every male that opens the womb will be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord: "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."** (Luke 2:21–24). Note that both Joseph and Mary both knew the Law and obeyed it. Note that they were also poor at this time, which is why they did not offer a lamb.

God never places in our way a hinderance to our spiritual life due to lack of money. I recall being very poor, living in a half of a duplex recently abandoned by a motorcycle gang, replete with oil spots throughout because of their motorcycles being driven through the front door and out the back (they set up ramps); and God provided me with more than enough doctrine and the time with which to study. **"If any man is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God..."** (John 7:17).

Leviticus 13

Leviticus 13:1–59

Outline of Chapter 13:

- Vv. 1–8 **Skin disorders in general and their preliminary symptoms**
- Vv. 9–17 **Skin disorders and raw flesh**
- Vv. 18–23 **Skin disorders and boils**
- Vv. 24–28 **Skin disorders and burns**
- Vv. 29–46 **Skin disorders and the head**
- Vv. 47–59 **Surface disorders and organic-based clothing**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 2 **Skin Disorders and Indwelling Sin**

Introduction: Lev. 13 might go quickly in terms of reading or listening; however, it was a long haul in terms of actually writing this. There are a lot of words that, while not peculiar to this chapter, their meanings were difficult to ascertain, many present-day translations being of limited help. I am certain that because so many people considered Leviticus to be repetitious and hard to read that perhaps they put their weakest translators on the job. I don't know; but often the English words found in this chapter do not coincide with their incidence outside this chapter (and the same could be said for much of Leviticus).

This particular chapter deals with various skin disorders and epidermal diseases, some of which are communicable. There are several words which occur over and over in this chapter and are often mistranslated or translated in such a way that one does not recognize that they are found in a different context elsewhere in the Bible. I will deal with several of these words almost immediately within the first few verses of this chapter. Leprosy is the Hebrew word *tsâra'ath* (טַרְאָת) [pronounced *tsaw-RAH-gahth*] found primarily here and Lev. 14. Other than its twenty appearances in these two chapters, it is only found in six more places in the Bible (Deut. 24:5 2Kings 5:3, 6–7, 27 2Chron. 19). The corresponding verb is *tsâra'* (טַרַּע) [pronounced *tsah-RAWG*] found more often throughout the Bible, several times in the next two chapters, and in Ex. 4:6 Num. 5:2 12:10 2Sam. 3:29 2Kings 5:1, 11, 27 7:3, 8 15:5 2Chron. 26:20–21, 23. Even though it is a verb, it occurs only in the Qal and Puel participles and acts like an adjective in most, if not all, of those passages.

It appears to refer to skin diseases which spread and/or are infectious, but not exclusively to leprosy (Hansen's disease). Unlike one author who said that the Jews would not understand the concept of infectious, that may or may not be true, but that is not the issue here, as Yahweh dictated this portion of the Bible to Moses and Yahweh discovered infectious skin disorders in eternity past. We know that Yahweh understood this because the most common prescription for leprosy was quarantine of the wound (Lev. 13:4, 11, 31) and/or the patient (v. 26) and/or anything which might carry the disease (vv. 50, 54). Because of the specificity of the disease leprosy, this word would be a superset of the disease leprosy; that is, leprosy would be one of the skin disorders mentioned. This is confirmed by some of these passages reveal an atypical quick recovery from the disease in question (vv. 14–16, for instance).

We get the word leprosy from the Greek *lepra*, which was used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. It was in 1873 or 1874 that the Norwegian G. Armauer Hansen discovered the bacillus he named *myobacterium leprai*, which was present in most cases of leprosy. Due to his discoveries, it is more often called Hansen's disease today.

Leprosy proper occurs in two forms, one an infectious spreading disease and the other is a more benign form. Both begin with a patch of skin which is discolored, often on the face, and the infected area may be impervious to pain, due to possibly nerve damage. The more destructive of the two leprosy, lepromatous, can spread quickly in all directions and spongy, tumorous growths can appear on the epidermis. The disease destroys the flesh on the hands and feet, causing them to become deformed and it into the body and affects various organs.

An untreated case of leprosy last as long as twenty years, the person eventually dying of the disease itself or another infection which attacks the weakened body. The less destructive leprosy, tuberculoid, can eventually spread to several discolored areas on the person, recognizable usually by a low ridge around the infected area. Even an untreated case can heal within 1–3 years. Although we are not given many case histories in the Bible, it is possible that due to the plagues of Egypt that leprosy could have spread from there in some way or another or it could have been resident in the desert area. Like AIDES, leprosy will have periods of time when it flares up and the patient can have fever and experience pain. These periods of time might last from a few hours to a few weeks. During this time is when the leprosy is the most infectious. Although there is no indication that the Israelites could treat this disease with anything other than quarantine, we have very effective cures today which do not require the isolation of the infected patient.⁶²

Although leprosy and the other skin disorders alluded to in the next two chapters are real, they also speak of the invasiveness and destruction of the old sin nature when given full, uncontrolled reign over the life. AIDES is not unlike leprosy in this respect. It can affect the entire person for the entire remainder of their life, often isolating them and then destroying them over a period of several years. Certain unchecked sins have the same destructive affect, isolating us from our loved ones and destroying our lives over a period of several years. This is apart from divine discipline (which is not a privilege of the unbeliever, anyway).

Skin Disorders in General and their Preliminary Symptoms

Then Yahweh said to Moses, [Lev. 13:1]

We do not know in how many sittings that Moses received all of this information. It is possible that he received this every day, several groups in messages a day, or once a week or less. Whichever, I would personally lean toward the often.

"When a man has a swelling or an eruption or a[n] [unusual] blemish on the skin of his body and it becomes on the skin of his body (into) a leprous disease [lit., a bruised area from an epidermal disorder] then he will be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests. [Lev. 13:2]

Here we have an external mark of uncleanness on this person. Several versions of the Bible translate *bahereth* (בַּהֶרֶת) [pronounced *bah-HEH-reth*] with the phrase *bright spot*, which I suppose could convey something to someone, but since this word is found only in Lev. 13 and 14:56, context would indicate that this should be translated *blemish* or *discoloration*. One might first qualify that with the word *new* or *unusual* and then just use the word *blemish* once it has been identified.

What these skin disorders represents is sin. The following is a list of things which epidermal disorders and sin have in common:

Skin Disorders and Indwelling Sin

1. It is something which begins on the inside.
2. It manifests itself in horrible ways.
3. Its manifestations are diverse and unpredictable.
4. There is no human cure for sin and there was no human cure for these skin diseases.
5. Those with skin disorders went to the priest; we go to our High Priest with our sin and confess it to Him and He cleanses us (I John 1:9).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

⁶² Most of this information came from ZPEB, Vol. 2, pp. 138–139 and the 1983 World Book Encyclopedia, vol. 12, pp. 179–180.

An issue that should be addressed from the outset is who dealt with these epidermal disorders? The priests were in charge here. One must keep in mind that the medical attention needed and the serums and medicines which we use today are of relatively recent development with reference to the skin diseases herein described. Furthermore, God dealt with Israel on a much more personal level in this realm than He deals with mankind as a whole. So we must take these chapters in the context of who they are written to and during what time period in man's history and during what time table in God's history (i.e., the dispensation of Israel). Just as we no longer offer animal sacrifices because He Who they represented has come and has died on our behalf, these disorders, which had no proper treatment then (and some may have died out due to quarantine), also had a spiritual meaning as well as actual physical consequences (as just discussed) and the treatment prescribed herein was the best that the ancient world had to offer and it illustrated spiritual truths as well. One of these truths is that we do go to our High Priest for everything.

We do have a case history of a woman who suffered from hemorrhaging for twelve years and she went to the physicians of her day, spending her life savings, yet receiving no relief from the symptoms of her disease. However, God the Son healed her when she went to Him (Mark 5:25–26 Luke 8:43–44).

Now this has become distorted by some groups who disallow modern medicine to work its cures. This is foolish and this is not the purpose of these few chapters. As a believer, we can be struck down with disease to get our attention when we are in perpetual carnality or our disease is a way to glorify God. If we do not seek medical attention, we will become a stumbling block to the unbelievers around us. We are a stumbling block because no matter what our testimony is, they look at us as forbidden by our religion from seeking medical help, and Christianity does not forbid that. We will have ample opportunity to reveal character and trust in God, even in a hospital under a physician's care. If we are under discipline, certainly even before going to the doctor, we should rebound and get our lives right with God, pray for healing, and, if necessary, see a physician. Similarly, unbelievers can be struck down with disease to get their attention. Sometimes it requires a great deal of suffering to reach the typical unbeliever. If you are an unbeliever reading or hearing this, there is a simple way to avoid God having to get tough with you—you need only believe in Jesus Christ for your salvation.⁶³

"And the priest will see the diseased area on the skin of his body and if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the appearance of the diseased area is deeper than the skin of his body, it [is] a leprous disease [lit., it a bruised area from an epidermal disorder]; and the priest has seen him, and he [will pronounce] him unclean. [Lev. 13:3]

Diseased area in this verse is the word *nega* (נֶגַע) [pronounced *NEH-gahg*] is better understood when viewed between its two verbs *nâga* (נָגַע) [pronounced *naw-GAHG*], which means *to touch* and *nâgaph* (נָגַף) [pronounced *naw-GAHF*] which means *to strike, to hit*. With the close association of these words, *bruised area* might be a more literal translation, as though it is the result of being slugged. However, it is used consistently throughout Leviticus 13 and 14 for a diseased area, that we will stick with that rendering. It should be pointed out that it is translated *plague* by the KJV, being found in Gen. 12:17 and Ex. 11:1 (its only two appearances prior to Leviticus). *Wound, injury, bruise* are also good renderings of this word. V. 2 pretty much defines what it is we are speaking of in terms of both the disease and the word *nega*. This is given a multitude of renderings in this context, usually different from the rest of the Bible (which is not, by the way, entirely incorrect, as this is a different context). The NASB uses the word *infection*; Owen's uses *diseased spot, diseased person* and *disease*. Young likes the word *plague* (which I don't because it leads you away from the literal meaning). *The Emphasized Bible* helps to solve that by using *plague-spot*.

The translation *it is a leprous disease*, is an unfortunate one. We have the two words we have just studied, the one for bruised area and the one for a skin disorder. A person can get a bruised area from several different sources, one of them being from a skin disorder; that is the precise meaning here.

⁶³ The catch, however, is that God becomes your Father and He may then administer divine discipline to you; however, a lifetime of divine discipline followed by eternity with God is much better than a lifetime of human misery where God is attempting to gain your attention, and then eternity in the Lake of Fire.

At the end of the verse we have the Piel of the verb *to make unclean*. This is a metonymy where the action is put for the declaration concerning the action. To quote Bullinger, *what is said to be done is put for what is declared, or permitted, or foretold as to be done*.⁶⁴ The main reason we have to stand by this rendering is that the priest, we know, does not make anyone or anything unclean, and the verb is in the 3rd person masculine singular and it carries with it a 3rd person masculine singular suffix. Therefore, the action is being performed by the priest and it is being performed on someone—here, the victim of the skin disorder.

"But if the blemish [or, discoloration] is white on the skin of his body and the appearance of it [is] no deeper than the skin and the hair on it has not turned white, the priest will close up the bruised area for seven days. [Lev. 13:4]

We have a sudden discoloration or blemish on the skin; if it does not appear to be too unusual, then it is not the person with the bruise who is quarantined, but the bruise itself is closed up—today, we would say it would be bandaged or wrapped or covered for seven days. The verb, *will close up*, has as its direct object *bruised area*.⁶⁵

"And the priest will look at it on the seventh day and if the bruised area remains unchanged in his eyes [and] the bruised area has not spread on the skin then the priest will close it up seven days [for] a second time. [Lev. 13:5]

I took some liberties with one word due to the context. That word is the 3rd masculine singular, Qal perfect of *ʿamad* (עמד) [pronounced *gaw-MAHD*] and it means *to take a stand*; however, when used with this unusual discoloration, it means that this discoloration *has remained*, it *has taken a stand*. However, it has not spread (this negative addition further affirms that the blemish is still there). The footnote of the NASB gives a good translation: *has stood*.

In both verses, it is the bruise and not the person who is being shut up. This doesn't mean that the person involved is not quarantined; it is just that is not in view here. *Disease* here is in the masculine singular and that is both the suffix of the verb *will close it up* and the context of the passage. Later, it will be the person who is quarantined.

"And the priest will look at it on the seventh day and if the bruised area [is] fading and has not spread on the skin, then the priest will [pronounce] him cleansed; it [is] an eruption and he will wash his clothes and be clean. [Lev. 13:6]

We should examine two words here. *Kêhâh* (כָּהָה) [pronounced *kay-HAWH*] is translated by some *lighten* and by others *become dark*. The key to this word is the corresponding verb, *kâhâh* (כָּהָה) [pronounced *kaw-HAWH*] which is used of the eyes which are growing old and having a difficult time seeing. Sometimes it is rendered as the eyes becoming *faint*, *darkened*, *dimmed*. The idea here is that one is having a harder time distinguishing objects from one another and shapes and colors; everything is blending and it is difficult to discern precise colors and objects. With this bruised area of discoloration, it is not necessarily getting darker or lighter, but its color is becoming similar to that of the surrounding skin; it is *fading* into the skin, you might say, just as eyes when they go bad are spoken of as *fading*. The indication is that this bruised area is healing, albeit slowly.

On a very practical note, the reason for this chapter is that the Israelites faced a number of skin diseases, some relatively harmless one which mimicked the very dangerous ones. This allows the priest to examine those with a skin disorder and to make a pronouncement so that either the patient could return to household without restriction or he might return bandaged up or he might not return but be quarantined instead.

⁶⁴ p. 570.

⁶⁵ I should point out that Bullinger calls this a metonymy of the adjunct, where it is the person who is shut up rather than the wound.

"However, if the eruption spreads in the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he will appear again [lit., a second time] before the priest. [Lev. 13:7]

This is obviously the third time before the priest; the word for *second* stands for another act, not identical, but one in a series,⁶⁶ and that is what is meant here. Gleason Archer, in his *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, thinks that this might be a phagedenic ulcer (p. 127).

"And the priest will see and if the eruption on the skin has spread, then the priest will pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy [lit., an epidermal disorder]. [Lev. 13:8]

Here we have more than just a wound or a bruise; this is a skin ailment which has progressively gotten worse during the time that it should have improved.

The grammatical construction here which we have rendered *will pronounce him unclean* was covered in v. 3.

The unbeliever with no interest in things eternal, can have his life destroyed by sin and their results. God does not have to discipline him; in fact, God does not discipline the unbeliever, *per se*. The unbeliever is not a son of God. This does not mean that the unbeliever leads a carefree life; he faces the effects of sin and God sometimes must try to reach the unbeliever through pain (as we as former unbelievers can testify).

Skin Disorders and Raw Flesh

"A bruised area from an epidermal disorder when it is against a man, he will be brought to the priest. [Lev. 13:9]

Under these circumstances, it does not matter if the previous steps have been followed or not. If a person has leprosy, which speaks of the old sin nature eating away from the inside to the out, then they are to be taken before the priests.

"Then the priest will see and if there [is] a white swelling on the skin which has turned the hair white and the raw portion of raw flesh in the swelling. [Lev. 13:10]

The priest examines the portion of the skin which is infected and takes note of the swelling, the change of hair color and the fleshy area where much of the epidermis has seemingly rotted away.

"It is a chronic [possibly, ancient or old] epidermal disorder on the skin of his flesh and the priest will pronounce him unclean; he will not [or, need not] shut him up because he is unclean. [Lev. 13:11]

Chronic is the word *yâshan* (יָשָׁן) [pronounced *yaw-SHAHN*] and it is a verb for *old*, found in very few places in the OT (Lev. 26:10 Deut. 4:25). However, this is according to BDB. The exact same verb is also used for the word *sleep* (as found in Gen. 2:21) which is found sixteen times in the Old Testament. The only reason to treat this as a separate verb is because of its noun cognate, *yâshîysh* (יָשִׁישׁ) [pronounced *yaw-SHEESH*] and it undoubtedly refers to an older person, one who is considered wise because of his age (this word is found only in Job 12:12 15:10 29:8 32:6); and because of its adjectival cognate, *yâshân* (יָשָׁן) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWN*], also a relatively rare word found in only eight places (Lev. 25:22 26:10 Neh. 3:6 12:39 SOS 7:13 Isa. 22:11). I am not sure how to translate it in such a way to distinguish it from the other, more often used word for *old*, which is *zâkên* (זָקֵן) [pronounced *zaw-KANE*].

In vv. 4–5, we have seen that the wound is what is closed up or covered up (although God the Holy Spirit does not use the word for atonement). The leper represents unregenerate man in a perpetual state of spiritual death.

⁶⁶ BDB p. 1041.

Here, however, it is the person which does not have to be quarantined, as all the words referring to the skin disorder in vv. 10–11 are in the feminine and the verb *to shut up* carries a masculine suffix.

He does not need to isolate the person for the purpose of further examination anymore because it is clear what the problem is. Further proof is not necessary. Furthermore, this is an ancient disorder that this person is suffering from, one which has apparently stabilized, but it is not infectious.

"And if this [lit., the] epidermal disorder breaks out on the skin so that this disorder [lit. so that the epidermal disorder] covers all of the skin of the bruised area person from head to foot with regards to all of [the] vision [or, sight] of [the] eyes of the priest. [Lev. 13:12]

Here we have what was an ancient skin disease which seems to have spread fast across the entire epidermis of the individual, just as unchecked sin eats up our entire personage. However, what has really happened is the discoloration ends up covering the entire body evenly, as we will see in the verse below:

"And the priest will look and if the epidermal disorder has covered all his flesh, he will pronounce the bruised area clean. All has turned white, he [is] clean. [Lev. 13:13]

I must admit to have some initial confusion here as to why is this man now clean? The key here is the word *white*. Lâvân (לָבָן) [pronounced *lawb'-VAWN*] means white, but the explanation is in Gen. 30:37. You may be thinking that you do not recall any information about lepers or skin diseases in Genesis (or Exodus for that matter) and you would be correct. White in this verse refers to the white of the tree underneath the bark. Here, the outer skin has been peeled off and what is below is not richly tanned, it is raw, but it is clean. It is as though God creates a new heart within us and we become cleansed from the inside to the out.

"But whenever [lit., in the day] raw flesh appears on him, he is unclean. [Lev. 13:14]

Raw flesh is made up of two Hebrew words: Bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*] means flesh, referring to that which is more than just the epidermis of the body. This word is first used in Gen. 2:21, 35 where God had taken a rib from Adam and then closed up the flesh thereof. This is a word used to express the humanity of man, as separate from animals, from angels and from God (Gen. 6:3, 12–13). It can be used nontechnically for the epidermis; that is, for the skin which is seen (Ex. 28:42). And it is used for the flesh of the animal sacrifices (Lev. 7:17–18). Raw is the Hebrew word is the often used adjective chay (חַי) [pronounced *KHAH-ee*] and it means *living, alive*, and it is used of God, man, animals and here, of flesh. Here, it is the portion of flesh beneath the epidermis which should not be seen; the muscle and fat tissue.

"And the priest will see the raw flesh and pronounce him unclean; raw flesh—it [is] unclean; it [is] a skin disorder. [Lev. 13:15]

Here, this is more than just peeled back skin, like a blistering sunburn. Here the flesh which is further down than just beneath the surface is exposed.

"But if the raw flesh is changed to white, then he will come to the priest... [Lev. 13:16]

Time has progressed and the exposed raw flesh has healed.

"...and the priest will see him and if the bruised area has turned to white, then the priest will pronounce the bruised area clean; he [is] clean. [Lev. 13:17]

Again, the skin disease has healed to a point where the skin, although not richly tanned, is healing.

Skin Disorders and Boils

"And flesh when there is in it a boil on his skin that has healed... [Lev. 13:18]

This boil is an eruption of the skin and it appears to have healed.

"...and there is in place of the boil a white swelling or a white spot [or] reddish, then it is shown to the priest. [Lev. 13:19]

The boil itself has begun to heal and in its place is some swelling, perhaps a swelling with some pus (this would be the white spot) surrounded by reddish skin.

"And the priest will look and notices [lit., behold] the appearance of it [is] deeper than the skin and its hair has turned white, then the priest will pronounce him unclean; [because] it [is] the bruised area from an epidermal disorder in the boil—it has broken out. [Lev. 13:20]

Although there are promising signs of healing, when the priest examines the person closer, the infected area goes much deeper than just an epidermal disorder.

"However, if the priest sees it and if there is not white hair on it and it [is] not deeper than the skin but [rather] it [is] fading, the priest will shut it up seven days; [Lev. 13:21]

I am pretty certain that it is the wound which is being shut up and not the person. It is the wound which is examined; however, the shutting up applies to the person as the verb carries with it a masculine singular suffix, whereas the words for wound are in the feminine mostly. The clincher in this verse is when the priest examines *it*, *it* is in the feminine singular; however when it comes to closing *it* up, *it* is in the masculine. This does not mean that the person involved was not quarantined before; that was not given information.

"And if it spreads on the skin, the priest will pronounce him unclean; it [is] a bruised area. [Lev. 13:22]

In those days, the priest became the authority on the diseases of the epidermis.

"If if the discoloration remains in one place and does not spread, it [is merely] the inflammation of the boil, then the priest will pronounce him clean. [Lev. 13:23]

I have been following convention throughout and have translated a verb *pronounce him clean*. This has been the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect, 3rd person masculine singular suffix of *ṭâhêr* (טָהַר) [pronounced *taw-HAIR*] which simply means *to be cleansed*. In the Qal stem, it does not seem to have the force of an active voice, but is almost passive (Lev. 11:32–12:7); and in the Piel stem, it has more of an active force (Num. 8:6, 15 Neh. 13:30 Jer. 33:8), but not always is it the act of cleansing, but the act of *pronouncing* one cleansed (Lev. 13:6, 13, 17, 23).

Skin Disorders and Burns

"Or when flesh has on its skin a scar of a burn and [this] viable burned-area becomes discolored, [either] reddish-white or white; [Lev. 13:24]

These verses which are two halves of the same sentence ought to have been kept together. There are a couple of words that I was going to translate without mention, but they have caused me some initial confusion. The first is the Hebrew word *mîch'gâh* (מִיחַגָּה) [pronounced *mee-kh'YAWH*] and, although it is found only eight times in the Old Testament (Gen. 45:5 Lev. 13:10, 24 Judges 6:4 17:10 2Chron. 14:13 Ezra 9:8–9), it seems to have almost half as many meanings (according to BDB). One of the best rules I have come up with (which may not be original

with me) is that God the Holy Spirit often has given us clues as to the meaning of a word, if not a reasonable definition, the first time it occurs in Scripture. In Gen. 45:5, a purpose of Joseph's being taken into slavery is described by this one word *mîch^oyâh* (however, it is not the only reason; more are given in Gen. 45:7–8). What happened, is that some translators allowed Gen. 45:7–8 and God's clearly stated purpose in these verses, *to preserve the lives of the Israelites*, to cloud the translating of v. 5. *Mîch^oyâh* means simply *life, living, sustenance, life-sustenance, survival*, and in most instances, the words *sustenance, life-sustenance*, are good translations. Joseph would preserve the lives of the Israelites (v. 7), but a related concept is in view in this verse, and that is life-sustenance. Joseph would develop great storehouses of grain for life-sustenance. In Leviticus, we have a more difficult time with this word; however, in some diseases, flesh dies and peels off or falls off and in some instances, the flesh remains *viable*; it is the latter case here. It is in the construct in the Hebrew; I have fudged somewhat and translated it as an adjective. It is attached to a Hebrew words used twice in this verse, translated *burn* and *burned-area*. Some scars from burns are dead tissue and some are not. Here we have viable tissue which is not the same color as the skin surrounding it. The skin diseases covered in this verse and the next few are skin disorders which might develop due to a severe epidermal burn. Some will become cured by themselves and others might become infected.

"The priest will see it and if the hair has turned white on the discoloration and it appears deeper than the skin, then it [is] an epidermal disorder in the burn; it has broken out and the priest will pronounce him unclean—it [is] a bruised area from an epidermal disorder. [Lev. 13:25]

We do not necessarily have a *burn* in these past two verses, but a skin disorder which resembles a burn.

"However, if the priest examines it and if the hair on the discolored-area is not white and is no deeper than the skin and [is] fading, the priest will shut him up seven days [Lev. 13:26]

Here the area which appears burned looks as though it is in a stage of healing.

"Then the priest will see him the seventh day; if it is spreading on the skin, then the priest will pronounce him unclean—it [is] a bruised area from an epidermal disorder. [Lev. 13:27]

Although it appeared to heal, here the disease has begun to spread.

"However, if the discolored area remains unchanged [lit., has taken a stand] on the skin but is fading; it is a swelling from the burn and the priest will pronounce him clean for it [is only] the scar of the burn. [Lev. 13:28]

Here, this burned area has not spread, but shows definite signs of healing.

Skin Disorders and the Head

"And when a man or a woman it is a bruised area on the head or in the beard; [Lev. 13:29]

This is a disease of the skin which occurs where hair is growing.

"The priest will look at the bruised area and if it appears deeper than the skin and the hair on it is yellow and thin, then the priest will pronounce him unclean; it [is] an itch, an epidermal disorder of the head or the beard. [Lev. 13:30]

This is apparently much more than a very bad case of dandruff, as the normally dark and thick Hebrew hair is yellowing and waning. *The Bible Almanac* calls this ringworm and Gleason thinks that this could be psoriasis.

"And if the priest sees the itching bruised area and it appears no deeper than the skin and a black hair [is] not on it, then the priest will shut up the itching bruised area for seven days. [Lev. 13:31]

Although most translations read that this is the *person* with the disease who is quarantined, that is not how the text reads.

"Then the priest will look at the bruised area on the seventh day and if the itch has not spread and there is on it no yellow hair and the appearance of the itch is no deeper than the skin; [Lev. 13:32]

Again, we stop mid-sentence.

"Then he will shave himself, but the itch he will not shave; and the priest will shut up the itch for seven days again [lit., a second time]. [Lev. 13:33]

This is a difficult maneuver—the hair of the affected area is removed, but the diseased person is careful not to scrape away the infected skin.

"And the priest will look at the itch on the seventh day and if the itch has not spread on the skin and its appearance is not deeper than the skin, then the priest will pronounce him clean and he will wash his clothes and be clean. [Lev. 13:34]

Here the infected person is not only pronounced clean, but he is told to wash his clothes as well.

"But if the itch spreads on the skin after his cleansing; [Lev. 13:35]

So it appeared as though everything was okay after the itch was shut up; however now it has spread.

"Then the priest will see him and if the itch has spread on the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellow hair; he is unclean. [Lev. 13:36]

Recall that the hair has been shaved off; there might be very little to look at. The Word of God does not want the priest to look too closely or poke around too closely in case the disease is infectious.

"But if in his eyes the itch has remained unchanged [has taken a stand] and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed, he [is] clean, and the priest will pronounce him clean. [Lev. 13:37]

I am certain that there can be some underlying meaning here dealing with the old sin nature; however, these are primarily laws of quarantine and disease.

"When a man or a woman has discolored areas on the skin of the flesh—white spots; [Lev. 13:38]

Here *discoloration* is in the plural, referring to several areas of discoloration on the skin.

"The priest will look and if on the skin of the body the discolored areas [are] a dull white, it is eczema [or, a freckled spot or tetter] that has broken out on the flesh; he is clean. [Lev. 13:39]

What the hell is tetter? I haven't a clue. This Hebrew word occurs only here and what we are speaking of is an inconsequential ailment, like dandruff. Rotherham refers to it in translation as a *dead white spot* and quotes the *Oxford Gesenius*⁶⁷ in the footnote, calling it a *harmless eruption on the skin*. *The Bible Almanac* calls this vitiligo.

"And a man, if his head [has become] bald, he is clean. [Lev. 13:40]

Some men do suffer from premature baldness and this is a possibility what we have here.

⁶⁷ The *Oxford Gesenius* is a Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament based upon the Lexicon of William Gesenius and edited by Francis Brown.

"And if from the border of his face, his head is bald—he has baldness of the forehead—he is clean. [Lev. 13:41]

This is male pattern baldness, which is also not a cause for uncleanness.

"However, if there is on the bald head or the bald forehead a reddish-white bruised [-looking] area, an epidermal disorder is breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead. [Lev. 13:42]

This might be the cause of the baldness; which is something outside of genetics.

"Then the priest will examine him and if the swelling of the bruised [-looking] area [is] reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead similar to the appearance of an epidermal disorder in the skin of the flesh; [Lev. 13:43]

Here the head is showing signs of infection beyond what would be normal with baldness.

"Then he is a skin-diseased man; he is unclean—the priest must pronounce him unclean on his head [because of] his bruised [-looking] area. [Lev. 13:44]

Even though loosing one's hair is bad enough, here it is worse due to the accompanying disease. The word that I have been translating as an *epidermal disorder* I have now translated as *skin-diseased*.

"And the leper who has the bruised area—his clothes will be torn and his head will be uncovered and he will cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean, unclean.' [Lev. 13:45]

The word for uncovered is the masculine singular, Qal passive participle of *pâra'* (פָּרַע) [pronounced *paw-RAH*] which word we have seen in Ex. 32:25 and it has to do with the removal of something (this is the only way it will jive with its use in Ex. 5:4 and Prov. 13:18 15:32). In this context, it is the removal of the hood from the head (*head*, by the way, is the literal translation, and not *hair*). This verb is also found in (this is a complete listing) Lev. 10:6 21:10 Num. 5:18 Judges 5:2 2Chron. 28:19 Prov. 1:25 4:15 8:33 29:18 Ezek. 24:14.

The symbol of spiritual darkness and the total penetration and ruination of the body due to sin in the life is leprosy and the other skin disorders herein described. For this man, it is a cause of great distress and God allows such a one to be very demonstrative; I personally would make a terrible Jew.

"As long as he has the bruised area, he will remain unclean. His is unclean [and] he will dwell alone outside the camp [which is] his habitation. [Lev. 13:46]

It is the area outside the camp which is his habitation; not the camp alone.

The NIV Study Bible begins to explain quite well what has occurred here. Yahweh inhabited the tabernacle and the camp of Israel (Num. 5:3 Deut. 23:14). To be unclean, even only ceremonially, meant that the person had to live outside the camp, outside God's special privilege, blessing and wall of fire (Lev. 10:4–5 Num. 5:1–4 12:14–15 15:35–36 31:19–24 2Kings 7:3–4 2Chron. 26:21). All of regenerate Israel has an eternal future together and uncleanness was indicative of being outside of Israel and therefore separated from these eternal blessings. Certainly, there was the simple isolation from the camp, which would have been the most immediate concern, but it is what it all symbolizes that is important. The very demonstrative grief outside the camp, the tearing of the clothes, the partial covering of the face, the removal of the hood and the crying out is a view of the Lake of Fire and eternal separation from God due to uncleanness. There is nothing more horrible than to spend the rest of eternity in the Lake of Fire in complete and total separation from God. When we can apprehend God's eternal blessings by doing so little (by believing in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ and trusting Him for our salvation), it is mind-boggling that anyone would not take five seconds out of their life to make their eternal future certain.

Surface Disorders and Organic-based Clothing

"And the clothing: when there is on it fungus or mold [lit., a bruised area from an epidermal disorder], whether a woolen garment or a linen garment; [Lev. 13:47]

This is the protosis of a conditional sentence. We obviously have a problem here. Clothing cannot be leprous, per se. The explanation of NIV is that this is mildew and we are dealing with ceremonial uncleanness. Whereas that is a possibility, the words used throughout the remainder of this chapter are the same ones used previously, all referring to infectious and/or spreading skin diseases. So it is possible an analogy is being drawn, so that we do not view the entirety of the chapter as simply a medical dissertation, but understand it to have some spiritual significance as well. Therefore, clothing which has become contaminated with mildew, fungus and or mold to where it appears to be an epidermal disorder, is dealt with in a ceremonial way. I may embarrass myself with my ignorance here, but these are clothes worn by people with serious skin diseases and I wonder if it is possible for the disease to spread through contaminated clothing. Keep in mind that we are dealing with various skin diseases and not just leprosy (it is not known how leprosy is spread, although it is thought that it is spread by discharges from the nose and from skin sores and that the germs enter the body of the uninfected person through cuts in the skin).⁶⁸ Such an analogy is not necessarily outside the realm of Biblical theology, as our Lord Jesus Christ warned the church at Sardis: **"But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are so entitled."** (Rev. 3:4)

The NIV Study Bible points out that around the Sea of Galilee, during the rainy season of Israel (October through March), the heavy amount of condensation makes mildew a serious problem.

When writing to his fellow believers, Jude admonishes them as follows: **Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. Furthermore, convincesome of those who are doubting; [and] rescue others, snatching them out of the fire; and some have mercy accompanied with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh** (Jude 21–23).

"In warp or in woof of linen or wool or in a skin [or, leather] or in any article of skin [or, leather]; [Lev. 13:48]

I had no clue what *warp* or *woof* are except for the margin of the NASB which gives the rendering *weaving or texture*. So therefore it has something to do with the way the fabric is made.

"If the disease shows greenish or reddish in the garment, whether in the skin [or, leather] or in warp or woof or in any article of skin [leather], it [is] a bruised area of an epidermal disorder and will be shown to the priest. [Lev. 13:49]

My guess here is that the skin and infection of the disease has come off in part onto the leper's clothing.

"And the priest will look at the bruised area and shut up the bruised area for seven days. [Lev. 13:50]

It is not the person who is wearing the garment who is shut up, but specifically the bruised area on the garment itself.

"Then he will look at the bruised area on the seventh day; if the bruised area has spread in the garment in warp or in woof or in the skin, whatever be the use of the skin [lit., of all that is made of leather for work], a malignant epidermal disorder the bruised area it [is] unclean. [Lev. 13:51]

We have a rather difficult word in this context, one often translated *malignant* or *fretting*. It is the verb *mâ'ar* (מֵאֵר) [pronounced *maw-AHR*], found only in the Hiphil participle (meaning that it is used as an adjective and it is in the causative stem) and we find this verb only in Lev. 13:51–52 14:44 and in Ezek. 28:24. We would rule out the idea

⁶⁸ 1953 World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, p. 4375 and 1983 World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, p. 179.

that this is a *painful* or a *prickling* sensation, as this word is used only in Leviticus for a piece of clothing and for a house. Furthermore, we already have a word for *spreading* used in this context. The only clue that we have is that there are indications that this has grown and the two closest Hebrew words—*ma'ārāv* (מַאֲרָב) [pronounced *mah-uh-RAW⁶⁹* V] meaning *ambush* and *m'êhrâh* (מְעַרְהָ) [pronounced *m'eh-RAWH*] probably meaning *curse*. It is a tough call and we will stay with *malignant*.

The discoloration which appears to be a skin disorder on the garment is growing on the garment continuing to stain the garment with larger and larger areas of infection.

"And he will burn the garment, whether in warp or woof, woolen or linen or any article of skin [or, leather] which is the bruised area, for it is a malignant epidermal disorder [and] it will be burned in fire. [Lev. 13:52]

The cloth itself apparently can carry some of the leprous infection here.

"And if the priest looks and the bruised area has not spread in the garment, whether in warp or woof or in any article of skin [leather]; [Lev. 13:53]

The person wearing the garment has got a skin disorder of some kind, but it is not one which is spreading.

"Then the priest will command that they wash the garment on which is the bruised area and he will shut it up seven days a second time; [Lev. 13:54]

It is unclear whether this is the person, the garment or the bruised area here. The one more time seems to indicate that this is the bruised area.

"And the priest will examine the bruised area after it—the bruised area—has been washed; and observe! [lit., behold] the bruised area has not changed its color [lit., its eye],⁶⁹ though the bruised area has not spread, it is unclean; you will burn it in the fire; it [is] an epidermal disorder whether on the baldness of the top [lit., head] or in its front. [Lev. 13:55]

Washing is often the prescription for that which is unclean. Remember that all of this is analogous, even though there were likely sanitary reasons for following God's ordinances here. We are washed by the Holy Spirit in regeneration and we are washed by the Word of God throughout our believing lives (Eph. 5:26 Titus 3:5).

In this verse, it is clearly the garment which is thrown into a fire.

"But if the priest looks and the bruised area is faded after it is washed, he will tear it out of the garment or the skin [leather] or the warp or woof; [Lev. 13:56]

So we are still talking about the garment and the portion which is infected is removed.

"Then if it appears again in the garment in warp or woof or in any article of skin [leather], it is spreading; [then] you will burn it with fire, that in which is the disease. [Lev. 13:57]

Again it is the garment here which is burnt.

"However, the garment, warp or woof or anything of skin [leather], when you have washed it from which the bruised area departs, it will then be washed a second time and be clean. [Lev. 13:58]

⁶⁹ This is a reference to how it looks; Bullinger calls it another metonymy here where the senses are put in for the object of the senses (p. 598).

My guess here is that some forms of leprosy could be spread on the garment and be infectious for sometime later. I may be wrong medically here, but that is what this seems to say.

"This is the law for a bruised area from an epidermal disorder in a garment of wool or linen, either in warp or woof or in anything of skin [leather], whether it is clean or unclean. [Lev. 13:59]

This last sentence seems to indicate that the use of *epidermal disorder* could refer to a discoloring and an unusual change in the clothing. Again, it is possible that this is simply mildew which has destroyed the fabric to where it is not only unusable but capable of possibly carrying a disease or harboring harmful bacteria.

Leviticus 14

Leviticus 14:1–57

Outline of Chapter 14:

- Vv. 1–32 **The ceremonial offerings on behalf of one cleansed from a serious skin disorder**
- Vv. 33–48 **The steps taken to cleanse a house with an analogous ailment**
- Vv. 49–53 **The ceremonial offerings on behalf of a house that has been cleansed**
- Vv. 54–57 **Summary of Leviticus 13 and 14**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 7 **The Parallels between Lepers and Our Salvation**
- v. 52 **The Poetic Format of Lev. 14:51–52**

Introduction: Lev. 14 will deal with the ceremonial cleansing of a leper (i.e., one who has been afflicted by a serious skin disorder and the disease is now in remission) and the ceremonial cleansing of his house. The first portion could be broken up into three parts, as per the NIV Study Bible: (1) the ritual for the person during the first week, while remaining outside the camp (vv. 1–7); (2) the ritual for the person during the second week, while being inside the camp (vv. 8–20); and, (3) special allowances made for the poor (vv. 21–32).

The Ceremonial Offerings on Behalf of One Cleansed from a Serious Skin Disorder

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 14:1]

Again, this is a direct quote from Yahweh, all the more reason for a translator to attempt to get the translation to be exactly correct.

"This is the law of one with an epidermal disorder in the day of his cleansing: he will be brought to the priest..." [Lev. 14:2]

One with an epidermal disorder is a long translation of the Pual participle of *tsâra* (טָרָא) [pronounced *tsah-RAW*], which is usually, when found on its own, translated *leper*. My guess is that it refers to the disease when accompanied by *nega* (נֶגַע) [pronounced *NEH-gah*], which I translate *bruised area*.

"And the priest will go out out of the camp and the priest will look and if the bruised area from the epidermal disorder is healed in [lit., away from] the one with the epidermal disorder; [Lev. 14:3]

Vv. 2–4 are one sentence which should have been kept together as a full sentence. The *leper* (I use that term out of convenience and not as a correct medical designation) has been assigned an area outside of the camp and notice that the priest now goes to him, just as Jesus Christ, our High Priest, came to us.

"Then [lit., and] the priest will command them to take for him being cleansed two birds, living, clean, and cedarwood and scarlet material and hyssop. [Lev. 14:4]

Not only does the priest go to the diseased, but he brings with him what is necessary for the ceremonial cleansing. The hyssop is often found in ceremonial cleansing, as it speaks of the cross (this will be covered in more detail later).

"And the priest will command them to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over living water. [Lev. 14:5]

The priest oversees this ceremonial cleansing. The earthen vessel is our Lord in his human body and the living water is the Holy Spirit. Our Lord was **put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit** (I Peter 3:18b).

I will quote this quite often throughout the Law: **For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God command you."** And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the law, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:19–22 Ex. 24:8). Furthermore, if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:13–14)

"The living bird: he will take it with the cedarwood and the scarlet material and the hyssop and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the living water.
[Lev. 14:6]

The NASB, *The Amplified Bible*, KJV, Owen and Young all translate this *running water*. The NIV and NRSV, *fresh water*. Only *The Emphasized Bible* has this literally translated: it is *living water*. The adjective here is chay (חַי) [pronounced *KHAH-ee*] and it means *living*. Living water speaks of salvation: **Jesus answered and said to her, "If you know the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water."** (John 4:10). And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who heads say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes to take the water of life without cost (Rev. 22:17).

The cedarwood is the humanity of Christ; the scarlet material speaks of His blood, the dead bird of His sacrifice on our behalf. The hyssop tells us of the cross, which is mentioned only twice in the New Testament, in John 19:29, at the cross, and in Heb. 9:19, referring back to the sacrifices required under the Law.

"And he will sprinkle it upon him who is to be cleansed from the epidermal disorder seven times; then he will pronounce him clean and will let the living bird go into the open field. [Lev. 14:7]

The release of the living bird, which has just been cleansed with blood, speaks of our cleansing and the freedom from sin that we are afforded. Furthermore, the flight of the live bird speaks of His resurrection (and, later, our resurrection). **He, Who was delivered up because of our transgression, was also raised because of our justification** (Rom. 4:25). The bird which represents resurrection is just as important as the bird which represents the death of our Lord for our sins. **Now if Christ is proclaimed that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is empty [and meaningless]; your faith is also empty [and meaningless]...For if Christ is not raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins** (I Cor. 15:12–14, 17).

The Parallels between Lepers and Our Salvation

The parallels to our salvation are obvious and pointed out by C.I. Scofield (I have expanded on them somewhat):

1. The leper is outside the camp of God (Lev. 14:3 Heb. 13:13).
2. Being outside the camp is being out away from the presence of God (Num. 5:2–3).
3. The priest searches out the leper (Lev. 14:3 Luke 19:10).
4. The leper does nothing for his own purification (Lev. 14:3–7 Rom. 4:4–5).
5. There must be shedding of blood for the remission of sins (Lev. 14:5 Heb. 9:22).
6. If our Lord did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain (Lev. 14:7 I Cor. 15:17).
7. The leper is brought into the camp, as we are adopted as sons of God (Lev. 14:8 Gal. 4:4–6).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

"And he who is being cleansed will wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe himself in water and he will be clean; and after that he will come into the camp, but will dwell outside his tent seven days. [Lev. 14:8]

There is a mixture of ceremonial cleansing and medical cleansing here. I suspect that there could have been skin disorders in the desert which died out with the Jews because of their careful quarantining of the patients. If every person with HIV virus and AIDES ceased from sexual contact, and every drug addict with the disease ceased from sharing needles, the disease would be gone in one or two generations. However, apart from those who are unaware of their condition, some continue in their sexual immorality because their personal sexual gratification is worth more to them than the lives of those they come in contact with. It is ironic that the ultimate act of love can be the ultimate act of selfishness and total disregard for the other person.

The number seven is often used as the magic number of spiritual completion. We will see a similar cleansing of the Levites in Num. 8:7.

"And on the seventh day, he will shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair will he shave off; then he will wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and he will be clean. [Lev. 14:9]

The cleansing continues after the seven days have been completed.

"And on the eighth day, two male lambs without blemish and one ewe lamb, a year old, without blemish, and three-tenths of fine flour, a tribute offering, mixed with oil and one pint [lit., log] of oil. [Lev. 14:10]

My sources indicate that the flour is approximately 6 liters (NIV Study Bible) a bushel (NASB) and others indicate that the additional oil is a two-thirds of a pint to a pint, although a great deal of careful reading is necessary to ascertain that from the footnote concerning Josephus and the amount in *The Emphasized Bible*. The unit *log* is the smallest measure of volume in the Bible.

"And the priest, who cleanses him, will set the man being cleansed—and these things before Yahweh at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 14:11]

In this verse, we have the noun *man* and the Hithpael participle of *cleanse* together. The Hithpael can carry with it a reflexive meaning and, on occasion, a passive one. The participle causes it to be taken as an adjective to describe the leper (the man) in question here. From here on out, the person will be simply referred to as *[the one] being cleansed*, as we have set a precedent here in v. 11 that we are speaking of this particular man.

Now this is taken before the people in the court of the tabernacle. The oil is the Holy Spirit and the flour speaks of the Word.

"And the priest will take one of the male lambs and offer it for a guilt offering along with the log of oil and wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:12]

What the Jews did in their religious ceremonies was always very demonstrative; since the real had not yet come, they performed ceremonies which spoke of their coming Lord.

"And he will kill the lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and burnt offering, in the holy place for the sin offering. The guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is holy of holies. [Lev. 14:13]

All the offerings speak of the same person, therefore they are all slain in the same place. They were slain by the altar in front of the tabernacle (Lev. 1:11 4:4).

"And the priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering and the priest will put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is being cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot. [Lev. 14:14]

Our service to God is done at His right hand and we serve Him with our right hand. This person who has been atoned for and cleansed was dead and separated from life and now he is alive and he can serve his Lord, Yahweh.

"Then the priest will take some of the log of oil and pour [it] into the palm of his own left hand; [Lev. 14:15]

The oil speaks of the Holy Spirit and the hand speaks of our service to God.

"And the priest will dip his right finger out from the oil that is in his left hand and sprinkle some oil with his fingers seven times before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:16]

Seven is the number of divine completion and perfection.

"And some of the oil that remains in his hand the priest will put on the tip of the right ear of the one being cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the guilt offering. [Lev. 14:17]

The feet speak of our walk with God; the big toe allows us to remain balanced. Our hands speak of our service to God; it is our opposable thumb which makes our hand useful. It is with our ears that we hear God's Word. All of these must be sanctified with the blood of our Lord and we must be filled with the Holy Spirit in order for our life to have meaning.

"And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he will put on the head of him being cleansed; then the priest will make atonement for him [lit., will cover upon him] before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:18]

Our turning to our Lord Jesus Christ is a momentous occasion, the most spectacular event of our lives. The cost to our Lord was far more than we could ever imagine. Therefore, this ceremony was lengthy and fraught with meaning. It is what is in our head which allows us to serve the Lord. Our minds would think doctrine. One who is firmly grounded in the Word and in the Spirit will have a full, real life.

"And the priest will perform [lit., do] the sin [-offering] and to make atonement for him [lit., cover upon him] [who is] being cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward, he will kill the burnt offering. [Lev. 14:19]

In the Old Testament, our Lord had not yet in time died for the sins of the world, so these sins were temporarily covered, as this ritual represents.

"And the priest will cause the burnt offering and the tribute offering to ascend on the altar; thus the priest will make atonement for him [lit., cover upon him] and he will be clean. [Lev. 14:20]

It is unfortunate that many of the translations simply have that the priest will *offer* the sin offering and *offer* the burnt offering, when it does not say that. In v. 19, the priest performs the ritual of the sin offering. The word used is 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct*. In this case, the sin offering stands for the ceremony of offering the ceremony, which the priest performs. In v. 20, the priest causes the burnt offering to ascend; the verb is 'âlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] and it means *to climb, to ascend*. However, it is found here in the Hiphil perfect, being the causative stem of completed action. The use of the two words together like this is poetic.

"But if he is poor and cannot afford [lit., his hand cannot reach] then he will take one male lamb a built [-offering], to be waved to make atonement for him [lit., to cover upon him] and a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a tribute offering and a log of oil; [Lev. 14:21]

A person's own wealth or lack of it was not a hindrance to salvation.

"And two turtle doves or two young pigeons, such as he can afford [lit., which his hand reaches to]. The one will be a sin [-offering] and the other a burnt offering. [Lev. 14:22]

These are the two easiest to afford birds that would still speak of the death of our Lord and His resurrection.

"And he will bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing to the priest to the door of the tent of meeting before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:23]

There is a proper time to do all of this. He comes before Yahweh on the eighth day, when all has been completed (analogous to our coming to our Lord once He provided salvation).

"And the priest will take the lamb of the guilt offering and the log of oil and the priest will wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:24]

God is omniscient and knows what is being offered; however, there are a cloud of witnesses about and this makes it clear as to what the priest is doing.

"And he will kill the lamb of the guilt offering and put [the blood] on the tip of the right ear of him being cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot. [Lev. 14:25]

Again, the right hand speaks of service to God, the thumb speaks of meaningful service; the feet speak of our walk in the Spirit, the big toe speaks of balance.

"And some of the oil the priest will pour upon the palm of his own left hand; [Lev. 14:26]

Being a left-handed person, I am going to have to delve into this left hand business, as there are times when it speaks of judgement; and here, the priest is representing Jesus Christ in His judgement on our behalf.

"And the priest will sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before Yahweh; [Lev. 14:27]

The seven being the number of divine completion.

"The priest will then put some of the oil that is in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of [the one] being cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and the great toe of his right foot in the place where the blood of the guilt offering. [Lev. 14:28]

We are first brought into the family of God through the blood of our Savior; then He goes to prepare a place for us and He sends us His Spirit, represented by the oil. It is our Lord's blood which sanctifies us eternally, and the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies us in time. There is no service to God and no walk before God without regeneration and the filling of the Spirit.

"And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he will put on the head of him who is to be cleansed to make a cover upon him before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:29]

After salvation and after the filling of the Holy Spirit is when our head is filled with doctrine (based upon our positive volition, of course).

"And he will make one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, from that to which his hand can reaches; [Lev. 14:30]

In the situation where the leper is poor, he is not required to bring an offering which is beyond his reach.

"[Even] from that to which his hand reaches, one for a sin [-offering] and the other for a burnt offering, along with the tribute offering. Furthermore [lit., and] the priest will make a covering upon him who is being cleansed before Yahweh. [Lev. 14:31]

This one who was previously unclean, kept outside the camp wherein dwelt the Shekinah glory, is made clean ceremonially through these offerings and through the blood and the oil.

"This is the law for him in whom [there is] a bruised area from an epidermal disorder whose hand cannot reach to his cleansing." [Lev. 14:32]

This is the oft used idiom meaning that he cannot afford his own cleansing; the analogy remains here, as we cannot afford our own cleansing; it had to be a free gift from God.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Steps Taken to Cleanse a House with an Analogous Ailment

And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [Lev. 14:33]

Again, Aaron is in the picture.

"When you enter the land of Canaan which I give you for a possession and I put a bruised area from an epidermal disorder in a house in the land of your possession; [Lev. 14:34]

The standard interpretation here is a heavy mildew, mold, fungus and/or bacteria in the house of a Jew. This appears in adobe homes and even on wood where the humidity is high and this is accompanied by sustained high temperatures. The fungus could spread quite rapidly and be a breeding ground for all kinds of diseases and bacteria.⁷⁰ However, the words used here are the exact same ones used of the person suffering from a skin disease.

"Then he who owns the house will come and tell the priest, saying, 'A bruised area there seems to me in the house.' [Lev. 14:35]

There seems to me is the 3rd person, masculine singular Niphal perfect of verb *râ`âh* (ראה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*] (which means *to see*), followed by the lamed preposition (*to*) and the 1st person suffix. The Niphal is the passive stem, and we are speaking of *appearances* or what something *seems to be*.

God has made a promise to those who are in Him; to those who are growing in Him: **No evil will befall you nor will an bruised area come near your dwelling place** (Psalm 91:10).

"Then the priest will command that they empty the house before the priest goes to see the bruised area so that all that is in the house is not [declared] unclean. So [lit., and] the priest will go in to see the house. [Lev. 14:36]

The standard word for something becoming unclean is found here: *tâmê`* (טמא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*].

⁷⁰ Gleason Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, p. 127.

"And he will look at the bruised area and if that bruised area in the walls of the house [is] deeper greenish or reddish and their appearance deeper than the wall [s surface]; [Lev. 14:37]

This is most likely a ceremonially unclean situation where the house has become heavy with mildew and a breeding area for harmful bacteria.

"Then the priest will go out of the house to the door of the house and shut up the house seven days. [Lev. 14:38]

The language is exactly the same as found with the skin disorders and perhaps what is being done is that this is definitely being identified with an analogous situation, so that, even though there was real uncleanness in the previous chapter, this reveals to us that it was also a type, a shadow of things to come, of the things which are real.

"And the priest will return on the seventh day and look and if the bruised area has spread in the walls of the house; [Lev. 14:39]

As in the previous chapter, this also stops mid-sentence.

"Then the priest will command that they take out the stones in which the bruised area [is] and throw them outside the city into an unclean place. [Lev. 14:40]

The analogy here is to the Lake of fire where all that which is unclean is thrown outside of the presence of God.

"And the house he will cause to be scraped off of the house all around and they will pour the plaster that they scrap off outside the city into an unclean place. [Lev. 14:41]

So the stones from the mildewed area and the cement which held them in place are both removed. The Hebrews used several kinds of plaster (or, mortar) in the ancient world. The earliest was simply mud and clay mixed with straw, as they had learned to make in Egypt. The word found here is rendered mortar, plaster and dust, indicating that this was the composition which was primarily used. The Jews also, after having settled in Canaan, used a mixture of earth and ashes and another of sand, ashes and lime for mortar. Occasionally, oil was added to the mixture.

"Then they will take other stones and put them in the place of those stones and other plaster and he will take and plaster the house. [Lev. 14:42]

Much of the key to understanding the book of Ezekiel is a firm grounding in the books of Leviticus and Numbers. "And I will give to them one heart, and will put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11:19–20)

"And if the bruised area returns again and breaks out in the house after he has taken out the stones and has scraped the house and has plastered [it]; [Lev. 14:43]

Some people when they are regenerated, return to their heart which is bruised, their heart of stone and of negative volition.

"Then the priest will go and look and if the bruised area has spread in the house, it is a malignant epidermal disorder in the house; it [is] unclean. [Lev. 14:44]

This is analogous to the person who is perpetually carnal. This is likely mildew, fungus and mold.

"And he will break down the house, its stones and its timber and all of the plaster of the house and he will carry [these things] out of the city to an unclean place. [Lev. 14:45]

This is analogous to dying the sin unto death. It is about as painful as you can possibly imagine. When a house is viewed as unclean and there is no way to cleanse it, then it had to be destroyed. This had practical as well as spiritual benefits.

"Moreover [lit., and] he who enters the house while it is shut up is unclean until the evening. [Lev. 14:46]

Those in contact with the one perpetually out of fellowship often find themselves falling out of fellowship too.

"And he who lies down in the house will wash his clothes and he who eats in the house will wash his clothes. [Lev. 14:47]

Both can become ceremonially unclean and medically unclean. My suspicions were that there were a lot of diseases designed by Satan to destroy the Jewish race and their vigilance kept them healthy, pure and alive.

"But if the priest comes and makes an examination and if the bruised area has not spread after the house was plastered, then the priest will pronounce clean the house for the bruised area is healed. [Lev. 14:48]

After the stones and some of the plaster have been removed and the house has been repaired; then if there is no additional mildew, which would appear like a skin cancer, then the house is considered to be *healed*.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Ceremonial Offerings on Behalf of a House That Has Been Cleansed

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He shall take to cleanse the house...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then shall he take to cleanse the house...
KJV	And he shall take to cleanse the house...
NASB	To cleanse the house then, he shall take...
NIV	To purify the house, he is to take...
NRSV	For the cleansing of the house, he shall take...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And he hath taken for the cleansing of the house...

The initial portion of this verse seems pretty clear; all of the major translations agree fundamentally as to what is there. The verb meaning to cleanse is *tâhêr* (טָהַר) [pronounced *taw-HARE*]; however, that is not the word which is found here. The word found here is the Piel infinitive construct of *châtâ*' (חָטָא) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], which simply means *to sin*. It is preceded by the *lâmed* preposition, which can mean in regard to, so this is correctly translated:⁷¹

"And he will take with regards to the sinning of the house, two small birds with cedarwood and scarlet material and hyssop; [Lev. 14:49]

Again, the cleansing of the house is analogous, just as the cleansing of the leper is analogous to what is really important.

"And he will kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over living water. [Lev. 14:50]

⁷¹ If not for a footnote in *The Emphasized Bible*, I would have completely missed this.

The bird is killed in an earthen vessel just as our Lord was killed in an earthen vessel, his human body. Water speaks of the Word and all of this is done according to God's Word, looking forward as well as in the present day.

"And he will take the cedarwood and the hyssop and the scarlet material along with the living bird and dip them out of the blood of the bird that was killed and in the living water and sprinkle the house seven times. [Lev. 14:51]

The cedarwood speaks of the humanity of our Lord, the hyssop of the cross, the scarlet material of his blood shed for us on the cross. The blood of the dead bird speaks of our Lord's death on the cross and the living water is the Word of God.

"Thus he will cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the living water and with the living bird and with the cedarwood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet material. [Lev. 14:52]

All of these items speak of Christ on the cross and when someone observed what was occurring, God the Holy spirit made these things real to him, in front of all the angelic creation and in front of all the demons and this person could be saved and Satan would not know how or why. **And my message and my proclaiming were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be by means of the wisdom of man by means of the power from the God. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature;; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden, which God predestined before the ages to our glory. [This wisdom] which none of the rulers of this age has understood, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.** But just as it stands written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and [things which] have not entered into the heard of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. For to us God revealed [these things] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, the God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught to a spiritual apparatus. But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? But, we have the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:4–16 Isa. 64:6 40:13). Satan is the ruler of this age, along with his demon army; had he understood what God was doing, he would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

One of the things which we miss in the translation is the poetic nature of some verses. What we have here is an introverted correspondence, also called chiasmus, where the first corresponds with the last, the second corresponds with the second to the last, etc. It is easier to see than it is to describe:

The Poetic Format of Lev. 14:51–52

And he will take the cedarwood and the hyssop and the scarlet material
and the living bird
and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed, and in the living water
and sprinkle the house seven times
thus will he cleanse the house
with the blood of the bird and with the living water
and with the living bird
and with the cedarwood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet material (Lev. 14:51–52).

Bullinger described this as *the most stately and dignified presentation of a subject; and [it] is always used in the most solemn and important portions of the Scriptures.*⁷²

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

"And he will let the living bird go out of the city into the open field so he shall make a covering above the house and it shall be clean. [Lev. 14:53]

The living bird allowed to go free is the resurrection of our Lord and it is because of His resurrection that we know we are atoned for.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Summary of Leviticus 13 and 14

"This is the law for all bruised areas from an epidermal disorder: and for an itch; [Lev. 14:54]

This appears to be a summary of Lev. 13–14.

"And for an epidermal disorder in a garment and in a house. [Lev. 14:55]

This is the latter portions of chapters 13 and 14.

"And for a swelling or an eruption and for a spot. [Lev. 14:56]

This is the first portion of Lev. 13.

"To teach in the day of the unclean and of the day of the clean; this is the law for epidermal disorders. [Lev. 14:57]

The use of *in the day of* can be reasonably, but not literally, rendered *when*, as it refers to an indefinite time.

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Return to Beginning of Chapter](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

⁷² Bullinger's *Figures of Speech*, p. 374.

Leviticus 15

Leviticus 15:1–33

Outline of Chapter 15:

Vv. 1–10	Uncleanness of the discharge of a male
Vv. 11–15	The procedure to attain cleanness
Vv. 16–18	Uncleanness of a seminal discharge
Vv. 19–26	Uncleanness of a menstrual discharge (or any discharge of blood)
Vv. 27–30	The procedure to attain cleanness
Vv. 31–33	Summary of chapter 15

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 15 continues the theme of what is clean and unclean. All discharges of human blood are considered unclean. This is because the life is in the blood and in each cell of our bodies we have the indwelling old sin nature. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, a lamb without spot and without blemish. We cannot be redeemed by the blood of fallen man because his blood is unclean. So that we are never confused as to Who are redeemer is, we have a chapter telling us that man's blood is unclean.

There are often two themes running concurrently throughout Leviticus (just as many prophecies have a near and a far fulfillment). On the one hand, we are further exposed to *sanitation laws which included ultraviolet sterilization, washing and sewerage disposal millennia before finite man knew that these were for the social good*.⁷³ On the other hand and much more importantly, God's holiness is in the forefront where there is to be no mixing of the clean and the unclean ever and that which is unclean corrupts that which is clean. The closer one came to the holiness of God in the Holy of Holies, the more ceremonial cleanliness became an issue, to the point of making the difference between life and death. We must never lose sight of the fact that God's perfection, justice and righteousness are absolutes and cannot be whisked away by some maudlin, always-forgiving and continually wafting love. God righteousness demands rightness, and His absolute perfection requires absolute perfection—no less is acceptable.

Uncleanness of the Discharge of a Male

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, [Lev. 15:1]

Those who broke these chapters up finally decided to allow God to do it, and each time we find this verse, we are in a new topic and therefore a new chapter.

"Speak to the people of Israel, and you will say to them, 'Any man [lit., a man of man], when there is a discharge from his flesh, his discharge is unclean. [Lev. 15:2]

The word used here is *flesh*, rather than body. It is the Hebrew word *bâsâr* (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*] and it is consistently translated correctly in the KJV; however, most of the other versions vary between *flesh* and *body* when referring to a person. It is this word which connects us most closely with the earth and with our old sin nature, but also a neutral word which just differentiates us as mankind (Gen. 2:21–23 6:13, 17 Eccles. 5:6 Isa. 40:6 Joel 2:28). It is also used of animal meat (Lev. 7:15).

Zôw^bv (זֹוֹב) [pronounced *zô^bv*] means *issue, discharge, excretion*. It is closely related to the verb *zûw^bv* (זִוַּב) [pronounced *zoo^bv*], which means *flow, gush*, and, when in the participle, it acts as the corresponding adjective. This is the first occurrence of the noun in the Bible, however the verb has occurred several times in Ex. 3:8, 17,

⁷³ Quoted from *Dawn of the Kingdom*, by Charles Clough, p. 70.

13:5 etc. as in a land *flowing* with milk and honey. The verb and the noun both occur several times throughout this chapter; in fact, this is the only place where the noun occurs and this accounts for nearly half of the places where the verb occurs.

There is certainly a matter of medical hygiene as well as symbolic spirituality. The NIV indicates that this is probably a reference to diarrhea or urethral discharges; however, I don't think this needs to be so narrowly construed. However, what will be emphasized is any place where the man has sat or lain (vv. 4, 6, 9), which would likely indicate that the discharge was related to the buttocks or to the genitals. Whenever the body exudes some known or unknown fluid that we normally do not or should not, then there is a reasonable chance that fluid, whether blood, pus or whatever, is infected or carrying bacteria. Therefore, it should be treated as unclean. On the spiritual side, man's blood cannot accomplish the same thing as the blood of Jesus Christ. By comparison, since every cell in the body carries the old sin nature, man's blood is unclean, along with any other fluid that happens to emanate from his body.

"And this is [the law] his uncleanness with a discharge: his flesh discharges a discharge or his flesh is stopped from a discharge; it [is] uncleanness in him. [Lev. 15:3]

The differentiation here, which the NASB makes fairly clear, is whether the body is allowing the fluids to discharge or if they are hindered from being discharged due to a blockage of some sort; they are still unclean fluids either way.

"Every bed on which lies the one with the discharge [lit., the discharger] is unclean and every article [of furniture] on which he sits will be unclean. [Lev. 15:4]

One of the changes which I have made is the phrase usually translated *and everything* (KJV, NASB, and NRSV) which is made up of the construct of *kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] and it means *on the whole, every, all, any*. With this is an all-purpose word *k'liy* (כְּלִי) [pronounced *k'l-EE*] and it is an all-purpose word standing for anything which has been finished, made or produced. It could be translated *an article, utensil, vessel, object, stuff, load, baggage, implement, apparatus, weapon, furniture, receptacle*. Therefore, their rendering is not far afield.

The bed mentioned here is probably a mat laid on the ground. The fluid being discharged is unclean and possibly contagious or a carrier of disease-causing bacteria.

"And whoever touches his bed will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:5]

Satan certainly was doing whatever he could do to destroy the Jewish race and using bacteria and disease viruses is not beneath his bag of tricks. These precautions here managed to keep the Jewish race clean and strong for several millennia.

"And whoever sits on the article [of furniture] on which the discharger has sat will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:6]

Let's move away from the spiritual temporarily and move to the practical. Here is a person who has possibly been exposed to a disease, virus, or a disease-causing bacteria; he is in a state of human isolation until he has washed his clothes, himself and still maintains a distance from his loved ones until night falls. Although this will not resolve all problems which have to do with bacterial and viral infections, it would go a long way to reducing said infections.

"And whoever touches the flesh of the discharger will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:7]

It would be interesting to see if any other contemporary laws or ordinances also dealt with such things as quarantines and human discharges.

"And if the discharger spit on one who is clean, then he will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:8]

Here we have what would presumably include the discharge from a sneeze or a cough. These are possibly the most infectious of the discharges, and yet quite subtle.

"And any saddle upon which the discharger rides will be unclean. [Lev. 15:9]

Although this all has spiritual application, there is a clear understanding of infectious disease in the mind of the Author of Leviticus.

"And whoever touches the things which were under him will be unclean until the evening and he who carries them will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:10]

Rather than just simple obedience, the Jews devised an incredible series of laws to accompany the Torah. They missed the spiritual significance of these laws and the medical benefits and followed them for the sake of earning Yahweh's respect; and we cannot earn anything from God.

The Procedure to Attain Cleanness

"And anyone who touches against him the discharger and his hands he has not rinsed in water, he will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:11]

There are not additional laws required to tell someone how to obey this chapter. Any contact of any kind with a person who is discharging fluids of any sort causes one to become unclean and he must clean himself and his clothes and quarantine himself until at least the evening. When we come into contact with any kind of sin, we become immediately unclean and remain unclean until we are cleansed via I John 1:9.

"And the earthen vessel which the discharger touches will be broken and every vessel of wood will be rinsed in water. [Lev. 15:12]

The earthen vessels, even when washed, can still be breeding grounds for bacteria. On the spiritual side, he who possesses an old sin nature in his earthen vessel, his body of clay, is unclean forever and will never be free of this uncleanness until the vessel dies and he is raised again in a new body.

"And when the discharger is cleansed of his discharge, then he will count for himself seven days for his cleansing and wash his clothes and he will bathe his flesh in living water and he will be clean. [Lev. 15:13]

Yahweh heals the disease or causes the discharge to cease. The priest does not do that but ceremonially recognizes God's work.

God knows that even after the effects of a bacterial or viral infection have seemed to subside, that the person with this infection could still be contagious so he remains unclean for a week. On the spiritual side, our bodies remain unclean until we fulfill or complete God's perfect plan; that is, accomplish that for which he designed us. Recall that the number seven is the number of divine completion. Once we have fulfilled our days on earth, then we will become wholly and totally clean of our old sin nature.

"And on the eighth day, he will take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and come before Yahweh to the door of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. [Lev. 15:14]

Bringing the birds represents this person's faith in the cleansing power of Yahweh. He brings his faith to the tabernacle and gives it to the priest.

"And the priest will offer them, one for a sin [-offering] and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest will make atonement for him before Yahweh on account of his discharge. [Lev. 15:15]

The two offerings speak of our Lord's offering for our sins and for his death on the cross. They are two aspects of one event.

Uncleanness of a Seminal Discharge

"And when a man's semen [lit., seed of copulation] goes out from him, he will bathe his entire flesh in water and he will be unclean until evening. [Lev. 15:16]

Ceremonially, every cell of the man's flesh is unclean, even that which gives life is corrupt.

"And ever garment and ever skin on which the semen [lit., seed of copulation] is will be washed with water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:17]

This is treated as any other discharge from the body. **Wretched man that I am; who will set me free from this body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand, I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin (Rom. 7:24–25).**

"And a woman with whom a man lies [with] semen—both of them will bathe themselves in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:18]

We are not dealing with sexually transmitted diseases here; the morality demanded of the Jews by God precluded such diseases. This is strictly ceremonial and a matter of cleanliness, which also reduced sexually transmitted diseases to practically nil. Notice that here, as well as for a menstrual discharge, there is no command of offering a sacrifice. Normal cleanliness is observed. This would indicate that normal sexual activity and the menstrual cycle, although both indicate uncleanness from the standpoint of their respective emissions, there is not necessarily an accompanying moral uncleanness or an uncleanness which requires more than simple cleanliness.

We find an illustration of this verse in 2Sam. 11:4: **And David sent messengers and seized her, and when she came to him, he lay with her and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.** Incidentally, Bathsheba's observance of the Law here, indicated that she was a believer and no mention of a similar response by David is mentioned, indicating that he was out of fellowship of degenerating (or, as Thieme would put it, going into reversionism).

Uncleanness of a Menstrual Discharge (or Any Discharge of Blood)

"And when a woman is discharging, [even when] blood is a discharge from her, from her flesh, she will be in her impurity seven days and whoever touches her will be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:19]

The blood of the person makes that person unclean. It means that the woman has gone another month without conceiving and the promise to all mankind is that the woman would bear a Son, a Savior of all mankind. Because another month has gone by and a woman has not brought the Savior into the world, then she is unclean.

"And everything upon which she lies [while] in her impurity is unclean; everything also upon which she sits is unclean. [Lev. 15:20]

Again, this is strictly ceremonial here.

"And whoever touches her bed will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:21]

Whatever comes in contact with the menstruating woman is ceremonially unclean.

"And whoever touches any article [of furniture] upon which she sits will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:22]

Similarly, any person who comes in contact with the woman becomes ceremonially unclean.

"Whether he [is] on the bed or the article [of furniture] upon which she sits when he touches it, he will be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:23]

I do not know anything about whether diseases are passed via menstrual blood; however, the principle of ceremonial uncleanness still applies.

The next verse has been ruined by a few translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And if any man lie with her, and her impurity be upon him...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And if any man shall even lie with her, and her cause for removal be upon him...
KJV	And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him...
NASB	And if a man actually lies with her, so that her menstrual impurity is on him...
NIV	If a man lies with her and her monthly flow touches him...
NRSV	If any man lies with her, and her impurity falls on him...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And if a man really lies with her, and her separation is on her...

Obviously, we have a little work to do here. The verb *shâka*^{bv} (שָׁכַב) [pronounced *shaw-KAH^bV*] is the standard verb meaning *to lie down*. It has many applications, including lying down due to being diseased (1Kings 41:9), to lying down due to humiliation (Jer. 3:25), for a nap (2Sam. 4:7) and for sexual relations (Gen. 19:33 30:15–16). This verb is found twice here, first in the Qal infinitive absolute and then in the 3rd masculine singular, Qal imperfect. Literally, it is *And in laying down, a man lays her*. In translating that, I included the conjunction at the beginning, the subject *man*, and the direct object notation with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix (there is no preposition *with* here). Perhaps that is too literal. If this wasn't the Bible, I would try to soften it up with euphemism.

This is followed by a conjunction and the 3rd person, singular feminine, Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAWH*] which is the Hebrew equivalent of our verb *to be*. Then we come to our noun of contention: the feminine singular of *nîdâh* (נִידָה) [pronounced *nîd-DAWH*], which BDB gives as the primary English equivalent *impurity* and Strong's renders this *rejection*, and (by implication) *impurity*. The key to the meaning is the verb from whence this word is derived. *Nâdach* (נָדַח) [pronounced *naw-DAHKH*] means *to drive away, to banish, to expel* (Deut. 30:4 2Sam. 14:13–14 Job 6:13 Jer. 49:5). Obviously the woman is not being banished, nor is she expelled, except that ceremonially she is banished or separated. We first studied this word in Lev. 12:2. Menstruation is implied and a separation or ceremonial removal is implied. After plowing through those words, the rest of the verse is fairly simple and equal to its various renderings.

"And if in laying a man lays her and her menstrual-separation is on him, he is unclean seven days and every bed on which he lies is unclean. [Lev. 15:24]

Here the man having sexual relations with the menstruating woman is also considered unclean. Because there is no ceremonial purification rites that the man or the woman had to go through following this activity, this would likely indicate that sexual relations were not strictly forbidden during this time. There was a period of ceremonial uncleanness, but there were no prescribed penalties and no purification rites associated with this act. There was

associated with this act seven days of uncleanness. Lev. 18:19 and 20:18 contextually deal with sexual immorality outside the context of marriage and are not pertinent here.⁷⁴

"And a woman when there is discharging a discharge of blood for many days not at the time of her menstrual-separation, or if she is discharging beyond her menstrual separation, all the days of her discharge [is] her uncleanness as in the days of her menstrual-separation she is; she [is] unclean. [Lev. 15:25]

The discharge of blood for any reason at any time outside the menstrual time or when it extends beyond the menstrual cycle is a time for uncleanness. It is treated as a sickness was treated in the realm of uncleanness, just as unusual discharges were handled in Lev. 15:14–15. An example of this is found in Luke 8:43 and following.

"Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge as the bed of her menstrual-separation will be to her and everything upon which she sits is unclean as the uncleanness of her menstrual-separation. [Lev. 15:26]

Everything that the woman comes in contact with is unclean.

The Procedure to Attain Cleanness

"And whoever touches them is unclean and he will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [Lev. 15:27]

Every person that is in contact with the uncleanness of the woman is also unclean.

"But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she will count for herself seven days and after that she is clean. [Lev. 15:28]

This means that her menstrual cycle is over and she must wait seven days to be completely clean.

"And on the eighth day she will take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest to the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 15:29]

Once she is clean, then she comes to the priest with her ceremonial offering.

"And the priest will make one for a sin [-offering] and the other for a burnt offering and the priest will make a covering for her before Yahweh for her unclean discharge. [Lev. 15:30]

The priest does all of the work now.

Summary of Chapter 15

"Thus you will warn the people of Israel from their uncleanness so they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling My tabernacle that is in their midst. [Lev. 15:31]

Most of the translations begin v. 31 with *thus you will warn keep separate [or, keep consecrated] the people of Israel*. However, according to the western Samaritan codices and the Septuagint, it should read *warn*. God wants

⁷⁴ They are analogous to today's morality which proclaims that while unprotected sex is immoral, sex with a condom is okay. Those passages indicate that illicit sexual relations which are done during the menstrual cycle in order to avoid pregnancy does not make the act correct.

the symbols of that which is unclean kept separate from His people because any uncleanness brought to His tabernacle could result in the death of any who brings the uncleanness to the tabernacle, as in the sin unto death. [Yahweh is speaking to Ezekiel]: "Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual-separation" (Ezek. 36:17).

This verse tells us that God is still speaking to Moses and Aaron. Also, it is clear why Aaron is present because many of his priestly responsibilities are covered in this chapter. These cannot be taken lightly. The reality behind this chapter and others like it reveal the absolute holiness of God. The unclean cannot come into contact with the clean. We cannot go to God in our filth. There must be a real (and not just a ceremonial) cleansing which has taken place. We, in our corrupt bodies, filled with filthiness and sin, cannot hope in any way to have a relationship with God apart from the provision of God the Son (analogous to what the priest would do on behalf of those who were ceremonially unclean). This was so important, that approaching God improperly in one's uncleanness could result in the sin unto death for all those involved (we have already seen this occur with the two eldest sons of Aaron). Whereas you cannot overemphasize the cross and what Jesus Christ has done on our behalf; similarly you cannot overemphasize the perfect character and the perfect holiness of God, which cannot come into contact with that which is unclean.

"This is the law for him discharging and which the seed of copulation goes out from him with reference to becoming unclean [Lev. 15:32]

Vv. 32–33 summarize what has occurred in this chapter.

"And for her who is sick in her menstrual impurity; this is for any discharger with reference to male or with reference to female; and with reference to the man who lies with a woman who is unclean. [Lev. 15:33]

The past few chapters have the same basic outline. First Yahweh speaks to Moses or to Moses and Aaron; then we have the text of the message, which deals with a particular subject area; and then we have the closing direct quote from Yahweh.

Leviticus 16

Leviticus 16:1–34

Outline of Chapter 16:

- vv. 1–19 **The Day of Atonements**
- vv. 20–28 **The Scapegoat and the Final Cleansing**
- vv. 29–34 **The Time of the Day of Atonement**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 16 covers the day of atonement, the one time of the year that the high priest would enter into the holy of holies and offer up a blood sacrifice on behalf of himself and Israel. The time element (i.e., once a year) is mentioned in Heb. 9:7 and Ex. 30:10 and at the end of this chapter. The actual term, *the Day of Atonement* is not found here in this chapter. The Jewish term, as we have all heard, it Yom Kippur, however, the correct Biblical designation is Yom Kîppurîym (יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים) [pronounced *yome kip-poo-REEM*] and, in the English, that is Day of Atonements. The Jews made some changes in this day through their traditions, just as we in the Christian realm, adopted these changes and gave a theological significance to the word *atonement* which is similar to its true meaning, yet still removed (this will be covered in Lev. 16:6).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Day of Atonements

And Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron when they drew near with strange fire to Yahweh and died. [Lev. 16:1]

The phrase *with strange fire* is not found in the Massoretic Text; however, it is found in the western Targum of Onkelos, the Targum of Jonathan, the Syriac, the Septuagint and the Vulgate; and therefore is probably the correct reading (Lev. 10:1).

It is a verse like this which indicates that it is possible that some of the portions of the books of Moses may not be in strict chronological order. That is, there are certain chapters which contains God's exactly words to Moses (and Aaron) but it is possible that He spoke to Moses first concerning the material in chapter 15 and then the material in chapter 14. However, this places this chapter sometime immediately after their deaths.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses "Tell Aaron, your brother, not to come at all times into the holy [place] within the veil before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, so that he does not die; for in the cloud I will appear upon the mercy seat. [Lev. 16:2]

Here is Aaron, the high priest, one of the most dedicated and spiritual persons of his generation, and Yahweh is telling him not to come into the holy of holies. Part of the problem is the meaning of the translation. It reads that Aaron should not come into the holy [place] at all times; this is an idiom meaning, *just at any time*. This is a solemn warning that Aaron not die the sin unto death as did his eldest sons. What is being impressed upon Moses is the true sanctity of the holy of holies. What will occur will speak to many generations, but the timing would be but once a year.

"But thus Aaron will come into the holy place: with a bull of the herd for a sin [-offering] and a ram for a burnt offering. [Lev. 16:3]

When Aaron enters into the holy of holies, it must be tied to sacrifice. The sin offering is the man-ward side of the cross; Jesus Christ died for our sins. The burnt offering is the God-ward side of the cross; God the Father accepted His perfect sacrifice on our behalf. There was but one sacrifice, but it took several different animal sacrifices to explain soteriology to the Jews.

This entrance into the holy of holies was to occur but once a year. No one was able to see what was going on; they all knew if they knew Scripture. **But into the second [room; i.e., the holy of holies] on the high priest [enters], once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit signifies this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a type [or, symbol] for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they [are] only food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the dispensation of this new order. But when Christ appeared a high priest of the good things that have come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation. And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:7–12).**

"He will be putting on a holy linen coat; the linen undergarments are against his body; he is being girded with the linen girdle; he is wearing the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He will bathe his flesh in water and then put them on. [Lev. 16:4]

The imperfect tense with all of these verbs means that during the entire process, he will be wearing these garments. Only the high priest wore these garments because he was unique, just as our Lord Jesus Christ is the unique God-man. The cleanliness speaks of our Lord's perfection. The fact that he could go into the holy of holies speaks of ceremonial perfection to match our Lord's perfection.

"And from the congregation of the people of Israel, he will take two male goats for a sin [-offering] and one ram for a burnt offering. [Lev. 16:5]

The word for *sin-offering*, again, is the same as the word for sin. This indicates how closely tied the sin is to the sin-offering. **He made Him [Jesus Christ] Who knew no sin, sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21).**

There is another historical analogy here, which is rarely seen (if at all). The Day of Atonement spans several millennia, even though it centers upon the cross. Here, Aaron is representative of Israel, whose sins could only be dealt with symbolically prior to the cross.

"And Aaron will approach with the bull as the sin [-offering] for himself and will make atonement [lit. a covering] on behalf of himself and his house. [Lev. 16:6]

The bull is not offered or sacrificed at this point in time in the rituals of the Day of Atonement. Qârav (קָרַב) [pronounced *kaw-RAV*] means, as we have seen, *come near, approach* in the Qal stem. In the Hiphil, it is often translated *bring, offer*, but it is better translated *to approach [with]*. We append the *with* when there is a direct object involved. As we have seen, *to bring, to offer* are not definitions which will jive with Gen. 12:11 and Ex. 14:10, where the Hiphil perfect clearly means *to be brought near*. One of the problems with a sloppy translation is that it sounds as though the bull is offered as a sacrifice here, then Aaron casts lots concerning the goats, then it sounds as though he offers the bull again in v. 11. The bull is not offered or sacrificed twice; it is merely brought before the Lord in this verse and sacrificed in v. 11. A correct translation makes that clear. The NIV Study Bible presents vv. 6–10 as an outline of vv. 11–22, which is a possibility; but one which is proposed more due to a poor translation than out of exegesis.

We need to fully understand what *atonement* means. Scofield points out that this word has come to have a great deal of theological significance beyond its strict usage in the Bible. Here it is the 3rd masculine singular, Piel perfect of kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*] and it literally means *cover, placate, pacify*. We find this word used one time in the Qal stem back in Gen 6:14 where the verb clearly means *to cover [with pitch]*. This word is found

in the Piel back in Gen. 32:20 where Jacob sends a present⁷⁵ to Esau to *appease or placate* Esau. Recall that the Bible was written by God the Holy Spirit and when dealing with words of great spiritual import, the Holy Spirit reveals their meaning early on in the Bible, cognizant through omniscience, that certain words, like *kâphar*, come to take on a meaning of their own. These first two uses allow us to reel ourselves in from getting too complex and listing its true meaning. There are two sides to this verb; when man *kâphar*'s for himself, he *appeases* Yahweh because the man's sins have been *covered over*. There is the corresponding masculine noun *kôpher* (כֹּפֶר) [pronounced *KOH-fer*] also first found in Gen. 6:14 for the *pitch* that was used. It was a type of covering. We also find the noun used in Ex. 21:30 where a man's ox had previously killed, it had not been put to death, and it killed again. The ox would be killed, the man would be executed or he kill the ox and would have to pay an amount of money which was the value of a life, which a limitations being set on that amount which could be demanded for the goring of a slave (Ex. 21:32). The clear indication here is that his life is spared if they can come up with an amount of money to *cover* what had been done and to *appease* the family of the person who was killed. Therefore, *kâphar* (and its corresponding noun *kôpher*) could be translated *cover* if only the sin of the transgressor was the context, but it could be translated *appease* if God was the direct object of the verb. The feminine substantive cognate is *kappôreth* (כַּפֹּרֶת) [pronounced *kap-PO-reth*] which means *lid*, and we find it used only in the Bible for the *mercy seat* of the ark of the covenant. This lid covers are transgressions of the law and our rebelliousness (recall the objects found within the ark) and our dismissal of God's provisions; and God sees only the complete *covering* of acacia wood plated with gold and He is *appeased*. Verb = Strong's #3722 BDB #497. Noun = Strong's #3724 BDB #497–499.

To take from Scofield, the absolute master of theological editing, he write, *In theology it is a term which covers the whole sacrificial and redemptive work of Christ. In the O.T., atonement is the English word used to translate the Hebrew words which mean cover, coverings or to cover. Atonement is, therefore, not a translation of the Hebrew but a purely theological concept.*⁷⁶ Strictly speaking, the sacrifices did not *atone* for the sins of the people, but rather temporarily covered these sins and temporarily appeased the perfect God of justice. It is our Lord Who *atones* for our sins; that is, He completely removes our sins from us and appeased the perfect God of justice forever.

The bull is brought before God on behalf of Aaron's sins so that he will be qualified to lead in this ritual, because Aaron also posses an old sin nature and he also sins. **For every high priest taken from among men is apoint on behalf of men in things pertaining to God in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself is also beset with weakness; and because of this [his old sin nature], he is obligated to offer [sacrifices] for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but when he is called by God, even as Aaron was** (Heb. 5:1–4).⁷⁷

"And he will take the two goats and set them before [the] faces of Yahweh at the door of the tent of meeting. [Lev. 16:7]

Yahweh, although He is said to be the cloud above the mercy seat, is omniscient; so we use the term *faces* to indicate this.

"And Aaron will cast lots concerning the two goats; one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for the scapegoat. [Lev. 16:8]

We need to examine a couple of words here. *Casting lots* is a method of divination used on important matters when prescribed by God to ascertain divine will. This is used only in the Old Testament as a means of divine guidance. This is because at that time there was no a completed Old Testament, so that God's will had to be determined in a number of ways. When used in the New Testament, the first time was a method of selecting who

⁷⁵ Recall that this was quite the gift: 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 20 milking camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys (Gen. 32:13–15).

⁷⁶ p. 148.

⁷⁷ By the time we are finished with the books of the Law, particularly Leviticus, we will have covered a major portion of the New Testament book of Hebrews.

would legally steal our Lord's clothing at the cross, fulfilling prophecy, but not a matter of divine will; who got the clothing was inconsequential and could possibly be in hell today. The only other time a lot is cast concerned the choosing by the Apostles of a successor for Judas. Although God decreed there be a replacement for Judas from eternity past, God would choose this person and the other eleven Apostles would not. They presented to God two men who were not God's choice out of several candidates, who also were not God's choice, and asked God to reveal to them who His choice was. God chose none of them and later revealed this by making the most prominent Apostle out of a persecutor of the church. However, casting lots in the Old Testament was a bona fide means of determining God's will. The mechanics of casting lots has not come down to us because people today would abuse that knowledge (notice how people use prayer to determine God's will; they will go against the clear teaching of Scripture thinking that if they pray hard enough and long enough that they can just go ahead and do whatever it is that they wanted to and, through all their prayer, receive the blessings of God). We know from this verse that when casting these lots, it was apparently done twice, once to determine which goat would be sacrificed to Yahweh and the other to determine which goat would become the scapegoat, casting one lot for Yahweh and the other for the scapegoat. Exatly why this was done this way and how is unknown to us. At least some of the time, the lot was cast into the lap of the caster (Prov. 16:33). Why it is occasionally in the plural and occasionally in the singular is not clearly explained; but, knowing the exact mechanics, again, would be potentially dangerous information.

The word for scapegoat is 'ăzâ'zel (אֶזְאֵזֵל) [pronounced *az-aw-ZALE*] and this word is found only in this chapter of Leviticus (vv. 8, 10, 26). We do not find it in the New Testament or anywhere else in the Old. The words for *goat* and *departure* are combined to make up this word. The Greek translation of the Sepuagint confirms this. The sins of Israel will be placed on this goat and it would take their sins far from them. There is a tradition which came about much later that 'ăzâ'zel is the name of a desert demon. There is absolutely nothing in Scripture to support this notion. Recall, this is the only chapter in which this word occurs.

"And Aaron will approach with goat on which the lot fell for Yahweh and make it a sin [-offering].

[Lev. 16:9]

The lot noted which goat would be sacrificed directly to God. Again, the translations which are usually used make it sound as though Aaron offers the goat here to God and then does it again in v. 15. I am certain that there are been mentions of this as a contradiction in one of those many, short-lived books which purports to reveal all of the contradictions found in the Bible. A correct translation clears up 90% of all alleged contradictions.

"But the goat which the lot fell for [the] scapegoat will be presented alive before Yahweh to make atonement over it and it may be sent away (with reference to the scapegoat) into the desert.

[Lev. 16:10]

So there is no confusion in these brief references, the goat is undeniably identified with the scapegoat here (some translations transliterate this word so that it sounds like someone's name). Jesus Christ is presented alive before God the Father when the sins of the world are poured upon Him. Author's of books on systematic theology (such as Chafer or Hodge) spend hundreds of pages on soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), so it only stands to reason that the various aspects of salvation would be dealt with in great detail in the Old Testament, albeit in shadow form.

"And Aaron will approach with the bull as a sin [-offering] for himself and will make atonement for himself and for his house [lit., cover on behalf of himself and on behalf of his house]; and he will kill the bull as a sin [-offering] which [is] his own. [Lev. 16:11]

Next we need to examine the preposition *ba'ad* (בְּאַחֲרָיִם) [pronounced *BAH-ad*], which we have looked at before; it connotes separation and is translated *from*, *behind*, *about*, *away from*; however, it can also mean *through* (as in *through* a window) and *on behalf of*, as we find it used here.

Scofield's notes are well worth mentioning here. The sacrificial types which foreshadow the death of our Lord all have these four necessary elements (I am paraphrasing): (1) The sacrifices are substitutionary; the offering takes

the place of the offerer in death; (2) God's law is not abrogated nor is it sidestepped or ignored; the sacrificial death was a fulfillment of the sentence of the law; (3) an analogy to sinlessness must be emphasized with every sacrifice, whether it be a lamb without spot or blemish, or the cleansing of the high priest; (4) the result of the sacrifice was both forgiveness and fellowship.⁷⁸

"And he will take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar from before the face of Yahweh and two handfuls [lit., the filling of the hollow of his hands] of sweet incense beaten small; and he will bring it within the veil. [Lev. 16:12]

Now we are speaking of entering into the holy of holies. There cannot be a mistake in this procedure. It is the Holy of Holies which speaks most convincingly of Jesus Christ and man's absolute need for salvation.

"And put the incense on the fire before the face of Yahweh the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat, which is upon the [ark of] testimony, so that he does not die. [Lev. 16:13]

The incense and the mercy seat both speak of propitiation to God; that is, God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; it is sufficient to allow fellowship between man and God. In the spiritual life, Thieme often emphasized that strictly adhered to precise procedure, was the order of the day. Here is Yahweh speaking directly to Moses telling him that this is exactly the way that this must be done to prevent Aaron dying the sin unto death. Upon the ark of the covenant was the glory of God, which few if any could behold without dying (the clean cannot come into contact with the unclean). The smoke would obscure some of the glory of God.

"And we will take out from the blood of the bull and sprinkle [it] with his finger on the front of the mercy seat, east-ward; he will sprinkle the blood seven times with his finger. [Lev. 16:14]

Seven was the first number that we became acquainted with in terms of meaning; we found that seven indicated divine provision and completion. The sprinkled blood would be like the drops of blood coming from out Lord's hands. Recall that the tabernacle furniture is in the shape of a cross and the eastward side of the furniture corresponds to the downward direction of the cross; that is, here the blood would be *dripping down*, so to speak. Aaron here is in the holy of holies. **Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own, otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself** (Heb. 9:23–26).

By New Testament times, the ark of the covenant was no longer in the holy of holies. Sometime after the time of David, who recovered the ark, and before the inter-testament times; probably during the dispersion, the ark was removed from the Temple (no longer a tabernacle at that time), not to ever be returned.⁷⁹ The holy of holies had become as empty as their apostate religion of works.

"Then he will kill the goat of the sin [-offering] which is for the people and bring its blood within the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull; sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. [Lev. 16:15]

Again, the blood placed where it was would have been equivalent to blood on the cross where the hands were and this blood would be dripping downward. The sacrifice of the goat was on behalf of the people of Israel.

"Thus, he will make a covering upon the holy place on account of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins, so he will do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their uncleanness. [Lev. 16:16]

⁷⁸ Scofield's Reference Bible, p. 148.

⁷⁹ Gower's *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible*; p. 360.

Vv. 16–17 are summary verses telling us what has taken place so far and they give us the stated meaning for the people of Israel in the Old Testament. This is done because of all of the sins and transgressions of the house of Israel, to make a covering or a shielding for the tabernacle, which is in the midst of Israel and in the midst of all her impurities. Our Lord on this earth was preserved in His humanity through the strength, guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit, the exact same Holy Spirit which offers us the exact same strength, guidance and protection.

The purpose of the sacrifices was to temporarily cover over their transgressions so that the God of the Heavens, the perfect and righteous God Who cannot come into contact with anything sinful, does not come into direct contact with their sins and transgressions. There are two reasons why this did not cancel sin: (1) these are rituals, and rituals portray what is real but they are not in of themselves real; and, (2) our Lord had not yet come in time and paid the penalty for sin. For those same two reasons, none of the Jews from the age of Israel were ever resurrected. Christ, the First Fruits, was first resurrected, to show God's approval and to bring many other sons into salvation.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people; for since He Himself was tempted in that which He was suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (Heb. 2:17–18). Whereas Aaron offered up a blood sacrifice for himself and the people of God; God the Son offered up His own blood, then helps us in our weaknesses to withstand sin.

"There is not be any man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement [lit., to make a covering] in the holy place until he comes out and has made atonement for [lit., a covering on behalf of] himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. [Lev. 16:17]

Aaron must be ceremonially clean in order to approach Yahweh and all the congregation must be ceremonially clean in order to approach Yahweh. There is no approach to God apart from Aaron entering the holy of holies and making an offering to God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, without any help from man, gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ died for our sins alone; He made atonement for our sins alone.

"He will go out to the altar which is before Yahweh and make a covering concerning himself and he will take out from the blood of the bull and out from the blood of the goat and he will put [it] on the protrusions of the altar round about. [Lev. 16:18]

The blood is used to cleanse; the altar is where all burned approaches to God are lain. Aaron emerges from the holy of holies and from the tabernacle, just as God the Son will leave the third heaven, then throne room of God, the presence of God the Father, and gather Israel at the end of the tribulation

"And he will sprinkle upon it out from the blood with his finger seven times and cleanse it and set it apart from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel. [Lev. 16:19]

Before Israel has a chance to do anything right or wrong, God calls them unclean and atonement must be made the separate them from their acts of sin and transgressions.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Scapegoat and the Final Cleansing

"And when he has finished from covering the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he will approach with the live goat. [Lev. 16:20]

These things are earthly items which are not holy in themselves; by the blood, Aaron makes all things holy, or set apart to God by cleansing them with the blood which stands for the blood of our Lord. Then he approaches God with the live goat.

"And Aaron will lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their transgressions, with reference to all their sins, and he will put them upon the head of the goat and send [the goat] away into the desert by the hand of a prepared man. [Lev. 16:21]

The description of the man varies from translation to translation because the adjective describing this man occurs only one time and that is here. It is the word *ʿîṭîy* (עִטִּי) [pronounced *geet-TEE*], which is very close to the word *ʿâthîd* (אֶתִּיד) [pronounced *gaw-theed*] so some translators give them the exact same meaning. Whereas the latter word has a verb cognate to help fix its meaning, this word does not. There *prepared* is a reasonable, but not necessarily accurate guess as to the adjective used here.

This verse tells us exactly what was done with the scape goat. Aaron lays both of his hands on the head of the goat and all of the sins of Israel are transferred from Israel to the goat; then the goat will be taken by a man who will free the goat in the wilderness. The goat will in this way take the sins of Israel far from Israel. **As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us** (Psalm 103:12). The Egyptians had a practice when offering sacrifices to place their hands on the head that so that evil may not fall upon them but upon the head of the animal being sacrificed.⁸⁰ This is not something which the Jews copied from the Egyptians, but a similar symbol used by God that the Jews were familiar with; much like language of accommodation, this was symbol or type by accommodation.

"And the goat will bear [or, carry] upon himself all their iniquities into a solitary land; and he will let the goat go in the desert. [Lev. 16:22]

Just as our Lord took all of our sins upon Himself; **He bore our sins in His own body on the tree** (I Peter 2:24a). The solitary land is into the earth when our Lord's body went into the ground, His Spirit into heaven, and his soul to preach to the souls in Tartarus (Luke 23:43, 46, 53).⁸¹ This solitary land (Rotherham calls it *lone land* and footnotes *land of seclusion*), is Tartarus to us; where all the souls are kept until the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is probably better translated *land of separation*; the word is *g'zêrâh* (גְּזֵרָה) [pronounced *g'zay-RAWH*], and, although it is found nowhere else in the Old Testament, this word is closely related to *gâzar* (גָּזַר) [pronounced *gaw-ZAHR*], and this means *to cut, to divide, to decree*. This is where our Lord went upon His resurrection, into the solitary land—the land of seclusion, with reference to those who are still alive.

"The Aaron will come into the tent of meeting and he will take off the linen garments that he had put on when he went into the holy place and he will leave them there. [Lev. 16:23]

What is being taught here is amazing. **And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret [one], for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come face to face with Him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. And so they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore, on account of the day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there...and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb...and looking up, they saw that the tomb had been rolled away, although it was extremely large...[John] came to the tomb first [before Peter], and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings laying; he he did not go in. Simon Peter therefore also arrived, following him, and entered the tomb and he looked at the linen wrappings laying; and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself** (John 19:38–41 Mark 14:46b John 20:4b–7). Just as our

⁸⁰ Freeman, p. 91.

⁸¹ This in itself is quite a study.

Lord was resurrected and left his linen wrappings in His tomb, so Aaron would leave his linen clothing behind in the tabernacle after the symbolic offerings for our sins. Furthermore, Our Lord would shed His covering, His human body in the grave, so to speak; and He was resurrected into a spiritual body. The seed for his resurrection body, that is, His human body, died, was placed into the ground, and was resurrected as a new body.⁸² That which was human and temporal was left behind and He took up a new body. Obviously, his body went through a transformation of sorts to one that was capable of walking through closed doors and of vertical ascent. Aaron, in the same way, left his covering behind once the sacrifice for the day of atonement had been completed.

"And he will bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make a covering on behalf of himself and on behalf of the people. [Lev. 16:24]

Our Lord took upon Himself our sins and was judged for our sins in His body on the cross. However, when He was raised from the dead, He was raised free of these sins, which had been paid for. Aaron's cleansing and putting on his garments and emerging from the tabernacle is analogous to our Lord being raised from the dead in His perfect resurrection body and emerging from the grave, perfect. The burnt offering speaks of the judgement of our Lord; there was a ram for himself and a ram for the congregation (Lev. 16:3, 5). This judgement is the final process.

"And the fat of the sin offering he will burn upon the altar. [Lev. 16:25]

This is either the bull which was offered for himself or the goat which was offered for the people of Israel.

"And he who released the goat as the scapegoat will wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and afterward he may come into the camp. [Lev. 16:26]

This person has been in contact with the goat, which is bearing all of the sins of Israel. Even though this is a picture of our Lord, it is also a goat bearing the sins of Israel, and therefore, because of the sins, is unclean. The person in charge of releasing the goat must cleanse himself. Since this is all a shadow, an analogy to what is real, the analogy will break down occasionally. This was seen with Aaron, who represents Jesus Christ, our High Priest, but then Aaron had to make sacrifices for himself in order to perform the Levitical ceremonies herein described.

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, [appoints] a Son, made perfect forever (Heb. 7:26–28). This is why there was so much ceremony and so many different sacrifices; to illustrate the multifarious aspects of salvation.

"And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place will be carried forth outside the camp and burned with fire; their skin and their flesh and their dung. [Lev. 16:27]

These animals came into contact with the sins of Israel and have ceremonially become unclean due to that contact. Therefore, they are carried outside the camp of Israel and their remains are burned. There are two analogies found here; this is analogous to our Lord being sacrificed outside the gate: For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest for sin are burned outside the camp; therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Heb. 13:11–12). This is also analogous to those who chose to remain in their sins and are burned outside of God's love in the lake of fire: And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

⁸² See I Cor. 15:35–48.

"And he who burns them will wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and afterward he may come into the camp. [Lev. 16:28]

Just like the one who released the goat, this close contact with the sacrifices that bore the sins has made these men unclean and they must be cleansed again to return to the camp of Israel.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Time of the Day of Atonement

"And this is to you a statute forever in the seventh month on the tenth day of the month you will humble yourselves and you will not do any work—[not] the native or the stranger who temporarily resides with you. [Lev. 16:29]

I don't know if I am quite ready to deal with the word for *yourself* in this verse. However, notice that on the day of atonement, the day which speaks of the one day our Lord went to the cross to die for our sins; no one is to do any work. You cannot work or earn your salvation in any way. What God has accomplished is perfect and there is no human effort involved on any level. We merely accept what He has done for us on our behalf. Notice that this is applied to all who are there; not just the Jews, but any stranger who resides there with Israel. Salvation is open to all mankind.

I should take a moment to clear up any confusion when one reads this passage and also reads Lev. 23:32, where the Day of Atonement is to begin on the ninth day of the seventh month. The rest is to begin on the ninth day of the month at dusk; this then became the tenth day of the month for the Jews, as they calculate their days from evening to evening.

Next the date: this was to occur sometime in September/October (according to my NIV); why was this not correspondent to the day our Lord died on our behalf? This is because this particular group of sacrifices spans all history from the ceremonial cleansing of the people of Israel (to which Aaron is analogous) all the way to the end of history when those who do not believe in our Lord are cast into the lake of fire and our Lord returns to rule over a new heavens and a new earth forever. Even though the focus of all sacrifices is firmly upon our Lord's sacrifice on the cross, this particular day is historically far-reaching in both directions of time.

"For it [is] on this day a covering is being made for you to cleanse you from all your sins before Yahweh; you will be clean. [Lev. 16:30]

There is no confusing this issue—the sins of the Jews are dealt with on this day, albeit ceremonially. They cannot work for it; they can only stand and solemnly observe in humility. However, they must be cleansed. There is no provision made for the one who has kept the whole law because no such man exists. Even Aaron had to bring for himself a bull and a ram to sacrifice for his own sins and he had to cleanse himself several times in order to present these things to the sons of Israel.

"It [is] to you a Sabbath day of solemn rest [lit., a sabbath of a sabbath] and you will humble yourselves—[this is] a statute forever. [Lev. 16:31]

Again, a Sabbath is a time of no work; they cannot work for what is being accomplished on their behalf. Even in the Old Testament, it was clear that man could not work to achieve cleansing before God. It is only on this day when the high priest enters into the holy of holies (a place known to the rest of Israel only through God's Word). The priest entered into the holy of holies three times on this day, once with the incense (vv. 12–13), once with the blood of the bull (v. 14) and once with the blood of the goat (v. 15). This was the only day that the people were specifically told to *humble* themselves. However, I do not believe that they were to necessarily fast (the Scripture is inconclusive here; I have carefully examined the Scriptures used to support such a fast and find them unconvincing in this regard). It may have become a fast day, but that is not necessarily a result of divine mandate.

but of human works (Isa. 58:5 Zech. 7:5 8:19). The contexts of Isa. 58:5 and Zech. 7:5 indicates that the fasting they did was not approved of by Yahweh (however, it is inconclusive as to whether it was divinely sanctioned or no). There is one verse where humbling oneself is associated with fasting, and that is Psalm 35:13. In any case, it certainly became a day of fasting (Acts 27:9), being called by the name *The Fast*. We have to separate what God commanded from the later bastardization of these holy days.

"And the priest will make a covering; whoever is anointed and whose hand is filled as priest in his father's place wearing the linen garments, the holy garments. [Lev. 16:32]

When someone has their hands full it means that they had more than enough to do. When, as it was put in those days, someone had their hand filled, then he had a responsibility, a vocation, a calling, which occupied his time.⁸³ This expression is often translated *installed, consecrated*. The Piel imperfect of the verb acts almost like a passive voice. That is, the priest did not go out and solicit this position; it was given him by God. Allow me to quote from Zodhiates concerning the use of the Piel: *the Piel stem refers to an accomplished or established state of being, without regard to the process or events that brought it about (a meaning reserved to the Qal stem). The Piel stem is used to refer to verbal facts and results. In the Piel stem, the object of the verb is passively transformed so that there is an idea of causation inherent in the meaning, though this causative aspect is never the point of emphasis. It may refer to the difference between a current state and the one that is to be established...Many occupations and repetitive acts are referred to by the Piel stem.*⁸⁴

This just lets the Israelites know that this great day of atonement continues throughout time, past the death of Aaron and that someone else will take Aaron's place; and then someone will take his place.

"He will make a covering on behalf of the sanctuary, and on behalf of the tent of meeting; and for the altar he will make a covering; and on behalf of the priests and on behalf of all the people of the assembly, he will make a covering. [Lev. 16:33]

All those things which represent that which is holy must be covered, as all that is in the earth is corrupt and it must be ceremonially cleansed to represent the things which are above.

"[This is] an everlasting statute that a covering is to be made for the people of Israel because of all their sins. Once in the year." And Moses did as Yahweh commanded. [Lev. 16:34]

Notice the chain of command; Yahweh spoke to Moses who then spoke to Aaron. **See the chart of the Day of Atonement.** And what does all of this mean to us as believers? **Since, therefore, brothers, we have confidence with reference to access to the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated on our behalf through the veil, that is, His flesh, and because [He is] a great priest over the house of God, then let us draw near with a sincere heart in full confidence from doctrine, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19–22).**

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

⁸³ Bullinger, p. 607.

⁸⁴ Zodhiates *Complete Word Study Old Testament*, p. 2280.

Leviticus 17

Leviticus 17:1–16

Outline of Chapter 17:

- vv. 1–9 **Improper sacrifices**
- vv. 10–16 **An injunction against the eating of blood**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: At different times during his ministry, R. B. Thieme, Jr. emphasized different themes. One of these was precisely correct procedure. God does not accept people who think that they are right, who are sincere, who always do what they think is the best thing. The most degenerate book in the Bible, Judges, contains the phrase *and every man did what was right in his sight* several times. When we simply do what we believe to be right, regardless of God's mandates, then we are making God in our own image, the worst kind of idolatry. The first portion of Lev. 17 deals with the renegade Jews, those who choose to worship in the way that they feel is best—and prescribes excommunication for them; the second portion forbids the eating of blood.

Lev. 17–26 is sometimes called the *Holiness Code*, as these chapters deal with the correct approach to God after one has been redeemed.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Improper Sacrifices

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 17:1]

Twenty of the twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus begin with this phrase or something quite similar to it. After the first third of Leviticus, the ones dividing it into chapters and verses finally decided to allow God to divide up the chapters for them by beginning a new chapter where Moses began a new chapter.

""Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel; and you will say to them, 'This is the word which Yahweh has commanded, saying: [Lev. 17:2]

There are ceremonial laws which pertain only to the Levitical priesthood (I really should say the Aaronic priesthood) and laws which pertain to all; these obviously pertain to all.

'Any man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp or who kills it outside the camp; [Lev. 17:3]

The first word in this sentence is *ʾîysh* (יִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*] and it means *man*. The second word in this sentence is *ʾîysh* (יִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*] and it means *man*. This not-too-unusual construction occurs in Lev. 17:8, 10, 13 18:6 20:2, 9 22:18 and several other passages. Since the absolute and the construct state of *ʾîysh* are the same, this could read *a man a man* or *a man of man*. This verbiage tends to be found in Leviticus and Numbers and I haven't seen it used that way elsewhere (although *ʾîysh* occurs over 1500 times in the Old Testament; so I may have missed a few places). This particular construction is used during a list of prohibitions or acts which have negative consequences and my instinct is to translate this *any man*. and pass it off as a grammatical variance so as not to lose our attention.

This is not the mere killing of an animal for food, but this is a religious sacrifice; we will note that by the context and by the implication of the next verse.

""And he does not bring it to the tent of meeting to approach [with] a gift to Yahweh before the tabernacle of Yahweh, bloodguilt will be imputed to that man; he has shed blood and that man will be cut off from among his people. [Lev. 17:4]

In many Bibles, it looks as though we have a brand new word here: *bloodguilt*. However, the word is *dâm* (דָּם) [pronounced *dawm*] and it means, simply *blood*, often *visible blood* (although it is used for the juice of the grape—Gen. 49:11. ZPEB has done the statistics for us; of the 362 times this word occurs, 203 refer to death by violence and 103 refer to sacrificial blood.⁸⁵ It can be used, as here, for *bloodguilt* (Ex. 22:3 Ezek. 18:13) or, quite simply, responsibility for a transgression which has been made (Lev. 20:9). If not atoned for, *bloodguilt* can result in direct punishment from God (Gen. 9:5 Isa. 26:21 Ezek. 24:6–9)

The offering of an animal at the tent of meeting did not mean that the owner would be at a great loss; that is, the one who offered one of his animals in the field would not be better off financially than the one who offered his animal in the court of the tabernacle. The one offering his animal before the priests still received most of the animal back as a gift from Yahweh.

Sacrifices being done only at the tent of meeting will be true just for this generation and the greater portion of the next. When the Jews go into the land, they will spread out as per Yahweh's command and will no longer be close enough to the ark of the covenant to sacrifice near it. At that time, sacrifices will be honored elsewhere (Deut. 12:5–6, 14–15, 21). However, to prevent the corruption of the Canaanites, there were times when worship was allowed only in Jerusalem (2Kings 18:22).

""To the end that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they are sacrificing in the open field [lit., face of the field]; that they may bring them to Yahweh to the door of the tent of meeting to the priest and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to Yahweh. [Lev. 17:5]

It is worthless to just sacrifice animals on their own terms; this is self-worship, not worship of the Almighty. Yahweh wants the animals to be sacrificed to Him properly.

""And the priest will sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh at the door of the tent of meeting and burn the fat for a tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 17:6]

In this way, the sacrifice of the animal will count for something. Do you remember all the money that you have given to the church or to various worthy causes when you were out of fellowship (before you knew how to rebound)? Worthless, meaningless—the only value is if someone saw you drop the wad of money into the coffer and they thought to themselves that you were pretty cool for that. Only in that way was it worthwhile for that instant. But there are no long-term, meaningful results. Similarly, animals sacrificed apart from God's plan are also meaningless. God has set up a precise procedure that is to be followed.

""So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices for satyrs [lit., goats], after whom they have prostituted themselves; this will be to them a statute to them forever throughout their generations.' [Lev. 17:7]

The word for *goat* and *satyr* are exactly the same words. This no doubt originated from the time when the angels fornicated with women or even prior to that. The concept of a half-goat, half-human is a very common image in degenerate society of one who is very sexually active. Context here, as in 2Chron. 11:15, would suggest that *satyr* is the better of the two translations (other reasonable translations would be *goat idols*, *hairy ones*). The Egyptians

⁸⁵ ZPEB, Vol. 1, p. 627.

worshiped the god, Mendes, who was a goat; and erected an incredible temple in its honor. The rituals which accompanied the worship of Mendes included acts of bestiality.⁸⁶

Yahweh was the God of the Jews and provided everything that the Jews needed. He was all-powerful and omniscient. They were married to Yahweh, so when they followed after other gods and worshiped demons, they were prostituting themselves; they were seeing if they could get perhaps just a little bit better deal or another extra blessing if they worshiped a heathen god. In this way, they prostituted themselves.

"And you will say to them, 'Any man out from the house of Israel or out from the immigrant [or, outsider] that temporarily reside in their midst'⁸⁷ who sends up a burnt offering or sacrifice; [Lev. 17:8]

Typical of Leviticus; they have stopped mid-sentence of the protasis of a conditional. However, let's deal with that word often translated *stranger*. Some people will be attracted to the Jews and move to live with them; others will be dwelling in the land and chose to live among them; others might be slaves. In any case, these people can be grouped under the classification *sojourners* or *strangers*. Unfortunately, the former designation is archaic and the latter does not really communicate that we are simply dealing with a non-Jew; therefore, I have translated the Hebrew word *gêr* (גֵּר) [pronounced *gare*] with the phrase *immigrant [or, outsider]*.

"And to the door of the tent of meeting he does not bring it to perform it to Yahweh, that man will be cut off from his people. [Lev. 17:9]

With the Jews, there was no do whatever feels right. God gave them a particular procedure to follow and they were not to deviate from that procedure. There are no exceptions listed here.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

An Injunction Against the Eating of Blood

"Any man out from the house of Israel or out from the immigrant [or, outsider] temporarily residing in their midst,⁸⁸ who eats any blood, I will set my face against that one eating blood and will cut him off from among his people. [Lev. 17:10]

The phrase *I will set my face against that one* is an idiom for judging and carrying out the sentence.

Even non-Jews who temporarily reside with the Jews were not allowed to deviate from God's carefully prescribed procedures. There was to be absolutely no eating of blood. Only the blood upon the altar was efficacious, which represents the spiritual death of our Lord—as only Christ's death on our behalf is efficacious. Furthermore, the blood is the life of the animal and represents our life, which is in the soul. Our souls belong to God, although we have the freewill choice to deny the Lord Who bought us. **But false prophets also arose among the people...denying even the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves** (II Peter 2:1). **Every moving thing that is alive will be food for you; I give all to you as the green plant; only you will not eat flesh with its soul—its blood. And I certainly require the blood of your souls; from every beast I require it. And from the hand of every man and from the hand of every man's brother, I require the soul of man** (Gen. 9:3–5).

The warning found in this verse is found in Ezek. 33:25, when punishment for this transgression (among others) is near: **"Thus says Yahweh Elohim, 'You eat with the blood; lift up your eyes to your idols as you shed blood. Should you then possess the land? As I live, surely those who are in the waste places will fall by the sword, and**

⁸⁶ Or, as Freeman called them, *the vilest acts of bestiality*, as if there were bestial acts which are not vile?

⁸⁷ Several codices (The Syrian, Septuagint, Vulgate, the Targum of Onkelos and the Targum of Jonathan) read *in your midst*.

⁸⁸ Several codices (The Syrian, Septuagint, Vulgate, and the Targum of Onkelos) read *in your midst*.

whoever is in the open field, I will give to the beasts to be devoured; and those who are in the strongholds and in the caves will die of disease. I will make the land a desolation and a waste and the pride of her power will end, and the mountains of Israel will be desolate, so that no one will pass through. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, when I make the land a desolation and a waste because of their abominations which they have committed." (Ezek. 33:25b, 27b–29).

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it [the blood] for you upon the altar to make a covering for your souls; for it [is] the blood with the life [lit., soul] that makes a covering [or, atonement]." [Lev. 17:11]

This is an incredible statement. The Bible is not a scientific textbook, but when it deals with scientific principles, it is accurate. God the Holy Spirit understood that blood is one of the most basic components of life.

Theologically, the blood of the animals represents the spiritual death of Jesus Christ—His separation from God and the penalty He paid on our behalf for a portion of the time that He was on the cross. The animals are a temporary covering for the sinfulness and the indwelling sin in our souls. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of that type. Almost every sacrifice prescribed by God involved the smearing or sprinkling of blood. **Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God publicly displayed as the mercy seat [or, propitiation] because of His blood through faith to demonstrated His righteousness because in the clemency of God, He passed over the sins previously committed** (Rom. 3:24–25). It is not the blood of the animals running through the veins which is propitiates God but the blood poured upon the altar. The symbolism has to be precise. **The blood is a gift from Yahweh as a covering for their souls when it is upon the altar; just as it was not the life of our Lord that saves us, but His death.** I have put that in bold because one of my *Christian* sources did not seem to have a clue as to why the Jews were not allowed to eat the blood of the animal.

"Therefore, I have said to the people of Israel, 'Any person out from you will not eat blood; neither any immigrant [or, outsider] who temporarily resides in your midst will not eat blood." [Lev. 17:12]

A little quirk in the translation here; several translations⁸⁹ go with *any person among you...any immigrant among you*; however, there are two different prepositions here. I am often guilty of glossing over these prepositions and taking what is given me in some English translations, but it appears that many translations have little or no consistency when it comes to the use of Hebrew prepositions. The first one, having with it a second person masculine plural suffix and *midst* as its object, is *min* (מִן) [pronounced *min*], which means *out of, from*; and the second is the prefixed preposition *be* (בְּ) [pronounced *b'*] which means *in, with*. It is a minor point, but there is no reason why these words cannot be distinguished.

The blood is most sacred because of what it represents. It is the life of the animal and it represents the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was considered sacrilegious to drink the blood of an animal. It was too sacred. Furthermore, it was discovered millennia later that the blood can carry with it a whole host of diseases; one could eat the flesh of a diseased animal and not necessarily be harmed by it (often because it was cooked); but partaking of the blood could result in picking up the disease.

"And any man [lit., and man of man] out of the sons of Israel or out of the immigrant [or, outsider] that temporarily reside in their midst⁹⁰ who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten will pour out its blood and cover it with dust." [Lev. 17:13]

This is both the most sanitary thing to do (as the animal will rot faster when the blood is left in the animal) and the sacred thing to do. If they were not to partake of the blood of their sacrifices, then certainly they were not to drink the blood of their game.

⁸⁹ Neither the NASB, Owen's translation, *The Amplified Bible* nor the NRSV distinguish between these prepositions; *The Emphasized Bible* and Young's translation (as we would expect) do.

⁹⁰ Several codices (The Syrian, Septuagint, Vulgate, the Targum of Onkelos and the Targum of Jonathan) read *in your midst*.

""For the life [lit., soul] of all flesh—its blood [is] in its life [lit., soul of it].' Therefore, I have said to the people of Israel, 'The blood of any flesh you will not eat, for the life of all flesh it [is] its blood; all eating it will be cut off. [Lev. 17:14]

It is unfortunate that physicians and scientists did not examine this passage of the Bible more carefully in the earliest days of medicine and science, as the life of flesh is in the blood is repeated several times, as in a classroom, so that this principle is not missed. Now certainly this was an observation that Cain made when watching his brother Abel sacrifice animals to Yahweh. When he slit the throat of the animal and the blood ran out, the animal's life left it; he applied the same principle to his brother, resulting in the first murder.

Because the life of an animal is in the blood, anyone who drank the blood of an animal was ceremonially unclean.

""And every soul that eats a carcass or torn [by beasts], [whether] with the native or with the immigrant [or, outsider], he will wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening—then he will be clean. [Lev. 17:15]

Often the animal who has been killed by other animals or one that has simply died, is an animal which is diseased. From a simple health standpoint, the person who eats of the flesh of this animal is subject to all kinds of diseases.

From the spiritual standpoint, an animal that has died on its own or has been killed by other animals, has not had its blood drained and is therefore, by v. 13, unclean; and anyone who eats of it is unclean.

""But if he does not wash [his clothing] or bathe his flesh, he will bear his guilt [or, iniquity]."" [Lev. 17:16]

This means that this person would be subject to discipline by God.

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

Leviticus 18

Leviticus 18:1–30

Outline of Chapter 18:

- Vv. 1–5 **Introduction: the following laws are based upon the authority of Yahweh**
- Vv. 6–17 **Specific prohibitions of incestuous relationships**
- Vv. 18–23 **Addition prohibitions in the sexual realm**
- Vv. 24–30 **The morality of the Israelites is not to be determined by those around them**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: For those who may have been bored by all of the animal sacrifices, Lev. 18 deals with incest, homosexuality and bestiality. Once these laws have been dealt with, God will further admonish the Jews that these are the laws of correct behavior and that they are not to be influenced by the degenerate countries which surround them.

There is not a nice, neat line between the ordinances and the ceremonial laws of Exodus through Numbers; however, this appears to be the beginning of the general ordinances, laws which were specific to Israel during this specific time period, and geared toward the culture of that day until the Incarnation. This does not mean that all of these laws are to be null and void at the point of the Incarnation, nor does this mean that, an ideal government will institute these exact laws in times to come. However, there are principles from these laws which carry on into the dispensation of the church, and such laws guide us into what is reasonable for the laws pertinent to a national entity.

We have heard the phrase, *you cannot legislate morality*, but that is simply a lie. All laws legislate morality. No law will eliminate immorality, but it can decrease the amount of immorality. What a society faces is, what is the proper balance between freedom and law, as well as, what is the reasonable amount of penalty for breaking a law.

Most of the laws which have preceded this chapter pertain mostly to the ceremonial laws, and they look forward to the Coming of Jesus Christ, and such laws actually foretell His coming. The slaughtering of a lamb, for instance, in order to take away sin, looks forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.

However, at this point, we are looking at laws which regulate, for the most part, morality and the interactions between the citizens of national entity Israel (not yet a national entity at this time) which best protect the free will of the people within Israel and protect the free will of those who come to Israel. These laws are specifically designed for this culture during this time period, and that needs to be kept in the back of our minds as well. Therefore, when we see the regulation of slavery, that does not mean that slavery is a good thing; it simply means that slavery was a part of this nation's history and culture (as it was of every nation's history and culture), and God sought to regulate slavery in such a way that the slaves not be abused or lose the reasonable exercise of their free will.

Introduction: the Following Laws Are Based upon the Authority of Yahweh

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 18:1]

It is possible that Moses would report to the tabernacle with a legal pad in hand or God spoke to him and then, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, wrote down later what God said. One needs to put this into context and

examine the situation here. As Josh McDowell would put it, we only have three options here. Either (1) Moses is telling the truth and Yahweh is speaking to him; or, (2) Moses has been suffering from delusions of speaking with the Almighty for the past several years and will continue in those delusions for forty years; or, (3) Moses has a good idea of how he wants to run things so he has written a few laws, but has decided to give them divine authorization.

With regards to option #2, while it is true that some leaders must lead a flamboyant lifestyle, that they might tend toward more grandeur than us regular folks, few if any great leaders were so delusional as to claim that the God of the Universe speaks to them on a regular basis. There are certainly people who believe that, many of them are under lock and key for their own good; and there have been some short-lived, religious cults founded by such men; however, it is out of character (if not outright psychologically impossible) to have such a man lead a huge group of fairly unwilling participants through great difficulty through two generations without losing his own ability to rule; and even more unlikely for such a one to be held up as one of the greatest Jews in the history of all Israel, agreed upon by Christians, Jews and Muslims.

Let's examine option #3: Moses did exert a great deal of power over the people; the fact that when he returned from the mountain speaking with God and forced many of the infidels to drink water with the ground up gold from their idols indicates that his power and authority were as absolute and as unchallenged as anyone's could be. Because of this great strength, at some point in time, it would have been unnecessary for Moses to claim divine guidance at every turn if this were not true. Furthermore, for one with the great authority that Moses had, to the point of claiming that he spoke with God's authority, it would be a small leap to claim to be God and it would have been a small leap to glorify himself. However, Moses never made those small leaps because when he claimed to speak with God's authority, he really was speaking with God's authority.

"Speak to the people of Israel, and you will say to them, I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 18:2]

So there is no misunderstanding here, Moses is not going to say to the children of Israel that he is God. He will speak for God and this announces who God is. As the NIV Study Bible points out, this phrase *I am Yahweh, your God* occurs 42 times in the next 9 chapters; this is the authority by which these laws are given. The contrast is between what is popularly believed and practiced as opposed to what is right and good. The Jews will be reminded again and again, this is God speaking to them; this is the authority by which these laws stand.

"You will not do as that which is done in the land of Egypt; [Lev. 18:3a]

The main verb is the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of our old friend 'âsâh, which simply means *to do, to make, to construct, to make something out of something else*. What is not to be done is the prefixed preposition kaph, which means *like, as* and the substantive cognate of 'âsâh, ma 'ăseh (מַעֲשֵׂה) [pronounced *mah-ġa-SEH*] and it means *deed, work, that which is done*. Strong's #4639 BDB #795. **And I said to them, "Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of the eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am Yahweh, your God." But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt (Ezek. 20:7–8a).**

"You will not do as that which is done in the land of Canaan (to which land I am bringing you); you will not walk in their statutes. [Lev. 18:3b]

At the end of this chapter, we will have a summary concerning the things prohibited the Israelites throughout this chapter, and these things will be attributed to those who live in the land of Canaan (Lev. 18:24–30).

There is not a concern here whether there is some morality to be found in either the religious system found in Egypt or found in Canaan; God does not compromise His character. Other than that which comes from God's own mouth, all religious systems are of Satan. Unbelievers and even many unbelievers have a hard time with this. They do not like the idea that God is perfect, God is perfect righteousness and justice and that He has devised a perfect plan and has a precise set of procedures for us to follow as believers. People want to worship wherever they are comfortable; in whatever religion that they were raised in; whatever church has the right contacts,

activities, child care, etc.; they want to worship a God which is not so demanding—a god, perhaps, just a little more like them. Certainly there is some truth and some morality in almost every religious system. However, God has never told us to search out whatever we like the best and just pay attention to the good parts and eliminate the bad. If there is anything which is certain in the Bible, it is the exclusivity of Christ, His being both a necessary and a sufficient condition for salvation; that additional works not only are not of any benefit, but when presented to God along with faith in Jesus Christ, they actually prevent one from being saved. **"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me."** (John 14:6). **"There is none other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."** (Acts 4:12). **There is one God and one mediator between God and man; that man, the Lord Jesus Christ** (I Tim. 2:5). The true religion of God is not liberalism and everyone gets to have their own personal opinion.

The Jews have just come out of the land of Egypt and are about to enter into the land of Canaan. People have a tendency to go along with whatever society expects. Homosexuality will be dealt with in this chapter so let me use that as an example. In the 1950's almost everyone disapproved of homosexuality as an act of serious abnormality that, if it shouldn't be punished, the practitioners should, at a minimum, be shunned. However, in the 1990's, there were a significant number of people who saw homosexuality is just what a person is, similar to being Black or Polish; they were just born that way and no judgement is passed, one way or the other. Is it because we are talking a new and different generation? Certainly not. If you transported those people from the 1950's and caused them to be inculcated with the 1990's and vice versa, both groups of people would change their viewpoint 180°—this is because people tend to go along with what society thinks. God had to clearly separate the Jews from the societies wherein they lived. It did not matter that this is the way that people lived in Egypt nor that this was the way things were done in Canaan; God's laws are absolutes and what is right and wrong does not change. Today, just because we live in the midst of several generations who believe that premarital sex is okay and that it is okay to get married and divorced several times, this does not suddenly make these things right. Six times Yahweh will tell the Jews not to follow the example of the Heathen around them. Today, as then, we have to look to God's Word for moral guidance, not to the *wisdom* of this age. Did you know that Leviticus would be so applicable to your life today? God's Word is always right and it does not go out of date.

"You will do my ordinances and you will guard my statutes to walk in them—I am Yahweh your God." [Lev. 18:4]

God could have spoken directly to the Israelites. There was such a large number that God could have spoken to all of them directly and had Moses write everything down; however, God has always chosen to speak to man through man as a mediator. This has been the way that God had prepared His people; to expect to hear His Word from one of their own. God will set down a perfect set of laws, ordinances and statutes for the Jews to follow and He will expect these to be followed perfectly.

One of the words we should look at is *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAHR*]; this word comes from a primitive root word which means to hedge about with thorns; although it is often translated *keep*, I believe that a better translation would be *to guard, watch, preserve*. You may be wondering to yourself, *guard God's statutes from what?* The Jews were to guard His statutes from corruption; look at the context and v. 3.

Walking speaks of their daily life; at that point in their history, 90% of the Jews (if not a greater percentage) walked everywhere that they went. To go from Egypt to the land of Canaan—they are walking. This is their daily life. Their statutes are to be a part of their daily life. We all know people who go to church, some religiously (i.e., every Sunday, or every Easter) and it is just something that they do and it is not a part of their daily life. What the Jews were taught and what is expected of us is an all-encompassing, day-by-day walk. Just as we breathe and eat and walk, we are to function in the realm of God's Word. No matter how sorry our life is, how rich, how poor, our position in society—God's Word should be where we walk. Furthermore, they are (as we are) to walk *in* them; that is, to walk in the realm of God's judgements, statutes and laws. The *bêyth* preposition emphasizes proximity, nearness, being within. There are boundaries set up by God's Word—we are to remain inside those boundaries. For us, our boundary even from a very immature spiritual age, is simple—we are to walk in the Spirit; we are to be filled by the Spirit. The Jews, not having the Spirit as we in their dispensation, were to function within the boundaries set up by God's Word. **The entire Age of Israel shows us and all Angelic creation that man, by**

himself, cannot walk in God's Laws, even if God comes down personally and enumerates just exactly what His expectations are. The entire Age of the Gentiles prior to the Jewish Age tells all the observers that man, or his own volition and with his own conscience, cannot, as a whole, do what is God's will or even know what God's will is. Since every person of spiritual note in the Old Testament had some sort of relationship with the Spirit of God, we are now shown in the Church Age that even when we are given God's Spirit, free, to draw upon at any time that we choose, we still often choose that which is evil.

"You will therefore guard my statutes and my ordinances; the man which does them shall live; I am Yahweh. [Lev. 18:5]

The word for *do* in this verse is our old friend 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *aw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct*. It is usually used for making something out of something else. The raw material that man is given to work with are God's statutes, laws and ordinances; doing them means obeying them and following them. The word for live is châyah (חָיָה) [pronounced *khaw-YAH*] and it is the simple word for *live*. Well, pretty much everyone wandering about on this planet is alive and living. What is implied here is beyond living; or, better, beyond simple existence. There are people on this earth whose existence is not too many steps above the animal kingdom. They draw breath and they exist; however, they are not alive in the sense that we find here.

God apparently led Ezekiel in a Bible study of Leviticus. Ezek. 20:11 and 13 read: **"And I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man does them, he will live...however, the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the desert. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man does them, he will live."** Paul, himself, quotes this verse in Rom. 10:5: **For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is out from the Law will live by means of it.**

Life is an important topic throughout the Bible, its meaning expanded upon in the New Testament, particularly by our Lord. John in particular recalls that which our Lord spoke on this earth concerning life. **"Point of doctrine: I tell you, he who hears My word and believe Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life...I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst...I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live, even if he dies and everyone who is living and believes in Me will never die; do you believe this?...I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me...And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent (John 5:24 6:35b 11:25b 14b 17:3).**

Note that there is clearly two kinds of life spoken of here; there are people who are physically alive and there are people who are spiritually alive; those who are spiritually alive are those who have believed in Jesus Christ and the Father who sent Him; even if they die temporally, they will have eternal life. At physical death, we all pass from life to life immediately. This life is associated with never thirsting, never being hungry—which we can associate with simple temporal needs. God provides everything for us for our time here on earth and our time in eternity.

Paul again quotes the same verse when contrasting faith and works for the Galatians in Gal. 3:12. The one who wanted to live strictly by obeying God's Laws was cursed by those same Laws. We are cursed by the Law, as Paul wrote: **For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them. How it is evident that no one is justified by the Law before God; because the righteous man will live by faith. However, the Law is not out of faith; on the contrary, He who practices them will live by means of them. (Gal. 3:10–12 Deut. 27:26 Habak. 2:4 Lev. 18:5).**

So that you are not confused, let me try to make this clear. Herein we are receiving a group of laws which deal primarily with sexual morality, particularly in the area of incest, homosexuality, and bestiality (in other words, in general, this chapter reveals who you do not, under any circumstances, become sexually involved with). Then I have quoted you several New Testament passages which tell us that we are not under the Law; does this abrogate these prohibitions? Definitely not (to quote Paul)! The Jews are a people set apart to God already; they are the Lord's. To apply this to today, they are analogous to us as Christians and as God's own peculiar people, they were held to a much higher form of morality than the heathen in Egypt or in Canaan. Similarly, we as

Christians are held to a much higher standard of morality than they heathen in the midst of whom we live. We can only perform what God wants by being filled with the Spirit; that is how different it is from typical morality. However, it is not our moral behavior which saves us but the blood of our Lord who died on our behalf. It is because we have a relationship with God that we obey Him in all things.

Before we begin this dissertation on the sexual relations forbidden us, I should point out that this chapter carries with it just the prohibitions; in Lev. 20, we will cover the legal penalties.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Specific Prohibitions of Incestuous Relationships

"Any man [lit., man of man]—you will not approach to uncover nakedness regarding all of his close relatives [lit., all of flesh of his flesh]. [Lev. 18:6]

This verse begins with the doubling of the word 'îysh (as we saw back in Lev. 17:3) and I am going to stay with the convention of translating this *any man*. The word I have translated consistently *approach* is the one that many translators translate as *offer*, *sacrifice* or as *approach*, depending upon their mood; however, obviously, there is no *offering* or *sacrifice* in this context. *Approach* is in the Qal imperfect here, indicating several attempts.

The other verb found with *approach* is the Piel infinitive construct of gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to depart*, *to remove*, *to reveal* in the Qal; *to reveal*, *to publish* in the Niphal; *to carry away* in the Hiphil and Hophal; and *to uncover*, *to discover* in the Piel. Strong's #1540 BDB #162. Gâlâh is not always used in a negative sense, however; here what is uncovered is *nakedness*. What is being clearly stated here is there is sexual activity, but it is not necessarily sexual intercourse. God is not leaving any openings for incestuous people to excuse themselves by claiming there was not sexual intercourse. The privacy and sexuality of a close relation is violated and consent is not an issue. Mutual consent means that either one was coerced or they are both involved in sin.

As with any chapter in Leviticus, each will carry with it its own peculiar vocabulary and it is best if we just deal with it right up front. We have this unusual word sh'êr, which can be found in only the following passages: Ex. 21:10 Lev. 18:6, 12, 13 20:19 21:2 25:49 Num. 27:11 Psalm 73:26 78:20, 27 Prov. 5:11 11:17 Jer. 51:35 Micah 3:2–3. Some marginal references read *remainder* because it is similar to the word sh'êryth (which means *remnant*, *remainder*). In the passages in Leviticus (but, significantly, **not** in Num. 27:11), this word occurs with the word *flesh*—bâsar (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAHR*] where sh'êr is in the construct state. This is a word which indicates a close relationship; and when used with bâsar, an even closer relationship. However, it is also used for *meat* or *flesh* in the passages in the Psalms. The connection here is that this is a less-used word which is a synonym for *flesh* (for bâsar), and, where we can either see the word *flesh* as describing some sort of meat that we are about to eat or we can see the exact same word as someone who is a close relative (our own *flesh*, if you will), so it was with the Hebrews. Here, I will translate *flesh of flesh* (sh'êr of bâsar) as *close relatives*.

V. 6 is a generalized statement forbidding incest; we will become more specific as this chapter goes on. As was mentioned, even though incest usually has an initiator, consent is not an issue; it is herein summarily denied. This was not the case with the very first family, where Cain and Seth both married their sisters; but, at that point in time, there was no choice. The gene pool was such that it would not suffer through this kind of a union and it was not an act of immorality at that point (when this changed is not covered in the Bible; very likely, it was that very generation). In any case, incest is outlawed today by God's Word and this prohibition has never been retracted.

"You will not uncover the nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother and you will not uncover her nakedness. [Lev. 18:7]

This is a fascinating verse inasmuch as the child or young adult is admonished to begin with as being prohibited with engaging in sexual acts with his parents. Why is that? Any young child who is brought up in God's Word

would have covered this early on in their training and would understand that it is clearly a sin to become sexually involved with either parent. This is going to be hard to get past some of you who are nonplussed, as the parent is usually the aggressor and the child is the victim; however, when a child is brought up knowing God's Word and learning it correctly in depth, the child recognizes that what is occurring or what has been proposed is against God's Laws; a child with that knowledge has to remove himself (or herself, of course) from that situation. Now, there are situations where both parents are aggressors; however, it is usually one parent who is incestuous and the other parent either does not know or does not recognize or want to recognize the gravity of the situation. All it takes is one parent to be a believer and to teach God's Word to a child and that would eliminate a great many incestuous relationships. This is one of many instances where it is imperative that a parent teach his child from a very early age the gospel and then doctrine; which is more than a couple of moralistic Bible stories.

"You will not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; that [is] your father's nakedness.

[Lev. 18:8]

This is a prohibition in addition to the one above. There is not to be sexual involvement between a son and his mother or his step-mother (note that the Bible is the most up-to-date book). There is an incredible issue of possession and privacy here where the nakedness of the woman belongs to the father. This is violated by incest (and, in case it is not clear, incest can occur between people who are related only by marriage). At this point in time, it was more common to have a multiple wives than it was to have a divorce and a new wife. These laws apply regardless of the circumstances at to how and when the wife was acquired.

"You will not uncover the nakedness of your sister—the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother; whether born at home or born abroad—their nakednesses [you will not uncover].

[Lev. 18:9]

This should be absolutely clear that there is to be no sexual relations between step-children or half-siblings, as well as (obviously) natural brothers and sisters. This is a line that no one is to cross over. Notice how clearly God the Holy Spirit covers the exceptions (*what if my step-mother came over from Europe with a daughter that I am particularly fond of?*). It does not matter if this is the daughter of your mother or your father, whether they were born at home (implying at least a common mother or common father), or whether they were born abroad (implying no blood relation). Sex between siblings, whether actually related by blood or only by marriage, is strictly forbidden—regardless of the attraction, be it mutual or not. Try to understand, the Bible is not forbidding things to those who have no desire to do them; it forbids things which some people have a desire to do. Having a strong desire to do something does not abrogate God's Laws. Most people can understand this in the area of incest; just hold that thought as we move into other sexual sins.

"You will not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter or of your daughter's daughter—their nakednesses [you will not uncover] for your nakedness [is] theirs [or, they are your nakedness].

[Lev. 18:10]

The first portion of this verse is easy to understand and the one which is violated often in incestuous relationships. A grandfather is to never sexually exploit his grandchildren. Besides being sick, it is a sin. The last phrase is difficult, however. Let's see how it is translated elsewhere and then clear it up.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...their nakedness you shall not uncover, for they are your own flesh.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...you shalt not uncover their shame,—for thine own shame they are.
KJV	...even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover; for theirs is thine own nakedness.
NASB	...their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours.
NIV	[a literal translation here was not attempted]
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...thou dost not uncover their nakedness; for theirs is thy nakedness.

To attempt at a very literal translation (word order included), we would have: **The nakedness of the daughter of your son or of the daughter of your daughter you will not uncover their nakedness for your nakedness theirs.** This tells us that there is more to this *nakedness* than simply the lack of clothing. It implies an incredible intimacy and

a total lack of protection and a responsibility on the part of the other party involved. You have an intimacy with these children as they are the children of your son or daughter. As a family member you have the right and the duty to protect them; and their exposure before you requires you to protect them. When you do not protect them, those of your own household, those generally of your seed, then you have exposed yourself and your seed to a total lack of protection. That is, in attacking them, as your own family, you have attacked yourself.

"[You will not uncover the nakedness of] your father's wife's daughter begotten by your father—she is your sister; you will not uncover her nakedness. [Lev. 18:11]

Incest takes many forms. At this point in history and likely many centuries back, incestual relations between brother and sister were disallowed. There were quite a number of polygamous households, meaning there would be many half-brothers and half-sisters. Although the Jews were admonished to stay within their own race, they were not allowed to have incestuous relationships.

One is reminded of the story of Amnon and Tamar, a son and daughter of King David (2Sam. 13). Amnon was in love with her (v. 1), which was overpowering youthful lust (v. 15), and suffered great frustration, not due to the law, which he either did not know or neglected, but because his sister's virtue and knowledge of the Law (vv. 2, 12). We are not given their ages, but my guess is that Amnon was significantly older than she, that they were raised in separate households (v. 7) and were not brought up as youthful playmates. Tamar is attracted to him, but for the purposes of marriage, apparently is willing to ignore the Law (v. 13). We will examine the remainder of that incident off in the future.

"The nakedness of your father's sister you will not uncover; ⁹¹she [is] the close relative of your father [lit., she is flesh of your father's flesh]. [Lev. 18:12]

The child is not to have a sexual relationship of any sort with his aunt.

"The nakedness of your mother's sister you will not uncover for she [is] the close relative your mother [lit., she is flesh of your mother's flesh]. [Lev. 18:13]

There is not to be a sexual union between a child and an aunt related to his father or to his mother.

"The nakedness of your father's brother you will not uncover; you will not approach his wife; she is your aunt. [Lev. 18:14]

So there is no misunderstanding, you are not to have a sexual relationship with your aunt even if she is related only by marriage. The sword cuts both ways; a woman is not to have a sexual relationship with her uncle; that is just not what is in view here specifically—only by implication. By making an approach on the wife of your uncle, you are uncovering the nakedness of your uncle.

You may wonder at this time as to why not just outlaw all forms of premarital and extramarital sex? Or, better yet, hasn't adultery been banned, so why doesn't this fall under the heading of adultery? This goes beyond simple adultery. It does not matter if the other spouse is still alive or not; that is not the issue. The issue is incest, and it extends to those related to you by marriage but not by blood. Furthermore, by this prohibition, it further restricts those who may marry. We do not have a separate set of marriage restrictions because these laws preclude that.

"The nakedness of your daughter-in-law you will not uncover—she is your son's wife; you will not uncover her nakedness. [Lev. 18:15]

Some men enter into a second childhood and begin to behave distressfully in their late thirties to late forties. One degenerate manifestation is not only becoming attracted to one's daughter-in-law, but acting upon that impulse. You might be reminded of Judah and Tamar from Gen. 38. Judah deceived Tamar, preventing her from becoming

⁹¹ The Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate all insert the word *for* here.

married to a third son, all the while, leading her to believe that she would marry his third son (he attributed the deaths of his first two sons to her; although they both died the sin unto death). Later, Tamar deceived Judah, resulting in two sons—twins—being born to them. The union within the bounds of marriage was not necessarily wrong because there was not the Law of Moses to guide them (although it appears as though they operated under some system of legal and moral law).

"The nakedness of your brother's wife you will not uncover—she [is] your brother's nakedness.

[Lev. 18:16]

This is the sister-in-law and this will lead us to the first exception to the absolutes that we have seen thus far. The intimacy and protection and close relationship is spoken of in the phrase *she [is] your brother's nakedness*. A sexual relationship with her is the same as uncovering the nakedness of one's own brother.

There is an exception to this. If a brother has married and then dies and there are no children, his brother is to raise up children by his sister-in-law in order to preserve the brother's name. This is found in Deut 25:5–6. Further, their union is to result in a marriage. I am not sure as to whether a marriage would be allowed if children had been born to the deceased brother. The NIV says no, but qualifies it by saying that this would not be an immoral act, but one that would confuse the inheritance.

"[The] nakedness of a woman and of her daughter you will not uncover. Her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; you will not take to uncover her nakedness—they are your close relatives [lit., the flesh of your flesh]—it [is] [pre-planned gross] immorality. [Lev. 18:17]

This is a woman that you have married who has children. You are not to sexually exploit her children or her children's children, even though you are actually not genetically related to them. They have become a part of your family and they are the closest of close relatives to you, even though you are not related genetically. To exploit that is wickedness. In order to actually do something like this sort of incest, there is intense planning and careful thought which is put into this act of immorality. The word used here means just exactly that. See the **Doctrine of Zimmâh**.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Addition Prohibitions in the Sexual Realm

"And a woman [i.e., your wife] regarding to her sister—you will not take [her sister] for marrying as a rival-wife to uncover her nakedness [the sister's] against her [your wife's] while she [your wife] is yet alive. [Lev. 18:18]

It is difficult to plow through all of these pronouns; something for which the Bible is legend. However, there are innumerable times when a woman marries someone and her sister, somewhat jealous and involved in inordinate competition, find herself attracted to the bridegroom. Since her prospects haven't been good and since she likes her sister's husband, she makes a play for him. This is a prohibition against marrying two sisters when faced with that option.

One of the interesting areas of the United States is Utah where there are perhaps hundreds of polygamous families. This is supposed to be in keeping with the Old Testament (and, I guess, the *Book of Mormon*?). However, here there is a clear prohibition against marrying a woman and her sister and there are several of these marriages which are just that—a man has married a woman and her sister.

We recall the history of Jacob and Leah and Rachel; Jacob fell in love with Rachel, but was duped into marrying Leah. He eventually married Rachel as well and there was constant inordinate competition which resulted from this union (Gen. 29–31).

"And a woman, is her menstrual-separation of uncleanness, you will not approach to uncover her nakedness. [Lev. 18:19]

As you will recall, all blood is considered unclean and coming into contact with any blood is unclean; therefore, intercourse during menstruation was forbidden. This prohibition is repeated in Ezek. 18:6 and associated with other forms of uncleanness, implying that this prohibition was a matter of cleanness rather than one of morality. In those days, it was desirable to have a great many children, and that would be just about the worst time to conceive. However, there is nothing today to prevent a man and wife from engaging in consensual relations during menstruation.

"And regarding your associate's wife, you will not give your laying for seed to make her unclean. [Lev. 18:20]

It is an odd group of words which I have given a very literal translation to. However, the word translated *wife* here, is the same word which I translated *woman* in the previous two verses.

"And you will not give any of your children to [cause to be] passed through [the fire] to the Molech; and you will not profane the name of your God [by this act]—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 18:21]

Molech was a heathen god; a god of the Ammonites. Throughout the Bible, it is taken as the name of a god, and not a kind of sacrifice (although sacrifice to Molech is often involved; as here). We have Canaanite texts and artifacts which both attest to the sacrifice of children by throwing them into a fire (here, it is called *passing through* [a fire]). This practice was common in Phoenicia and other nearby countries.

Another view, which contextually fits better, is that some parents would dedicate their children to Molech, making them become temple prostitutes. Since we are in a chapter which deals with various types of incorrect sexual behavior, it makes sense that this reference is to sexual behavior and not to child sacrifice. See the **Doctrine of Molech**.

"You will not lay with a male [as the] layings of a woman—it [is] an abhorrant act. [Lev. 18:22]

Due to the times, we need to deal with this particular verse carefully. It begins with a conjunction, the word for *with*, and the substantive *zâkâr* (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*] and it is the word for *male*, *male offspring* (whether animal or people). It is used in conjunction with circumcision in Gen. 17:10, 12, 14, 23 Lev. 6:11, 22; in conjunction with male offspring in the animal kingdom (Ex. 12:5 Lev. 1:5, 10); and males, as separate from females (Gen. 1:27 6:19 Num. 5:3); my point is that this is not a term which is used collectively for males and females, as *ʾādām* (אָדָם) [pronounced *aw-DAWM*].

The verb is the 2nd person **masculine** singular, Qal imperfect of *shâkav* (שָׁכַב) [pronounced *shaw-KHAV*]. We have seen the verb for laying here used as connoting sexual activity in Gen. 19:34 39:7 Ex. 22:19 Lev. 15:24 (this is by no means its exclusive use, but given this context, that is undoubtedly what is referred to). As most (if not all) God's commandments, they are in the second person and usually they are in the masculine singular. The negative of prohibition is used. Next, a contrast will be set up so that there is no doubt in our mind that it is homosexuality which is prohibited.

This is followed by the masculine plural construct of *mishkâb* (מִשְׁכָּב) [pronounced *mish-KAWB*], a word for *bed*, *couch*, or *the act of lying down*. Here it is used in the latter sense as it is accompanied by the word for *woman*, *wife* as opposed to the word for *male*, *man*: *ʾishshâh* (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAWH*]⁹²—it is the name that Adam gave to the woman. Whereas his name can be used collectively for males and females (whether *ʾādām* or *ʾiysh*), her name is not use collectively for males and females. This word is primarily translated *woman*, *wife* and is used of women bearing children (Num. 31:18); for a woman as belonging to a man (Gen. 2:24, 25 Deut. 20:7);⁹² for

⁹² It often has a masculine singular suffix when used in this way.

women conceiving (Ex. 2:2 Lev. 12:2); etc. The point that I am making is this is strictly a *woman*. There is no getting around that.

Finally, we have a description of this act: the Hebrew word *tôw'êvâh* (תּוֹעֵבָה) [pronounced *to-ay-VAWH*], meaning *disgusting act, an abomination, abhorrent, an abhorrent act*. Since *abomination* sounds so King Jamsey, I will stick with the latter two renderings. Until this point in time, this word has been used rather sparingly, found only in Gen. 43:32 46:34 Ex. 8:26 (in all cases, this was a situation of what the Egyptians found to be abhorrant; this makes me wonder if this might be a loan word). We will find it used throughout the rest of this chapter, once in Lev. 20:13 and then often in Deuteronomy. It is often used of the *abhorrent acts* of heathen (2Chron. 28:3 33:2).

This means, like it or not, homosexuality is not just prohibited, but it is an abhorrent act, an act punishable by death (Lev. 20:13). See the **Doctrine of Homosexuality—not finished yet!!** What people dislike intensely is that when they have an intense physical desire, or any kind of a desire, particularly when it is shared by many others, that they like to call this desire *natural* meaning, or implying, that it is justified. We all have an old sin nature. That sin nature has weaknesses. Our Weaknesses are not things that we do once and awhile, our weaknesses are the things that are abhorrent to God that we strongly, even fervently, desire to do. Just because our sins are not overt and are less disgusting than the sins of others, this does not make us better. Personally, there are some sins which I have no desire to do, like homosexuality, child molestation, drunkenness; and there are sins which my old sin nature gravitates toward. I personally have no right to proclaim Christians (or, non-Christians) who are beset by and want to do the sins that I have no desire to do as inferior to me. That is their weakness. Nor do I have a right to take a sin which is my weakness and proclaim it to be just and right in the eyes of God. When something is abominable to God, abhorrent to God; then that is all we need. There are many Christians who had a strong desire to take drugs prior to being saved and even after being saved. This does not excuse the taking of drugs nor does it make it right. Just because that desire is held by thousands of other people, and some might even say it is a *natural* desire and we may likely find a gene that seems to be present more often in drug addicts than not; genetic predisposition does not make a sin not a sin. Although we know that homosexuality is banned also in the New Testament; even if it were not, the added phrase of this being an *abhorrent act* should make it clear that it is wrong.

Does this mean that homosexuals cannot be saved? Certainly not. Does this mean that after salvation they will no longer desire homosexual acts? It is very likely that they will continue to desire to have homosexual relationships if that is their brand of weakness. Where homosexuals run into problems is when they try to justify their behavior as being acceptable to God by emphasizing the passages proclaiming God's love and ignoring those which prohibit homosexuality. **I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book** (Rev. 22:18–19).

Let me give you two simple examples. Men have a tendency to strongly desire females for sex. However, a man who is married or is not is prohibited from having sex outside the marriage union. It does not matter whether this seems natural, if most men have this desire, or if it is a strong, almost overpowering desire. It is still wrong and it is still a sin. Any woman who has had her life shattered and her heart broken by a husband who has slept with another woman can testify as to how evil this sin is. Example #2: there are some men who are child molesters and it would not surprise me in the least that this could be a genetic-based desire. This does not make it okay or excuse the men. Child-molestation is absolutely wrong, as we have seen in this chapter of Leviticus (which covered this from the standpoint of incestuous child abuse). It does not matter if this is a strong, almost overpowering desire that the molester thinks about day in and day out—this does not excuse the behavior, the thoughts, nor does it make it right. Can a child-molester be saved? Certainly. Might he continue to commit acts of child-molestation after salvation? Certainly. Does he lose his salvation? Certainly not. Should he be prosecuted and imprisoned? Certainly; just as prescribed by the law of the land. If the child-molester had won the same political battles as the homosexuals have, that would not make child-molestation right.

We have to think clearly on these issues. I have lived in a time when it was almost universally believed that homosexuality was wrong and immoral and even a crime; and I have lived when many believed that it is simply

a reasonable, genetic predisposition, not different than being born Polish. These beliefs carried by society do not excuse sin. At one time, Hollywood glorified smoking and drinking (including drunkenness) in their movies as being not only socially acceptable, but humorous, sophisticated and nondestructive. For awhile, drugs were handled in the same way. It took time for us to realize how destructive these things can be. What is my point? My point is just because these things are generally accepted by society at one time or another does not remove them from the sin list nor does it minimize their destructiveness. They are still sins, they are still wrong and abhorrent to God (as is all sin); and committing any sin immediately breaks our fellowship with God.

We are all carrying around with us an old sin nature and that old sin nature will cause us to desire, through the use of our volition, all kinds of things that are wrong. That is the nature of our being and it is very *natural* and it is very wrong. Paul himself, the great apostle, writes: **Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?** (Rom. 7:24). If he speaks of himself and his own desires in this way, that should clue us into the fact that we are all beset by an old sin nature and doing what it naturally wants to do cannot be called righteous when it is sin. **"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight."** (Isa. 5:20–21). **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good** (Rom. 12:21).

"And with any beast, you will not lay and cause yourself to be unclean; neither will any woman stand to a beast to lay with it—it [is] a violation of nature [or, confusion]. [Lev. 18:23]

Bestiality is forbidden; and so there is no confusion, it is forbidden to men and to women. Most of the transgressions listed are forbidden to the male since the male seems to exhibit the least self-control when it comes to sexual sins (although that is changing in our society).

Prior to the giving of the Law, we have several instances of these laws *being broken* (which is a misnomer, as you cannot break a law which is not there). It is very likely the Sarah, Abraham's wife, was also his half-sister (Gen. 20:12); that the parents of Moses were nephew and aunt (Ex. 6:20); and, as we noted, Jacob married two sisters (Gen. 29).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Morality of the Israelites Is Not to Be Determined by Those Around Them

"And do not cause yourselves to be unclean by any of these things for by all of these things the Gentiles defiled themselves; [the Gentiles] who I am casting out from before you. [Lev. 18:24]

According to Scofield, archeology has made many discoveries which reveal the depths of degeneracy to which the depraved Canaanites had fallen. Recall that, while the Jews were in Egypt and leaving Egypt, God stated that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet fulfilled (Gen. 15:16). This means that from generation to generation, there were still Amorites who chose to believe in Jesus Christ, in whatever way He was revealed to them. The society as a whole was not so cancerous as to infect everyone around them. However, at this point in time, their degeneracy was increasing into an all-encompassing destructive force. Archeology testifies to the increasing moral depths to which the Amorites plunged during this time period.

Not only are these acts depraved, but the Gentiles that God will throw out of the land and cause the Israelites to destroy (often every man, woman, child and animal) are Gentiles who live in societies which not only allow some of these acts, but promote them as being acceptable human behavior. You cannot allow the so-called wisdom of society to dictate to you what is right and what is wrong. Our society has been steadily moving away from the absolute principals of the Bible toward the relative principles (or lack thereof) of the desires of the collected old sin natures in our land. This is exactly what the Gentiles in the land of Canaan, and exactly why God destroyed them and threw them out of that land. We foolishly think that because our nation was at one time strong and powerful and prosperous that it will occupy this position forever, at least through to our grandchildren or beyond. We are fools. We enjoyed great prosperity and power because we evangelized much of the world; our principles

were often based upon sound Biblical principles. This does not mean that we have ever been a Christian nation, per se, but we have spend a great deal of time as a client nation to God (Thieme's excellent terminology which allows us to filter out a lot of incorrect thoughts about our nation and its relationship to God).

"Then the land became unclean so that I will attend to its iniquity [or, guilt] [that is] against it. Then the land will [be caused to] vomit out its inhabitants. [Lev. 18:25]

Vomit is in the Hiphil imperfect—the causative stem and the tense of incomplete action (sometimes called the future tense). Like most figures of speech found in the Bible, this is fairly obvious. Land does not literally vomit; this is of course a *personification*, where an inanimate object has attributed to it the actions of a person. The inhabitants will be caused to be vomited out of the land group by group, just as when someone is sick, they rarely vomit just once but continue to wretch several times until whatever it is that caused them to be sick no longer remains in their stomachs. So God will deal with the present degenerates who inhabit the land of Canaan. This is one of the many verses which some critics despise because it tells us in advance what is going to happen to Israel and the land. Claiming that the authorship of the books of Moses actually belongs to several other authors written at much later dates is not the result of careful scholarship, but the result of a predisposition to discount prophecy as being possible. The Law is filled with verses which predict what will happen in the future—and documentary critics despise that because these large amounts of fulfilled prophecy make it more and more likely that this book which we all hold is the work of God, to be studied and appreciated and obeyed. When a scholar is wrapped up in himself, this is too difficult for his old sin nature to deal with so he attempts to discount the veracity and the historicity of the Bible if at all possible.

Throughout this chapter, in vv. 3, 24–25, 28, the Israelites are both told that God will take them into the land of Canaan and that he will throw the inhabitants of the land of Canaan out before them. The fact that God would bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan was spoken of back in Gen. 15:16 46:4 48:21 50:24–25. Furthermore, Yahweh promised the Jews that He would drive out and destroy the peoples of Canaan before them, as in Ex. 23:23, 27–28, 31 33:2 34:10–11, 24. We will find all of this fulfilled in the book of Joshua.

"And you will guard [and keep and observe] my statutes and my ordinances; and you will not do any of these abhorrent acts—[not] the native or the immigrant [or, outsider] who temporarily lives in your midst. [Lev. 18:26]

These final verses are a summary of this chapter of God's Word. Israel has a responsibility to those who choose to dwell among them to expose them to the Law.

"For all of these abhorrent acts the men of the land did who [are] before your faces. [Lev. 18:27]

The Jews will eventually enter the land—the land of Canaan before them is filled with men whose life has just been herein described. When the time is right, when the iniquity of the Amorites has not been fulfilled, the Israelite will go into the land and cast out the degenerate Gentiles before them.

"And don't let the land be caused to vomit out you by making it unclean as it is vomiting out the nation before your faces. [Lev. 18:28]

This is a warning to Israel and a promise which was fulfilled. God will cause the land to vomit Israel out for engaging in the same activity which God found abhorrent in the Gentiles.

"For whoever does any of these abhorrent acts will be cut off—the persons that do them—from among their people. [Lev. 18:29]

There is more than simple excommunication involved here. When this is read, people look at this as maybe these people are cast out of Israel, maybe they are shunned. What God has promised is that they will not be a part of the inheritance of Israel; they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. They will not have in eternal relationship with God because they never had a temporal one with Him. Being cut off is being removed from all of the blessings

and glory which are promised to Israel because of their relationship with Yahweh. Therefore, this is analogous to spending all of eternity without God. All the blessings and guidance and protection afforded Israel was real, but it also spoke of our eternal state and God's preservation of our souls and the unspeakable blessing that He has and will give to us.

However, Israel went through many periods of time where they rejected God's Laws and His statutes. Ezekiel, who had been carried into captivity because of the degeneracy of the Jews, pointed out to them why they were removed from the land: *You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. Slandorous men have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood, and in you they have eaten at the mountain [shrines]. In your midst, they have committed [carefully planned] immoral acts. In you, he has uncovered [his] father's nakedness; in you, they have humbled her who was unclean in her menstrual impurity. And he has committed abomination with his neighbor's wife and another has immorally defiled his daughter-in-law. And another in you has humbled his sister, his father's daughter...[therefore], I will scatter you among the nations, and I will disperse you through the lands, and I will consume your uncleanness from you. And [when] you profane yourself in the sight of the Gentiles, then you will know that I am Yahweh.*" (Ezek. 22:8–11, 15–16).

"Therefore [lit., and] guard [or, keep and observe] my charge; to never do any of these abhorrent acts which were done before your face. And never make yourselves unclean by them—I am Yahweh, your God." [Lev. 18:30]

What the Jews were to guard was *mish^omereth* (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) [pronounced *mish^o-MEH-reth*] and it refers to something which someone has been given charge of or responsibility for. It may be something simple which someone is simply responsible to take care of or to maintain or simply something to keep (Ex. 16:23). Sometimes it is something more ethereal, such as a responsibility (Habak. 2:1 Zech. 3:7). Sometimes it is mistranslated as *ordinance* or something similar; however, the Law itself, as written form of doctrine, could be considered something that they were given the responsibility for; however, *ordinances* as a translation evades the meaning. In the feminine, it is a reference to that which is watched; in the masculine, it is a reference to those who are doing the watching (Gen. 40:3 41:10 Neh. 4:9).

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

Leviticus 19

Leviticus 19:1–37

Outline of Chapter 19:

- Vv. 1–8 **Laws dealing with that which is holy**
- Vv. 9–22 **Ordinances dealing with one's fellow man**
- Vv. 23–37 **Miscellaneous ordinances**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 19 deals with a multitude of different laws, which would be difficult to classify as we could in the previous chapter. They often come under the heading of various and sundry laws.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Laws Dealing with That Which Is Holy

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 19:1]

There should be no question that Moses is either claiming absolute divine conference for the laws listed in this chapter.

"Speak to all the assembly of the people of Israel; and you will say to them, 'You will be holy [or, set apart to God] for I, Yahweh, your God, [am] holy [or, set apart from this world].' [Lev. 19:2]

In this verse we have the 2nd person plural, Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* and the adjective *qâdôwsh* (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DŌSH*] and it means *sacred, holy, set apart*. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of synonyms here which are modern. I like *sacrosanct*, but it would not communicate. *Set apart to God* is wordy, but probably communicates best what is meant here. Yahweh is set apart from all else; compared to our lives and all the things that we see from day to day and all of the things that we think and do, God is set far apart from all of those things. His thoughts are not our thoughts and his ways are not our ways. As high as heaven is above the earth, that is how far removed He is from us in the realm of holiness (Isa. 55:8–9). Yahweh, by His very character, is completely set apart from the world; and the Jews, in their relationship to Him, are set apart to Him, just as believers throughout all dispensations are set apart to Him. Saint Peter exhorted the Christians that he wrote to, to be holy, **...because it stands written: You will be holy for I am holy** (I Peter 1:16).

"Everyone will respect his mother and his father and you will keep [and, preserve] my Sabbaths; I am Yahweh your God. [Lev. 19:3]

Shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAHR*] means *keep, watch, preserve, guard*. This particular word is used over 400 times in the Old Testament, usually in conjunction with keeping God's Word, His statutes, His ordinances. These are the fifth and the fourth commandments. The fourth commandment connects the Jews to the God who created the Universe—this distinguishes them from the heathen and their gods made with hands.

"Do not turn to idols and do not make for yourselves molten gods; I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 19:4]

This is the second commandment. People think that we have advanced a great deal over the centuries because we do not make idols in our modern society. On the contrary, we do have idols, they are just not fashioned with hands. People practically worship human celebrities—we pay them astronomical salaries; many women would

sleep with a person just because he is a human celebrity; and the more ascetic of us design images of God in our mind that are more like us than they are like Him. When we decide that God should be this way or that and reject His revealed Word as to Who He really is, we are making God in our own image, the absolute worst form of idolatry. What can be more prideful than to design a god to worship who is so much like ourselves?

Some question, well why not Buddha or Krishna? Are these valid deities? The Psalmist writes: **For all the gods of the peoples are idols; but Yahweh made the heavens** (Psalm 96:5). **There is but one God. Know that Yahweh Himself—He is God; it is He Who has made us and His we are** (Psalm 100:3a). **How blessed are the people whose God is Yahweh!** (Psalm 144:15b). **For who is God except Yahweh; and Who is a Rock except our God?** (Psalm 18:31). You can believe whatever you want, but the Bible is exclusive.

""And when you slaughter a sacrifice of peace to Yahweh in regard to your positive volition [and desire], you will slaughter it; [Lev. 19:5]

This stops mid-sentence, but there is a word here that I am going to try to unravel, as it is given roughly eight different renderings in the KJV. The word is *râtsôwn* (רָצוֹן) [pronounced *raw-TSŌN*] and it is rendered *own will, free will, favour, accepted, desire, pleasure, delight*. What seems to be a common thread is the concept of free will and this being a good or a favorable thing. An offering made to God is one that should be made fully from one's own positive volition, apart from coercion, tradition or meaningless ritual; and there should be a desire to do this; a delight to be able to slaughter an animal before God.

""In the day of your sacrifice, it will be eaten or on the following day and anything left over until the third day will be burned with fire. [Lev. 19:6]

The portion of this law which pertains to diet is obvious—meat kept around too long would spoil and should be disposed of and not eaten. The analogy breaks down also; that which represents our Lord should be without spot and without blemish; rotting meat does not fit that profile.

""If in eating it is eaten on the third day, it [is] refuse [or, foul]; it is not acceptable [or, pleasing]; [Lev. 19:7]

The noun to describe three-day-old meat is *pîggûwl* (פִּגְגוּל) [pronounced *pig-GOOL*] and it means *to stink, foul, refuse* and is only found in Lev. 7:18 19:7 Isa. 65:4 Ezek. 4:14. V. 7 ends with the verbal cognate of *râtsôwn*; the Niphal imperfect of *râtsâh* (רָצָה) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] and it means *to be pleased with, to accept favorably*. It is often translated *delight* and that is almost acceptable here. Symbolically, our Lord was sacrificed once, on the cross, and when he had risen from the grave, He was not longer under judgement for our sins; He had paid for them. The continued eating of the sacrifice speaks of continued sacrifice past His perfect sacrifice already rendered on our behalf.

""Furthermore [lit., and] every one eating it will bear his [own punishment for] guilt-iniquity because he has profaned a holy [set apart] [thing] of Yahweh and that one's soul [lit., the soul of the one] will be cut off from his people. [Lev. 19:8]

When we find the word *bear* in connection with the word for *guilt*; what is born is the *punishment* for the iniquity or guilt. Our lives should be in complete separation from the world and to God; and here, that which is sacred, the sacrifice which represents our Lord's sacrifice, is profaned—is made common by eating from it on the third day. Because God has set up specific directives to follow with respect to His sacrifices and because the person involved here did not eat of the sacrifice as specified by God—and nothing should be more important than the sacrifice of Jesus Christ represented by the multifarious animal sacrifices—then that person is cut off from Israel and from the promises made by God to Israel, which are both true and analogous to the promise of eternal life.

Ordinances Dealing with One's Fellow Man

""When you reap the harvest of your land, you will not complete the corner of your field to harvest; you will not complete the gleanings after your harvest. [Lev. 19:9]

What is said here is that a person has an entire field planted in corn, but he is not to harvest his entire field. He is to keep one corner of this field unharvested.

""And your vineyard, you will not strip bare [or, glean]; and neither will you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you will leave them for the poor and for the immigrant [or, the one traveling through]. [Lev. 19:10]

We find this particular law being followed in Ruth 2:2–7 where Ruth goes out to the field of Boaz and gathers a few ears of corn after the reapers had gone through. In this way, Ruth and Boaz met and, as Thieme often said, the key to right man, right woman is not finding the right person but being the right person. Ruth 2:11 tells us that Ruth had a very favorable reputation, which attracted Boaz to her. They were King David's great grand parents who met and fell in love because of this law.

God would bring people through the land under all kinds of pretenses, but primarily to expose them to His Word and to the gospel. These people had to have their basic needs met in order to be responsive to the gospel. **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it** (Heb. 13:2). **If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for [their] body, what use is that?** (I Peter 2:15–16). Note that there is a time to give a person an outright handout and there is a time to allow that person the chance to work for his food. The remaining portion of the field still requires that the poor person or the one who is traveling through to go to the field and pick the corn or the grapes in order to be able to eat. This requires the person to work. Related Scripture can be found in Deut. 24:19–21. **Whoever has the word's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth** (I John 3:17). One of the great works of believers are the local missions found in almost every town which deal with the lost souls. There are those who live on the streets, who have allowed themselves to be conquered by alcohol and drugs, who are cold, desperate and alone. These missions provide them with a hot meal and with food and clothing—and, far more importantly, with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves them and gave Himself for them.

You may be concerned here about the owner of the field. Won't everyone just go into their neighbor's field and get what they need? God set up laws for those who take what remains in the field. **When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat grapes until you are fully satisfied, but you will not put any in your basket. When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you will not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain** (Deut. 23:24–25). So the indigent was allowed to take from the field of a neighbor, but he was neither allowed to harvest nor to carry away what he had harvested in a basket. He was allowed to pluck with his hands and carry away whatever his hands could carry. Furthermore, note the timing of this particular verse. They Jews are in the desert right now, and will be wandering in the desert for another 38–39 years. They do not have vineyards nor do they have fields; God knew the future and devised laws for their future. This is another reason some *experts* do not like the idea that Leviticus was written when it claims to be written. It implies that (1) God knows the future and that (2) Moses had a relationship with God. In the eyes of the expert, this cannot be, so they must find alternative explanations for prophecies and for laws which were fully developed prior to their need.

""You will not steal nor deal falsely nor lie to one another. [Lev. 19:11]

These are the eighth and ninth commandments, respectively. This better helps to define what it means *to bear false witness against your neighbor* in Ex. 20:16. **Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him** (Col. 3:9–10). The update in the New Testament is that we have the Holy Spirit to help

keep us from sin. When we lose the Spirit, we only need name whatever sins we have committed. In this verse, we are not to lie nor are we to deal fraudulently with anyone else. That is, we are not to use half-truths, deception, and so-called white lies to separate a person from his money or possessions. If you are a Christian salesman of any sort, you need to take this to heart. You do not present your product falsely in any way. God will discipline you if you do.

""And you will not swear by my name falsely and [so] profane the name of your God—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:12]

This is a portion of the third commandment—using God's name in emptiness. We do not profane God's name by using it in meaningless ways, such as *oh my God* or *I swear to God* or in profanity or, as is stated here, to back up a lie with God's name. We are tying the Perfect One of the Universe to a lie. This is profanity. God is perfect, just and good and in His perfection, cannot come into contact with that which is not perfect. This is even more profane cause Him to come into contact with that which is specifically false—swearing by God over a falsity is blasphemy.

""You will not exploit your neighbor and take [from him]; the wages [lit., work] of a hired servant will not remain with you until morning. [Lev. 19:13]

This is an interesting set of directives. One word which we have touch on some time ago is the verb *ʿâshaq* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SHAHK*]. BDB gives its meanings as *oppress, wrong, extort*; however, allow me to suggest the rendering *exploit*. Strong's #6231 BDB #798. The word commonly rendered *neighbor* in the KJV is *rêaʿ* (רֵעַ) [pronounced *RAY-ahg*] and it is a person with whom you come into contact. They might live next door, you might do business with them, you run into them in a store, a restaurant, etc. It is not necessarily, in this context, a fellow Jew or a fellow believer or your next-door neighbor, although these would certainly be included. Strong's #7453 BDB #945. Luke 10:29–37 clears up who a neighbor is for us. You are not to *use* a person as a means of gain or to get whatever it is that you want. Although this context places us in the realm of finances, this has wide application; for instance, the male who exploits a female for her sexuality (or, vice versa); the student who copies another student's homework; the used car salesman who misrepresents a car he is selling; the office or hospital worker who cleverly puts his assigned work onto someone else; the executive who steals the work of an underling; the musician who steals the composition of another for profit—these are all examples of someone exploiting his neighbor. There are all kinds of exploitation; one of them is robbery, which is alluded to here. The Hebrew word is *gâzal* (גָּזַל) [pronounced *gaw-ZAHL*], and it is used when something is removed from someone else or taken away. Violence is sometimes involved, but it is not a necessary element to the use of this word. *Rob* is a reasonable translation, but, for me, it seems to tie it too closely to a street mugging or a burglary, and that is too confining. *Remove from, take away from* is perhaps a better way to render this word. What is meant here is that you are not to remove a neighbor from his possessions. Property rights are a cornerstone of the Biblical view of a nation's laws.

At the end of this verse, we actually find the word *work* rather than the word for *wages*. This is also found in Jer. 22:13, Rom 11:6 14:13. What is meant is *wages*. The latter phrase means that someone has done some work for you, they are finished, and you are temporarily withholding their wages for no reason. This does not mean that a company cannot pay its employees a week later, if it is because the paychecks cannot be reasonably cut prior to that time. However, just holding onto someone's money that you owe them because you do not feel like parting with it—that is what is disallowed. Do you have your rent but you don't feel like sending it? You are wrong; that's what this verse tells you. Do you have an unpaid bill and the money to pay it with? That is wrong; that is an application of this verse. Did you hire a paper boy, someone to mow your yard, someone to clean your house, and you are making them return later for their pay when you have it right there—that is wrong. You are to discharge your obligations.

""You will not curse the deaf or before the blind put a stumbling block, but you will fear your God—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:14]

People, for all kinds of reasons, have infirmities. Some are blind, some have speech impediments, so are deaf, some are crippled, some are born retarded. Many children cruelly make fun of those who are disabled, as well as adults. Calling attention to a person's defect by making fun of it is vicious and wrong. The person here has nothing to say to those who lack hearing abilities—they are swearing at them as a joke; they have nothing to do with the blind person other than to place something in his way for him to trip over. These are simply acts of cruelty for someone who is either born different or has later in life lost the use of one of his abilities. One of the very frequently used verbs in the OT is the word *yâra'* (יָרָא) [pronounced *yaw-RAH*] means *fear, fear-respect, reverence*. This is placed here because God can cause the exact same disability to befall us. People suffer various disabilities for a reason, and that reason is not for our entertainment. Sometimes they are under discipline, sometimes they are under conviction, sometimes they are affected by a natural occurrence in the devil's world, and sometimes they are blessed and rewarded in that affliction. In any case, treating them with cruelty and belittling and humiliating them is vicious and falls outside of God's plan for our lives.

""You will not do injustice in judgement; you will not be partial to the poor or defer to the great; in righteousness, you will judge your neighbor. [Lev. 19:15]

The Emphasized Bible has a good interpretive translation: *You shall do no injustice in judging a case; you shall not be partial to the poor or show preference for the mighty, but in righteousness and according to the merits of the case judge your neighbor.* If only all juries could be cognizant of this mandate from God. There is a tendency to side with the underdog, with the afflicted and with the poor particularly when they are in court against a company or a successful, and possibly not likeable, individual. All judicial matters should be determined on the merits of the case. One should be able to mentally and emotionally interchange the plaintiff and the defendant and come up with the exact same verdict based upon the facts. If someone is poor and they have a suit against a faceless company with deep pockets, they should not be awarded a judgement, let alone a vast sum of money because you are sympathetic toward that poor person. Court cases are not to be used to solve the inequities of life but to right that which is wrong. There will always be rich and there will always be poor and a trial is not to be an opportunity to equalize two parties who are on opposite ends of the financial spectrum.

On the other hand, if the defendant is important, well-known, likeable, famous, handsome, attractive—these factors are not to even be taken into consideration. If you are in a place of judgement, then their fate should rest upon the merits and the facts of the case. What is right and just should determine the outcome of any case; not whether or not the parties are likeable or not.

Carefully note here that God's Word does not go out of date. Even though these are things which Moses wrote down 3500 years ago by the mouth of God, these apply to our everyday life. How many books composed a thousand years ago or more still apply to our lives?

""You will not go as a slanderer among your people;⁹³ you will not⁹⁴ take a stand against the blood of your neighbor—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:16]

The Emphasized Bible reads: *You shall not go up and down as a dispenser of gossip and scandal among your people, nor shall you [secure yourself by false testimony or by silence and] endanger the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.* The first portion of this verse is obvious. You do not verbally run other people down. I recall working in an office where three women, all who were likely Christians or, at least, attended church; three women who spent the greater part of their free time complaining about almost every individual that they knew and slandering these people. They spread rumors, they stretched the truth, they exaggerated the facts, and smeared the names and reputations of several colleagues, their husbands and persons that they just happened to have the misfortune of running into them. This is vicious and wrong and God will personally discipline the Christian who is caught up in this activity. Col. 3:9 reads: *But now you also begin to put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech from your mouth.* In fact, now would be a good time to cover **the Doctrine of the Sins of the Tongue—not finished yet!!**

⁹³ The Massoretic text reads *peoples*, but other sources have this in the singular.

⁹⁴ The Samaritan, Targum of Onkelos and the Targum of Jonathan read *neither will you*.

The second half of this verse applies to someone who has been wronged or was a victim of wrongful violence and you have taken a stand against this person. One place where we saw this is when some black people had crosses burned on their lawns or violence was committed against them because they were not living where some thought they should be living—a person who took a stand against those who were wronged has disobeyed God's Word. Some rape victims face this same thing. Violence was committed against them and some take a stand against them.

""You will not hate your brother in your heart; you will resolve [conflicts] with your neighbor so that you do not bear a sin because of him. [Lev. 19:17]

The Bible is realistic: you have an old sin nature and those whom you come into contact with have old sin natures. It only makes sense that you will have disagreements and altercations with the people that you see every day. However, in the event of a disagreement, we are told to simply reason with our neighbor. This word is found twice in this verse. It is the Hebrew word *yâkach* (יָכַח) [pronounced *yaw-KAHK*] and the best place to get a handle on its meaning is to go where it is first found in Gen. 20:16 21:25 24:14, 44 31:37, 42. We will pass over the first reference, as it is in the Niphal, and most of the occurrences of this word are in the Hiphil. In Gen. 21:25, Abraham has a disagreement with Abimelech over well water so Abraham goes directly to Abimelech and *yâkach*'s with him. In Gen. 24:14, it is the woman who speaks to the servant of Abraham who is *yâkach*'ed by God for Isaac (v. 44 is a parallel verse). In Gen. 31:37, Laban and Jacob are having a dispute and Jacob says to place the matter between their respective kinsmen and let them decide (*yâkach*) as neutral third parties. In Gen. 31:42, God *yâkach*'s concerning Laban and Jacob. When there appears to be a conflict, this word is used in the resolve of that conflict, to the outcome of that conflict. When no conflict is involved, then it appears to be the rendering of a decision after thinking things out. Strong's #3198 BDB #406.

Conflicts between old sin natures occur and these conflicts must be resolved in a fair and just manner; reasoning and compromise are essential elements here. If these conflicts remain unresolved, mental attitude sins flair up and you are under sin.

Brothers, even if a man is caught in any misstep, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too don't become tested (Gal. 6:1). The one who says he is in the light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (I John 2:9–11). There is no difference in the moral values espoused in the Old or the New Testaments; they are fundamentally the same, with some differences arising due to the crucifixion of our Lord, the changing of dispensations and the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, hatred was never to be a part of the life of the Jew (or of our lives as Christians). A person filled with hatred and other mental attitude sins is just as evil as the drunkard and the fornicator, if not more so. See **the Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins—not finished yet!** One of the many debts that I owe to the ministry of Bob Thieme was his emphasis upon the importance of avoiding mental attitude sins. He many times on at the point of preaching when he came to a passage that dealt with mental attitude sins. There is nothing more vicious and destructive to the Christian life than one who is filled with mental attitude sins against others and in his life. *Every one who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that not every murderer has eternal life abiding in him* (I John 3:15).

As we go through this book I think to myself how sad that one author denigrated Leviticus as being repetitious and boring; that some congregations never hear what is to be found in this great book. Where else could you find so much practical application? The first half is dedicated to the gospel in shadow form and the second half of Leviticus deals with one's walk after salvation.

""You will not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you will love your neighbor as yourself—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:18]

So many people when they read or hear the sermon on the mount think that the God of the Old Testament is a God of hatred and violence and revenge and that the God of the New Testament is somehow a kinder, gentler

God—as though God changes. **Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever** (Heb. 13:8). **Of old, You did found the earth and the heavens are the work of Your hands; even though they will perish, you will endure; in fact all of them will wear out like a garment, like clothing they will change them and they will be changed,** but He is the same and Your years will not come to an end (Psalm 102:25–27; quoted of Jesus Christ in Heb. 1:10–12). Just as we Christians are commanded to love one another, so God has commanded the Jew to not have mental attitude sins toward his fellow Jew. God is not a God of strife and disagreement, but of harmony and love in the Spirit.

By just living in this world, we will be subject to injustices and people who treat us unfairly. Paul wrote to the Romans: **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right to the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, be at peace with all me. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath—for it stands written:** Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord (Rom. 12:17–19 Deut. 32:35). Notice those all important words: *as far as it depends upon you* and *if it is possible*, be at peace with all men. Most of us realize that there are people out there who we will never get along with as long as we are in these bodies of sin; no matter what we say or do, they will always treat us poorly. I remember working with a woman like that who personally seethed when I was around. I tried several different things, including praying on her behalf; however, if their old sin nature is out of control—that is, they do not know how to use rebound, or if they are unbelievers, they do not have any self-discipline in the realm of certain personal sins, then no amount of praying is going to turn them around. We are tested by these people constantly—in fact, for some of them, that is the only reason that God keeps them around—to test other believers.

Some believers have been short-changed by their pastors because their pastor never rubbed the noses in Lev. 19:18b: **you will not bear a grudge**. Grudges do you no good whatsoever. They are a breeding ground for additional mental attitude sins, for several groups of verbal sins and some overt sins. A person who allows a grudge to fester will see that grudge eat away at their spiritual growth and eat away at their own mental attitude. Carrying a grudge is carrying a huge weight everywhere you go; a weight which holds you back and colors your entire view of the world. Let me not kid you—certainly that grudge can be a burden to the person for whom you hold the grudge; but, more importantly, it is a burden for you. Life is too short. And it does not matter if you are justified to be irritated at someone. Guaranteed that in this world, you will meet people who will give you good reason to be angry with them. They have old sin natures and some are there to test you. However, when you allow them to cause you to carry a grudge, you have lost and you have not trusted your Savior. Step back, give God room, and let Him handle these people. You do not have to cause them trouble at work or in their social lives; you do not need to call them at 3 am from a pay phone and hang up; you do not need to grimace and scowl when you run into them; you do not have to spend your life thinking of a smart remark to make against them in private or in public. Just stand back, rebound, and give God enough room to work. As long as we try to take some form of vengeance, God will stand back, like a gentleman and allow your negative volition to wear itself out. How you ever seen a boxer who continually strikes at the wind because his opponent is too fast for him, and he just wears his arms out throwing worthless punches? God stands back and allows us all the worthless punches that we want to take until our arms grow tired and we let Him work in our behalf.

Finally, **you will love your neighbor as yourself**. This is God's command to us, the perfect tense taking the place of an imperative (which is relatively rare in the Old Testament). We find our Lord quoting this in Matt. 22:39 Mark 12:31 and Luke 10:27, Paul (Rom. 13:9 Gal. 5:14) and James (James 2:8). This has always been God's policy. When Jesus said, **"You have heard that it was said, 'You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy,'"** He was not quoting Scripture entirely but quoting a portion of Scripture and then how it had become distorted by the legalistic Pharisees (e.g., the school of the Shammai). Loving your neighbor carried with it a flip side, as they thought—that flip side being the hatred of one's enemies. That is an incorrect take on God's Word, as our Lord explains in Matt. 5:44–48).⁹⁵ **For the whole Law is fulfilled in one utterance [lit., one word], "You will love your neighbor as yourself."** (Gal. 5:14).

⁹⁵ To be fair, not all Pharisees taught this—The NIV Study Bible quotes Rabbi Nahmanides, who wrote *One should place no limitations upon love for the neighbor, but instead a person should love to do an abundance of good for his fellow being as he does for himself* (p. 169).

Certainly, we must spend time in the New Testament for specific mechanics and doctrines specific to the Church Age; however, there is a great deal of day-to-day guidance to be found throughout the Old Testament. A church which ignores or pays but lip service to the Old Testament, it not functioning on all cylinders.

""You will keep my statutes; you will not allow two kinds of cattle to breed in you fireld and you will not sow with two kinds [of seed] and you will not place upon yourself a garment of two kinds of mixed material. [Lev. 19:19]

Because of this verse, the Jews did not breed the mule; however, they did aparently purchase them, as the prohibition was against the breeding, but not the owning of said animals. When Solomon rode upon David's mule signified that he was the heir to King David's throne (1Kings 1:33, 44) and Solomon later received mules as presents when he became king (2Chron. 9:24).

The point here is not so much with interbreeding cattle, confusion in the corn field or with mis-matched clothing, but the point of this is what fellowship has light with darkness; we must separate and make distinctions. That is all that is occurring here. It is primarily symbolic (although most women would prefer that their men followed that last rule).

V. 20 is another troublesome verse because most of the better translations go with tradition, but not with the language that is found here—in particular, one word:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave, betrothed to a husband...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, she being a bondmaid, acquired for a husband...
KJV	And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that <i>is</i> a bondmaid, betrothed to a husband...
NASB	Now if man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for <i>another</i> man...
NIV	If a man sleeps with a woman who is a slave girl promised to another man...
NRSV	If a man has sexual relations with a woman who is a slave, designated for another man...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And when a man lieth with a woman with seed of copulation, and she a maid-servant, betrothed to a man...

You may wonder why I go through listing these various translations and why I sometimes leave some out. Owen's translation is more or less the same as the *Revised Standard Version*, which has been updated (there ar a few changes); and sometimes the translations are so similar, that I don't list them all. I often leave out *Young's LLiteral Translation* and *The Emphasized Bible* because they contain the correct translation, and the other translations allow me to make a point. The reason I spend any amount of time doing this is I cannot make wholesale changes in a translation without giving some justification for it. Now let's proceed:

The word in question is the one translated *betrothed*, *acquired*, *promised*, *designated*. The word is the feminine singular, Niphal participle of charaph (חָרַף) [pronounced *khah-RAHF*] and, before even discussing its definition, spend a little time and look this word up in 1Sam. 17:10, 26, 36 Psalm 42:10 57:3 74:18 Isa. 37:4 and see if you can even figure out what English word corresponds to charaph. Only because there are so many passages listed would you be able to see that this word is consistently translated either *defy* or *reproach*. Charaph is found 39 times in the Bible and it is consistently translated *defy* or *reproach* 37 times.⁹⁶ It's noun cognate is found over 75 times in the Hebrew translated **every single time** as a form of *reproach*. There are times when one word is so close to another that just a slight slip of the pen can affect its meaning. That is not the case here. A reproach to oneself, one's own family or one's inner circle, is to bring disgrace and dishonor upon yourself and/or them. When you reproach someone else, you defy, discredit, shame, or rebuke them; when someone reproaches you, they defy, discredit, shame or rebuke you. The Niphal is the passive stem, so the woman has been shamed or discredited

⁹⁶ The other exception is Isa 18:6, which reads: ...beast of the earth *shall winter* upon them...

""If a man lies with a woman a laying of seed and she [is] a slave, shamed [or, discredited] with respect to [another] man and she has not been yet purchased [lit., in redeeming, she has not been redeemed] or there has not been given freedom, an inquisition [possibly with a scourging] will be [initiated] and they will not be put to death because she was not free. [Lev. 19:20]

Before we interpret, we should cover a little more of the language. In the Hebrew, there is often a doubling of verbs, but here we have a doubling of verbs where the stems are different. The verb for ransom, *pādāh* (פָּדָה) [pronounced *paw-DAWH*], is first found in the Hophal infinitive (the Hophal is the causative passive stem) and then in the Niphal perfect with the negative (the Niphal is the simple passive stem). What has happened is that a man has had sex with her outside the bounds of marriage and it is not certain whether she has been raped; as she has been shamed and/or discredited. The point is that we do not know if there is a guilty party here and because she was not free, there could have been coercion. One might render that portion of God's word less literally as *in the redemption process, she has not yet been redeemed*. You will note in the later verses who is considered responsible and who must make atonement for himself. Regardless of the fact that she had been discredited, she is not the one who takes an offering to the priest. The man, on the other hand, could have thought that everything was okay and this is her mode of behavior. In other words, this is a matter which requires an investigation and the man must bring a sacrifice to atone for his wrongdoing.

Then we have a word found only here with a very similar word in Ezek. 34:12. The KJV translates this as scourging, and that is the traditional Jewish rendering, however, this feminine noun is very close in form to the verb usually translated *seek*. Therefore, it would be reasonable to translate this *a seeking, an inquisition, a inquiry*. The translation *scourging* comes from the fact that some societies, in order to extract the truth from a prisoner, rather than mirandize them and question them, they were scourged, suffering great pain. Going to the Septuagint is not necessarily helpful here, because that translation was made a millennium later. Being that we have a just and righteous God, I wouldn't necessarily rule out a punishment here.

""Therefore [lit., and] he will bring a guilt [-offering] for himself to Yahweh to the door of the tent of meeting—a ram for a guilt offering. [Lev. 19:21]

In any case, the man certainly bears some or all of the guilt, even if seduced, so that he must appeal to God's mercy. In context, we know that this is a *guilt-offering*.

""And the priest will make atonement for him with the ram of guilt before the face of Yahweh for his sin which he has committed [lit., sinned] his sin which he has committed [lit., sinned] will be forgiven him. [Lev. 19:22]

It is unclear who is at fault so there was not a specific punishment associated with it. Why does this deal specifically with a slave? This is because a free woman would most likely be an Israelite and her virginity would be intact and anyone who disgraced her verbally or physically would likely face her family. We will deal with the loss of virginity, women who are engaged and free women in Deut. 22 (which is not a parallel passage but additional truth on a related subject).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Miscellaneous Ordinances

""And when you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, you will count as uncircumcised the uncircumcision thereof—their fruit [for] three years is to you [as] uncircumcised—it will not be eaten. [Lev. 19:23]

This again is a one time word—*will count as uncircumcised*—is found only in Heb. 2:16 as well; however, with the company it keeps, we may assume that this is its meaning. The upshot of this is that the fruit of a newly planted

fruit tree is not to be eaten from for three years. I don't know why, exactly, nor do I have an application for this day and time either. I hope one of my sources will supply one.

""And in the fourth year, all their fruit will be holy, celebrations of thanksgiving to Yahweh.
[Lev. 19:24]

After planting a new grove of trees, heathen and idolaters, would attempt to speed up the growth process by incantations, sprinklings and other heathen practices designed to entreat the heathen gods for a quick and bountiful harvest. This would be unnecessary for the Jew, as he could not eat from the tree until the fourth year anyway. There was also an heathen practice to offer up the first-fruits of a tree to prevent them from falling under the disapproval of the gods—since the Jews could not come into contact with the unclean fruit, this also prevented them from falling into those idolatrous practices.⁹⁷ The word translated *celebrations of thanksgiving* is *chillûwlîym* (חִלְלִי לַיִם) [pronounced *khil-lu-LEEM*], which means *celebration of thanksgiving, celebration, merry-making, praising*. It is only found only here and in Judges 9:27. Here, this word was used for the celebration of the fourth year of a tree when it brings forth its first real harvest of fruit. That fruit was to be set aside for a praise-offering or a *thanksgiving offering* [which is this word] to God. The fruit would be eaten in conjunction with a *celebration of thanksgiving* to God. We don't hear of this more often as it was to be done only upon entering into the land. The trees that the Israelites planted anew upon their entrance into the land were not to be eaten from for three years, and the fourth year would be the year that they *celebrate and partake of the harvest*. In Judges 9:27, it refers to a perversion of this word where the Israelites haul their produce into a heathen temple and celebrate. I will render this as a *thanksgiving-celebration* or *celebrations of thanksgiving*. Strong's #1974 BDB #239.

In the spiritual realm, things require maturing before they are set apart to God. At salvation, we are in no position to go out and witness to everyone that we see. In most situations, we should not even reveal to anyone that we are Christians. This should be a secret, because all newborn Christians do in their enthusiasm is muddy up the water when it comes to evangelism, introducing all kinds of meaningless issues.

""And in the fifth year, you may eat their fruit to add for you its produce—I am Yahweh, your God.
[Lev. 19:25]

In the fourth year, when there is a reasonable yield, that yield belongs to God and it is set apart to God. After that, the tree belongs to those who planted it.

""You will not eat over [or, upon] the blood. You will not practice divination or witchcraft.
[Lev. 19:26]

We have a couple of mandates here. We are dealing with various and sundry laws, so they are not necessarily tied together by any sort of the theme. This verse has nothing to do with the prohibition against eating the blood of an animal. Here, the Jew is told not to eat *over* the blood or *above* the blood (a prohibition which will be violated in 1Sam. 14:32–33). Interestingly enough, this law is added in with those against divination and the practice of witchcraft. It is likely that some forms of divination or witchcraft were practiced using blood.

The word for serpent is *nâchâsh* (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAWSH*] and the word for *practicing divination* is *nâchash* (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], whose root word means *to whisper*, and what is involved is casting spells, communicating with demons, and diving information which is not ours to divine. We have already seen this word several times in Gen. 30:27 44:5, 15; and the word for serpent goes back, of course, to Gen. 3:1–2, 4. The verb is first used by Laban, which told him that he had been blessed because of Jacob. In Gen. 44, we find that this is a term used by Joseph to indicate that he knew a stolen cup was in the saddle of Benjamin. Therefore, this certainly means searching for those things which are hidden from the naked eye through demonic means. Serpent = Strong's #5175 Practice divination = Strong's #5172 BDB #638.

⁹⁷ James Freeman's *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 93.

The last verb is also a word whose root meaning is to hum, like the noise of insects (although it could also mean *to cover*). It is the word *ʿānan* (אָנָן) [pronounced *aw-NAHN*] and in the Poel it seems to mean *to practice astrology*, although it is a tough call. We should examine where else it is found. Its first occurrence in Gen. 9:14 is likely a mistake and actually the word *ʿānân*. This is its actual first appearance in the Bible and it is associated with one who divines the future, but this would not be a synonym but a person in the same category. Deut. 18:10 contains an additional prohibition, linking a person who *ʿānan*'s with one who interprets omens, a sorcerer, one who casts spells, a medium, a spiritist and one who calls upon the dead. These are all different types of demon activity, indicating that *ʿānan* is related but different from those activities. This word is also found in Judges 9:37 2Kings 21:6 2Chron. 33:6 Isa. 2:6 57:3 Jer. 27:9 Micah 5:12. This practice is associated in Isa. 2:6 with influences from the East and is related to the practices of the Philistines at that time. In Jer. 27:9 they are associated with those who foretell the future apart from God. Bowing to translations from before, I will go with Astrologer, recognizing that even if this is the actual sense, I would not classify it with those who produce and read astrology today for entertainment value; however, it is quite similar to those who read and take astrology seriously as a means of foretelling the future.

""You will not round off the hair on your temples [or, shave in a circle around your head]; nor [will; you] mar the edge of your beard. [Lev. 19:27]

It is difficult to take something contextually in this chapter, since it jumps around from topic to topic; however, I would think that these particular hairstyles are not in of themselves evil or wrong, but are closely associated with those who do practice divination of one form or another and it was the hairstyle of choice of those who were astrologers. According to Herodotus, the Arabs would shave around their heads and allow a tuft of hair to stand up to honor Bacchus, the god of wine; and his host of nymphs and satyrs. Therefore this hair cut was forbidden the Jews to keep them separate from the cults that were and were to be. These hair styles and their connection to heathen gods still found today in India and in China (we have all seen pictures of certain Chinese with a long braided tuft of hair coming from an otherwise shaved head). There was also an heathen custom of cutting off one's hair at the death of a loved one and placing it in the sepulcher upon the corpse as an offering to the gods. The context of the next verse seems to agree with that.

If it was the hairstyle specifically that was forbidden in and of itself, then all those children who wore this style in the 90's were in direct violation of this law. According to the NIV Study Bible, some orthodox Jews still follow this till this day.

The principle illustrate here is that we are to avoid even the appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). For an unbeliever who reads astrology columns and occasionally purchases publications to do with his or her sign—this is not an issue even slightly in evangelism; you would be wrong to make it so. For the believer—there is really no reason to consult an astrological column. This doesn't mean that you run out of the room when you hear astrology mentioned; you just do not have a need to consult it for yourself.

""And cuttings on account of the dead [lit., soul] you will not make in your flesh; and you will [not] tattoo [lit., set] any marks upon you—I am Yahweh.⁹⁸ [Lev. 19:28]

An heathen custom when someone had died was to inflict oneself with pain by cutting or scratching oneself on the arms, hands and head when in mourning and my guess is that this would somehow atone for the sins of the recently deceased. This was practiced by the Babylonians, the Armenians, the Scythians and the Romans and this tradition is carried into the present day by the Arabs, Persians and Abyssinians. The practices of these verses are also alluded to in Lev. 21:5 Deut. 14:1 Jer. 16:6 48:37. The tattoos are a remembrance for one who has died would be a reasonable guess, as this is its context (it is tied to the negative at the beginning of the verse). If memory serves, Jews were never big on tattoos for any reason due to this passage. A tattoo is a man-made change, which is unclean and unholy. It was a sin to disfigure the body as this was a common activity of the resident heathen, and the Jews were to be separate from them. I would classify this a purely ceremonial, although I would personally not have a desire for a tattoo of any kind.

⁹⁸ The Septuagint, Onkelos and Syriac read *I Yahweh am your God*.

One of the reasons that I often cover the vocabulary of the verse is that is the entire basis for the interpretation. You must know exactly what God's Word says first in order to interpret it. As I have given many examples, six or seven of our very best translations can agree on an inaccurate translation because that is their interpretation, which is sometimes valid and sometimes not. V. 29 is a good example. Let's look at some of the poorer translations of v. 29:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Do not profane your daughter by causing her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and become full of wickedness.
KJV	Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.
NASB	Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land may not fall to harlotry, and the land become full of lewdness.
NIV	Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution, and be filled with wickedness.
NRSV	Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, that the land may become prostituted and full of depravity.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thou dost not pollute thy daughter to cause her to go a-whoring, that the land go not a-whoring, and the land hath been full of wickedness.

And, as any clear-thinking person can see, v. 29 basically says do not make your daughter a prostitute. Parents read this and think *duh squared*. I would never do that—and, as v. 29 is usually translated, I would have to agree that very few believing or unbelieving parents would ever do this to their own daughter. As translated by most translations, we have a verse which narrowly applies to one-tenth of one percent.

We begin with the 2nd masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *châlal* (חָלַל) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*] and its root means *to bore*, by implication meaning *wound, dissolve*. These are not the meanings of the word as used, but the root from which it comes. It means *pollute, defile, profane*.⁹⁹ *Profane* is something properly applied to God and that which is holy, such as the Sabbath (see Lev. 20:3 Neh. 13:18 Ezek. 23:39).¹⁰⁰ Although I personally like the word *defile*, it is on the archaic side for more; however, because of the recent trend of environmentalism, *pollute* has returned to us and its present-day meaning is apt. Another outstanding rendering (when not in reference to God or that which is holy) is the word *corrupt*, with additional synonyms *sully* and *contaminate*. See Gen. 49:4 Ezek. 28:16 This word is totally mistranslated in the KJV in Psalm 89:31, 34.

Zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*] generally means *to commit adultery* and less often *to commit fornication*, according to Strong's. The key is the subject and the object. When the subject is married, they are committing adultery (Judges 19:4) and when they are not married, they are fornicating (which is committing adultery prior to marriage). This is clearly illustrated by Hos. 4:13: *Therefore, your daughters fornicate and your daughters-in-law commit adultery* (a different word than *zânâh*). This word is most often used of Israel pursuing other gods besides Yahweh (Ex. 34:15 Lev. 20:5 Judges 6:33). The only sense in which we should translate this *a-whoring* in connection with an unmarried woman is in the modern-day sense when a young lady with several sex-partners is called a *whore*. Now we can properly translate this verse and properly interpret it, which is going to affect a lot more than one-tenth of one percent of the population with female children.

""Do not corrupt your daughter causing her to engage in fornication; so that the land does not fall into fornication and the land becomes full of [pre-planned] evil. [Lev. 19:29]

Today, many parents accept that their children engage in sex outside of marriage and, rather than even bother to strongly disapprove, they hand out condoms—hoping, I suppose, to be modern and with it. Even on a sadder note, many parents encourage this activity by their own behavior. How many young men and women have been exposed to their own mothers having overnight guests—some on a very regular basis. How can a child exposed

⁹⁹ *Châlal* also means *begin* primarily when found in the Hiphil stem (see Gen. 11:6 Deut. 16:9 2Chron. 31:10), and rarely in the Piel (Deut. 20:6 28:30).

¹⁰⁰ For those who cannot distinguish between profanity, obscenity and the use of expletives, profanity is properly taking God's name in vain, by using in conjunction with expletives or using it in such a way as to trivialize God, as in *oh my God*.

to that ever tell right from wrong in the realm of their own sexuality? Any Christian mother who has overnight guests is out of fellowship for sex outside of marriage and for corrupting their own children. This is not a sin which affects only the participants; this is a sin which can affect the happiness and marital stability of one's own son or daughter for decades into the future. What results is that the inhabitants of the land become involved in various evil activities which require forethought and pre-planning. They don't just spend some of their time engaged in doing wrong, they spend much of their time thinking about it and planning it. Recall Gen. 6:5: **Then Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** If you don't understand that, ask any predatory male on prom night or, on any date in general. They can seem to be the nicest guys, yet their hearts are filled with pre-planned out evil. Furthermore, by application, even though this is not being specifically taught here: how many fathers teach their sons that by sleeping with several women, this somehow makes them a stud or a real man?

""My Sabbaths you will keep and my sanctuary you will revere—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:30]

This chapter began with the mention of Sabbaths; this indicates that we are drawing to a close.

""Do not turn to [one with] a ventriloquist demon or wizards; do not seek to be defiled [or, made unclean] by them—I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 19:31]

The first substantive here is וְדַבָּרִים (וְדַבָּרִים) [pronounced ow^bv] which properly means *to mumble*; in that way, it can mean a *water bottle* or a *skin-bottle*, because of the way it sounds; it is always in the plural in this case. It also is a reference to the *ventriloquist demon*, one who speaks through a person (it is often translated *medium* for that reason). Because of its speaking quality, it is often translated *a familiar spirit* in the KJV. We find this in Lev. 20:6, 27 Deut. 18:11 1Sam. 28:3, 7–9 2Kings 21:6 23:24 1Chron. 10:13 2Chron. 33:6 Job 32:19 Isa. 8:19 19:3 29:4. This is a demon which usually possesses a person and speaks through that person (this can all be seen in the 1Sam. 28 passage).

יִדְדֵי־אֱוִנִים (יִדְדֵי־אֱוִנִים) [pronounced yid-d'ō-NEE] refers to a person who is demon-possessed. The KJV uses the rendering *wizard*, but this conjures up a cartoon character in most peoples' minds. These may also speak through their host; although this demon possesses the body of its person whereas the וְדַבָּרִים demon only works through that person's vocal chords (some Christians who speak in tongues allow the working of the וְדַבָּרִים demon; this close contact with this deonic entity accounts for their trances, ecstatic behavior and, on occasion, visions).

Defiled is the word תָּמְאָה (תָּמְאָה) [pronounced *taw-MAY*] means *to make unclean, to be unclean, to defile*; and *to pronounce unclean* in the Piel. Although in the Church Age, one cannot be a Christian and simultaneously possessed by a demon (as we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit), it is unclear in the Old Testament. In either dispensation, a believer can be inordinately influenced by the וְדַבָּרִים demon. Obviously, any demonic involvement defiled the Jew, whether a believer or not.

Let's look at how several translations begin v. 32:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You will rise up before the hoary head...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Before a hoary head shalt thou rise up,...
KJV	Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head,...

The first thing that came to my mind as I read this is *what the hell are we talking about?* *Hoary head* is the word שֵׂבִיבָה (שֵׂבִיבָה) [pronounced $\text{say-}^B\text{VAWH}$] simply means *gray-headed* and refers to someone who has come to an old age (implying that there was less baldness among the Jews at that time).

""You will rise before the [one with] gray hair and you will honor the face of an old man and you will revere [and fear] your God—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 19:32]

When an older person would come into your presence, the Jews were to stand up out of respect for their age; God has kept them alive for a long time and we are to have respect for that.

""When an immigrant stays with you in your land, you will not do him wrong. [Lev. 19:33]

It is common for many people of any given country to exploit those who come into their country. This is forbidden to the Jews. Notice that Yahweh adds the phrase *in your land* as they are not their yet and it will be their children and their children's descendants who will read and learn these words and obey them.

""As the native among you is to you, [so] the immigrant who stays with you—furthermore [lit., and] you will love him as yourself—for [this is how you treat] strangers—I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 19:34]

The Jews are a light to the Gentile world. They are a nation related directly to the True God of the Universe. Therefore their wisdom and relationship to God should be totally clear to the outside world and some Gentiles will travel to Israel to know Yahweh. Others will just pass through, for one reason or another—but God brings them through to be evangelized. Jews are to treat all immigrants with love and respect—they represent God to these people and they should represent God's love to these people.

""You will do not wrong in judgement, in measures, in weight or quantity; [Lev. 19:35]

In matters of trade and commerce; in the civil and criminal courts, all immigrants are to be treated with the same rights and respect as any Israelite would receive. One of the influences in our country is that, in general, all who have immigrated to our land can find legal recourse in the courts; revenge and protection in our court system, where their origin is not an issue. This should be the case for any client nation to God. However, the Jew were mandated by law to treat the Gentiles differently in some matters, particularly in the realm of money lending. One Jew was not to lend money to another with interest, particularly when it had to do with that Jew getting back on his feet (Lev. 25:35–38); however, the Jews were allowed to charge interest when lending money to Gentiles, because, generally speaking, that was strictly a business deal (Deut. 23:20); furthermore, the debts of the Gentiles were not canceled at the sabbatical year (Deut. 15:1–3).

""You will have just balances, just weights, a just ephah and a just hin—I am Yahweh, your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. [Lev. 19:36]

Recall that an ephah is approximately a bushel and a hin is roughly a gallon. These are just the common system of measurements used at that time. There was not a bureau of weights and measures during that time period, as the NIV Study Bible points out. A bureaucrat did not come out unannounced and check your weights and measures, which means it would have been easy to short-change the Gentile (or anyone else this person did not like. We find this topic also mentioned in Deut. 25:13–18 Prov. 11:1 16:11 20:10, 23 Amos 8:5 Micah 6:10–11. What other contemporary system of law strictly required that all foreigners be treated fairly in the realm of trade and commerce? Why was this so emphasized? The Jews represented to True god of the Universe. The Gentile who dealt with them knew they wre related directly to God. Like the unbeliever of today, as soon as a point of hypocrisy is discovered, the unbeliever immediately cites this as typical of Christians. We will always be under close scrutiny because we stand with the perfect Man of the Universe. God not only did this so that the Jews developed a reputation for fairness in trade, but because they represented Him in all activities and how could God be represented by deception and chicanery? Our lifestyle likewise should be characterized by integrity and honesty. When you read this portion of God's Word in your daily devotional, did you realize that you are being taught something in this verse?

""You will observe all my statutes and all my ordinances and you will do them—I am Yahweh."" [Lev. 19:37]

There is no mistaking the authority which accompanies these laws.

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

Leviticus 20

Leviticus 20:1–26

Outline of Chapter 20:

- Vv. 1–7 **Demon-related offenses and their respective reprisals**
- Vv. 8–12 **The attack of the institution of marriage and family and their penalties**
- Vv. 13–21 **Other sexual sins and related punishments**
- Vv. 22–27 **Summary and conclusion**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Up until now, we have learned what is a violation of God's law and what causes a person to become unclean. In Lev. 20, we see the punishment for certain acts of sin.

Demon-related Offenses and Their Respective Reprisals

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying [Lev. 20:1]

What is amazing is the one book which is almost entirely a word-for-word quote from Jesus Christ is one of the least read and least understood books of the Bible; written off, as I have mentioned, by some as dry and technical (the implication being that spending time there was not worth the bother).

"And to the people of Israel you will say, 'Any man of the people of Israel or of the immigrants who temporarily reside in Israel who gives any of his children [lit., gives from his seed] to Molech—he will be put to death! The people of the land will stone him with stones.' [Lev. 20:2]

I don't believe that we have seen much in the way of consequences yet. When someone became unclean, instructions were given him to become clean once again. However, here, not only is some religion spoken ill of, but it is punishable by death. here, the giving to Molech of children is not as a future temple prostitute, but as a human sacrifice to appease Molech.

The type of death penalty is interesting. Here, the death is a community effort. It takes more than just one person throwing stones. It would require at least a handful of men in order for this to be successful. One man picking up and throwing several stones would just take far too long. This meant that not only did it have to be decided that the death penalty was the reasonable punishment, but that several men had to agree to carry the punishment out.

"I Myself will set My face against that man and I will cut him off from among his people because of his children [lit., because from his seed] he has given to Molech, thus defiling My sanctuary and profaning My holy name. [Lev. 20:3]

There is more punishment than death—Yahweh will set His face against this man, cut him off from his people. His behavior toward his children, his total lack of regard for their safety, which is almost inbred, is lost and such a man is degenerate almost beyond belief. His actions, who resides in the holy land, defiles the sanctuary which speaks of our Lord and defiles His holy name (His reputation).

"And if the people of the land in hiding they hide their eyes from that man when he gives from his seed to Molech and does not put him to death; [Lev. 20:4]

Here is where the Israelites think that the punishment was too stern, so they back off. What has occurred is equivalent to first degree murder of the most degenerate kind. Such a parent does not deserve to live and the society in which he lives should not turn their back on their responsibility to legally put him to death.

"Then I will set my face against that man and against his family and will cut them off from among their people and all committing fornication after him in committing fornication after Molech. [Lev. 20:5]

There is a double meaning here; there did occur, in some of the phallic cults, some fornication which did occur between the congregation and the temple priestesses. Furthermore, some young children were groomed for that position. But more importantly, those who left the worship of Yahweh for the worship of Molech, regardless of the depth of their commitment, were committing adultery against Yahweh. It is not unlike the errant husband who commits adultery—the depth of the extra-marital relationship is only somewhat an issue; the important issue is the adultery itself.

"And the person who turns to the ventriloquist demon and to ones who are demon-possessed, committing fornication after them, I will set My face against that person and I will cut him off from among his people. [Lev. 20:6]

Those who turned to or sought out those involved with demons received one punishment (being cut off from their people—because should such a one seek his own God?). Those who became demon-possessed or allowed demons to speak through them, they were put to death (Lev. 20:27).

To seek such a person was to commit adultery; to commit fornication with a demon who is not your husband. You can seek God in your life or you can seek that which is demonic (which may not seem demonic). **For Yahweh has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit; just like a wife from youth when she is rejected** (Isa. 54:5–6). God speaks of Israel as His wife and when Israel seeks after demons in idolatry, this is the spiritual equivalence of adultery.

As before, the degeneracy of the person is bad enough as would be the lack of social commitment from the Israelites (which would occur from time to time was also depolarable); in times like these, Yahweh had to become directly involved. It is similar when we witness or pray (or do neither). God will take up the slack for our inactivity and our lives will be inferior for those choices; however, if it is time for a person to be witnessed to, God will see that it gets done, regardless of our participation. For your husband is your maker, Whose name is Yahweh of the armies, and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth.

"Set yourselves apart and be holy for I am Yahweh, your God.¹⁰¹ [Lev. 20:7]

The people have a responsibility to God and to their fellows to be faithful in all that God has called them to do.

The Attack of the Institution of Marriage and Family and Their Penalties

"Keep My statutes and do them; I am Yahweh Who sets you apart [or, makes you holy]. [Lev. 20:8]

We have the same verb used in Lev. 20:7 and 8; in v. 7 it is in the Hithpael, which is the reflexive stem of the Piel (the Jews are to do this to themselves) and in v. 8, the word is in the Piel, the intensive stem. In sanctification,

¹⁰¹ The Western Samaritan and the Septuagint read: *because holy am I—Yahweh your God.*

there are two sides—what choices the Israelites made after salvation and what God has chosen to do on their behalf to keep them separate.

"For every one who curses his father or his mother will be put to death—he has cursed his mother and father—his blood [is] upon him. [Lev. 20:9]

Respect for adults and respect for authority is an absolute in God's eyes. If a child is raised without that or a generation is allowed to grow without this respect, they become a cancer which eat away at the society. We as a society struggle with such foolish things as five years of juvenile hall for young children who murder; whether an older child who murders should be tried as an adult; whether a child is mentally impaired or emotionally disturbed.¹⁰² This is not God's viewpoint. A child who merely curses his parents should die. As a member of the baby boomer generation, we have permissively raised one of the most undisciplined generation of children who have raised an even less respectful, undisciplined generation of children and we will pay the piper for it. As we ease into retirement with weakened bodies, as we take great quantities of our society's resources in our retirement, we will face a generation who cannot support us in any way shape or form with social security, a generation that will have no respect for us; and many will despise us. Without claiming to be a prophet, I think that it is painfully clear that in the next twenty years, we will see assaults by youth on our generation such as has never been seen before in the history of our country. We will be physically assaulted, murdered, robbed, have our houses broken into without much of a regard for our lives if we happened to be there; and, those of the generation who have not turned to crime, will assault us politically. With the degenerate lives that we led and with the permissiveness that we raised our children, we will reap what we have sown.

And far worse than all of that is that we have raised two generations of children without absolutes. We wanted to do whatever felt good and we justified it to ourselves intellectually with such garbage as situation ethics. We demanded churches with watered-down information—many of which teach, if they are fundamental at all, just the gospel; and more of which are social clubs for moral people and a forum for the social gospel. In our schools, they will hand out condoms but become quite indignant if someone tries to hand out Bibles. We will pay for that. We will pay for the absolute stupidity of raising a child with the options of deciding whatever he wants to about God. This was a cop-out because we have not worshipped God, we worshipped ourselves; and we did not go to the trouble of raising our children properly. We did not teach them that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man—the man Jesus Christ. When you raise a child without God or with the idea that God is some kind of an option in their lives, quite a bit less important than their education and the kind of car that they drive, then we will pay for it. When we see or read about the wholesale slaughtering of those in our generation in the news, don't think that we are the innocent party. We raised those who raised those who will kill us—we raised them without God, without morality and without respect for our authority. We have tried to control today's youth with medicine instead of with discipline, actually thinking that 5–10% of our youth cannot control themselves without being medically sedated. It is easy to digress when faced with a passage like this.

The last phrase will be explained in v. 11.

"And a man who commits adultery with the wife of a man, who commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor,¹⁰³ the adulterer will be [caused to be] put to death and the adulteress [lit., in dying, he will be caused to be put to death, the man committing adultery and the woman committing adultery]. [Lev. 20:10]

¹⁰² Being mentally impaired is never an issue to God. Having worked around children, there are mentally impaired and emotionally disturbed children who lead decent, moral lives; people who are likeable and who are gentle. There are also those with low I.Q.'s who have a tendency toward criminal activity. The latter group should be prosecuted when they commits acts of crime against society. Their mental condition is not an issue.

¹⁰³ It is possible that this should read: **And a man who commits adultery with the wife of a neighbor, the adulterer will be put to death and the adulteress.** It is possible that some of the words in this verse were mistakenly written down twice.

To understand the language a bit better, there is no word for *with* in this verse; however, our translation of *commits adultery* is the translation of a verb. We do have a verb which corresponds almost exactly with the Hebrew: the word *cuckold*. However, it does not necessarily communicate.

To help understand the language, *put to death* is in the Hophal, which is the causative passive stem. The subject receives the action of the verb.

Part of the reason we have raised two generations of degenerate children is that the most basic unit of society, the marriage unit, is not inviolate any more. The dissolution of marriage is not only permitted, but encouraged repeatedly by friends, therapists, those in the media. God takes marriage seriously—seriously enough to demand the death penalty for those who commit adultery. This does not mean that the Jews followed this in every generation and sometimes they followed it selectively, killing the woman but not the man. However, the Bible is clear on God's position here.

However, I need to be clear on what is taught here and compare it with Scripture. The man in this verse is any man, married or unmarried. Both he and the woman are to be executed. However, if a married man commits adultery with an unmarried woman, they are not executed, but the woman is brought into the family (Deut. 22:13–30). I realize that many of you will not like that, but that was God's plan for the Jews at that time. I personally believe that no matter how devastating adultery is to a marriage, I personally believe that the husband, generally speaking, always suffers more when his wife is unfaithful than the wife does when the husband is unfaithful. You can label that sexist or a double-standard if you would like, but the Law comes from God and the opinion is mine. Similarly, I believe that a woman is more expressive of her emotions, if not over-dramatic—but that is in no way a measure of the intensity of the emotions. Concerning the difference in punishment for the same offense, Ralph Gower writes: *This was because the woman was the fundamental centre of the family, and for her to be unfaithful would be for her to destroy the family. This was not considered true of the man.*¹⁰⁴

"The man who lays with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness—in dying, the two of them will be put to death; their blood is upon them. [Lev. 20:11]

This crime is even worse than adultery. We have a child here who is fornicating with his mother or with his step-mother. Not only is this a gross sin, but one punishable by death. This also tells us when a child is old enough to be subject to the full force of the law—when he is sexually mature enough to copulate, he is mature enough to face the full consequences of the law for his actions. This is adultery, punishable by death, and the responsibility for their deaths is theirs for their degenerate sins—that is what is means by saying **their blood is upon them**. The shedding of their own blood—their deaths by execution—is their responsibility; they brought it on themselves. Bullinger calls this a synecdoche [pronounced *syn-EK-do-kee*] of the species where the word *blood* stands in for the word *guilt*.

"And a man who lays with his daughter-in-law, in dying, [the] two of them will be put to death. They have committed incest [lit., a confusion]; their blood is upon them. [Lev. 20:12]

One of the words here, the meaning of *tevel* (תֵּבֵל) [pronounced *TEH-ve*] could be very difficult to determine, as it occurs only twice in the Bible (Lev. 18:23 20:12). It is used with beastiality in the first passage and incest with this passage. Therefore, it cannot mean either of those things. What helps us with this word is that it's verbal cognate is *bâlal* (בָּלַל) [pronounced *baw-LAL*] found at the other end of the Strong's Hebrew Lexicon. As a distinction, *bêyth* with a dagesh (a dot) so pronounced *b* and *vêyth* without a dagesh is pronounced ^bv (a very soft *b* and a more pronounced *v*); however, they are the same letter in Hebrew. The verb is used much more often and it means to *minge*, *mex confuse*, *confound* and it is from this that we determine that *tevel* means *confusion*.

The punishment which our society metes out for our criminals is unbelievably insipid. God's Word would empty out 90% of our jails and many of those who are moral criminals who walk the streets. Certainly our society would

¹⁰⁴ *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, p. 75.

never permit such a thing because we are not strong enough—but God's Word tells us that this is what crime is and this is how it is dealt with. And note the most basic unit of society, the marriage unit, when attacked, is given full support by God.

An issue raised in our permissive society is that the law and government should not be involved when it is a matter of personal freedom which does not involve immediate harm to another individual. They consider things such as drug usage and sexual immorality outside the boundaries of the government. This is not taught in God's Word. God has set specific boundaries and specific punishments. Even though we are too short-sighted to see the logical result of acts which bear no immediate physical harm to anyone other than the one committing the act; God sees their logical results and has the perfect solution. Some of us are too short-sighted even yet to realize the great harm that permissiveness and drug usage have brought to our society. The criminal act of using drugs is not something which affects only the user. Our toleration of drug usage has been foolish and we will pay for that. We have made the mistake to not treat adultery as a crime and our society has become tremendously unstable because of that. We actually have born-again believers who commit adultery and they think it is okay because they are in love. They are wrong and I only hope that they know enough doctrine that when they are disciplined by God that they actually understand why.

Other Sexual Sins and Related Punishments

Lev. 18:12–14, 19, 22–24

"And a man who lies with a male as with a woman, [the] two of them have done an abhorrent act; in dying, they will be put to death—their blood is upon them. [Lev. 20:13]

We have had this term for *male* before, and I have shown you that the same word is used primarily, if not exclusively, for those who are *males* (as opposed to a collective term for *mankind*) (see Lev. 18:22).

I have once heard it said that there is only one passage in the Bible which undeniably forbids homosexuality. This was pure propaganda by homosexuals who do not realize that is all that it takes in order to make a prohibition valid in God's Word. However, that is also a misconception, as we have seen when we covered the doctrine of homosexuality. When we tolerate homosexuality, we will see it proliferate beyond what is even imaginable. This is not because there are 10 or 20% people who are born homosexuals who are finally allowed to practice it; this is because there are people who can be affected by the influence of homosexuality; people who will, at a very early age, experiment with those of their own sex and come to associate sexual gratification with those of their own sex. What happens around us does affect our moral growth. The child raised with the understanding that sexual promiscuity is absolutely wrong, as is homosexuality, is far less likely to become involved in homosexual acts as opposed to the child raised to believe that sexual promiscuity is a valid personal choice and that homosexuality is a valid alternative lifestyle. God is not quite this liberal, prescribing death to those who engage in homosexual acts. To head off the 1% (as Thieme called them); this is death under the law as applied to society as a whole. This is not a call for vigilantism. That is just one old sin nature attacking another.

"And a man who takes a wife and her mother also—it [is] [pre-planned] evil; they will be burned with fire, both he and they, that there be no [pre-planned] evil among you. [Lev. 20:14]

It is absolutely wrong for a man to have sexual relations, let alone, a marriage, with a mother and her daughter. This kind of a sin involved great forethought and preplanning and God demands that such persons be burned with fire. It is not really clear to me whether this is the mode of punishment (death by fire) or whether this is what will be done to the body after the person is executed. I am only aware of one instance where a person is burned by fire, and this takes place after and his family are stoned to death (Joshua 7:15–25).

"And a man who lies with an animal, in dying, he will be put to death, and you will kill the animal. [Lev. 20:15]

So that there is no misunderstanding: this is not Moses giving his personal viewpoint as to how a society is to be run—this is a direct quotation from God to Moses to give to the people. Bestiality is punishable by death.

"And a woman who approaches any animal to lay with it, you will kill the woman and the animal; in dying, they will be put to death—their blood is upon them. [Lev. 20:16]

We have seen this phrase *their blood is upon them* several times now. It means that they, from their own volition, have committed an act against the laws of God and they are responsible for their actions to the point of death. Note also the word *approaches*. This is the same word which some translators render as *offering* or *sacrifice* in other contexts. If we stay with its actual meaning, this word can be properly rendered in a variety of contexts.

"And a man who takes his sister—a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother—and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it [is] shameful and they will be cut off in the sight of the children of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he will bear his iniquity. [Lev. 20:17]

We have what I believe to be a rarity in the Hebrew language: a homonym. We have seen the word *cheṣed* (חֶסֶד) [pronounced *KHEH-sed*], which means *grace*. However, there is also the word *cheṣed* which means *shame, shameful, reproach* (found only twice in this passage and Prov. 14:34). Even though these words are spelled and pronounced the same, we know the meaning of the former, as it occurs over two hundred times in the Old Testament; and we know the meaning of the latter from context; also, the two nouns have the a homonym for their verbal cognates; spelled exactly the same. My personal opinion is that this is God's doing Who can turn a reproach into grace.

Here the punishment is somewhat different. The two are nationally excommunicated. They are not a part of God's promises to Israel anymore and they are not a part of their father's home any more. This is even true of half-brothers and sisters and step-brothers and sisters. There are no exceptions given here.

"And a man who lies with a woman faint [from menstruating] and uncovers her nakedness her fountain he has made naked and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood; both of them will but cut off from among their people. [Lev. 20:18]

The first word that we should deal with is the adjective *dāweh* (דָּוֵה) [pronounced *daw-WEH*], which is found only five times in the Old Testament. It is clearly tied to a woman menstruating in Lev. 15:33 and this passage. Graven images are referred to by this adjective in Isa. 30:22 (usually translated *impure, unclean*). However, in Lam. 1:13 and 5:17, it is simply a reference to being *sick, faint, weakly*. Because all blood, other than that of the Savior's, is impure, men were not allowed to come into contact with it.

"And the nakedness of your mother's sister or your father's sister you will not uncover for that is to make naked one's near relations [lit., flesh or flesh relative]—they will bear their iniquity. [Lev. 20:19]

Again, incest is forbidden (this time with one's aunt). One bearing his own iniquity means that there will be temporal discipline from God for it, along with natural negative results.

"And a man who lays with his uncle's wife—he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness—they will bear their sin; they will die childless. [Lev. 20:20]

The word describing their punishment is *ʾāriyrīy* (אֲרִירִי) [pronounced *ar-e-REE*] which is often translated *childless*, but it means *bare, stripped, barren*. Gen. 15:2 pretty much establishes this meaning of *childless* (this word is also found in Lev. 20:21 and Jer. 22:30). *Bearing one's sin or iniquity* means to bear or carry the penalty for committing that sin.

"And a man who takes his brother's wife—it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness—they will be childless. [Lev. 20:21]

A word that we must look at more carefully is *nîdâh* (נִדָּח) [pronounced *nid-DAWH*], so **see the Doctrine of Nîdâh**.

Yahweh's punishment for that type of incest was for the couple to go childless.

One of the sons of Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, known as Antipas the Fox, convinced Herodias, the wife of his brother, Herod Philip (another son of Herod the Great), to leave Philip for him. Her daughter, Salome (known in the Bible only as the daughter of Herodias) did somewhat of an erotic dance for her step-father, Antipas the Fox. He was so pleased by it, that he told her to ask for whatever she desired, and she, at the prompting of her mother, asked for the head of John the Baptist, who publically condemned Antipas the Fox for taking his brother's wife from him (this is all found in Mark 6:17–28).

Summary and Conclusion

Lev. 18:24–30

"You will therefore keep all of My statutes and all my ordinances and do them that the land where I am bringing you may not vomit you out; [the land] there [where I am bringing you] to dwell in it. [Lev. 20:22]

This is prophetic; they will be expelled from the land because they did not obey the Word of Yahweh.

"And you will not follow the customs [lit., walk in the statutes] of the Gentiles¹⁰⁵ who I am casting out before you for all these things they did (and therefore, I abhorred them). [Lev. 20:23]

Chapter 18 lists the various sexual impurities that the Jews were not allowed to participate in and then this chapter lists the consequences for those actions. Both chapters end almost exactly the same, with a stern warning which seems to be associated directly with sexual degeneracy.

"But I have said to you, 'You will inherit their land and I will give it to you to possess it—a land flowing with milk and honey. I am Yahweh, your God—I, who has severed [or, separated] you from among the peoples [or, Who has caused you to be severed and distinguished from the peoples]. [Lev. 20:24]

Bâdal (בָּדַל) [pronounced *baw-DAHL*] means *separate, divide, sever, differentiate, distinguished, make a distinction*. The key is separation—when you differentiate between two things, you are separating them from one another. We connect these meanings in the English as well, as the same words show up classified together in Roget's Thesaurus under *sever*. We first find this word used in the Hiphil in Gen. 1 where God has *divided, separated, severed, or distinguished* the day from the night, the waters above from the waters below in Gen. 1:4, 6–7, 14, 18. This is a word which is found but 43 times in the Old Testament, a scattered evenly throughout. We find *bâdal* in most often in Leviticus (Lev. 1:17 5:8 10:10 11:47 20:24–26), as a great deal of Leviticus is the distinguishing between Israel and the Gentile nations.

The earthly inheritance of the Jews is tied directly to their obedience, just as our earthly inheritance is tied directly to our obedience and willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

"You will, therefore, make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean; and between the unclean bird and the clean; you will not make yourselves [lit., your souls] detestable by animal

¹⁰⁵ This word is in the plural in the Western Samaritan, the Targum of Onkelos, the Targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint, Syriac and the Vulgate codices; but not in the Massoretic text.

or by bird or by anything with which creeps on the ground [lit., with which the ground creeps] which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. [Lev. 20:25]

This is a summary of chapters in the past and the need for a complete separation of the Jews to God. Because God has caused the Jew to be *separated* or *severed* from the surrounding peoples; because God has caused the Jews to be *distinguished* from the Gentile nations—the Jews are to *distinguish* between that which is clean and that which is unclean.

""You will be to Me holy for I Yahweh am holy and have severed [or, separated] you from the peoples that you should be mine. [Lev. 20:26]

The analogy and the great truth being presented is that those who believe in Jesus Christ are separated completed unto God. Peter, writing to the aliens who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, told them, **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light** (I Peter 2:9). There is a complete separation between the believer and the unbeliever; even before the cross between the believer and the unbeliever there was a great gulf fixed (Luke 16:26). This is one issue where there is nobody who falls in between. You are either a believer in Jesus Christ or you are not. You will spend eternity with God or you will not. You are clean or you are unclean. There is no purgatory, there is no second chance. **It is appointed unto man once to die and afterward this judgement** (Heb. 9:27).

""And a man or a woman that is among them [who has] a ventriloquist demon or [is] demon-possessed in dying, will be put to death; with the stone they will be stoned; their blood will be upon them."" [Lev. 20:27]

It sounds as though we have a play on words carried from the Hebrew into the English. However, being *stoned with stones* is not a verb and its noun cognate. *Stone* is the word 'even (אֶבֶן) [pronounced *EH-ven*] is found over 250 times in the Old Testament and is consistently translated *stone* with few exceptions; stones were used for weights and carried around in a bag to use possibly with a scale (see Prov. 11:1 16:11). *Râgam* (רָגַם) [pronounced *raw-GAHM*] means *to execute by stoning* and is found first in the Bible in Lev. 20:2, 20. At this time, Satan was more expressive and demonstrative and his control of people (and, by that, I mean *demon-possession*, not necessarily *Satanic possession*) was more obvious. No one just accidentally becomes demon-possessed. It is not like accidentally walking out in front of a moving car, or like tripping over a protrusion in the sidewalk. It requires a strong will and volition to acquire a demon and often today about the only things that are achieved are demon influence. Satan's tact during this portion of the church age seems to be one of secrecy and subtlety.

Leviticus 21

Leviticus 21:1–24

Outline of Chapter 21:

- vv. 1–9 **Regulations concerning the desecration of the priesthood**
- vv. 10–15 **Regulations concerning the desecration of the high priest**
- vv. 16–24 **Defects and blemishes which disqualify one for the priesthood**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Leviticus is called principally a book dealing with the Levitical priesthood. This is only true in part. Some chapters deal with sacrifices and some deal with specifics concerning the priesthood, but that is properly the Aaronic priesthood. Most of Leviticus, as we have seen, deals with laws and ordinances set up by God for all of the people of Israel. Lev. 21 is one of the few chapters addressed to the sons of Aaron. You would think that this will mean a new vocabulary; other than the list of blemishes and defects that the priest was not allowed to have, most of these words we have seen many times before. We will find the word for *holy* (or *consecrate*, *sanctify*) in its verb, adjective or noun form eleven times; its antonym, *profane*, *defile*, *desecrate* is found in its verb or adjective form also eleven times (there are two different words here). Another word that we often find is the one which is usually hidden—the word for approach; it is found seven times, usually mistranslated (and several times where we find the word *approach* it is a different word).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Regulations Concerning the Desecration of the Priesthood

Ezek. 44:20–23, 25

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, no one will defile himself for a soul among his people. [Lev. 21:1]

This is a change here. Moses is not told to speak to the people but to the sons of Aaron, the priests to Israel, concerning their personal ceremonial cleanness. This is a great chasm between the clean and the unclean and those who represent man to God and who present the gospel to the people (i.e., the priests) must be clean and undefiled. Primarily we will deal with one who is defiled by death. A person who dies represents spiritual death and separation from God, as that person is now lifeless and separate from his family. Num. 19:11 tells us that touching a corpse makes one unclean for seven days and Num. 19:14 indicates that even entering into a tent where a corpse is makes one unclean. A priest was allowed to come into contact with certain members of his family (vv. 2–3) and the high priest was denied even those exceptions (vv. 11–12).

This particular prohibition from v. 1 is repeated in Ezek. 44:25 and in examining that, I suddenly realize why Ezekiel and Leviticus are so similar in vocabulary; they are both almost in their entirety direct quotes from Yahweh, the God of Israel where, insofar as to the recording of this information, the prophets Moses and Ezekiel were little more than scribes (or, secretaries taking dictation) in their functions.

"Except for his near flesh [i.e., those related to him]; his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother; [Lev. 21:2]

A priest is defiled by coming into contact with the dead with these exceptions listed.

"Or his virgin sister, the near to him, who is not [with] a man [lit., whom no man has *had*]; for her, he may defile himself. [Lev. 21:3]

V. 3 is another exception; the word for *near* indicates that this must be a sister he is close to (as we all know, there are sisters that we are close to and those we are not).

"He will not defile himself being a lord among his people and so profane [or, pollute] himself. [Lev. 21:4]

Both words for *defile* are found in this verse. Tāmê' (טָמֵא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*] means *to make unclean, to be unclean, to defile*. The second word is châlal (חָלַל) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*] and it means *pollute, defile, profane, corrupt, sully and contaminate*. The first word means that he has made himself unclean and the second word means that he has thus disqualified himself for making offerings because he is polluted.

What is said in this verse is that the priest may not defile himself in any way as he is a leader among his people. You will find the word for *lord* of interest. It is the word bâ'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced *BAW-ahl*] and it means *lord, master* and, apart from idolatry, it is a good word. It is occasionally used for a husband, as he is known as the *lord or master*.

When I first looked at this verse, the English translation given me was *he shall not defile himself as a husband among his people and so profane himself*. My first thought was *what the heck are they talking about?* The best I was originally able to come up with is that this verse was tied in with v. 7; but I could not for the life of me understand why they were separated by two other verses. However, the key to understanding this verse is having the correct translation, as it is most of the time.

I may want to re-evaluate this in the light of my exegesis of Ruth 1:11.

"They will not make bald a bald spot upon their heads And the edges of their beards they will not shave off and nor make any cuttings in their flesh. [Lev. 21:5]

These were obviously things which the Gentiles did to express their grief at the loss of a loved one and the Jews were to be separate from the Gentiles in their behavior and customs. Ezek. 44:20: *Also, the [the priests] will not shave their heads, yet they will not let their locks grow long; they will only trim the hair of their heads*. With regard to cutting one's flesh while in mourning, we find that in 1Kings 18:28: *So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them*. In this context, they are doing this to gain the attention of Baal, their god.

"They will be set apart to their God and they will not profane the name of their God for the fire-offerings of Yahweh the bread of their God they offer; therefore, they will be set apart. [Lev. 21:6]

The priests are involved in all kinds of offerings to God and they must be set apart when approaching God with these offerings. Jesus Christ had to be without spot and blemish, and the priests must carry through with this type in their worship services.

"They will not take a harlot or a woman who has been defiled and they will not take a woman divorced from her husband—for he is set apart to his God. [Lev. 21:7]

There have never been any commandments against priests getting married. since the Aaronic priesthood is continued by being in the Aaronic line, it would be silly for them to be celibate. However, there were restrictions on the kind of woman that they were allowed to marry. The woman could not be a whore, she had to be a virgin and she could not be a divorcee.

Let's take a look at v. 8:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You shall consecrate him therefore, for he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you, for I, the Lord Who sanctifies you, am holy.
NASB	You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the Lord, who sanctifies you, am holy.
RSV	You shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy.

It sounds as though we have a lot of agreement for the translation of this verse and it sounds like this would be a marvelous place to differentiate our Hebrew vocabulary. However, the words we see translated *consecrate*, *holy* and *sanctify* are essentially the same word and its adjectival cognate. The verb is qâdash (קָדַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAHSH*] and it is translated *consecrate*, *sanctify*, *dedicate*, *hallow*. Any of these words are good translations, particularly *consecrate*, however, unless you have been going to church for a long time or speak old English fluently, it doesn't mean much to you. This verb means that something is set apart to God; this something takes on the quality of being sacred, holy, different from that which is tied to the earth. It is first found in the 2nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect, 3rd person masculine singular suffix; meaning that Moses will do this to Aaron and to each of his sons and what he will do will have completed results. The best definition I believe is *set apart*, *set apart to God*. It is simple and communicates even to those who are not theologians. Strong's #6942 BDB #872. This word is found twice in this verse; the second time it is in the Piel participle, 2nd person masculine singular, as verbal adjective describing God's work, which involves *setting apart* Moses. The reason that these are given two different translations in many Bibles is that one is what we do to ourselves or to others and the other is for what God does to us. The sons of Aaron are set apart to God by the ceremonial cleansing and offerings which we have covered earlier in Exodus 29. The adjectival cognate is qâdôwsh (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DÔSH*] which means *sacred*, *holy*, *set apart*. It is the result of either God setting something apart to Himself or the result of a ceremony here on earth where something is dedicated to God.

"You will set him apart [to God] for the bread of your God he approaching will be set apart [or, holy] to you for I, Yahweh, am set apart [or, holy], setting apart you [to Myself]. [Lev. 21:8]

The literal translation may not sound as flowery as the KJV, but it is a bit more accurate.

"And the daughter of a man, a priest, if she defiles herself by playing the harlot, she profanes [or, defiles] her father and she shall be burned with fire. [Lev. 21:9]

I suspect that if this law were in effect, there would be far fewer teenage pregnancies. The word found here translated both *profanes* and *defiles* is Châlal (חָלַל) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*], the antonym for qâdôwsh, best translated *defiles*, *pollutes*, *profanes*. Her father has been set apart to God; her behavior disgraces him and thereby defiles him. How can any parishioner (so to speak) concentrate on the sacrifice when he is thinking about the rumors concerning the priest's daughter. This is the human side; from God's side, the woman's immorality defiles herself and defiles her father.

The actual recordings of persons stoned with stones or burned with fire is rare. There is one instance recorded in Joshua 7:15–25. This does not mean that this punishment did not occur, but it was rare to record it in the writing of Scripture. The rarely recorded incident seems to indicate that the Israelites executed the person first and then burned their bodies with fire.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Regulations Concerning the Desecration of the High Priest

"The priest who is foremost among his brothers, upon whose head is poured the anointing oil [lit., which is poured upon his head the anointing oil] and who has been consecrated [lit., and has

filled his hand] to wear the garments—his head he will not uncover [lit., unbind]¹⁰⁶ and his clothes he will not tear. [Lev. 21:10]

The filling of the hand is the responsibility and the task of being the high priest. A portion of the consecration ceremony is found in Ex. 29:6–7. The clothing of the high priest is not to be torn as he represents our Lord, whose clothing was not torn at his crucifixion. Furthermore, he must present himself whole unto God. The covering of his head represents his authority orientation to God, just as a woman's long hair represents her authority orientation to her man (I Cor. 11:9–10, 15). My guess on the actual style of the hair by this verse is that the priests would bind the hair somehow, with something akin to a bandana or it was tied in back, similar to the pony tails today, although theirs would not have been so long (recall Ezek. 44:20).

To remind you of the importance of the high priest as a type: **Now the main point in what has been said: we have such a high priest who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence, it is necessary that this [one] also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve [as] a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned when he was about to erect the tabernacle, for, "See, He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."** (Heb. 8:1–5 Ex. 25:40).

"To any dead soul he will not go; [not even] for his father or for his mother, he will not defile himself. [Lev. 21:11]

It is interesting—today, not only is a so-called priest celibate, choosing his vocation (rather than the Biblical method of procreating and being chosen because of his birth); but today when someone is dying, some call for a priest. However, the priest was not to be defiled by the dead (with notable exceptions at the beginning of this chapter) and the high priest was not to be defiled by the dead whatsoever. However, as we know, there is no specialized priesthood today; there is no ceremonial priesthood today, as they were a type, and since the antitype has appeared, there is no longer a need for the type.

"He will not go out of the sanctuary; he will not defile [or, profane] the sanctuary of his God for the consecration [or, crown] of the anointing oil of his God is upon him—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 21:12]

This is the third wholly different word in the past five verses translated *consecrate* by some Bibles. This is the masculine singular construct of *nêzer* (נָזֵר) [pronounced *NAY-zer*] and it appears to have three related meanings: *crown, dedication or consecration, Nazariteship*. This is a reference to being set apart to God, to being separated from all else, to being dedicated to holy service—the crown is that which is a symbol of the consecration and dedication. One who becomes a Nazarite is one whose life is dedicated wholly to God, although he is not born a Levite or of the seed of Aaron.

"And he—a wife in her virginity he will take. [Lev. 21:13]

God could have used two antithetical symbols here. Taking a virgin means that his bride will symbolize purity, as we and Israel will be pure at the last trump. God could have also used the symbol of a whore and a trollop, as this is the way Israel behaved throughout most of her history. However, God chose the prophet Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer to represent that aspect of Israel's history. We and Israel will be fully sanctified and presenting to Christ as a bride without spot or blemish.

"A widow or one divorced [lit., one cast out] or one who has been defiled—a harlot—these he will not marry; but a virgin of his own people he will take to wife; [Lev. 21:14]

¹⁰⁶ Rotherham footnotes this as: *Shall not suffer the hair of his head to hang loosely* (in quoting the Polychrome Bible).

The word translated *divorced* is close, but this is actually the Qal passive participle of *gârash* (גָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *gaw-RASH*] and it means *to cast out, to throw out, to drive out*. When God told Moses that he would *cast out* the Gentiles from the land of Canaan before them, He used the same word (Ex. 23:28 34:11 Num. 22:11). What is the difference between this verse and v. 7? V. 7 applied to the priests in general and this is specifically written to the high priest. This command is repeated in Ezek. 44:22.

We have a similar commandment in the New Testament for the families of deacons (I Tim. 3:2–7). In the New Testament, the character of the person is more in view.

"That he may not defile his children [lit., seed] among his people; for I am Yahweh, who sanctifies him [or, sets him apart]." [Lev. 21:15]

If the mother is profaned or defiled, then her children are defiled. We find the same thing often applies with sexually transmitted diseases. Many of the children brought into this world have the diseases that their mothers picked up through their own immorality. Their children were unclean because they were unclean (this does not apply to the small percentage who have always been monogamous and they either had a heel for a husband or received the disease through some other means).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Defects and Blemishes Which Disqualify One for the Priesthood

"And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 21:16]

This is where we should have had another chapter break. However, this was kept together in the same chapter because this is still addressed to Aaron and his children.

""Speak to Aaron, saying, 'Any of your descendants [lit., seed] throughout their generations who has a blemish may not in approaching, approach with the bread of his God. [Lev. 21:17]

Those who serve God by bringing offerings to him must be without spot and without blemish just as their sacrifices must be without spot and blemish; otherwise, they do not conform to their type, which is Jesus Christ.

""For any one who has a blemish will not come near [or, approach]—[not] a blind man or lame or facially scarred or an extended [limb]; [Lev. 21:18]

All who approach the throne of God to bring sacrifices are to be without spot or blemish. The word for facially scarred is a difficult one. It is the Qal participle of *châram* (חָרַם) [pronounced *khaw-RAM*] which has the diverse meanings *ban, devote and exterminate*. However, here, BDB lists it separately on another page as meaning *slit*. The other uses of this verb, whether it is a homonym or no, are never in the Qal. All we can be certain of is that there is some kind of disfigurement.

""Or a man who has [lit., is] an injured foot or an injured hand; [Lev. 21:19]

Why these were separated into individual verses, I will never know.

""Or a hunchback, or a dwarf or a man with a defect [possibly, obscurity] in his sight [lit., eye] or an itching disease [or, eczema] or scabs or crushed testicle; [Lev. 21:20]

The defect in vision is not necessarily one of not being able to see well but an eye that looks as though there is a blemish or an abnormality of some kind.¹⁰⁷ The word used here is found only one time in the Bible, but it is

¹⁰⁷ This is an educated guess on my part.

similar to the word used to describe bestiality and homosexuality; so it is similar to that which is a violation of the natural order of things and confusion.

These are the children of Aaron about whom we are speaking. This does not exclude any of these people from salvation. "Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to Yahweh said, 'Yahweh will certainly separate me from His people.' Neither let the eunuch say, 'Because I am a dry tree.'" For thus says the Lord, "To eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths and choose what pleases Me and hold fast My covenant, to them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial and a name better than that of sons and daughters. I will give to them an everlasting name which will not be cut off (Isa. 56:3–5; Deut. 23:1 notwithstanding).

"Or any person who has a blemish of the descendants [lit., seed] of Aaron the priest; he will not in approaching approach with Yahweh's fire-offering since he has a blemish; in approaching, he will [not] approach with the bread of his God. [Lev. 21:21]

We have seen the word *approach* changed to a number of different things; however, it consistently means *approach* every time it is used (and it is found four times in this verse). **For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, [names] a Son, made perfect forever (Heb. 7:28).**

In a bit of political intrigue between the testaments, Herod the Great's power began to be consolidated around 40 BC and one of the incidents which occurred was Hyrcanus II had his ears cut off so that he could not perform the duties of the high priest—a position of great political import—as per this passage.

"The bread of his God [is] out of the holy of holies; and of the holy things [the things set apart], he may eat. [Lev. 21:22]

I don't believe that we are speaking technically of the holy of holies—that which is behind the veil, but of the priests provision as given him by God—that is extremely holy (holy of holies). This is a son of Aaron who has a defect or some sort. This is how God provided for the Aaronic priesthood—through the food brought to the priests to sacrifice. Paul quotes this fact in order to support the idea that those who spread the gospel must be remunerated for their work. **Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple; [and] those who attend regularly have their share with the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel (I Cor. 9:13–14).**

"But he will not come into the veil of the altar; he will not approach because he has a blemish that he may not profane [or, defile] my sanctuaries; for I am Yahweh who sets them apart." [Lev. 21:23]

However, this son of Aaron with the defect is limited. Just as our Lord could not have offered Himself as a sacrificial lamb on our behalf had he been defiled by sin; so the priest may not approach God or the tabernacle if he is physically defiled. The veil here is the one in the tabernacle separating the holy of holies from the rest of the tabernacle.

So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel. [Lev. 21:24]

This is a summary of what God has spoken to Moses for the past several chapters—Moses spoke all of these things to their respective recipients.

Leviticus 22

Leviticus 22:1–33

Outline of Chapter 22:

Vv. 1–9	Uncleanness in priests and eating of the sanctified food
Vv. 10–16	Restrictions for those who are not priests and the eating of the sanctified food
Vv. 17–25	Types of defects which make animals unfit for sacrifice
Vv. 26–30	Additional restrictions on sacrifices
Vv. 31–33	Conclusion of Leviticus 22

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 22 deals with several items: when the priests should abstain from eating of the offerings which are brought to them; when those associated with the priests (slaves, relatives, etc.) can partake of the food offerings and when they cannot; and specific defects and blemishes in animals which make them unfit for sacrificial offerings.

Uncleanness in Priests and Eating of the Sanctified Food

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 22:1]

This next chapter, like Lev. 21, will be directed toward Aaron and his sons.

"Tell Aaron and his sons to separate from the holy [things] of the people of Israel that they may not profane My holy name which they set apart for Me—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 22:2]

The word for separation here is *nâzar* (נָזַר) [pronounced *naw-ZAR*] and it is only found eight times in the Old Testament; it appears to simply mean to *separate*; to quote from Rotherham's footnote on p. 148: *i.e., when abstinence becomes duty by reason of the following disabilities.*

People will be bringing all kinds of offerings to the priests to Yahweh. Some of these things brought to God will be in accordance with His will and others will be not unlike Cain's offering from his vegetable garden. The priests are not to offer just anything upon the altar to God—regardless of the incredible sincerity which might be expressed. Food will be brought, and animals and who knows what else. Some things are to be sacrificed upon the altar; other things are to be eaten by those of the priesthood and other things are to be eliminated as inappropriate or profane.

"Say to them, 'Throughout your generations, any man who, out of all your descendants, approaches [with] the holy things which the people of Israel set apart to Yahweh and his uncleanness [is] against him—that person will be cut off from My Presence—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 22:3]

Holy things is the noun cognate for *set apart*. The word *approaches* often carries with it the implication of approaching *with* something. This is spoken to Moses to be conveyed to the sons of Aaron; they are not to approach Yahweh bearing any uncleanness. There is no verb for *has* in this verse, although several translators render a portion of this verse as *he has an uncleanness*. The gist seems to be the same, however, as the more literal rendering which I have given this. The thing which is brought is not what is unclean, but the person bringing

it near to Yahweh is unclean. That priest will be cut off from God's presence (this is spoken to Aaron and his sons). That is, the tabernacle is God's presence in Israel (just as God chose to tabernacle among us as Jesus Christ) and the priest who does not adhere to these mandates set down by Yahweh will be removed from serving in the tabernacle.

""Anyone [lit., a man a man] of the line of Aaron and he [is] skin-diseased or is bleeding [or, discharging] of the holy things he may not eat until that one [lit., who] is cleansed. And the one touching anything unclean of the dead or a man whose laying of seed goes out from him; [Lev. 22:4]

Some of that which is presented to God is given to Aaron and his sons to eat. In being presented to God, these things are set apart or holy; therefore, a priest who is unclean for whatever reason cannot partake in eating any of these things. Because of the pausal after *cleansed*, we know that the remainder of v. 4 is continued in subsequent verses rather than being a continuation of v. 4a. The time period in order to cleanse oneself will be given in subsequent verses, as the list of that which makes man unclean is continued.

""And a man who touches anything thriving [or, creeping (upon the earth)] by which he becomes unclean; or a man who is unclean in any uncleanness; [Lev. 22:5]

There are certain animals which move upon the ground, in close contact with the ground, which are considered unclean. Coming into contact with one of them makes the priest unclean. This may seem like a lot of meaningless rules to some, but what is taught here is that any contact with that which is unclean makes us unclean. As believers in Jesus Christ, any sin—no matter how small, trivial, justified we perceive it to be—puts us out of fellowship and we must be cleansed before we can enjoy fellowship with God once again. The priests faced the same thing. They could not be involved in any phase of worship while unclean.

""The soul who touches against it will be unclean until the evening and he will not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed his flesh in water. [Lev. 22:6]

When someone is taken out of fellowship with God by contact with that which is unclean, there must be a cleansing process. Today, for us, it is simply rebound. The priests had a more elaborate process that everyone was aware of which was illustrative of rebound. The prescription for cleanness is not an either-or situation, but he must bathe and wait until sundown. **And because [there is] a great high priest over the house of God, let us approach [or, draw near] with a pure heart in the full confidence of doctrine, having our hearts sprinkled away from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water** (Heb. 10:21–22).

""And when the sun has gone, he is clean and afterward he may eat of the holy things because his bread [is] this. [Lev. 22:7]

Those who served Yahweh in worship had to eat and being unclean did not mean that they had some inordinant amount of time which had to be spent waiting to eat. It was long enough to be ceremonial (until the evening) but short enough to be reasonable.

""A carcass or animal-torn he will not eat, to be unclean by it—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 22:8]

Here, it is the item of food itself which makes the priest unclean. This is an animal which was not presented to God alive but an animal which was found dead and then presented to God. Our Lord Jesus Christ was presented alive before God to take the punishment for our sins. His physical death was a result of our sins being paid for and His work in his untransformed human body being finished. This simply allows the type to better fit the antitype. This mandate is repeated in Ezek. 44:31 and we have a similar prohibition for the Jews in general in Ex. 22:31 Lev. 17:15.

Although for many of you, disallowing the eating of an animal which has died of itself is superfluous, in the east, some lower class people would otherwise partake. Freeman mentions a specific example of horses, camels and

mules which were so sold in Ispahan and were then made into hash and sold to the poor day-laborers.¹⁰⁸ The Greeks and Muhammadans also forbid the eating of animals killed by other animals. Not only is it safer to partake in the eating of meat of healthy animals, but our faith is to be placed in Jesus Christ who was killed according to God's plan; not as some chance occurrence.

""They will keep [or, guard] my charge [or, commission, responsibility] so they do not bear on account of it sin and die in it when they defile it [that is, their responsibility]—I am Yahweh the one sanctifying them [or, setting them apart]. [Lev. 22:9]

When someone bears their iniquity or their sin, what is meant is that they are bearing the punishment for the sin or the iniquity which they committed. This is a common metonymy used throughout both Old and New Testaments. When it reads that Jesus **Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree**; it means that He bore the *punishment* for our sins.

The priests in Aaron's line had a solemn responsibility to present to the gospel in such a form that it would be recognized and understood for the next several millennia, even before the death of our Lord occurred in time. Those who observed these rituals day after day had such things made real to them by the Holy Spirit, just as the Holy Spirit makes the gospel real to us today. The Jews of that day, including the priests, saw a longer, more drawn out version of the gospel presented symbolically—God the Holy Spirit made the information real to them and they believed in Jesus Christ just as we do today.

The responsibility of the priests is so important that God willed the sin unto death for Nadab and Abihu earlier in Leviticus for taking his commandments lightly. In Malachi's time, God spoke strongly against the priests, who were not fulfilling their priestly functions correctly. **"For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of the armies. But, as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi,"** says Yahweh of the armies. **"So I have also made you despised and abased before all the people just as you are not keeping My ways, but are showing partiality in the instruction."** (Mal. 2:7–9). **"Observe, I am going to rebuke your offspring and I will spread refuse on your faces; the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it"** (Mal. 2:3). Recall that the priesthood was a matter of birth, not of man's choosing.

Restrictions for Those Who Are Not Priests and the Eating of the Sanctified Food

""Any outsider [lit., anyone of a visitor] will not eat a holy thing, a visitor of a priest or a hired servant will not eat a holy thing. [Lev. 22:10]

This food is set apart strictly for those of the priesthood. This is not a matter of being selfish—only a believer-priest may take of the provisions of God.

""But when any priest buys a slave [lit., soul] as his property for money, he [the slave] may eat of it and those born in his house—they may eat of his food. [Lev. 22:11]

V. 10 was actually someone who was hired. However, in v. 11, we have a slave purchased, just as our Lord purchased us from the slave market of sin. The priest primarily represents man to God; however, he is also a type of Christ and those whom he buys partake of that which is his, just as we who have been bought by our Lord's blood partake in all heavenly things.

""And a daughter of a priest when she is for a stranger, she will not eat of the contribution of the holy things; [Lev. 22:12]

¹⁰⁸ p. 95; Freeman cites Tavernier here.

This daughter no longer belongs to her father, but belongs to the stranger, who is not necessarily a believer in Yahweh. Since she is joined to (symbolically) an unbeliever, she does not partake of that which is for believers.

""But a daughter of a priest when she becomes a widow or is cast out and [has] no child and returns to the house of her father as in her youth, out from her father's bread she may eat; however, an outsider will not eat of it. [Lev. 22:13]

The woman has transferred her ownership from her (presumably) unbelieving husband to her believing father. When this ownership was transferred, she became heir to the things of her father again, including his portion of food brought near to God. When we are joined to this earth, to our natural father the devil, we do not partake in the blessings of God; and when we are joined to our heavenly Father, we do. This does not mean that the stranger is always an unbeliever and that the priest is always a believer. This is all type played out against the antitype. We go by what it all is to represent, not what is always the true situation.

""And when a man eats a holy thing inadvertently, then he will add a fifth [of its value] beyond it and give the holy thing to the priest. [Lev. 22:14]

At some point in time, one who is not aware of what the customs are, might eat of the food which is not for his consumption. This person must replace what he has taken and add a fifth of its value. The preposition following *fifth* indicates that this is above and beyond the original value.

""And they will not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, which things they contribute to Yahweh. [Lev. 22:15]

When a person who is not a believer partakes of that which is holy, it confuses the type and thereby profanes that which is holy.

""And they cause them to bear [the] guilt of offensiveness by eating their holy things; for I [am] Yahweh Who sanctifies them [or, sets them apart]."" [Lev. 22:16]

The priests are responsible for what is done with that which is holy. Whether this is seen by the people of Israel or observed in private by the angels—in either case, the priests had to preserve the proper symbology of what was to come.

Types of Defects Which Make Animals Unfit for Sacrifice

""And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 22:17]

This may be at the same meeting but this is slightly different information.

""Speak to Aaron and his sons and too all the people of Israel; and you will say to them, anyone [lit., a man a man] of the house of Israel or of the immigrants¹⁰⁹ in Israel who approaches with his contribution for any of their vows, or for any of their freewill offerings with which they approach Yahweh for a burnt offering; [Lev. 22:18]

This will be a list of what must be true in the offerings that the people bring before the Lord. The sons of Aaron need to know this because they will be accepting these offerings and the children of Israel need to know this because they are the ones who will be doing the offering.

¹⁰⁹ The Western Samaritan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate all add *that temporarily reside*.

"For your acceptance: a male without blemish of the bulls, of the sheep or of the goats; [Lev. 22:19]

This is always a given—that which is brought to God which represents our Lord upon the cross must always be perfect—without spot or blemish. In order for the persons bearing this offering and for the offering itself to be accepted it had to be a male without blemish.

"Anything which has a blemish you will not approach [Me] because it is not acceptable for you. [Lev. 22:20]

The believer is not even to bother bringing such a thing before God—it is unacceptable. We know the *is* goes with the offering as it is in the 3rd person masculine singular rather than the 2nd person.

"And any man who approaches with a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh to perform [a wondrous] vow or for a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock—it will be perfect for acceptance; there will be no blemish on it. [Lev. 22:21]

We have an unusual verb here associated with vows; *pâlâ'* (פָּלַא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] which is usually used in the Niphal¹¹⁰ in conjunction with God performing or doing marvelous and miraculous things (e.g., Ex. 3:20 34:10). In the Hiphil (the causative stem) the KJV usually translates as something occurring *wondrously*, *marvelously* but here we have the Piel stem (also found in Num. 15:3, 8). Since these three instances are accomplished by man and not God and since there does not appear to be anything miraculous occurring, we will translate this *perform [a wonderful]*

It does not matter what the reason is for the offering here. A person could just feel like bringing an offering to God. It is not a matter of God getting our very best, which, although a consideration, is not the gist of the meaning here (in fact, that kind of thinking obscures the meaning). As has been pointed out countless times, the sacrifice is our Lord Jesus Christ, as a lamb without spot and without blemish (I Peter 1:19). A man who *committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth* (I Peter 2:22 Isa. 53:9)

"Blind or disabled or mutilated or [with] a discharge or an itch or scabs—you will not approach with these to Yahweh; you will not give from these a fire-offering upon the altar to Yahweh. [Lev. 22:22]

The Israelites were not to give from this grouping an offerings to Yahweh.

"A bull or a lamb extended [limb] or shortened you may make a freewill offering but for a vow it is unacceptable. [Lev. 22:23]

My guess is that we have a leg which is too long¹¹¹ or short; an offering from one's volition to God out of appreciation was acceptable; one which represented a vow to God was not.

"And the bruised thing and crushed and torn and cut—[these] you will not offer to Yahweh and within your land you will not do [Lev. 22:24]

Some of these words are obscure and there are several guesses as to their meaning. What is important is that they understood then what the limitations were and today we understand that there are the unacceptable *spots and blemishes*, so to speak. Definitely included in this list is the forbidding of the use of castrated animals as sacrifices. The analogy is clear *For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all*

¹¹⁰ The Niphal is usually the passive stem; however, it can stress the effect of the action of the verb on each individual.

¹¹¹ The use of this particular Hebrew word is confined to Lev. 21:18 22:23 and Isa. 28:20; *an extended [limb]* is probably the most reasonable translation, given the context (the passage in Isaiah is the Hithpaal, or passive stem).

things, in bringing many sons to glory, to complete the prince leader of their salvation through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). We are all born again through Him and in Him, so the type of a male who can reproduce must be maintained.

"And from the hand of a foreigner you will not approach with the bread of your God from any [of them]; because of their ruin [there is] a blemish [or, defect] in them; they [the offerings from the hand of foreigners] will not be acceptable in regard to you." [Lev. 22:25]

The defect of the foreigner is his lack of salvation. Whatever is offered from his hand is tainted by the fact that he has not been regenerated. His offering is therefore an insult to God, as it is brought before God completely by the flesh. Even if it goes to the hand of a priest, it makes no difference.

Additional Restrictions on Sacrifices

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 22:26]

Another, but related topic:

"A bull or sheep or goat shall, when it is born, be seven days with [lit., under] its mother and from the eighth day onwards, it will be acceptable for a fire offering to Yahweh." [Lev. 22:27]

We are no longer dealing with foreigners or with defects, but the age at which an animal can be offered.

"And if the mother is a cow or a ewe [lamb], both it and its young you will not kill in one day." [Lev. 22:28]

Although great portions of Israel would be wiped out from time to time; they entirety of Israel will always exist, in one form or another. Just as God will never allow the Jews to be wiped out totally; so he does not allow an animal family to be so wiped out. Again, this is a spiritual analogy. Similarly, there is always someone on this earth who is related directly to God, even if it is a small pivot¹¹² (such as Noah and his family).

"And when you slaughter a sacrifice [lit., a slaughtering]¹¹³ of thanksgiving to Yahweh so that you may be accept you will slaughter it¹¹⁴;" [Lev. 22:29]

This is the *if* portion of a conditional:

"[Then] on the same day it will be eaten—you will leave none of it until morning—I am Yahweh." [Lev. 22:30]

When we hear to gospel, that is when we need to immediately respond. We should not just wait around for a few days, months or years to respond to God's Word. The NIV Study Bible points out that the fellowship offering could be eaten the next day (Lev. 7:16). The analogy here is that our fellowship is a day-to-day thing, but salvation requires an immediate response.

¹¹² *Pivot* is a term of R.B. Thieme's referring to the believers who are on the earth and who are growing and maturing spiritually. It is this pivot which preserves a nation (our illustration so far was Abraham's bargaining with God to preserve Sodom due to the number of believers in the pivot there).

¹¹³ Or, **sacrifice a sacrifice**.

¹¹⁴ The Massoretic text lacks the 3rd person singular suffix but several other authorities add *it*.

Conclusion of Leviticus 22

"And you will guard [and keep] my commandments and you will do them; I am Yahweh.
[Lev. 22:31]

This is a summary of what has gone before, admonishing and directing the Jews and the Aaronic priesthood in the sacrifices.

"And you will not profane My holy name; And I will be hallowed from among the people of Israel; I am Yahweh Who sanctifies you [lit., sets you apart]. [Lev. 22:32]

Offering sacrifices different than those required by God would profane His name.

"The one bringing you out of the land of Egypt, to be God to you—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 22:33]

Leviticus 23

Leviticus 23:1–44

Outline of Chapter 23:

- vv. 1–3 **Introduction to the appointed times and the Sabbath**
- vv. 4–8 **The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread**
- vv. 9–14 **The Feast of the Firstfruits**
- vv. 15–22 **The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)**
- vv. 23–25 **The Feast of Trumpets**
- vv. 26–32 **The Day of Atonement**
- vv. 33–44 **The Feast of Tabernacles (or the Feast of Ingathering)**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 23 lists the feasts which God appointed for Israel to celebrate. My unsaved understanding of Christianity, particularly Old Testament Christianity, was that there was a lot of vowing and fasting. Quite the contrary, God required the Jews to celebrate their nationally exclusive relationship with Him. We will find out in this chapter that the word *feasts* is not the proper translation anymore than holiday connotes holy day. These national observances describe the relationship of Israel to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is rarely seen; only inferred by the anointing of oil, as the Holy Spirit did not have the same personal relationship with the individual Jews as we have in the Church Age (however, the Holy Spirit obviously acted directly in the life of the nation Israel as a whole and in the lives of some individuals).

Introduction to the Appointed Times and the Sabbath

Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, [Lev. 23:1]

Moses did not have just one or two really long conversations with God. He spoke with God often—perhaps several times a day at times—and he recorded what God said to him.

"Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The appointed feasts of Yahweh, which [feasts] you will proclaim them as holy convocations [lit., assemblies, set apart to God, for the purpose of encountering God through the exegeting of His Word]. The [are] these, my appointed feasts [lit., My appointed times]: [Lev. 23:2]

First the word convocation, a word we have encountered only once before in Ex. 12:16. *Mîq'râ'* (מִקְרָא) [pronounced *mik-RAW*] and we need to look at Neh. 8:8 to understand this word. During the time of Moses, they understood the meaning of the word. Subsequently, the meaning is not fully contained in the passages where this word occurs (Lev. 23:2–4, 7–8, 21, 24, 27, 35–37 Num. 10:2 28:18, 25–26 29:1, 7, 12 Isa. 1:13 4:5). From the those passages we understand that there is a gathering of some sort. However, in Neh. 8:8 the meaning is fully revealed. **And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which Yahweh had spoken to Israel. Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who listened with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it before the square which was in front of the Water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra stood at a wooden podium which they had constructed for this [lit., the] purpose...and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed Yahweh the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with faces to the ground...and they read from the book, from the Law of God, exegeting to give sense so that they understood the reading** (Neh. 8:1–8). Our word, *mîq'râ'* is that last word. The verbal cognate is *Qârâ'* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-*

RAW] which means *to encounter*. Obviously, the translation, *convocation*, *assembly* does not fully convey what is meant. *Mîkrâ'* means *an assembly for the purpose of encountering God through the exegeting of His Word*.

Prior to this, we have had the mention of a few assemblies in Ex. 12 and 23:14–19 from approximately a year prior. This was the inception. In Exodus, God gave the Jews the bare-bones minimum with which to begin their first year of freedom. Had this been a book written by priests and other religious types after the fact (as some have claimed), then we would not have things scattered like this. All the feasts would be found in one place; there would be no reason to name a couple feasts back in Exodus and then, a year later, name them and some others. God was speaking to Moses to speak to the people. He gave them as much as they could take in and perform. As time went on, Yahweh added to the law and expanded some areas. So He did with the feast days.

The word *feast* confuses the issue somewhat in the same way that *convocation* confuses the meaning of *mîk'râ'*; the same way Christmas confuses the meaning of the first advent. This is one of those words that began by meaning one thing and then ended up meaning some which was related but distorted. *Môw'êd* (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*] means *a specific time, a predetermined time, an appointed time*, as we find in Gen. 1:4 17:21 18:14 21:2. During these *appointed or set times* God would expect the Jews to set aside some time for the exegeting of His Word and for sacrifices. The NASB, *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* and *The Emphasized Bible* accurately render this as either *appointed times* or *appointed seasons*. Certainly, during this time period, the people gather and eat, just as we often do on Christmas and Easter, along with other rituals and traditions that we do. However, the meaning of the word gets lost in the celebration and thereby, we often lose the meaning of the celebration.

""Six days work will be done; but on the seventh day, a Sabbath of solemn rest [lit., a Sabbath of Sabbaths], a holy convocation.¹¹⁵ All work you will not do—it is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings. [Lev. 23:3]

Shâbbath (שַׁבָּת) [pronounced *shahb-BATH*] is the Hebrew word for Sabbath, their day of rest once everything had been accomplished or everything had been completed. This is obviously a transliteration, which is a place where meanings are often lost or distorted. This comes from the word *shâvath* (שָׁוַת) [pronounced *shaw-VAHTH*, which means *to cease, to desist*. It is a time when normal life, particularly work, ceases. The purposes are many. There will be sacrifices made, illustrating the substitutionary death of our Lord on our behalf; God's Word will be read and exegeted (carefully explained); the people will be gathered, as God will do when He returns; they will cease from their labors, as salvation is an end to our own work and the standing upon the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

V. 3 is specifically not a feast day. It is given here to differentiate Yahweh's appointed times from the Sabbaths.

We so far have gone three verses into Lev. 23. In your own personal devotion time when you decided to read the whole Bible, IF you ever got this far, how long did it take you to read these last two verses? 15 seconds? And how much did you get out of them? Nothing? God has designed for you to be led through His Word by a pastor-teacher, who neither earned nor deserved his gift. This is how your soul is filled with truth; with doctrine. This is the only way to function in the Christian life. You do not read for yourself and you do not get into groups and share your ignorance ("This is what this passage means to me"). **"If any man desires to do His will, he will know of the teaching [the doctrine], whether it is of God or I speak from Myself."** (John 7:17).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

¹¹⁵ An assembly for the purpose of encountering God through the exegeting of His Word.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Ex. 12:14–20 Num. 28:16–25 Deut. 16:1–8

""These [are] the appointed times of Yahweh, the holy convocations,¹¹⁶ which you will read [or, proclaim] them in the time appointed for them. [Lev. 23:4]

During the times appointed, Moses is to read, to proclaim to the people. This word can also mean (although it is not used as often this way) *summon*; and Moses will summon the people in the time appointed. It is this verse where the NRSV and the NIV translate *môw'êd* first as *appointed feast* and then as *appointed time*.

""In the first month on the fourteenth¹¹⁷ of the month between the two evenings, the Passover of Yahweh. [Lev. 23:5]

The Israelites used three different calendar systems. They referred to the months as the first, second, third, etc. (as here); they used the Canaanite names (Abib, Ziv, Ethan and Bul are the only four we know); and during and after their exile, they used the Babylonian names (Nisan, Adar, Tishri, Kislev, etc.). The latter set of names are still used today.¹¹⁸ Since the Jewish calendar was based upon lunar months, it had to be adjusted periodically about every six years with a *leap-month*, so to speak, called Second Adar.

This was the first sacred assembly decreed by God. We first find it in Ex. 12:1–13. This took place when Yahweh went through the land of Egypt and killed the first born—with the exception of those whose door had lamb's blood splattered on the sides and the top of the door frame. Protection and deliverance (or, salvation) came walking through the door surrounded in the blood of the innocent lamb, slain on their behalf. The death of the first born was associated with the deliverance of Israel from a land of bondage and toil to the land flowing with milk and honey, just as we are taken from this land of bondage to sin and to work based on the death of a first born to a land flowing with milk and honey and dwell evermore in the Presence of the Lord. During these times the Jews are exposed to the concept of salvation, they also associate it with the cessation from their work here on earth. We cannot work for what God has provided.

It is confusion to think of this as a feast or a fast, as this is a very solemn occasion, a time for the sacrifice of innocent animals without spot and without blemish; a time for the exegeting of God's Word; a time of no work.

""And on the fifteen day of the same month, the feast of the unleavened bread to Yahweh; seven days, you will eat unleavened bread. [Lev. 23:6]

In this verse, we have the word *chag* (חג) [pronounced *khahg*] and it means *festival gathering, feast, pilgrim feast*. This word does occur in this chapter in vv. 6, 34, 39, 41; other than that, the word found in this chapter is not *feast* but *appointed time*. It was during the Feast of Unleavened Bread that the first sheaf of the barley harvest was brought (vv. 10–11).

The feast of unleavened bread is spoken of in Ex. 12:14–22. Leaven speaks of the corrupting influence of evil. Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. **For Christ, our Passover, also has been sacrificed. Let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth** (1 Cor. 5:7–8). Primarily, we find leaven when someone thinks that they can work for their salvation. These are the people who believe that all religions are fundamentally the same (they are, save Christianity). They are all systems of works that man can do to inherit God's kingdom because they have impressed God so much with their good deeds.

""On the first day a there will be to you a holy convocation; you will not do any laborious work. [Lev. 23:7]

¹¹⁶ Literally, *an assembly for the purpose of encountering God through the exegeting of His Word*.

¹¹⁷ Several codices, the Western Samaritan, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, add the word *days* here.

¹¹⁸ NIV Study Bible, p. 173; excellent chart on p. 101.

This is the first day of the week of unleavened bread.

""And you will approach with a fire-offering to Yahweh seven days. In¹¹⁹ the seventh day, a holy convocation; you will not do any laborious work."" [Lev. 23:8]

On the seventh day, after an offering is made every day, the assembly of Israel will gather together to grow spiritually through the exegesis of God's Word in an encounter with God.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Feast of the Firstfruits

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I am giving you and you have reaped its harvest, then you will bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. [Lev. 23:9–10]

As believers, we receive blessings beyond our imagination. Those in fellowship and who are growing receive even more. God is glorified when He blesses us and He is glorified when His Word is resident in us. The bringing of some of the blessing we have received to God recognizes that He has blessed us and that we do not lose anything by showing our appreciation for what we have been given.

Note that for the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread we have a specific date. For this feast, the Feast of the Harvest or the Feast of the Firstfruits, we do not have a particular date. It is the first day of harvesting, but we are not given a day or a month (however, it would be around this time period and the Jews traditionally have chosen the 16th of their month of Abib). Obviously, this is an early harvest of late winter planting and there is much more to come in the way of harvesting at the end of summer.

Now for the analogy: **But now, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep...for as in Adam, all die, so also in Christ, all will be made alive. But each in his own battalion: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming...that which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else...so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown perishable; it is raised imperishable (I Cor. 15:20, 22–23, 36b–37, 42). With regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be easily shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for unless the departure comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction...for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains [the Holy spirit] until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (II Thess. 2:1–3, 7–8). "Even so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, at the door...but of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Take heed, keep on the alert, for you do not know when the time is" (Mark 13:29, 32–32).**

Our Lord is the First Fruits, Who was risen in this time period. However, the rest of the harvest, ourselves and then those of the Old Testament, are still to be raised in heavenly bodies. We will be raised at the rapture, and no man knows the day or the hour of the rapture. Since we do not know when the rapture will take place, we do not have a specific time given in Scripture for the Feast of First Fruits. However, once we have been raised, then there is a specific time for the resurrection of the Old Testament saints (that will be the Feast of Pentecost).¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ The Western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate read *and in or and on*.

¹²⁰ Realize that the feast days pertain strictly to Israel; they are not celebrating anything in these days which pertains to the church age in particular. Therefore, there are implications of us in the church age to be found in the feast days; however, we could be left out of history altogether and the feast days would still stand intact.

""And he will wave the sheaf before Yahweh that you may find acceptance on the morrow after the Sabbath; the priest will wave it. [Lev. 23:11]

Therefore, on the first day of the week, after the Sabbath, the laborer brings a portion of his first fruits, just as we are to lay aside on the first day of the week our offering to God.

""And you will do [this] on the day when you wave the sheaf: a lamb without blemish, a year old, as a burnt offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:12]

The basis of our blessing is the offering of Jesus Christ. We would be nothing without Him. The bringing of the lamb recognizes God's grace and His provision of our salvation.

""And the tribute offering with it: two-tenths [of an ephah] fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to Yahweh, a tranquilizing scent and its drink offering—wine, a fourth of a hin. [Lev. 23:13]

The drink offering was approximately a gallon. I don't know whether the amounts given are meaningful or not; obviously, when it comes to offerings and giving, God has to set up some guidelines; otherwise, man would blow things way out of proportion.

The flour and oil speak of God the Son as true humanity filled with the Holy Spirit, in Whom God was well-pleased (hence, the tranquilizing scent). The wine speaks of joy (and this is fermented wine; it is the same word for wine as we find back in Gen. 9:21).

""You will not eat bread and grain and fresh fruit until this same day until you have brought the offering of your God; it [stands] a statute forever throughout your generations in all of your dwellings. [Lev. 23:14]

All of our material needs are provided for us by God our Father. This offering merely acknowledges that.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

Ex. 34:32 Num. 28:26–31 Deut. 16:9–12

""And you will count from the day [lit., morrow] after the Sabbath from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering seven complete Sabbaths they shall be. [Lev. 23:15]

In Exodus, we have already covered the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of the Harvest (or the Feast of the Firstfruits). In general, they speak of Christ, our Passover, dying on behalf of us; the incorruptible Word, our bread of life; and our Lord being resurrected from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. What is next is the Feast of Pentecost (also called the Feast of Ingathering in Ex. 23:16 and the Feast of Weeks in Ex. 34:22), which is when Israel is gathered and restored. The time frame is seven weeks (seven Sabbaths) following the day after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, placing us on a Sunday.

""To the day [lit., morrow] after the seventh Sabbath counting fifty days, then you will approach with a new tribute offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:16]

This next feast is dependent upon the time of the Feast of Firstfruits, which is not given. Although the Jews celebrate this Feast on the 6th day of the third month (Sivan), a particular date is not specified by the Bible. One must count seven Sabbaths from the Feast of the Firstfruits. Similarly, we do not know when the Tribulation will begin. It begins at the rapture of the church, a time and hour that no man knows. However, after the rapture takes place, then we can count specific days and times.

""From your dwellings you will bring a wave offering of two [loaves of] bread,¹²¹ two-tenth [of an ephah] parts of fine flour; they will be with leaven. They will be baked as first fruits to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:17]

The Jews will be raised up side by side with the children of the evil one, as the parable of the wheat and the tares. Therefore, leaven, which represents evil (even though it makes bread taste good) is allowed as evil will infiltrate all that is holy. Some translations, such as the NASB add the words *of an ephah* as apparently that was the only measure used with flour on a small scale (here, the result is obviously two loaves).

""And you will approach with the bread, seven lambs without blemish a year old and one young bull and two rams—they will be a burnt offering to Yahweh. With their tribute offering and their drink offerings, a fire-offering, [they are] a pleasant scent to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:18]

This time will speak of the regathering of Israel as the harvest of God. A drink offering was one of wine which was poured out at the foot of the altar for burnt offerings, not unlike the pouring out of our Lord's blood for our sins. There were particular amounts of wine poured out for each type of sacrifice, the details of which can be found in Num. 15:4–12.

""And you will do one male goat for a sin [offering] and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. [Lev. 23:19]

The animals all speak of our Lord's efficacious work. Although we are in a different time period in the meaning of this feast, still everything that our lives are or will be is completely dependent upon the cross. No matter where we are in our lives or in our history, the central fact of all that is, is that we have been bought with a price; that our Lord paid the greatest possible price for us.

""And the priest will wave them with the bread of the first fruits as a wave offering before Yahweh with the two lambs. They are set apart to Yahweh for the priest. [Lev. 23:20]

The priest partakes in these offerings. God never forgets his workers; those who represent Him.

""And you will call on the same day a holy convocation [a time for encountering God through His Word]. Any laborious work you will not do. [This is] a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. [Lev. 23:21]

We have at the beginning of this verse the 2nd masculine plural, Qal perfect of *qârâ'* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] which simply means *call, proclaim, read*. This word is found approximately 800 times in God's Word. It often means *to name* something (Gen. 21:31–25:30) or to call something into being, so to speak. To all of the Jews, this will be a holy convocation.

Translation is an odd thing. Why some translators do what they do is totally beyond me. The RSV and the NRSV both have *you will hold a holy convocation*. There is no word for *holding* here; the verb is *hâyâh*, which is the common verb for *to be* in the Hebrew. This verb occurs repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, too many times to name. Furthermore, it is in the 3rd person masculine singular, not in the 2nd person masculine plural. This means that the subject of the verb cannot be *you* or *you all*.

""And when you reap the harvest of your land, you will not complete the corner of your field when you harvest and the gleanings after your harvest you will not gather—you will leave them for the poor and for the stranger. I am Yahweh, your God." [Lev. 23:22]

¹²¹ Lit., *bread of a wave offering two*.

We have seen this before. God's welfare system (and one did need to be in place) allowed those in need to harvest from the corners of the fields and from the produce which was not taken in the first sweep of a field. Therefore, the poor person did have to do some kind of work in order to eat.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Feast of Trumpets

Num. 29:1–6

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 23:23]

This is the most oft-time used phrase in this book.

"Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month in the first of the month, there will be to you a Sabbath, a memorial of a blast [of trumpets], a holy convocation. [Lev. 23:24]

This now makes me wonder. We have called these feast days forever (even though we have seen that is a poor translation) and now it appears as though these time periods should be all called *holy convocations* instead.

This month has become the celebration of Jewish new year in modern times (*Rosh Hashanah*, or *the beginning of the year*). However, this is not a Biblical designation and this particular phrase (*the beginning of the year*) is found but once in the Old Testament (Ezek. 40:1) referring to something entirely different. This was not God's intention for this holy day to be celebrated in this way; and assigning this to the seventh month further tells us that this is not the beginning of the new year. We would expect the Jews to misapply the meaning found in these feast days as many of them did not and do not recognize their own Messiah, Yahweh Elohim, Who bought them.

The word for trumpet does not actually occur here. We have the word for memorial in the construct followed by *terûw'âh* (תְּרוּעָה) [pronounced *t'rû-AWH*] found in the Bible here for the first time. In the book of Job, which either predates Leviticus or is coterminous with it, this word is used for a shout of joy (Job 8:21 33:26); however, this word can also be associated with the very loud sounds of battle, as in Jer. 4:19 Amos 1:14 2:2 Zeph. 1:16. As this word seems to be used in the latter sense most often, it would be reasonable to take it in that sense here. We know that following the rapture, there will be a time of great apostasy and, although it appears as though some areas will enjoy a relatively peaceful state, at least for awhile, many other areas would be involved in war during the tribulation and the instructions given to the Jews alive at that time deal directly with their persecution and fate in battle. Trumpets were also blown to signify the new lunar month, at the full moon and it would appear to be, on this particular day (Psalm 81:3; the singular *feast day* or *appointed day* signifies a particular *feast*). However, since we have a similar use of trumpets in Num. 10:10 and *feast days* is in the plural, we can assume that the trumpets were at the beginning of all feast days. Additionally, Num. 10:10 gives us other times when trumpets were blown. Since this was prior to digital watches, mass printing and the distribution of calendars from bookstores, this helped orient the people to the times and the seasons. It is no different than the noontime lunch whistle in a small town.

""Any laborious work you will not do and you will approach with a fire-offering to Yahweh."" [Lev. 23:25]

Less detail about this particular convocation is given. It represents Israel in war to both take over their land given them by Yahweh and their fighting during the tribulation.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Day of the Atonements

Lev. 16:2–34 Num. 29:7–11

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "On the tenth of this seventh month it [is] the Day of the Atonements, a holy convocation it is for you and you will humble yourselves and approach with a fire-offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:26–27]

Now you may wonder why we are covered the Day of Atonement here, if it has already been covered back in Lev. 16. This portion of Scripture tells us what man does with regards to the Day of Atonement—nothing. God does all of the work and man receives the blessing.

The instructions for this day are almost identical with the Feast of Trumpets, although the two days are very different in what they represent and what is done in those days. The word found here and translated atonements is the masculine plural of *kîppurîym* (כִּפּוּרִים) [pronounced *kip-poop-REEM*] and we have seen its verbal cognate *Kâphar* (כָּפַר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*] and it literally means *cover, placate, pacify*. The feminine version of this noun refers to the *mercy-seat*, or the covering for the ark. *Kîppurîym* means *atonement, covering, propitiatory*, and it is always found in the plural. Most translations translate this in the singular (the only exception that I know of is *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*). The Jews themselves call this day *Yom Kippur* (*Day of Atonement*) rather than *Yom Hakkippurim* (*Day of the Atonement*; or, possibly *The Day of Atonement*). I prefer the plural because our Lord died for the sins of all mankind. Some of this is lost in the translation. To be fair, from the God-ward side, there is one atonement; from the man-ward side, there were many who were atoned for. *The Emphasized Bible* translates this *propitiation*.

"And any work you will not do on this same day; for it [is] a Day of Atonements to make atonement (or, a covering) for you before Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 23:28]

These are all Sabbath days, days during which no work was done. This was not a vacation day so that you could do yard work or catch up on your taxes. All of these days were days to be centered in Yahweh and His Word. No work was to be done.

"For any soul which is not humbled on this same day, [that soul] will be cut off from his people. [Lev. 23:29]

An extremely important word in this verse is *ʿânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], and it is unfortunately translated *afflict, exercised*. It means *to humble, to be grace oriented, to be humbled, to be afflicted*. It means that you recognize your significance and position before God and your dependence is upon God. God expected His people to be grace-oriented; to understand their position in the world and His. Strong's #6031 BDB #776.

"And any soul who does any work on this same day I will destroy [or, cause the destruction of] that soul from among his people. [Lev. 23:30]

ʾĀʾvad (אָוָד) [pronounced *awʰ-VAHD*] is fairly well-defined; in the Qal stem, it means *to perish* (Lev. 26:38 Esther 4:16 Joel 1:11); in the Piel it means *to destroy* (Num. 33:52 Deut. 12:2–3); in the Hiphil it means *to cause the destruction of, to put to death* (Num. 24:19 Joshua 7:7). Moses is called the *meekest* man upon the earth (Num. 12:3). The word used in Numbers is the noun cognate of *ʾĀʾvad*. Moses didn't have a downcast look upon his sandals and bow and scrape and allow his people, the Jews, to walk all over him like a doormat. He would prostrate himself before Yahweh, but before the people, he was tough, strong, demanding.

"Any work you will not do; it [is] a statute forever throughout your generations in all of your dwellings. [Lev. 23:31]

Notice that this prohibition was a statute forever throughout *their* generations *in* their dwellings (which meant no housework and no handyman work).

"A Sabbath of solemn rest [lit., a Sabbath of a Sabbath] and you will humble yourselves on the ninth of the month beginning in [the] evening from evening to evening you will observe [lit., cease] [during] your Sabbath." [Lev. 23:32]

What the Jews did was generally very demonstrative compared to us. You might call the church age the age of subtlety (and you will notice that Satan, the imposter and chameleon, has followed suit). The Jews, having not the Holy Spirit, would do things that involved physical bowing and scraping to represent humility. Without the Holy Spirit, their religion often became a form without function, ritual without any reality. This is not a disparage them in any way; Christians today do the exact same thing because they choose not to be filled with the Spirit. There are people who are looked up to as being the most dedicated, humble, sincere Christians that you would ever want to meet and they have not been filled with the Holy Spirit from their first post-salvation sin. They are great at going through the motions. When you do not have the Holy Spirit filling you, then you imitate degenerate unbelievers and/or religious unbelievers.

V. 32 ends by saying *you will Sabbath your Sabbath*. The first is the verbal cognate of the second.

This paragraph was directed toward the people. Priestly instructions were given back in Lev. 16.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Feast of Tabernacles (or the Feast of Ingathering)

Num. 29:12–39 Deut. 16:13–17

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel to say, 'On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, the appointed time of temporary shelters—seven days [dedicated] to Yahweh. [Lev. 23:33–34]

The words you expected to find in this verse were *the feast of booths*. We have already covered the word *feasts* (which is not *feasts*, but *appointed times*). Most of us when we think of the word *booth*, we think of a 2'x2' little cubicle wherein there is enough room to stand. The word is *çukkâh* (סֹכֶה) [pronounced *sook-KAWH*] and it means *temporary dwelling place, tabernacle* (as long as you understand what a *tabernacle* is; most people do not). Gen. 33:17 is the first appearance of this word. This is called the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles, but it is really the appointed time of temporary shelters. When the Jews lived in the desert, they were there on a temporary basis. Abraham, although very wealthy, lived in a tent in recognition that he was not home because he was not in the land given to him and to all of his seed by God. All this is illustrative of the fact that earth and these bodies that we wear are both temporary shelters; this is not our home nor will we dwell in these bodies forever. It is because of that great Day of Atonement that we will be given permanent resurrection bodies, bodies capable of travel and movement only found in the imagination today.

During New Testament times, tents were made of palm leaves and these tents could be found on rooftops, in courtyards, in fields and in gardens and these were lived in unless there was exceptionally heavy rain (a rare occurrence) or a personal case of severe illness. Two priestly groups left the Temple each morning; one group collected leafy boughs and the other to the Pool of Siloam. They returned and walked around the altar, once on the first six days and seven times around it on the last day (in memory of Jericho in Joshua 6:3–4). Finally, they built a small shelter for the altar itself. Then water was poured down the Temple steps so that it flowed to the outside of the temple, meaning that their faith would travel out to the world.

During this feast, in the Court of Women were set up four large candelabra, their wicks made of priestly garments worn the year before, and the light of these candelabras could be seen throughout Jerusalem. The Jews often played music and danced in their light.¹²²

¹²² All this is courtesy of Gower's *The New Manners and Customs of The Bible*; pp. 358–359.

"On the first day, a holy convocation; any laborious work, you will not do. [Lev. 23:35]

Again, a convocation is a time set aside to encounter Yahweh through His Word and through ritual. The attention had to be diverted from work and toward God. Furthermore, time after time it must be pointed out that when it comes to our relationship with God, we cannot do anything to earn or deserve what He gives us; it is purely grace. We cannot work for God's blessings.

"Seven days you will approach with fire-offerings to Yahweh; on¹²³ the eighth day, it is to you a holy convocation and you will approach with a fire-offering to Yahweh; it [is] an assembly;¹²⁴ you will not do any laborious work. [Lev. 23:36]

Notice on the very last feast (appointed time) that it ends on Sunday, the Lord's day.

"These are the appointed times of Yahweh which you will continue proclaiming [as] holy convocations to present a fire offering to Yahweh, a burnt offering, tribute offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, a command of a day in its day. [Lev. 23:37]

I am convinced that translating committees put the absolute worst people in charge of Leviticus and when it is read over a second and third time, it is without a single thought to consistency. Furthermore, there is a lot of interpretation which passes as translating. For instance, throughout this verse, all the offers except for the last are in the singular because, even though the Jews will present millions of offerings before God, they all speak of one offering made one time by Jesus Christ for our sins. Therefore, contrary to what is found in the NASB, the RSV, the NRSV, and the NIV, we should see every offering, except for the drink offering, in the singular. Why should the drink offering be in the plural? It is a toast to the only true human celebrity; a toast made by every believer because every knee will bow before Him.

Almost the final word in the verse is a word rendered *matter* (NASB), *required* (NIV), *each* (Owen's translation, RSV, NRSV, *The Amplified Bible*), *thing* (*Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*), *each...appointment* (*The Emphasized Bible*) and *everything* (KJV). When you see such a veritable cornucopia of renderings, it makes you think that we must be dealing with one of those words which shows up only once or twice in the Old Testament with seemingly no contextual clues. Wrong. Dâ^bvâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw^b-VAWR], which means *word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter*. It occurs well over 1300 times in the Old Testament and its verbal cognate occurs over a thousand times; five times just in this chapter). This should indicate that we probably have a reasonable idea as to what this word really is; and we do; it means *word, saying, doctrine, command*. It is something which proceeds from the mouth and the context determines its exact parameters.¹²⁵ Its primary meaning is what is said; this can be extrapolated to refer to the content of what is said, and hence the translation *things, matters, reports*. Strong's #1697 (or #1696) BDB #182.

"Apart from the Sabbaths of Yahweh and apart from your gifts and apart from all of your vows and apart from all of your freewill offerings which you give to [or, place before] Yahweh. [Lev. 23:38]

The feast days enumerated in Lev. 23 are not the only days set apart to God. These are in addition to many other days set aside in worship of Yahweh. There are two words repeated four times in this verse. We have the prefixed preposition mîn (which connotes separation) and the prefixed lamed preposition and the word bad (בַּד) [pronounced bahd]. Altogether, they mean *besides, apart from*. Although the NIV's rendering *in addition to* is not literal, it is not entirely inaccurate as to what is meant.

¹²³ The Western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate all have *and on...*

¹²⁴ *The Emphasized Bible* reads *closing assembly* and footnotes *solemn assembly*, but these are a matter of interpretation and not translation.

¹²⁵ In glancing through *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*, a must for any student of God's Word, I noticed that the verbal cognate is never found in Leviticus in the Piel infinitive, although it is found in that form scattered throughout the other four books of the Pentateuch. If we have the same author, why is that? Moses is not writing in this chapter; he is taking dictation. Therefore, the vocabulary that he uses will be slightly different in Leviticus because it is not his but Yahweh's.

""On the fifteenth day of the seventh month in your gathering of the produce of the land, you will feast a feast of Yahweh seven days. In the first day, a Sabbath and on the eighth day a Sabbath.
[Lev. 23:39]

Here we have the word *chag* from v. 6 (*feast*) and its verbal cognate; so it means *to feast a feast*, an alliteration concerning which the Hebrews are legend.

""And you will take on the first day the produce of trees of splendor, branches of palm trees and branches of leafy trees and willows of the brook and you will rejoice before the face of Yahweh your God seven days. [Lev. 23:40]

Both the blessing which is received by the trees and the sustenance that they provide and the general beauty of the trees is acknowledged here. The bringing of these things is not out of necessity or coercion, but these things are brought before God and the bringer rejoices as he brings them. Palm branches are also used to celebrate the coming of royalty. Our Lord, the week before He was crucified, was met at Jerusalem with palm branches laid before Him.

God the Father does not have a face; this simply refers to being in the presence of God. In the Hebrew, *face* is in the plural, referring to the features of the face rather than to several faces.

""And you will feast a feast [or, celebrate a celebration] to Yahweh [for] seven days in the year; a statue forever throughout your generations [that] in the seventh month you will feast [or, celebrate]. [Lev. 23:41]

One thing of note is that several translations, like the RSV and NRSV keep sticking the word *feast* in where it is not found; yet here, where the word *feast* is found once as a noun and twice as a verb, those translations do not even carry the word once. In *The Amplified Bible*, we find the word *feast* but once in this verse. The NASB is reasonable here because instead of the verb *feast* they use the verb *celebrate*, which is similar enough in meaning.

""In temporary dwelling places you will reside for seven days; all that are native in Israel; you will reside in temporary shelters. [Lev. 23:42]

Epanadiplosis [pronounced *EP-an-a-di-PLŌ-sis*] means that a word which is used to begin a sentence also ends the sentence and this gives great emphasis upon what is being said in between this word and itself.

This looks backward, to the present and to the future. The Jews are reminded that they were brought to this land by Jesus Christ Who gave the land to them. Prior to that, where they lived was only temporary, as they were waiting upon God's promises to them of a permanent place to live. Today, we look around us and recognize that we are not of this world, that this is not our permanent home, and that we dwell in a temporary shelter, our bodies. We all look forward to the day when God will relocate us in our permanent homes, our permanent place of residence in resurrection bodies.

""So that you may know—your generations—that in temporary shelters I caused the people of Israel to dwell when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh, your God."
[Lev. 23:43]

The word for temporary shelters is *çukkâh* (חֹכֶל) [pronounced *sook-KAWH*] refers to several types of temporary dwellings, even more temporary and smaller than tents in most cases. According to BDB, this can be the thicket, a place where lions would hide (Job 36:29); a rude or temporary shelter, either for a warrior in the battlefield (2Sam. 11:11 1Kings 20:12), for watchers in a vineyard (Isa. 1:8) or a simple shelter from the sun (Jonah 4:5). Throughout Leviticus and Numbers, these are temporary booths where people lived during the harvest feast. Primarily they symbolize our bodies, the temporary dwelling place of our souls.

Thus Moses declared the appointed times of Yahweh to the people of Israel. [Lev. 23:44]

This would be an ideal time to examine the **Doctrine of the Feast Days** (which is a chart).

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

Leviticus 24

Leviticus 24:1–23

Outline of Chapter 24:

- vv. 1–4 **Responsibilities concerning the lamp**
- vv. 5–9 **Responsibilities concerning the table of showbread**
- vv. 10–12 **Half-Egyptian/half-Israelite speaks blasphemy**
- vv. 13–23 **Yahweh reiterates "an eye for an eye" and the blasphemer is executed**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 24 carries with it some additional commandments from God and then a short portion of it is narrative (the first narrative since Lev. 10). In this chapter we will see the first occurrence of capital punishment at the hands of the state and laws which deal with sentencing.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Responsibilities Concerning the Lamp

Ex. 25:6 27:20–21

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 24:1]

This begins as do most of the chapters of Leviticus.

"Command the sons of Israel and they will take to you oil of [the] olive, pure beaten for the lamp [lit., luminary]¹²⁶ for a lamp-fire to ascend continually; [Lev. 24:2]

The Jews at that time were the light of the world and this lamp symbolized that. Furthermore, this was a light for Yahweh, with which he could find the Jews.

"Outside the veil of the testimony in the tent of meeting; Aaron and his sons¹²⁷ will keep it in order from evening to morning before the face of Yahweh continually; [This is] a statute forever throughout your generations. [Lev. 24:3]

It appears as though v. 3 is a continuation of v. 2. The verb that Aaron does is *ʿârak* (עָרַךְ) [pronounced *aw-RAK*] and the BDB definition is *to set in order, to arrange in order*; Strong's: *to set in a row, to arrange in order*. However, we only have one item here and presumably Aaron's responsibility is to see that the lamp will stay lit continuously throughout the entire evening every evening, although he may not do the lighting or the changing of the oil personally. The word is first found in Gen. 14:8 when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and two other areas *set* their men *up* in the valley for battle. This word is used to describe Abraham *arranging* the wood for the fire upon which he will offer his son Isaac. This verb and its substantive cognate are both found together for the first time in Ex. 40:4 where Moses is to see to the arrangement on the table of showbread—he is to arrange the arrangement. We will stay with this rough definition until I can come up with a better word or set of words. It is

¹²⁶ Translated *light-giver* by Rotherham.

¹²⁷ This reads *Aaron and his sons* in the western Samaritan, Septuagint and the Targum of Onkelos; the Massoretic text leaves out *and his sons*.

possibly that the relationship here is that Aaron and his sons will arrange a schedule for themselves or will array themselves in a particular order to keep the lamp lit continuously.

"Upon the pure lampstand he will keep in order the lamps before Yahweh continually. [Lev. 24:4]

This refers to the lampstand, one of the articles of furniture for the tabernacle. Apparently, the lamps are possibly separate from the lampstand or can be separated from the lampstand; Aaron is to arrange them on the lampstand and to see that they are kept lit.

The importance of this cannot be over emphasized: [Paul speaks on his first missionary journey] **"For thus the Lord has commanded us: 'I have place you as light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.'" (Acts 13:47 Isa. 49:6).** This light that Israel has for the world is Jesus Christ. **And he [Simeon] came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him the custom of the Law; then he took Him into his arms and blessed God, and said, "Now Lord, You may let Your slave depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people, Israel." (Luke 2:27–32 Isa. 42:6).** **"Yahweh called Me out from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me...And He said to Me, 'You are My servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory.' But I said, "I have toiled in vain. I have spent My strength for nothing and emptiness; yet surely the justice to Me is with Yahweh and My reward is with My God." And now says Yahweh, Who formed Me out from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him (for I am honored in the sight of Yahweh, and My God My strength). He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'" (Isa. 49:1b, 3–6).** **And again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).**

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Responsibilities Concerning the Table of Showbread

Ex. 25:23–30

"And you will take fine flour and bake from it twelve cakes; two tenths [of an ephah] will be each cake. [Lev. 24:5]

The tabernacles has been standing for only a relatively short time and now God is seeing that the details are taken care of.

"And you will set them in two rows, six in a row,¹²⁸ upon the pure table before Yahweh. [Lev. 24:6]

Since the Jews are beginning to bring sacrifices to Yahweh and their holy days are about to begin, God sees to it that Moses takes care of everything for their ceremonies. This is the showbread or, better, *the bread of the Presence*.

"And you will put with each row pure frankincense that it may go with the bread as a memorial a fire offering to Yahweh. [Lev. 24:7]

The twelve loaves speak of the individual provision of God for the twelve tribes of Israel and the frankincense is the sweet savor to God. The frankincense is certainly not an ingredient of the bread but is burned on the table or nearby.

¹²⁸ Rotherham gives the alternate reading *piles* here; however, although this word is similar to the noun and verb for *heaped up*, it is not the same word and is found used only of the showbread. Therefore, *rows* is reasonably accurate.

"Every Sabbath day [lit., in a day the Sabbath in a day the Sabbath] he will set in order before the face of Yahweh [the bread and frankincense] continually from the proximity of the people of Israel as a covenant forever. [Lev. 24:8]

Epizeuxis [pronounced *EP-i-ZEUX-is*] means *reiteration, duplication or duplication*. The duplication of *in a day, the Sabbath* (or, *on the day of the Sabbath*) means *every Sabbath* with a strong emphasis upon the word *every*. This service must be done without fail. **Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not go hungry and he who believes in Me will never thirst."** (John 6:35).

From the proximity of is the prefixed min preposition affixed to the preposition *ʾêth* (אֶת) [pronounced *ayth*]. All these things would have meaning for the sons of Israel and for the angels which observe us, so Moses is to see that all of it is in place. This must all be done within the camp of Israel, as Yahweh has a special relationship with the Jews. This may sound as though the priest is working on the Sabbath. Our Lord said, **"Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?"** (Matt. 12:5).

"And it will be for Aaron and his sons; and they will eat it in a holy place as it [is] a holy of holies out of the offerings by fire to Yahweh—a perpetual statute." [Lev. 24:9]

What has occurred for several weeks now (and perhaps months) is that Moses has been going into the tabernacle and God has been speaking to him and Moses has been writing it down. However, in the midst of the instructions, we have something significant occur. What did our Lord mean when He said, **"Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house of God and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?"** (Matt. 12:3b–4). This incident occurred in 1Sam. 21:6 and David was not disciplined for it. This indicated that David, in those circumstances, had some right to the bread; this was not a social cause per se, but David, who was in the right, was on the run from King Saul, who was in the wrong. But we will get there some day (our Lord was quoted as saying this in all three synoptic gospels possibly on more than one occasion (Mark 2:26 Luke 6:4).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Half-Egyptian/Half-Israelite Speaks Blasphemy

Then the son of an Israelite woman went out (and he [was] the son of an Egyptian) in among the sons of Israel and they quarreled in the camp—the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel. [Lev. 24:10]

Although it is not stated, the implication is that the half-Egyptian, half-Israelite was possibly looking for a fight; he is named first, although the verb for quarreling is in the 3rd person, masculine plural.

Then the Israelite woman's son blasphemed [or, cursed] the Name and cursed and they brought him to Moses. His mother's name: Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan. [Lev. 24:11]

There are several words that we need to examine here. *Nâka^bv* (נָכָה) [pronounced *naw-KA^BV*] has several distinct meanings (like our English word *strike*). It can mean *to pierce* (2Kings 18:21 Isa. 36:6) and it can mean *to curse, to blaspheme* (Num. 23:8 Prov. 11:26); the connection being the cutting through of something or someone. It also means *to expressly designate, expressly name* (Gen. 30:28 Num. 1:17); and here I cannot make a connection (although, when I first read Gen. 30:28, I thought of *cutting a check*; but that doesn't jive there or elsewhere). All three meanings appear to occur an equal number of times (not very many) and they are not confined to any particular stem (although the latter usage is exclusive to the Niphal). However, we appear to have some disagreement concerning this verb. In this verse it is lacking a letter. Zodhiates, Strong's and the New Englishman's Concordance associates this verb with *nâka^bv* (Strong's #5344 BDB #666) whereas Owen and BDB associate this with the word *qâ^bva^bv* (קָבַח) [pronounced *kaw^B-VA^BV*] (Strong's #6895 BDB #866). To make matters

even more interesting, this word (possibly) reoccurs twice in Lev. 24:16 and they all associate it with *nâka^bv* (Strong's #5344 BDB #666) (it is more obvious in that verse). Damn.

We have a second word meaning *curse*; *qâlal* (קָלַל) [pronounced *kaw-LAL*] and it means *to treat something lightly, in a trifling manner* in the Niphal (1Sam. 18:22 Isa. 49:6); *to curse, to despise, to be accursed* in the Piel (Lev. 20:9 Deut. 23:4), Pual (Job 24:18 Isa. 65:20). The connection is simple; you may treat something as unimportant; and when that is intensified, you curse it. However, in the Qal stem, *swift, moving quickly, moving aside* seem to be the meaning (Gen. 8:8 2Sam. 1:23 Job 7:6). The Hiphil is a mixture of these meanings (Ex. 18:22 Isa. 23:9 Jonah 1:5). I include several passages so that you can see in many cases the same author will use this word in several ways. Strong's #7043 BDB #886.

Shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced *shame*] is a word meaning *name* (used twice in this verse) and *reputation, character*. It is used twice in this verse, the first time as a direct object with a definite article, referring to Yahweh's name. I believe one test of a degenerate society is their respect for God's name and in our culture, it is common on most television programs to here *God* used as a point of exclamation and in movies to use His name in profanity. There is just no respect or fear in our populace. In a theocracy, a person who blasphemed the name of Yahweh was sentenced to death. Up until now, we have not had many offenses which God did not handle directly. However, this boy blasphemed God's name and nothing has happened, so he is brought to Moses.

And they put him in [protective] custody [possibly, a prison of sorts] to make clear to them¹²⁹ regarding the will [lit., mouth] of Yahweh. [Lev. 24:12]

What has happened was disconcerting. Here is a young man who has seen the of the greatest miracles ever witnessed in history by the hand of God and he blasphemes the God Who has delivered him. The people who heard did not have any idea how to react or what to do. Since all of Yahweh's instructions were given verbally to Moses, their desire was to know what Yahweh would command in this situation.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Yahweh Reiterates "An Eye for an Eye" and the Blasphemer Is Executed

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 24:13]

Moses took this directly to God.

"Cause to bring out the cursing one and all who heard him will lay their hands upon his head and all the congregation will stone him. [Lev. 24:14]

Hearing God's name used in a profane way was disconcerting (which it should be for us). The hands being laid on the young man is the way they testified to his guilt. It was also a way of transferring sin, but that is not what is being done here.

"And you will speak to the children Israel to say, 'Whoever curses his God will bear his sin. [Lev. 24:15]

As we have seen, bearing one's sin means to bear the punishment for one's sin.

¹²⁹ This could be rendered *concerning them*; which would mean *concerning blasphemers*—however, Young, Rotherham and I all agree on this portion of the verse.

""And the one blaspheming of the name of Yahweh in dying he will be put to death; in stoning, all the congregation will be stone him; as the visitor as the native—in his blaspheming [the] Name, he will be put to death. [Lev. 24:16]

Any person among the Jews was treated the same way in this regard. This was a capital offense. God continues with a short list of capital offenses. Now let's examine a few renderings of the next verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"And he who kills any man shall surely be put to death."
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	"And when any man by smiting taketh the life of any human being he shall be surely put to death."
KJV	"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."
NASB	"And if a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death."
NIV	"If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death."
NRSV	"Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death."
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	"And when a man smiteth any soul of man, he is certainly put to death."

As usual, *Young's Translation* is the closest to the original, with *The Emphasized Bible* close behind. They all mean roughly the same thing; however if the literal translation conveys the meaning, I believe that we should go with the literal translation.

""And when a man strikes a soul of a human being, in dying will be put to death. [Lev. 24:17]

There are two words for *man* here: *ʾîysh* (יִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*] means *man*. and This is the generic name for man from which Adam chose the name for *woman*. The second word for man is *ʾâdâm* (אָדָם) [pronounced *aw-DAWM*], which can be the proper name for *Adam*, another name for *man* or a name for the human race, e.g., *human being*, *mankind*. After the first word for man we have the word *when*, we have *nâkâh* (נָכָה) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*] which is often translated *smite* in the KJV (a very good rendering, by the way); but in more modern language, it means *strike*, *assault*, *hit*. Often there are fatal repercussions; when the *soul* is struck, as it is here, this is equivalent to intentional manslaughter. This verse ends exactly as the middle of v. 16. It is the Qal infinite absolute followed by the 3rd masculine singular, Hophal imperfect of *mûwth* (מָוַת) [pronounced *mooth*], the simple word for *die*. The Hophal is the causative, passive stem; this means he will be put to death. This is the third or fourth time this law is found in God's Word. We are a foolish society to ignore this law.

""He who strikes an animal will restore it, a life for a life [lit., soul for soul]. [Lev. 24:18]

What the man will do is the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect, 3rd person feminine singular suffix of *shâlêm* (שָׁלַם) [pronounced *shaw-LAME*] and it means *to complete*, *to make perfect*, *to restore*. By killing the animal, or wounding it, the owner was made incomplete; when he replaces the animal, he is making the owner complete.

""And when a man causes a disfigurement in his neighbor, as he has done, it will be done to him; [Lev. 24:19]

This is one area where we are far behind the Arab peoples. Punishment should be equal to the crime; too many of our punishments are too easy and too many are too hard. A prison sentence often means condemning a person to homosexual rape (which should be punished by execution; as should any forcible rape). Not only does this fill up our prisons, but it is not apropos punishment. The word disfigurement is the same as the word used for *defect* or *blemish* on animals who are unfit for sacrifice to Yahweh. The verb I will cover at another time.

""Fracture for fracture, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; as he has disfigured a man [lit., given against a man disfigurement], so he will be disfigured [lit., so it will be given against him]. [Lev. 24:20]

The principle here is that the penalty should be appropriate to the crime, no more and no less. A criminal who is given a second chance via parole without being appropriately punished is a crime waiting to happen. Not everyone should do jail time; judges who have attempted to be creative in order to punish the criminals without jail time should often be commended for their initiative. This does not always mean necessarily that the exact same disfigurement should be given the criminal assailant (although that would be appropriate in many situations) but that the punishment should be equal to the crime.

This is a difficult translation and I may not have given it justice. One key verb can be translated *give*, *set*, *put* and the twice used preposition can be rendered *in*, *into*, *at*, *by* with *against*. Let me give a couple of other renderings, not to criticize them, but to give a fuller understanding to you:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused a blemish or disfigurement on a man, so shall it be done to him.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth as he inflicted a blemish upon a human being, so shall one be inflicted upon him.
NASB	...just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.
NIV	As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured.
NRSV	...the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he putteth a blemish in a man so it is done in him.

Of these translations, *Young's* is probably the most consistent and accurate. Our only problem is that when we think of a facial blemish, we do not picture in our minds serious disfigurement, which this particular word can mean. Notice that motivation and personal circumstances, insanity, diminished capacity are not germane to the assignment of punishment. As he does, it is done to him. It is simple and quick. Our Lord quoted this verse: **"You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say to you, do not resist him the evil one; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any one wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also."** (Matt. 5:38–39). Jesus Christ is not contradicting Scripture because **"The Scripture cannot be broken."** (John 10:35); He is clarifying Scripture. This passage is strictly within the confines of a government, law enforcement and a court system. This is not to be quoted or used for personal vendettas. When it comes to a personal problem with another person, you learn to give and to yield; you do not retaliate. If necessary, God will get revenge on your behalf (which I have seen done). Our battle is not with our fellow human beings, but against unseen powers; **our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenlies** (Eph. 6:12). Finally, we are on the defensive against the powers which are against us, as our Lord says in Matt. 5:38. We do not have to go looking for the powers of darkness; they are around us ever moment of every day. It is only our wall of fire, the protection of God the Holy Spirit and our guardian angels, which preserve us.

"And the one striking an animal will restore it; and a man who strikes a man will be put to death.
[Lev. 24:21]

These two laws are repeated and summarized; God has no problem with repetition.

"One judgement there is to you; as for the visitor, as for the native it will be to you, for I am Yahweh, your God." [Lev. 24:22]

Criminal laws do not carry with them a double standard favoring either party. No matter who commits the infraction, it carries the same penalty. Even though Yahweh is specifically the God to the Jews, He is not strictly a national God as were the gods of the heathen. His Laws stood for all mankind and what was wrong for a Jew to do was also wrong for a gentile.

So Moses spoke to the people of Israel and they brought out the curser into the outside of the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did as Yahweh commanded Moses.
[Lev. 24:23]

And this is the first recorded execution as performed by the state.

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Leviticus Homepage](#)

[Return to Beginning of this Chapter](#)

Leviticus 25

Leviticus 25:1–55

Outline of Chapter 25:

- Vv. 1–7 **The Sabbath year**
- Vv. 8–19 **The Year of Jubilee**
- Vv. 20–22 **God's provision in the consecutive Sabbath years**
- Vv. 23–34 **The law of redemption with respect to property**
- Vv. 35–46 **The treatment of fellow Jews who have become poor**
- Vv. 47–55 **The law of redemption with regard to Jewish slaves**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 4 **Isaiah 5:1–7a**

Introduction: One of the most fascinating portions of the Law is the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25 will cover these two periods of time and several other topics. Much of the end of this chapter deals with land and slavery and their redemption with respect to the Year of Jubilee. That is, a Jewish slave would be released in the Year of Jubilee; what about his redemption prior to that? That is what much of the remainder of Lev. 25 deals with. A key word in this chapter is *shûw* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; it means *return*, and it is found ten times in this chapter. Primarily we see a man's possession (in this context, his property) returned to him. In fact, the way it reads most of the time is that *he is returned unto his possession*. Another word often found in this chapter is *yâtsâ* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and it means *to go out, to come out*; however, in this context it occasionally means *to revert*. It is found nine times in this chapter and well over a thousand times in the Bible. Concerning this chapter, Zodhiates writes: *The provisions of this chapter prevent overworking the land, call for regular land redistribution, and forbid perpetual servitude...these things were not proposed merely as sound social legislation, for each one had a specific theological cause as well. Servants were to be released in the Year of Jubilee because God had rescued the Israelites from Egypt and they were all His servants (Lev. 25:55). The land was to be redeemed regularly, because it actually belonged to God, not Israel (Lev. 25:23–24).*¹³⁰

The Sabbath Year

Ex. 23:10–11 Deut. 15:1–11

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses by Mount Sinai, saying, [Lev. 25:1]

The prefixed *vêyth* preposition refers to proximity. The camp of the Israelites was near Mount Sinai; Moses was not going up on Mount Sinai anymore, as the footnote in the NASB seems to indicate.

"Speak to the sons of Israel, and you will say to them, 'And when you come into the land which I am giving you, the land will rest a Sabbath [or, Sabbath a Sabbath] to Yahweh. [Lev. 25:2]

Even what God has given the Israelites must be rested. God provides for everything. We can do absolutely nothing to earn or to deserve what God has given us.

"Six years you will sow your field and six years you will prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits. [Lev. 25:3]

¹³⁰ Zodhiates *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, p. 336.

Sow and prune are both in the imperfect tense, indicating continual work is to be done on these properties. Some people raised grain, others grapes.

""But in the seventh year, a Sabbath of a Sabbath. It will be a Sabbath to Yahweh for that land. You will not sow your field and your will not prune your vineyard. [Lev. 25:4]

Here is an idea which unfortunately never caught on in many places. One thing which interested me in the California school system is that at one time they had what was known as a Sabbatical where a teacher could take a break from teaching, go out into the world and learn and be paid a partial salary. This was a command to all the Jews from Yahweh. They were to rest for one full year and allow Yahweh to provide for them.

For the Jews, the Sabbath year meant a number of things: (1) A one year rest from their lives of labor (Lev.). A rest for the land (Lev. 25:5). (2) The spontaneous produce of the fields was for everyone, but particularly for the poor (Ex. 23:11 Lev. 25:6). (3) This was a time for the debtor to be released from his creditor (Deut. 15:1–2). We have a similar practice today; credit reports carry information of bad debts on them for approximately seven years, then those are removed. (4) During the Feast of Tabernacles during this year, the Law was to be read publicly to the people (Deut. 31:10–12).

As a point of agriculture, certain types of bushes, trees and vines do better when old growth has been removed. Growth which has become damaged or old or diseased should always be removed (in fact, I still remember a landscape architect friend of mine who gave me the general rule for pruning trees—if it is diseased, dying, crossing or damaged, you prune it). On certain types of trees (such as the Crape Myrtle), pruning improves the way it looks and stimulates greater growth. So it is with grape bushes. Also, the branches of the Jews, which were not bearing fruit, were pruned so that the branches of the church age believers could be grafted in—and because of that, we have seen amazing growth spurts (Rom. 11:17–24). This will help us somewhat with the meaning of the Year of Jubilee, the topic we will begin in v. 8.

So what does this Sabbath year mean, besides rest and total dependence upon God for His provision? The land is Israel. The land will stop producing as it is supposed to after a certain time. Sowing, reaping and harvesting are often related to the teaching of the gospel and man's response to it (see the parable of the sower). God will stop planting and harvesting in the land of Israel at the beginning of the Church Age—not forever, but He will let the land rest. The vineyard means the same thing.

We find the vineyard in...

Isaiah 5:1–7a

Let me sing now for my well-beloved [Israel] a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard:

My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.
 And He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine.
 And He built a tower in the middle of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;
 Then he expected to produce good grapes, but it produced worthless ones.
 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard:
 What More was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?
 Why, when I expected to produce grapes did it produce worthless ones?

So now, let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:
 I will remove its fence and it will be consumed;
 I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground;
 And I will lay it wast; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up.
 I will also command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of Yahweh of the armies is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant.

God will cease pruning and taking care of his vine, Israel, and stop taking the grapes from it as a yearly harvest, but He will allow this vine to run wild. God's produce will come from those living in the church age, and not from Israel as a nation, but from individuals Jews as members of the church. Read also John 15:1–11.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

""What grows of itself [lit., growth from spilled kernels] in your harvest, you will not reap and the grapes of your separated vine you will not gather. A year of a Sabbath it will be for the land. [Lev. 25:5]

What grows of itself is one word meaning *growth from spilled kernels*. When corn is harvested, some of the kernels fall and become seeds and then sprout the next year, apart from any encouragement or reseeded. What it amounts to is that this crop is growing of itself and by itself. Even if grape vines are not trimmed back, or pruned, still grapes will occur on the vines, although not as many as would be case with pruning first taking place. However, this is not a year of reduced activity where they Israelites don't have to work quite as hard as before; they are not working whatsoever when it comes to harvesting. From v. 7, it appears as though they could go out into the fields and take what they needed for their own personal use, but they were apparently not to harvest as they did during the other six years. The Jews were to live from the land as God provided for them, not as they worked the land.

I should probably say a little bit about Strong's #5139 BDB #634, which is the word generally rendered *Nazirite*.

""And the Sabbath of the land will be to you food for yourself and for your male slaves and for your female slaves and for your hired servant and for the visitor living with you; [Lev. 25:6]

God was asking a lot of the Israelites. He was asking them to trust Him entirely during that seventh year for their provisions. To the best of my knowledge, we have no record of the Jews ever believing Yahweh here and taking a Sabbath year.

""And for your cattle and for the animals that [are] in your land. All its yield [i.e., the yield of the land] is for food. [Lev. 25:7]

During that economy, instead of planting, harvesting, trading, and storing, the Jews apparently were allowed to go out to their fields, take what they needed and use that day by day for their sustenance. However, it may be that this is not allowed. This will be covered in more detail in vv. 20–22.

The Year of Jubilee

""And you will count for yourself seven Sabbaths of years—seven years of seven occurrences so that is to you the days of seven Sabbaths of years—forty-nine years. [Lev. 25:8]

And here we have a lot of repetition—the upshot of this is that something is going to occur every 49 years, so that this will occur at least once in every Jew's life. Now would be a good time for a short lexicon of terms:

1. She^bva' (שִׁבְעָה) [pronounced *she^b-VAH*] means seven.
2. Shabbâth (שַׁבָּת) [pronounced *shahb-BAWTH*] means Sabbath (taken from a very which means *cease, rest desist*). As we have seen, the Sabbath is the seventh day.

Some translations make it sound as though there are several different words to be found here; however, we have a repetition of *seven* and *Sabbaths*.

"And you will sound [lit., cause to pass along] the horn blast in the seventh month on the tenth of the month on the Day of Atonements. You will keep sounding [lit., keep causing to pass through] the horn throughout your land. [Lev. 25:9]

The blast of the horn could mark a time for alarm, a time for war (Num. 10:9); they were used to arouse the people of Israel in the morning (Num. 10:12); and it marked the Day of Atonements and the Year of Jubilee. I am not certain whether the horn or trumpet was actually a part of the Feast of Trumpets, however, as we do not technically have the word *trumpet* (i.e., in the Hebrew) in connection with that feast.

The Day of Atonements is also called (depending upon the translation) The Day of Atonement, The Day or Propitiation, or The Sin-Covering Day.

"And you will set apart [as holy] the year of the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty in the land for all dwelling there [or, in it]; it is to you a [year of] jubilee [lit., ram's horn] when you [all] will return [each] man to his possession when you [all] will return [each] man to his family. [Lev. 25:10]

This is absolutely incredible; whatever possessions of another that you have acquired from him over the years will have his possession (in the singular, this is going to be land; which is why many translators render this word *property*) returned to him and whatever men you have taken as slaves over the years will be returned to their families. They will be freed. It is a time of liberty and freedom. This also prevented the accumulation of too much wealth (in the way of property) in the hands of a few. Wealth does tend to accumulate, and often to the detriment of the poor and middle class. This is not an anti-capitalistic stance, per se; as God required this only every fifty years, not all wealth was redistributed, and this was never an issue in the New Testament.

The word *yôw^bvêl* (יּוֹבֵל) [pronounced *yô-BALE*] literally means *ram's horn* (Ex. 19:13 Joshua 6:4–6) and Rotherham footnotes this as a *cry of joy*. *Jubilee* is a transliteration from the Latin, which is a transliteration of the later Greek translations (not the Septuagint), which is a transliteration of this word. The Greek is *ἰωβελ* which became *jobeus/jubeus* in the Vulgate, *jubile* in the KJV (ZPEB suggests that it may have been dissyllabic), and, finally, *jubilee* in most modern translations. We will not cover this doctrine, as the remainder of Lev. 25 and a portion of 27 will be devoted to this Year of Jubilee. The Septuagint renders this word by *ἄφεσις* [pronounced *Ah-fe-sis*] and it means *release (from captivity)* and *pardon, cancellation*.¹³¹

In the Year of Jubilee, we have the following occurrences: 1. On the Great Day of Atonement in the Year of Jubilee, the trumpets are sounded throughout the land to announce this year (Lev. 25:9–10). 2. The land was given rest, as in a Sabbath year (Lev. 25:11). 3. Since the land would lie fallow for two consecutive years, God in the sixth year would give enough of a yield for the Jews to survive for two more years (Lev. 25:20–22 2Kings 19:29 Isa. 37:30). 4. All real estate reverted back to the original family owners, making most real estate transactions long-term lease-holds (Lev. 25:13–16, 28–34). 5. Similarly, all Jewish slaves were to be released, with their families, in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:39–41).

"It, jubilee [lit., a ram's horn] is to you a year—the fiftieth year. You will not sow and you will not reap what grows of itself; you will not gather grapes from the separated vines. [Lev. 25:11]

This is very similar to the Sabbath year; total dependence upon God for their day to day provisions.

"For it—the Year of Jubilee—is set apart to you; out of the field you will eat what it yields. [Lev. 25:12]

So the Jews are allowed to take in on a day by day basis their food; they are just not allowed to engage in farming; however limited.

¹³¹ Rotherham footnotes this as *cry of joy*, but I don't find that substantiated in the Hebrew.

You may have noticed that in vv. 11–12, I have either used commas or long hyphens around *jubilee*. *Jubilee* is a masculine singular noun and the pronoun *it* has been in the feminine singular, usually referring to something else directly in the verse. Also, since the word *year* is in the feminine singular, and I believe that the Hebrew allows us to insert *year* anytime we see *jubilee* and *it* together.

""In this Year of Jubilee, you will return each to his possession. [Lev. 25:13]

The land is *released* to the original family; the debt is *canceled* against them. As was noted previously, this is where the Greek word in the Septuagint comes from. The translators took into account what occurred during the Year of Jubilee and appropriately assigned a Greek word to relay that information. The NIV Study Bible: *The Lord prohibited the accumulation of property to the detriment of the poor.*¹³²

""And when you sell to your neighbor¹³³ or buy from the hand of your neighbor, you will not defraud [or, deceive; lit., oppress, maltreat] a man his brother. [Lev. 25:14]

There are several words that we should look at here. We have seen before the word *ʿāmīyth* (עִמִּי) [pronounced *aw-MEETH*] which means *associate, fellow*. I have translated this *neighbor*, although coming up with an accurate rendering is difficult. This is a person who might be a neighbor, but not necessarily. They may know one another only through this one particular business transaction. This person is probably a Jew, but not necessarily. It is someone else who also lives in the land.

The verb is the 2nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect jussive of *yânâh* (יָנָה) [pronounced *yaw-NAW*]; BDB gives the renderings *suppress, oppress, maltreat*. The NASB and translates this *do wrong*. The NRSV uses *cheat*, which I personally like; and *take advantage*, as found in the NIV, I like even more. Personally I would go with *take unfair advantage* or *exploit*. You will find that this meaning seems to work better than *vex, oppress*, etc. in passages such as Ex. 22:21 Isa. 49:26 Jer. 22:3 Ezek. 45:8 46:18.

The property is not returned for free; that there is an honest price given for it.

""According to the number of years after [the Year of] Jubilee, you will buy from your neighbor; and according to the number of years he will sell to you. [Lev. 25:15]

My impression here is that we are going to take into account inflation. NASB has a footnote mentioning *hands*, but that word is not found in this verse. They possibly missed the previous verse at one time and were taking up the slack for that.

The selling back of a piece of property was not a sloppy process where sketches were made on a cave wall or a group of men stood around some piles of sticks and mumbled things. The money was carefully weighed, deeds of various types were drawn up (albeit, not quite as elaborate as the paperwork in a property settlement of modern times, where most closing involve the killing of one tree to provide the paper); and the deeds which were used described the land being transferred in detail. Furthermore, this was done in the presence of several witnesses, to insure the finality and the authenticity of the sale (see Jer. 32:9–12 and Gen. 23:4–20)..

""In accordance with the abundance of years, you will increase its price and in accordance with the fewness of years, you will decrease the price; for the number of crops he is selling to you. [Lev. 25:16]

V. 16 literally begins with *according to the mouth*; however, BDB gives alternate translations for *mouth* as it is used as a preposition: *in proportion to, according to the measure, in accordance with.*¹³⁴

¹³² p. 178.

¹³³ More literally, this is a person with whom you are associated; BDB suggests on p. 765 this was possibly built from the word for *association* (although that looks to be pretty far-fetched to me).

¹³⁴ See BDB p. 805 and Gen. 34:26 43:7 Ex. 17:13 34:27 Lev. 27:8 Jer. 29:16.

If the property has been cultivated for a long time, it is worth more; and if has been held a shorter time, often meaning that it has not been fully farmed, then it is worth less. And, as I mentioned, there may be an element of inflation figured in here.

""You will not exploit a man his neighbor, but you will fear [and respect] your God for I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 25:17]

The motivation for honesty is respect and fear of God. People seem to have a problem with that. A properly behaved child when young has a healthy respect/fear for his parents. When he is good, he is praised, and when he is bad, he is spanked. A child who does not fear his parents at age six is out of control and remains out of control at least into his twenties and sometimes for the rest of his life. However, the child who at age six fears and respects his parents has a much better chance at becoming a well-adjusted adolescent and young adult. This respect eventually extends to all figures of authority. Just as a child's attitude toward the authority of his parents evolves from simple fear to respect (we are talking about an ideal situation); so a believer as he matures finds his attitude toward God's authority changing from fear of discipline to respect for God's perfection and desire for the best for us (again, this is an ideal situation).

""Therefore, you will do my statutes and my ordinances; you will guard and perform them and you will dwell [or, remain] in the land in security [or safety and confidence]. [Lev. 25:18]

God's commandments involve active participation. There are certain things that the Jews must actually do, as we have seen, in order to obey these laws and ordinances. What is implied in this verse is that their obedience to and the guarding of God's Law is a part of their security package. They do that and God sees to their security in the land.

""And the land will yield its fruit and you will eat to be satisfied and you will dwell in security in it. [Lev. 25:19]

The land will sustain the Jews and provide them with more than enough food.

God's Provision in the Consecutive Sabbath Years

""And if you say, "What will we eat in the seventh year; observe, we are not sowing or gathering in our crop [or, produce or revenue];" [Lev. 25:20]

This could be more informally rendered; **Okay, suppose that we do not sow and we do not harvest our produce?** This is a reasonable objection. The Jews have to eat and certainly they wonder if they do not reap or sow, what can they eat?

""I will command My blessing to you in the sixth year so that it [the land] will bring forth fruit [lit., produce or production] for three years. [Lev. 25:21]

The first verb is tsâwâh (צו) [pronounced tsaw-WAW] and BDB lists its meanings as *to lay charge upon, give charge to, charge command, order*. The latter two are probably the most consistently used. Some crops are ripe for a sort time and that is it; many are used year round, but only have certain times when they may be reaped. Since the Jews would take a year off, they would have nothing growing for that year or for the next so God would see to it that they would be provided for during the sixth, seventh and eighth years.

""When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating old produce until the ninth year when its produce comes in; you will [continue] eating the old [until then]. [Lev. 25:22]

Here is where context is important. There are two Sabbath years, so to speak, back to back. The Sabbath Year itself and the Year of Jubilee were two times when the land was to lie fallow. Therefore, Yahweh promised enough produce for the Jews to last them through those two years.

One of the problems that a lot of businesses face is burnout. Even though this all has spiritual meaning, it still would make good psychological sense. We have seen that having a day off is needful for all those who work; a year off every seven years would allow a person to rest and recuperate and recharge their batteries.

What is the spiritual meaning of the year of Jubilee, when all of the slaves are set free and the land is returned? The freeing of the slaves is obviously the freedom we receive as redeemed by our Lord's blood. Isaiah mentions this in Isa. 61:1, which is quoted by our Lord during a very dramatic moment in the temple when He began His public ministry. **And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,** The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. **And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. and He began to say to them, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."** (Luke 4:17–21 Isa. 61:1–2b). This is the first advent of our Lord.

Now, with respect to the land, the Jews were removed from God's plan as a nation somewhere between 30 and 70 AD and they were removed from their land. They have never taken back the full amount of land as given them by God. God will restore them to the land; God will resume His plan with the nation Israel at the end of the Church Age. This is taught by the Year of Jubilee, announced on that Great Day of Atonement. This is the second advent of our Lord.

The Law of Redemption with Respect to Property

"The land will not be sold in perpetuity to strangers and temporary residents for the land [is] mine and you are with me. [Lev. 25:23]

Here is a law which is peculiar to the Israelites; the land is Yahweh's and they could not make a final sale on their land to someone who was not a believer. It is analogous to an unbeliever gaining access to heaven. The closest they might come is being married to a believer who is mature. However, this cannot occur in perpetuity; that is, forever. This means that at best, a non-Jew could lease a portion of the land for 48 years. The land is a promise from God to Noah, to Abraham Isaac and Jacob. **All these died in doctrine, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth** (Heb. 11:13).

"And in all the land of your possession, you will grant a [right of] redemption for the land. [Lev. 25:24]

All of the land is Yahweh's and He mandated that the land could always be repurchased by the original family; and, if they lacked the means to do so, it would be returned to the original family on the Year of Jubilee. This right is a part of the deed to the land.

"And¹³⁵ when your brother becomes poor and sells out from his possession, then his nearest redeemer to him will come and redeem what his brother has sold. [Lev. 25:25]

Generally speaking, the word *ʾâch* (אָח) [pronounced *awhk*] means simply *brother*, as in Gen. 4:2 27:6. However, there are times that it refers to a close relative, as in Gen. 14:14, 16 (Lot was Abram's nephew, not his brother) Lev. 10:4; and this word can refer to one's *fellow-countrymen* (Lev. 19:17 25:14, 46). That which belongs to a

¹³⁵ The *and* is found in the Western Samaritan, Septuagint and Syriac codices.

fellow Jew was lost due to his brother's poverty. His nearest kinsman must redeem the land; that is, he must purchase it back on behalf of his brother and the family. Kinsman here is not the Hebrew word for *kinsman*, but the Qal active participle of gâ'al (גָּאֵל) [pronounced *gaw-AHL*], the verb for *redeem, purchase*. We find it translated *avenger* in Num. 35:12, and elsewhere as *revenger, kinsman, kinsman-redeemer*; however, this is the verb for *redeem* found in the Qal participle. The verb is so ancient as to its origins, that its original meaning is lost to antiquity, if it were any different. However, properly, it means, In the Qal participle, *redeemer, purchaser*. Rendering this as *kinsman-redeemer* do is more by interpretation than by translation. Strong's #1350 BDB #145. Now, with this verb, we have the definite article and the adjective qârôb (קָרֵב) [pronounced *kaw-RO^bV*], which means *near, contiguous, imminent, near in relation*. Strong's #7138 BDB #898.

One is not to sell his property unless he becomes destitute and then God prefers that a kinsman-redeemer step in and purchase the land. And, in any case, the land never becomes a permanent possession of anyone else but it eventually reverts back to the family. Essentially, a person who has become destitute leases his land out; he does not deliver a clear title.

We have a situation in 1Kings 21 where King Ahab desires a plot of ground that belongs to Naboth; however, Naboth recognized that this land was his families and because he was not destitute, he could not sell the land to Ahab. This is an application of this passage. See Jer. 32:6–15 also.

In some circumstances, the kinsman-redeemer was obligated to marry the widow as well (Deut. 25:5–10). This helps to explain what occurred in Ruth 4:1–8, when Boaz was speaking with a close relative concerning Ruth's widowhood and the redemption of Naomi's land.

The underlying spiritual principle in all this is that someone who is sold into slavery and has not the means to purchase himself out of this slavery must be redeemed by a kinsman-redeemer. Our kinsman is Jesus Christ, come in the flesh (which makes Him our kinsman) and the redemption price was His spiritual death on the cross (which tends to sound mild, but He endured the equivalent of our eternal punishment on the cross). Let me go out on a tangent here. We deserve eternal torment for the sins that we have committed, for our rebellion against God, for our constant actions against Him. You might well wonder how can our punishment, multiplied by the number of people who were born on this earth, multiplied by an eternity of torment could be paid for on the cross in a finite amount of time? Other than explain that the intense suffering was beyond anything imaginable, even by those in torments now; in mathematics, there are infinite series—an infinite sum of numbers, each additional number adding more to the entire sum—which so have a definite sum, even though they are infinite. All I can say is that this is analogous; an infinite amount of pain and suffering brought to one point in time upon one person on our behalf. That was the cross.

""And a man when this is not for him a redeemer and his hand has been caused to reach and he attains [or, finds] with sufficiency his redemption; [Lev. 25:26]

Here is a person who did not have a redeemer, but he has attempted to reach out to his friends and family and has attained the amount necessary to redeem the property (this is a figure of speech that we find here, similar to the one where we are said to dig deep enough into our pockets to find the money to do something).

""He will determine the years since he sold it and return the excess to the man [to] whom he sold it and he will return to his property [lit., possession]. [Lev. 25:27]

Without going into the Hebrew, he sold his land some time ago. He is to account for the years that it has been sold and, when he redeems it, he must also pay what might be considered interest or inflation. Whatever the case, he must pay more than he received for the property.

""However, if his hand cannot attain [or, find] enough to return to himself, then [lit., and] the thing sold will remain in the hand of the buyer of it until the Year of Jubilee. And in the [year of] Jubilee, it will revert [lit., go out or come out] and he will return to his property [lit., possession]. [Lev. 25:28]

When a person is in trouble and has sold a piece of property, he always seems to have a buy-back clause allowed there by Yahweh, as the property was not his to begin with, but Yahweh's. The terms of the buy-back must be reasonable to the person who purchased the property. However, even if he could not reach deep enough into his pockets to purchase the property back, it does revert back to him in the Year of Jubilee. This is a remarkable law, not applicable today as this applied to the Jews in the land given them by God.

"And when a man sells a house of dwelling in a walled city, then [lit., and] his [right of] redemption will be until the completion of a year from its sale—[for a year of] days is his [right of] redemption. [Lev. 25:29]

This was difficult to render and to understand. What helps us is the word *days* in the plural often refers to a full year's time (Gen. 40:4 Ex. 13:10 Judges 11:40) or almost a year's time (10 months, as in Gen. 24:55). Several translations recognize this and do not even use the word *days* in their translation, but use the word *a year*, *yearly*, etc. instead.

"And if it is not redeemed until the completion to him [or, of it] a full year, then the house that is in the city which is¹³⁶ in a walled city stands in perpetuity to him who bought it throughout his generations; it will not revert [possibly, go back; lit., go out] in the [year of] Jubilee. [Lev. 25:30]

Let me quote from the NASB to help clarify this passage: Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee. Let me throw in the NIV version: If a man sells a house in a walled city, he retains the right of redemption a full year after its sale. During that time he may redeem it. If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to the buyer and his descendants. It is not to be returned in the Jubilee. So, although I lean more and more toward the most literal translation of the Bible that I can render and sometimes say disparaging things about translations which are not so literal; here, the NASB and the NIV help us out a great deal with the meaning of this passage. Once a home in a walled city is sold and has not been redeemed within a year, then it is sold for good, and it does not revert back to the original family even in the Year of Jubilee.

"But the houses of the villages which [have] no wall around them in accordance with the fields of the country it will be determined—they may be redeemed and they will be released in the [Year of] Jubilee. [Lev. 25:31]

The house in the country sitting on a little land will be just like the land and the same laws which pertain to the land pertain to that house; this is because the land is God's.

The chief difference between a village and a city was not size or even density (although, that would certainly be a factor) but the walls. These walls were usually just the blank walls of a large number of houses built side by side all around the city itself. When this sort of wall was replaced by a wall of solid construction, that became a fortified city (Jer. 34:7). Cities and villages were often side-by-side so that during times of war, the villagers could retreat to the cities to be protected by the walls; and that during times of peace and prosperity, those in the city could join in the sowing or planting and harvesting of the land in the villages (Joshua 15:32, 36, 41).¹³⁷

"And the cities of the Levites—the houses in the cities of their possession, the [right of] redemption is at any time to the Levites. [Lev. 25:32]

This is interesting, because up until now, all spiritual function has been in the hands of the sons of Aaron, who is a Levite. There were a great many Levites that, up until now, were treated no differently than the rest of the tribes

¹³⁶ According to a Rotherham footnote (p. 152), the Massoretic text has a negative in here, a *manifest error*; this is how it is to be read (without the *not*) and some copies are both read and written without the *not*.

¹³⁷ Ralph Gower's *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 186.

of Israel. Suddenly, we have a unique privilege. They are the exception to the law stated in vv. 29–30. It is surprising that in the book called Leviticus, the Levites have not been mentioned until now. In fact, they are mentioned ONLY in vv. 32–33 in this chapter and no where else in the book of Leviticus.

""And when one redeems [a house] from the Levites, then [lit., and] that house that was sold in a city of their possession will revert in the [Year of] Jubilee because the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the people of Israel. [Lev. 25:33]

There seems to be a bit of disagreement in the exact rendering of the first portion of this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But if a house is not redeemed by a Levite, the sold house in the city they possess shall go free in the year of jubilee.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And if one of the Levites should not redeem then shall the sale of the house and the city of his possession go out in the jubilee;
KJV	And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in <i>the year of jubilee</i> ;
NASB	What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee;
NIV	So the property of the Levites is redeemable—that is, a house sold in any town they hold—and is to be returned in the Jubilee,
NRSV	Such property as may be redeemed from the Levites—houses sold in a city belonging to them—shall be released in the jubilee;
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...as to him who redeemeth from the Levites, both the sale of a house and the city of his possession have gone out in the jubilee,

Not only is this a difficult verse to render, but the Massoretic text differs from the western Vulgate. However, let me try to interpret what the point is: the Levites will be those in charge of all the spiritual functions of the land of Israel (although those duties have not been parceled out to them as of yet in God's Word) and what has been given them is eternal. They can only lose it for a short time. Just like our salvation; it may appear as though we have lost it temporarily, due to our actions and what occurs in our lives, but it is an eternal inheritance, undefiled, kept for us until the last day; or, as Saint Peter wrote: **an inheritance [which is] imperishable and undefiled and will not decay, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation prepared to be revealed in the last time** (I Peter 1:4–5).

""But the fields of common land belong to their cities may not be sold, for that perpetual possession it [is] for them. [Lev. 25:34]

Whereas the other tribes could sell their land during times of financial crisis, the Levites were not given that privilege; their land remained with them as long as Israel was in the land. We will examine the land of the Levites in further detail in Num. 35 and Joshua 21.

The Treatment of Fellow Jews Who Have Become Poor

""And if your brother [or, fellow countryman] becomes poor and his hand totters [or, shakes] with you, you will cause him to grow strong—even a foreigner and a visitor—and he will live with you. [Lev. 25:35]

Just as we began with a Christian community of sorts, so it was with the Jews. Their family extended well beyond blood lines even to Gentiles which God caused them to come into contact with. We have a similar command to feed those who are hungry and clothe those who are without prior to giving them the gospel—from this has sprung many marvelous Christian missions who deal with the hopeless and present the gospel to them. As the Apostle John wrote: **But whoever has the world's goods, and sees [lit., beholds] his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?** (I John 3:17).

"Take from him no [exorbitant] interest and usury, but you will fear your God that your brother [or, fellow countryman] may live beside you. [Lev. 25:36]

Interest and usury are two entirely different words. Neshek^e (נֶשֶׁךְ) [pronounced *NEH-shek^e*] can mean *interest*, *usuary*; it literally means *something bitten off*. This does not necessarily forbid interest altogether. This particular word can mean exorbitant interest or usury, as well as just interest. The word usury [pronounced *YOU-zhuh-ree*] is an excessive amount of interest; it is over and above what a reasonable interest would be. The second word is tarbbiyth (תַּרְבִּיט) [pronounced *tar^b-beeth*] and it is built on the word for *increase*, and it means usury. Together, the use of these two words seems to be similar to charging excessive interest and points on top of that. When someone is in need, this is not a financial opportunity for you. This is not a time of gain for you. This is a time to give and we give because we fear and respect our God and because our God has given graciously to us. As the NIV Study Bible notes: *The main idea was not necessarily to forbid all interest, but to assist the poor. The law did not forbid lending so much as it encouraged giving.*¹³⁸ The lending of money and receiving interest on the loan is a cornerstone of business practice, and this is not sinful or evil or disapproved of by God. In fact, several of our Lord's parables dealt with the practice of lending money with interest (Matt. 25:27 Luke 19:23). See also Ex. 22:25 and Deut. 23:19–20.

"Your money you will not lend to him with interest; and for profit, you will not give your food. [Lev. 25:37]

This is Christian giving. This person's personal tragedy is not a time for you to accrue some sort of live interest bearing account. Interest is allowed when someone needs your money to invest in something; although excessive interest with fellow Jews was never allowed.

"I am Yahweh, your God who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan to be your God. [Lev. 25:38]

Periodically, when delivering these laws, God gently reminds the Jews that these are not suggestions; these are not some good ideas to try out—these are God's commands because He was the one to bring them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and He is their God.

"And if your brother beside you becomes poor and sells himself to you; you will not make him serve as a slave. [Lev. 25:39]

One of the laws which should be allowed is for a person in great debt to sell himself into slavery to someone in order to pay these debts off. This verse does not mean that this particular thing cannot be done; it is a matter of attitude and treatment, as the next verse will confirm.

"He will be to you as a hired servant or as a visitor until the [Year of] Jubilee he will serve you. [Lev. 25:40]

When a fellow Jew is really down and out and sells himself into slavery to you, you are not to humiliate him, not to work him to death, but to work him as you would any other hired help, treating him with respect and deference. The Jews had to learn this because they had poor role models in the Egyptians.

"Then he will go out from you—he and his children with him—and return to his own family to the property [lit., possession] of his fathers he will return. [Lev. 25:41]

There are a great many social issues addressed in this chapter, and most of them are eventually tied into the Year of Jubilee. You may wonder why would God command that Jewish slaves be released during the Sabbath year (Deut. 15:12–18) and also during the Year of Jubilee (which followed a Sabbath year). The explanation is simple; the Jews would not keep God's Sabbath year; therefore, all of the laws and expectations of the Sabbath year were

¹³⁸ p. 178.

not followed. Therefore, this law was given for the Year of Jubilee as well, which the Jews apparently kept. The release of slaves in Deut. 15 was made prior to many (if any) Jewish slaves; in fact, it was prior to going into the land—therefore, this did not have to be taught in Exodus or in Leviticus.

""For they are My servants who I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they will not be sold as a sell of slaves. [Lev. 25:42]

Just as the land is Yahweh's, so the people that He brought out of the land. Even if one falls on particularly hard times and has to sell himself, he still belongs to God—he has still been redeemed by God; so he is no one else's possession. **For he who was called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman; likewise, he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brothers, each man is to remain with God in that [condition] in which he was called** (I Cor. 7:22–24).

""You will not rule over him with harshness, but you will fear your God. [Lev. 25:43]

In my pre-Christian days, I had the wrong impression that the God of the Old Testament was somehow different from the God revealed in the New Testament. We feared the God of the Old Testament and loved the God of the New Testament. Here, compassion is taught based upon our fear and respect of God. **Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven** (Col. 4:1). **And masters, do the same things to them and give up threatening, that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him** (Eph. 6:9).

""And [concerning] your males slaves and your female slaves which are to you from among the Gentiles that are round about you; from them you may buy male and female slaves. [Lev. 25:44]

Slavery was not something disallowed in the Old Testament. I realize that there are situations where slaves have been abused; but I am not convinced that it is wrong as an institution. We have workers today which are equally exploited and they do not even make enough money to pay for rent and food. At least a slave had these things provided for him.

""And also from among the strangers who live temporarily with you—you may buy from them and their families that are with you who have been born in your land and they may be your possession. [Lev. 25:45]

This in no way allows the Jews to round up aliens in their land and put them on the auction block for sale as slaves. However, there were circumstances in the ancient world where slavery was respectable; the most conspicuous being when someone was totally broke and had nothing but himself to sell.

""You may bequeath them to your sons after you to inherit as a possession forever; you may make slaves of them, but over your brothers, the people of Israel, a man over his brother, you will not rule with harshness. [Lev. 25:46]

First, to deal with the obvious figure of speech: no one can be a slave *forever*. This obviously means that they will be in slavery for the remainder of their lives.

In that day and time, slaves were common and it was not morally wrong. That was a social issue which is not an absolute right or wrong. Much of politics concerns itself with issues which are neither right nor wrong. Usually the fixes prescribed bring about much more evil than they purport to solve. However, God had redeemed and delivered Israel and therefore, all of Israel was His.

The Law of Redemption with Regard to Jewish Slaves

"And when the hand of a visitor and an alien with you reaches [and obtains] [wealth]; and you brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the visitor and¹³⁹ foreigner with you or to a member [or, an offshoot] of the family of the visitor; [Lev. 25:47]

This is the protasis of a conditional clause. There would certainly be a period when a Jew would fall upon hard times, yet right next door would be a Gentile who is prospering. While in hard times, this Jew has had to sell himself to the Gentile or to one from the Gentiles family.

"Then afterward, he has been sold—he is redeemable—one of his brothers may redeem him. [Lev. 25:48]

Being *sold* is in the Niphal, which is the passive stem. The perfect tense indicates that this is a finalized. At first, I thought this could be translated *up for sale*; but that would have to be in the imperfect, indicating that it is not a completed action. He has sold himself to the visitor; then any Jew may come (actually, should go) and redeem him; buy him back. An order of preference is given here: first his brother; and the next verse indicates that this is his actual genetic brother.

"Or his uncle or his cousin or a near kinsman belonging to his family may redeem him; or, if he grows rich, he may redeem himself. [Lev. 25:49]

The law of the land, as set by God, allowed the Jew as a slave to acquire wealth and allowed anyone to redeem the Jew in slavery. In this verse we have the kinsman-redeemer; that is one with a close tie to his family who redeems him. Boaz was the kinsman-redeemer of Ruth in the book of Ruth (Ruth 2:1–2 3:1–4:10). This is a foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was both a kinsman to the Jews, being Jewish; and to us, being human. We have been sold into sin and are without the means to purchase ourselves out of slavery. As our near kinsman, He has paid the price for our redemption to remove us from the slave market of sin, as Thieme would put it.

"He will determine with the purchaser from the year he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee and the silver of his sale will be according to the number of years according to the day of slavery he has been with him. [Lev. 25:50]

Even though a Jew was redeemable by a kinsman redeemer, this did not mean that God would treat the Gentiles unfairly. All Jewish slaves were released in the Year of Jubilee, so the Gentile owners understood for how long he was to remain a slave and paid a price for him accordingly. Here, in order to redeem him, the value is determined by how many years are left on his contract, so to speak; that is, how long until the Year of Jubilee, when he would be released anyway. The owner is paid according to that calculation.

"If there are still many years according to them [lit., at their mouth], he will return [the entire amount] for his redemption out of the price of his purchase. [Lev. 25:51]

If the Year of Jubilee is 30 or 40 years away and that is the expected lifetime remaining for this particular slave, then the price of redemption is whatever the Gentile paid for him originally. God is fair. If Jews were designing these laws, their treatment of the Gentile would not have been nearly as fair. This is not to speak disparaging about them; that is simply human nature to favor one's own kind. Any favoring of the Jew in God's Laws came about because He had purchase them and He had redeemed them, delivering them out of the hands of the Egyptians, delivering them out from hundreds of years of slavery and exploitation—therefore, God had the final say as to the deposition of any Jew.

¹³⁹ And is not found in the Massoretic text, however it is found in the Western Samaritan, Onkelos, Septuagint and Syriac codices.

""If but a few years remain [lit., remain in years] until the Year of Jubilee, he shall make a determination with him according to [or, in proportion to] his years, he will return his price of redemption. [Lev. 25:52]

In real estate mathematics, one of the first things we learn how to do is to prorate (we have to prorate insurance, taxes, maintenance fees, interest); this is prorating which is occurring in this passage. The overall value is determined and a proportion of that is returned, depending upon the number of years of expected service remaining on the slaves contract.

""As a servant hired year by year, he [the redeemed Jew] will be with him [the kinsman-redeemer]. He will not rule over him with harshness in your sight. [Lev. 25:53]

So, the kinsman-redeemer has purchased the slave from the Gentiles. Just as our Lord has purchased us and then has treated us with love, more as a husband than a slave owner; so the Jewish owner of a redeemed Jewish slave is to be. Moses, as the federal head of state, was give the authority to determine whether cruelty was involved in the slavery of one Jew to another; obviously, the power can and would be delegated (as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, suggested a year earlier).

""And if he is not redeemed by these [years], then he will be released in the Year of Jubilee; he and his children with him. [Lev. 25:54]

The word *years* is implied by the demonstrative adjective. This Jew has been redeemed and he works until the Year of Jubilee and his work counts toward paying off this redemption amount. Even if he has not put in enough years to pay off that debt, he is still released in the Year of Jubilee. There will be a time of freedom and liberty for all those redeemed by the blood of our Lord—this was represented by the Year of Jubilee when all Jewish slaves were released, along with their families. Similarly, when we die as believers, we will be removed from our bodies of sin—released from our bodies of corruption—into everlasting liberty from sin. There is another principle to be found here, buried in all of this. Some believers who have been redeemed by our Lord do not have long full lives. Thieme often recalls one of his friends lost in World War II, Freddy McIntosh, who was a believer and, as my understanding of the situation, probably had the gift of pastor-teacher and his life implied that he would be great in this field; however, God removed him from this life before he could serve God in that capacity. A lot of believers are removed from this life before it appears as though their life has been fulfilled; this is not to be a concern to us. God knows exactly what He is doing; He has a perfect time-table and we should hold to that. Death is not a tragedy for a believer.

""Because to Me, the people of Israel [are] servants; they [are] My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. I [am] Yahweh, your God."" [Lev. 25:55]

The Jews were in service to God, just as we are in service to God. They were taken out of slavery to Egypt, as we have been redeemed from the slave market of sin. Although the Jews were often all believers, such as this Exodus generation, this was not always the case. However, their relationship with God was a foreshadowing of our relationship to God the Father and our Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 26

Leviticus 26:1–46

Outline of Chapter 26:

- Vv. 1–13 **Blessing promised when the Jews are obedient to God's Word**
- Vv. 14–17 **Penalty for disobedience: the first cycle of discipline**
- Vv. 18–20 **Penalty for disobedience: the second cycle of discipline**
- Vv. 21–22 **Penalty for disobedience: the third cycle of discipline**
- Vv. 23–26 **Penalty for disobedience: the fourth cycle of discipline**
- Vv. 27–39 **Penalty for disobedience: the fourth cycle of discipline**
- Vv. 40–46 **God's faithfulness to Israel**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 9 **God's Conditional and Unconditional Promises to Abraham**

Introduction: It is Lev. 26, among many other passages, which caused people to come up with the JEPD (or documentary) hypothesis. This stands for the Jehovahist, the Elohimist, the priest and the Deuteronomic code (supposedly discovered in 621 BC)—these were the various authors (as the theory goes) of the first five books of the Bible. Why would someone come up with a theory of several authors for books four of which are spoken of as coming from the hand of Moses in the books themselves, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament? There are a number of reasons. These books record a great many miracles. Had the books of Moses been written during the time of Moses, they would not have been considered Holy Scripture as they were filled with miracles—miracles which occurred in the sight of all Israel—and everybody knows that miracles cannot happen. The books of Moses also look far into the future. This chapter, even before the Jews enter into the land, speaks of the dispersion of Israel which will occur when Israel becomes spiritually decadent. Well, it is just impossible to see into the future. And, finally, throughout the book of Leviticus, the most oft-used phrase is, **and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying**. God cannot speak to anyone (or maybe it is impossible for anyone to hear the voice of God); therefore, Moses could not have heard God speaking to him. Had this been written in his time period, then these books would not have been accepted as Holy Scripture, because all of this would be easily verified or disputed. However, this is a faulty hypothesis built upon faulty premises. One of the key points of this hypothesis was originally that one of the authors used the name Elohim and the other used the name Yahweh, and this is how they could be easily distinguished. ZPEB: *One of the fallacies of the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis was its examination of the text of the OT without reference to literature from Israel's contemporaries. The criteria used for dissecting the early books of the Bible, including double names of individuals, groups, places, common nouns, the deity, and even changes of style, are, in fact, features that are paralleled in contemporary documents from Israel's neighbors. For this and many other reasons, the documentary hypothesis has been widely abandoned or modified. In particular, it is not now generally held that the so-called Elohist or Yahwist sources can be traced in Judges.*¹⁴⁰ However, people who accept this hypothesis today (because they like the faulty assumptions) do not distinguish between these two authors as such a distinction cannot be drawn (today, the two separate portions by these two supposed writers are now called JE and are no longer distinguished).¹⁴¹ However, as we have studied, the latter four books of Moses were indeed written by Moses and Genesis was likely compiled and (possibly) edited by him.

This chapter basically be divided into three portions: (1) what will God do on behalf of Israel if she obeys His commandments and walks in His statutes (vv. 1–13); (2) what will happen if Israel falls into apostasy (vv. 14–39); and, (3) a final promise of restoration to Israel (vv. 40–46). This is almost 100% prophecy and I have included a

¹⁴⁰ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 741.

¹⁴¹ They are distinguished in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon because most of it was written in the late 1800's and published around 1906 when the separation of the two sources, J and E, was still a popular concept.

large amount of Scripture throughout this chapter showing where most of this chapter has been fulfilled. A portion of this chapter continues to be fulfilled today. When we study the prophets, we will see that there are certain peoples and certain city-states that God would wipe out; remove from history altogether. Those peoples were wiped out and we do not have their recognized ancestors to this day. However, no matter how Israel has failed, God has a purpose for them in the future. In almost every nation of the world, there are Jews. There are no Chaldeans, no Philistines, no Babylonians, no Syrians—descendants from the greatest nations of the past have faded into obscurity. However, the Jewish race remains and they will remain unto the end of time because God still has a purpose and a plan for them. Let me read a footnote from *The Amplified Bible*: *No greater evidence that God keeps His Word is available than the fact of the existence today of the Jews as a nation. Scattered for twenty-five centuries throughout the world with powerful forces determined to wipe them out, yet they are restored to their homeland, because, in spite of all their sins against Him, God refuses to break His covenant with their forefathers and with them. The presence of even a small number of Jews in the world, after all the centuries of diabolical effort to exterminate them, would alone be sufficient assurance that God will keep His promises whether good or bad, to individuals or to nations.*¹⁴² Throughout the Old Testament, we will continue to see a connection between Israel's spiritual status and their life in the promised land. This chapter is paralleled in Deut. 28, which was spoke to the second generation. In Deut. 28 we have God's blessing (vv. 1–14) and cursing (vv. 15–68); and in Deut. 30, we have God's promise of future blessing..

Some things pointed out by Charlie Clough in connection with this chapter, which I would have missed otherwise, is the absolute sovereignty of God and His control over every aspect of our lives. He controls the climate (vv. 4, 19), animals and plant growth (vv. 4–6, 20, 22, 26); military function (vv. 7–8, 25, 32–39); and the economy (vv. 10, 20, 26).

Finally, this chapter in many ways seems to be the conclusion of the book of Leviticus, whereas Lev. 27 is somewhat anticlimactic, possibly an appendix (not added centuries later, but by Moses as directed by God the Holy Spirit). In fact, it is so presented in the NASB Study Bible's outline.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

¹⁴² *The Amplified Bible*, p. 157.

Blessing Promised When the Jews Are Obedient to God's Word

Deut. 7:12–24 28:1–14

"You will not construct for yourselves feeble [and worthless idols] and a sculpted figurine and pillar [possibly sculpted]; you will not erect for yourselves even a stone according to [lit., of; but possibly out from one's] imagination; you will not set up in your land to bow down to them; for I am Yahweh, your God. [Lev. 26:1]

We have several terms here which appear to be synonymous. The first word, usually translated *idols* is the plural of 'ēlîyl (עֲלִיִּל) [pronounced *el-EEL*] has a meaning which is unclear, but it is probably close to *worthless, feeble, poor, weak, insufficient*. This describes the power of the idols in our lives. The first time we find this word used is in Lev. 19:4. This is something which takes the place of God, is our own personal opinion of Who and What God is, usually modeled after our own selves, often our own best selves. It is the use of 'ēlîyl in Job 13:4 which indicates that this is something of little or no value; when found in Isa. 2:20, things of earthly value (things which are molded perhaps to be gods) are called *idols*; and in the gods of other peoples are called *idols* in Psalm 96:5 Isa. 10:11 91:1, 3.

Peçel (פֶּעַל) [pronounced *PEH-cell*] comes from a verb which means to *hew into a shape*, so *graven image* is a good translation; however, if that is too Old English, then *sculpted image* is more accurate. This word occurs a lot in the time of the judges and in the time of Isaiah, both times of great apostasy in the nation Israel. It is associated with trust in Isa. 42:17 and idolatry in this passage, indicating that this is more than just a mere sculpture. We first find this word in the Ten Commandments in Ex. 20:4.

Pillar is a neutral term that can go either way. It is the word *matstsê'vâh* (מַצְטַעַבָּה) [pronounced *mahtz-tzay'-VAWH*] and we find it when a pillar or monument is left to commemorate personal contact with God (Gen. 26:18, 22 35:14); or it can be a pillar commemorating a relationship with idols, which are Satan's demons, as in Ex. 23:24 Deut. 7:5 2Kings 3:2; these pillars can have specific shapes (usually when used of demon images as in Hos. 10:1 Micah 5:13) or not (Gen. 31:13, 45, 51–52). My impression here is that these are generally larger than the *sculpted images* and they are not always *sculpted*. Strong's #4676 & #4678 BDB #663.

Mas^ekkîyth (מַסְכֵּיִת) [pronounced *mah-s'k-KEETH*] is a tough word. It is found in only six passages (Lev. 26:1 Num. 33:52 Psâlm 73:7 Prov. 18:11 25:11 Ezek. 8:12). BDB gives its meanings as *showpiece, figure, imagination*. Here it accompanies with word *stone*, perhaps indicating a stone cut according to one's imagination. In context, it obviously has something to do with idolatry and with stone. The use of this word in Psalm 73:7 and Prov. 18:11 seem to indicate that *thinking* or *imagination* are involved. My educated opinion is that this is a stone sculpted according to one's imagination of the unseen world. Freeman gives the possibilities that this is a stone formed into a figure or an idol of stone as opposed to one made of wood or iron. He also gives the possibility that there are stones with figures or hieroglyphic inscriptions.¹⁴³ In either case, context indicates that worship was involved. Strong's #4906 BDB #967.

Note the context here: we are not forbidden to make statues or figurines; what is forbidden is the worship of same. That is, a figurine of the virgin Mary (as though we have even a clue as to her physical appearance) is probably okay. Kneeling before such a statue is idolatry and forbidden. Carrying around this figurine in a car for good luck is not idolatry, necessarily; it is simply foolish as there is no luck in God's plan.

""You will keep My Sabbaths and my sanctuary, you will reverence [exercise fear and respect]—I am Yahweh. [Lev. 26:2]

Sabbaths, plural, refers to the Sabbath days, the Sabbath years, the feast days which are Sabbaths and the Year of Jubilee, which is a Sabbath year of sorts. The word for *reverence* is the word often translated *fear* throughout the Bible. This clearly shows us that *fear* is only a part of the meaning of this word.

¹⁴³ Freeman's *Customs and Manners of the Bible*, pp. 96–97.

"If you [continue] walking in my statutes and My commandments you guard and do them; [Lev. 26:3]

This sets up a conditional for the Israelites to follow. But become doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves; for if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like the man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of a person he was. But one who looks intently at the Perfect Law, the [Law] of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does (James 2:22–25). God's commands, a great portion of the Pentateuch, were to be guarded, which included knowing them, teaching them, obeying them and preserving these commandments. The latter is the emphasis of this word (which is done when they are taught and known); but what also became involved was the meticulous copying of the Law generation after generation so that there were always good copies of the Law. Part of Israel's duties as a client nation to God was to preserve God's Word. A client nation today will be involved in the careful translating of God's Word, the preservation of ancient manuscripts, the publishing of various translations and the dissemination of these Bibles. One of the reasons that I Corinthians 12 is not an exhaustive listing of every spiritual gift is that those gifts were for those times—some disappeared, some continued—and many gifts were added to the church, including those little appreciated gifts of those who have spent their lives and sometimes given their lives to disseminate God's Word; to find, preserve and disseminate ancient Bible manuscripts; those who have mastered the languages of Greek and Hebrew and have passed this on to Pastor-teachers; and those who have brought God's Word into a language spoken by the common man so that all could handle His Scriptures.

"Then I will give your rains in their season and the land will yield [lit., give] its increase and the trees of the field will yield [lit., give] their fruit. [Lev. 26:4]

As I type this, it appears as though Texas will be going through one of the greatest natural disasters of this century (as the news hyped it); we have had very little rain this year. We can expect our crops and all industries dependent upon farming to have great price increases. Even in this modern age, just a few months of drought can impact farming for years. The rain coming in their seasons, at particular times, is a blessing from God which is absolutely necessary for agricultural production—and no matter how advanced or how backward a nation is, it is always dependent upon agricultural production. "And I will make them and the places around My hill [Jerusalem] a blessing and I will cause showers to come down in their seasons; they will be showers of blessing." (Ezek. 34:26).

"And threshing will last [lit., reach] for you to [the time of] grape gathering and grape gathering will last to the time for sowing and you will eat your bread to the full and you will dwell securely in your land. [Lev. 26:5]

Threshing is the act of separating the grain from the stalk. Timing is everything and here, it is important for the farmer to be able to allocate his time to all the tasks at hand. If one chore overlaps another, then one is neglected and the other is performed. With the rain coming at the proper times, the farmer is allowed to intelligently allocate his time to the various tasks at hand. Finally, what else is promised is security, not to be overlooked or taken for granted. Israel was a small nation and, at this point in time, was not a nation of warriors. God has promised them security in their nation if they walk in His statutes and preserve and do His commandments. This verse receives its ultimate fulfillment in the millennium. "Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel and they will rebuilt the ruined cities and live. They will also drink their wine and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says Yahweh, their God (Amos 9:13–15).

"And I will give peace [and prosperity] in the land and you will lie down and none will make [you] afraid. And I will remove dangerous animals from the land and the sword will not go through your land. [Lev. 26:6]

Obviously, the sword going through the land is a metonymy—the sword stands for war and slaughter which will be brought through the land of Israel. This is called a metonymy of the cause—the sword is the instrument used in the slaughter and death.

This is a conditional promise made to the sons of Israel when in the desert, near Mount Sinai, not far from Egypt. This is repeated as an unconditional promise in Psalm 29:11: **Yahweh will give strength to His people. Yahweh will bless His people with peace [and prosperity].** However, even though conditions are not stated and this will take place without fail in the future, Israel, as God's people, will have returned to Him and they will obey His voice. **I will hear what God Yahweh will say; for He will speak peace [and prosperity] to His people, to His godly ones. But let them not turn back to folly. His salvation [or, deliverance] is certainly near to those who fear [or, respect] Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Grace and truth have met together; righteousness and peace-prosperity have kissed each other.** (Psalm 85:8–10).

One time when a person is vulnerable to attack and overpowering is when they are tired and they lay down to sleep. Some people cannot get a good night's sleep because they recognize this vulnerability and they have no reason to trust God for their safety. However, here God has assured Israel, **conditionally**, that they will sleep soundly and securely. Man had two live enemies in those times—undomesticated animals and other men—particularly other nations. If Israel follows God's plan, Israel has been promised safety and a lack of war in their nation. God promised this same thing to Israel through His prophet Zephaniah: **"The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."** (Zeph. 3:13). **"And I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful animals from the land, so that they may live securely in the desert and sleep in the woods."** (Ezek. 34:25). The book of Judges will give us the other side of the coin—what happens when they do not preserve His Word and do not walk in His statutes.

Ultimate fulfillment will come in the millennium. **"The wolf and the lamb will graze together and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and ...they will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountains,"** says Yahweh (Isa. 65:25a, 25c). **"And I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful animals from the land, so they may live securely in the desert and sleep in the woods."** (Ezek. 34:25).

"And you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by their sword. [Lev. 26:7]

This indicates that Israel will often be the aggressor in disputes and that victory, as Thieme has stated many times, is achieved by killing in battle. *Falling before you* is Israel's victory in battle by their killing of the enemy. It is clear that in the Bible, homicide, as outlined in the Ten Commandments, is completely different from an execution for crimes committed and from killing in war. Many liberals today try to lump them together (yet, they surprisingly do not include abortion in this lump) whereas God's Word differentiates between the various types of killing.

"And five of you will chase a hundred and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand; and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. [Lev. 26:8]

We will see this promise fulfilled over and over again throughout the Old Testament. Israel was often outnumbered in battle yet God allowed Israel to be victorious in battle. Israel was successful in battle because Jesus Christ was with them. **"How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight (unless their Rock has sold them and Yahweh had given them up). Indeed their rock is not like our Rock—even our enemies themselves discern this."** (Deut. 32:30–31).

"And I will turn to you and I will make you productive [or, fruitful] and I will multiply you and I will cause my covenant to stand with you; [Lev. 26:9]

What God will do is the Qal perfect of *pânâh* (פָּנָה) [pronounced *paw-NAWH*], which means *turn*. It can mean *turn away from*, which is a type of abandonment (Deut. 30:17 Judges 18:20 2Kings 5:12) but it can also mean *to turn toward* (Ex. 16:10 Deut. 31:18). Sometimes, such as this passage, *turning toward* someone indicates favor, blessing, concern and/or regard (Num. 16:15 Judges 6:14). **But Yahweh was gracious to them and had**

compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and He would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now (2Kings 13:23).

The Jews were objects of conditional and unconditional promises (or, covenants). There is a parallel here to free will and God's sovereignty, manifested in predestination. Some overemphasize one to the exclusion of the other, but the Bible teaches both. The key is foreknowledge. God's plan is inseparably tied to His foreknowledge and our volition. **And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called [or, elected to privilege] according to a pre-determined plan** (Rom. 8:28). We all have heard that verse, although most of us stop reading three-fourths of the way through the verse. We don't see it—the ones who read the entire verse are the hyper-Calvinists. All things work together for good to the called, the elected and these people were called and elected according to a pre-determined plan. And then they stop reading. Paul knows full well what he has written and he realizes that if he stops this topic right here, there is going to be some confusion and misinterpretation (much of Romans is like this). So Paul explains (note the order): **"Because whom He did foreknow, He also pre-destined [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be first-born among many brothers; and whom He did predestinate, these He also called; and whom He did call, these he also declared righteous; and whom He declared righteous, these He also did glorify** (Rom. 8:29–30). And just in case the order eludes you, notice where glorification is—it is at the end of the line. We are not glorified yet! We will be. We will be glorified **because** we were **first** declared righteous. Now, we are in the midst of being declared righteous—we are half the way there—we have been sanctified positionally, we are being sanctified experientially, and in the future is ultimate sanctification). We have been declared righteous **because** we were called; we were called **because** we had been predestined. Hyper-Calvinists, keep listening: we were predestined **because we were foreknown**. Why did Paul stop and give us an explanation of what it meant to be called according to a pre-determined plan? To head off those who tend to go off on a tangent when given half a chance.¹⁴⁴

This is analogous the God's unconditional promises and His conditional promises. God did not blindfold Himself, go eenie meenie minee moe and chose Abraham. When God chose Abraham, God knew exactly what Abraham would do, every option that Abraham would have and every choice that Abraham would finally make. He knew this about every single person in Abraham's line, including every Jew and every Arab in the descendants of Abraham. God's conditional and unconditional promises to the Jews are bound securely by His foreknowledge, just as our calling is based upon His foreknowledge. Perhaps this chart will help:

God's Conditional and Unconditional Promises to Abraham	
Conditional Promises	Unconditional Promises to Abraham
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic and agricultural prosperity (Lev. 26:4–5a). 2. Security in the land (Lev. 26:5b). 3. Peace in the land (Lev. 26:6a). 4. Freedom from anxiety concerning natural disasters and war (Lev. 26:6b). 5. Military strength (Lev. 26:7–8). 6. God will multiply the descendants of the Jews (Lev. 26:9). 7. God would live and walk among the Jews (Lev. 26:11a, 12a). 8. God would not reject them (Lev. 26:11b). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God would make Abraham a great nation (Gen. 12:2a). 2. God would bless him (Gen. 12:2b). 3. God would make Abraham's name famous (Gen. 12:2c). 4. The blessing and cursing by God given to other nations would depend upon their attitude toward Abraham (Gen. 12:2d–3 18:18). 5. A specific patch of land would be given to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 13:14–15 15:18–21). 6. God would multiply the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 13:16 15:5).

¹⁴⁴ The Old Testament and the New Testament are both fully the Word of God. You cannot properly understand one apart from the other.

God's Conditional and Unconditional Promises to Abraham	
Conditional Promises	Unconditional Promises to Abraham
<p>Notice that in between sets of promises there are similarities, differences and overlap. For instance, Abraham was not promised peace or prosperity in the land for his posterity; however, the Jews were given that promise if the fulfilled the conditions of Lev. 26:3. However, the increase given to the descendants of Moses and of the Jews is both a conditional and an unconditional promise. It can be both because it is based upon the foreknowledge of God. What I am saying is this: the Law [which contains the conditional promises to the Jews], which came 430 years later [after the unconditional promises to Abraham], does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based upon law, it is no longer based on a promise; however, God has graciously given it [his inheritance] to Abraham by means of a promise (Gal. 3:17–18). Therefore, what this tells us is that it does not matter if the Jews fail; God still has unconditional promises which He made to Abraham which the failure of the Jews because they do not follow God's laws will not nullify. That is, because of His unconditional promises to Abraham, God still has a plan for the Jews.</p>	

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

""And you will eat the old [or, what has been stored], having been stored; and you will clear out the old [what has been stored] from the face of the new. [Lev. 26:10]

The translating here is difficult. We find the adjective *yâshân* (יָשָׁן) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWN*] twice in this verse and its verbal cognate once. It is something which is old; it has been kept in the same place for awhile. We have used the verb to describe one remaining in the same place (Lev. 11:13 Deut. 4:25) and we use it to mean sleep (Gen. 2:21 1Kings 19:5 Job 3:13), which means to remain in the same place for awhile (in the case of Adam, he was anesthetized). As an adjective, this word appears twice, acting as a substantive, meaning *that which is stored, the old thing, the thing which remains*. Interpretation is easier. They have so much produce that it is time for them to eat all that which they have stored up and replace it with their newer produce. *Clear out* is the Hiphil imperfect of *go out, come out*. The Hiphil stem is causative, so these stored items will be *caused to go out*, which is similar enough to *clear out*.

""And I will place my abode [lit., tabernacle] among you and My soul will not abhor you. [Lev. 26:11]

The word here often translated *dwelling-place, abode* is *mish'kân* (מִשְׁכָּן) [pronounced *mish'-KAWN*] and this is the word translated tabernacle throughout the end of Exodus. Strong's #4908 BDB #1015. The surface meaning the spiritual meaning here are obvious. While the Israelites are in the land, God will dwell with them in the holy of holies. **"And they will construct a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell among them."** (Ex. 25:8). He will be there for their every need. If they keep his commandments and walk in His statutes, God will not abhor them as He did, as a for instance, the Sodomites (this is an anthropopathism which expresses the disparity between God's holiness and the degeneracy of the Sodomites). This also has future application to the millennium when God regathers all of Israel into the land and gives to them all the land spoken of in the Abrahamic covenant. Jesus Christ will rule here on earth over them and over the rest of the world in bodily form.

However, on another level, God will come and dwell among the Jews in bodily form as Jesus Christ and He will die on their behalf on the cross for their salvation, the ultimate act of love, destroying the barrier of sin between man and God. It would be the most natural thing in the world for God and man to be at eternal enmity with one another. It is our Lord which took upon His humanity the penalty for our sins and, for that reason and that reason alone, we are no longer in a state of complete abhorrence to God. When you have a good overall understanding of what God's plan is, Who Jesus Christ is, the purpose of the Bible, everything that is written fits neatly together.

""And I will walk in the midst of you and I will be your God and you will be My people. [Lev. 26:12]

This has complete fulfillment in the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. And when our Lord is in heaven, this is fulfilled by Him being in us. **Or what agreement has the temple of God (our bodies) 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 will be My people." (II Cor. 6:16).** *Walking* is in the Hiphil, which is usually the causative stem, but here it acts as a reflexive, as in *I will cause Myself to walk in the midst of you.*¹⁴⁵ *Midst* is the Hebrew substantive tâvek^e (תָּוֶק) [pronounced *taw-VEK^e*], which means *midst*; it is often preceded by the prefixed vêyth preposition, which means *in*. We find this continually throughout the Pentateuch in connection with Yahweh dwelling in the midst of the Jews in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:8 29:45 Lev. 15:31); we also find this word in Gen. 3:8, when our Lord walked in the midst of the garden. When God first walked in the midst of us, in the Garden of Eden, we, being in Adam, rejected Him. Then, when our Lord first walked among the Jews, they, as a whole, rejected Him. He was their God and He was walking among them—He was walking in their midst—and they, as well as the Gentiles, rejected Him. Strong's #8432 BDB #1063. However, in the future, they will be designated His people during the millennium, the 1000 year rule of Jesus Christ on earth, thus fulfilling the second half of this verse. **And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and there will no longer be death; there will no longer be mourning, or crying or pain; the first things has passed away." And He Who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Rev. 21:3–5a).**

This is a conditional promise; *I will be your God and you will be My people* is true of some Jews and not true of others. When Hosea married Gomer, she bore him a son, and God said, concerning his name: **"Name him *Lo-ammi*, for you are *not My people* and I am not your God."** (Hos. 1:9b).

"I am Yahweh your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out from being their slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke and I have caused you to walk upright [that is, as freemen]. [Lev. 26:13]

It is time to look at the translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...out of the land of Egypt, that you should no more be slaves;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen;
KJV	...out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen;
NASB	...out of the land of Egypt so that <i>you</i> should not be their slaves,
NIV	...out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...out of the land of the Egyptians, from being their servants;

Note a major difference between the translations: all of them, except for *Young's* has a negative. In the Hebrew there is no negative. If you look at *Zodhiates Complete Word Study Old Testament*, you will observe that there is no Strong's number above the word *not*—that is because *not* is not there. After Egypt (or, Egyptians), we have the preposition mîn, which is the preposition of separation, translated *away from, out from, out of*. *Being* is in the Qal infinitive construct—there is no second person singular or plural found with an infinitive. That is, the word *you* should be italicized (as in the NASB) because it does not occur in this verse either. The verse is easy to understand translated properly; I don't know why it was not done that way.

God removed Israel from Egypt, from servitude to them, and caused them to walk (this is the Hiphil again) upright, or, as the NIV so aptly put it, finding an idiom to almost literally replace an idiom, *to walk with heads held high*. Ezekiel, the great student of Leviticus, quoted our Lord when He said, **"And the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they will no longer be a prey to the Gentiles, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will cause [them] fear."** (Ezek. 34:27–28).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

¹⁴⁵ Zodhiates, p. 2274.

Penalty for Disobedience: the First Cycle of Discipline

Thieme has always presented this portion of Leviticus as the five cycles of discipline. When the Jews become apostate and degenerate, God begins to discipline them and then slowly increases the intensity of the discipline. Each cycle of discipline is an intensification of what has gone before and sometimes an additional bit of discipline.

"But if you will not listen [and obey] Me and will not do all of these commandments; [Lev. 26:14]

This is the other scenario; this is what happens if the Israelites choose to rebel against God. The NIV Study Bible aptly points out that the list of curses is generally much longer than the list of blessings (compare Deut. 28:1–14 to Deut. 28:15–29:28). In our fallen state, we can relate to curses better than we can relate to God's blessings. This is why most people, unbelievers included, have a better concept of what it means to spend eternity in hell as opposed to what it means to spend eternity in God's Presence. Joshua recognized that God had blessed Israel under him, but he also, being a student of the word, realized that Israel would fall into apostasy and thereby fall under God's judgement. **"And it shall come about that just as all the good words which Yahweh Elohim spoke to you have come upon you, so Yahweh will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which Yahweh your God has given you."** (Joshua 23:15). God spoke through Malachi to the Jews: **"If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says Yahweh of the armies, "Then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and, indeed I have curse them, because you are not taking [this] to heart. Observe, I am going to rebuke your offspring and I will spread refuse on you faces,¹⁴⁶ the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it [the refuse]."** (Mal. 2:2–3).

The apodosis of this conditional clause will take us to the end of the chapter. By the time I got to v. 19, I suddenly recognized that we have this incredible parallelism throughout this chapter. The second portion of Lev. 26 will have the same verbs as the first portion of Lev. 26, but they are used against the children of Israel. God is their greatest ally or their greatest enemy as he is to all mankind. We believe in Jesus Christ and have eternal reward and happiness and we choose not to believe in Him, and we suffer eternal damnation. God is our greatest ally or our greatest enemy. Satan can certainly influence us and do everything in his power to move us away from God's plan; but he does not control our free will; we control that. He will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire with all of those whom he has blinded.

"And if you spurn My statutes and if your soul abhors my ordinances so that you will not do all my commandments to break my covenant; [Lev. 26:15]

Thieme gave this breakdown: God's statutes are His laws of divine establishment, his ordinances are the spiritual and doctrinal laws (such as those associated with the sacrifices), and the commandments are the decalogue.

As we know, the Jews became involved in a lot of degenerate activity; the last of which was ultra-legalism. They took god's Laws, His matchless grace and perfection, and turned it into a tangled, legalistic mess, rivaled only by our current set of tax laws. Salvation and right relationship to God has become a complex set of mandates to follow, to hopefully win the favor of God. In this they have spurned His statutes and their souls have abhorred His commandments; and in doing so, they have broken their covenant with God. When a covenant was made between two parties, it was a serious agreement. In the ancient near East, those who made the covenant often passed between the cut up carcasses of animals who had died at the hands of scavenger animals—this solemn ritual, in effect, told the parties to the covenant what would happen to them if they broke the covenant. **"And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me [when] they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts—the officials of Judah, and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers, and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf—and I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the animals of the earth."** (Jer. 34:18–20).

¹⁴⁶ At this time, several contemporary colloquialisms come to mind, but I will spare you.

"How much more [or, then] I will do this to you: and I will authorize over you sudden trouble, consumption and fever that wastes the eyes and cause life to pine away and you will sow your seed in vain and your enemies will eat it. [Lev. 26:16]

V. 16 begins with the conjunction 'aph (אֲפֹ) [pronounced *ahf*] and it means *yea, also*, although it can be used as an adversative and to introduce emphatically a new thought. It is often found in prose and poetry in reference to a previous sentence and then translated *yea, à fortiori, the more so, how much more*. It is possible that *then* would be appropriate here, but used in a very emphatic way. Strong's #637 BDB #94.

The second verb is a difficult one, given almost as many translations as it appears in the Old Testament. It is the word *pâqad* (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-KAHD*] and in the Hiphil, the causative stem, it is translated *appoint, set, make, committed, laid up*. This is a sovereign act by Yahweh to place something on or over someone else. I would go with the more modern *authorize, delegate, designate, or install*. *Authorize* carries with it a causative rather than a direct sense. *Sudden trouble* means that things seem reasonable and quiet and suddenly, their lives are invaded and changed. Some versions translate this word as *sudden terror*, but I think that might be a little too harsh at this point (this word is found only elsewhere in Psalm 78:33 Isa. 65:23 Jer. 15:8). **So He brought their days to an end in emptiness, and their years in sudden trouble** (Psalm 78:33).

Consumption is a disease which causes one to waste away; one's energy is easily spent. Finally, the trouble is more than one of illness, as someone else—their enemies—will eat their produce. This does not necessarily mean invasion by a foreign power (although it can) but this can be a simple economic reality. They have sown the seed, but, because of their illness, they have not the strength to harvest it. They must therefore hire someone to do it, and that is where their profits go. In this first cycle of discipline, we have economic failure and serious illness. **"And your turbans will be on your heads and your shoes on your feet. You will not mourn, and you will not weep; but you will rot away in your iniquities, and you will groan one man to his brother."** (Ezek. 24:23). **"Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how can we then live?"** (Ezek. 33:10b). This can also result from the attack by Gentile enemies. **For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go up against them. So they would concentrate [lit., camp] against them and destroy the produce of the land as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox or donkey. For they would invade [lit., come up] with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to plunder it. So Israel was become feeble because of Midian and the sons of Israel cried to Yahweh** (Judges 6:3–6).

"And I will set my face against you and you will be stricken before the face of your enemies and those who hate you will rule over you; and you will run [to escape] when no one pursues you. [Lev. 26:17]

So the Philistines fought and Israel was struck [down], and every man fled to his tent, and the slaughter was very great; for there fell of Israel 30,000 foot soldiers (1Sam. 4:10). Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa (1Sam. 31:1).

In Lev. 26:17, we do not necessarily have foreigners ruling over Israel, but rulers without compassion. When we get into 2Kings, we will see a vast array of rulers who were evil and had no concern for those over whom they ruled. The Jews were subjected to this because of their own negative volition toward God's Word. Furthermore, they would experience paranoia, a kind of mental illness, a sign of great instability and mental illness. These people do not necessarily physically run away when no one is chasing them but they are unnerved by the activity which goes on around them; they misinterpret the things that they see and experience and believe that others have evil designs on them. This is not a complete mental breakdown, but it means that they are losing a firm grasp on reality. **The wicked flee when no one is pursuing but the righteous are confident, as a lion** (Prov. 28:1). The reason this particular construction is used to illustrate paranoia is to parallel v. 7 where, under prosperity they chase their enemies and their enemies fall by the sword.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)
[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Penalty for Disobedience: the Second Cycle of Discipline

""And if in spite of these [things], you do not listen [and obey] Me, then I will chastise you again—sevenfold—because of your sins. [Lev. 26:18]

We will see this phrase repeated several times. Each time it is followed by an intensification of national discipline.

""Then [lit., and] I will break the pride of your power and I will make [lit., set, give, put] your heavens like iron and your land like brass. [Lev. 26:19]

The word we translated *make* is found three times back in Lev. 26:4 where God gives rain in its season and the land gives its abundance and its production to Israel. This word is used to parallel its use in v. 4. God gave rain and production before; now He gives no rain and no production. Under the first cycle of discipline, there was some produce, even though those at enmity with the farmer participated in most of the increase. Now there is little or no produce to be had by anyone. In v. 13, Yahweh spoke of *breaking* the yoke of slavery over the Jews. In this verse, He *breaks* the pride of their power. Under God's blessing, God gave rain in its season, not too much and not too little at the proper time and the land gives produce; under discipline, God gives a sky of iron and an earth of brass. **Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilreal, said to Ahab, "By the life of Yahweh, the God of Israel, before Whom I stand: surely there will be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."** (1Kings 17:1).

""And your strength will be spent [or used up or consumed] in vain for your land will not yield [lit., give] its increase; and the trees of the land¹⁴⁷ will not yield [lit., give] their fruit. [Lev. 26:20]

Tâmam (תָּמַם) [pronounced *taw-MAHM*] means *to completely use up, to complete, to finish, to consume, to exhaust, to accomplish, to spend, to be (spiritually) mature*. The meanings are all related, but it is difficult to come up with a word which can be used consistently. It is used when strength or money has been completely used up (Gen. 47:15, 18 Lev. 26:20 Jer. 37:21). This word is used in connection with war, or any disaster, when a group of people have been completely killed (or *consumed* by war or disaster—Num. 17:13 Joshua 5:6 Jer. 44:12, 18). This word is used in connection with *finishing, completing or accomplishing* something (Lev. 25:29 Joshua 4:1, 10 Job 31:40). It is finally used to describe reaching maturity (2Sam. 22:26 Psalm 18:25). Finally, there does not seem to be a well-defined correlation between these meanings given and the stem of the verb (most of these meanings occur in the Qal stem).

The Israelites will expend all of their energy and resources; **"They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns; they have they have strained themselves and do not have a profit. But be ashamed of your harvest because of the fierce anger of Yahweh."** (Jer. 12:13). Without God's blessing, they can do nothing to alter the fact that their land will not give them food. This is a more intensive economic disaster than they suffered before (as an agricultural disaster brought with it economic ruin).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)
[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Penalty for Disobedience: the Third Cycle of Discipline

""However [lit., and], if you walk against me [in] opposition and you are not willing to listen [and obey] Me [lit., to Me], then [lit., and] I will add to you sevenfold [more] woundings according to your sins. [Lev. 26:21]

¹⁴⁷ The Western Samaritan and Septuagint codices read *of the field* instead.

The word translated *opposition* is translated by some as *hostility*. The latter translation may be a bit too harsh, as it comes from the word *to encounter, to meet, to befall*. Therefore, being in *opposition* is closer to its meaning. *Woundings* is the substantive cognate of the word for *strike, smite*. It is the result of being *stricken* by God. God has increased the discipline and the Jews still stand in opposition to Him.

""Then [lit., and] I will send among you the animal of the field and it will bereave you and will cut down your cattle and diminish you and your ways will become desolate. [Lev. 26:22]

The attack from undomesticated animals upon their children and upon their cattle speaks of natural disasters, chaos in nature, violence and a decrease in the population. These are literal attacks, as evidenced by 2Kings 17:25–26: *And it came about at the beginning of their living there, that they did not fear Yahweh; therefore Yahweh sent lions among them which killed some of them. So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have carried away into exile in the cities of Samaria do not know the custom of the God of the land; so he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them because they do not know the custom of the God of the land."* However, it is by application that we can reasonably determine that this also stands for other natural disasters. These cycles of discipline apply to us as a client nation just as they applied to Israel. We can see our nation during various periods of time going through these first couple cycles.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Penalty for Disobedience: the Fourth Cycle of Discipline

""And if by these things you are not turned toward me but walk against Me [in] opposition; [Lev. 26:23]

The intention of these increased levels of discipline is to turn the Israelites toward God; however, when they do not turn toward Him but continue to walk in opposition to Him, God has no choice but to increase the discipline.

""Then I also will walk in opposition against you and I will strike you again Myself sevenfold for your sins. [Lev. 26:24]

In v. 21, God adds to the Jews sevenfold more woundings (or strikings) as an increase of their discipline; now, in v. 24 He strikes them (the verbal cognate).

""And I will bring upon you a sword executing vengeance [or, more literally, avenging vengeance] of the covenant and [while] you have been gathered into your cities, then [lit., and] I will send pestilence among you and you will be delivered into the hand of the enemy. [Lev. 26:25]

We are now in the fourth cycle of discipline, and God has turned up the heat. War is brought against the Israelites in the fourth cycle and they have gathered themselves into the cities, they will face disease and still fall into the hand of their enemy. Here their enemy has invaded their land and is defeating them in their own land. *There is a sound of fugitives from the land of Babylon to declare in Zion the vengeance of Yahweh our God; vengeance for His temple (Jer. 50:28).* In addition to war, Yahweh has spread sickness among them: *So Yahweh sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died (2Sam. 24:15).* The plague had begun to spread among the people. So Aaron put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked. But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah (Num. 16:47b–49).

""In My breaking to you a staff of bread; then [lit., and] ten women will bake your bread in one oven and will deliver your bread by weight and you will eat and not be satiated. [Lev. 26:26]

Most of the men have died in battle, so there are ten women for each man. Delivering the bread by weight means that the amount of bread given out was rationed and there is not enough to eat and to be satisfied. There are a few good, sinless pleasures in life, and one of them is a good meal where one does not gorge oneself. However, here, the person in question, representative of all of Israel, does not have enough to eat. He has received a small proportion of the amount which was prepared, as did everyone else and everyone gets something to eat—just not very much, not enough to eat and be satisfied. **For observe, Yahweh God of the armies is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support, the whole staff of bread and the whole staff of water (Isa. 3:1). Moreover, He [God] said to me [Ezekiel], "Son of man, behold, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they will eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and drink water by measure and in horror because bread and water will be scarce; and they will be appalled with one another and waste away in their iniquity." (Ezek. 4:16–17). "You have sown much but you bring in little; you eat, but not [enough] to be satiated; you drink, there not [enough] to become drunken; you put on clothing, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages [which are placed] in a purse with holes." (Hag. 1:6).**

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Penalty for Disobedience: the Fifth Cycle of Discipline

"And if [in spite of] this, you will not listen [and obey] Me but walk against Me [in] opposition; [Lev. 26:27]

This takes us into the final, fifth cycle of discipline. They have faced war, disease, poverty, economic disaster and they still stand in direct opposition to God. The remainder of the chapter will cover the fifth cycle of discipline. What is truly amazing is that they Jews have not even entered the land and we are about to hear exactly why they would be disciplined and how they would be disciplined.

"Then I will walk against you in wrath of opposition and I will chastise you even more Myself—sevenfold—on account of [or, in accordance with] your sins. [Lev. 26:28]

Vv. 27 and 28 are in obvious parallel; they Jews choose to walk in opposition against God and He will walk in opposition against them in His wrath. A young child that does wrong should learn right away that his parents can inflict upon him greater force and misery than he can inflict upon them (even if it is not true). By the time he is civilized, disciplined and well-trained, he may recognize that he could (and often did) cause the greatest pain and still can, yet, his training has now precluded uncivilized behavior. We must be trained the same way. If we are growing in the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of God, then at some point in time, there are things that we did in the past, got disciplined for, and would, not out of fear of discipline, but from spiritual growth, choose not to do these acts again.

"You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. [Lev. 26:29]

This has a literal fulfillment: Their only food will be the dead bodies of their children. When Samaria, the northern kingdom, was to face death at the hands of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, there was a great famine in Samaria...**a kab [about a quarter pint] of dove's dung was five [shekels] of silver. And as the king of Israel was, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" And he said, "If Yahweh does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the threshing floor or from the wine press?" And the king said to her, "What [is] to you?" And she said, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she had hidden her son."** (2Kings 6:25b–29). Furthermore, by application, this verse means that their sons and daughters will die before their eyes while they are starving, due to economic, natural and war-related disasters and there is nothing that they can do. The discipline of God is far greater and more painful than we ever want to face. Knowing what is right and to do wrong sets us up for divine discipline and a great deal of pain. It is only rebound, the naming of our sins to God, which saves us from this horrible pain.

"And I will [cause to] destroy your high places and cut down you sun-pillars and I will throw your dead bodies [or, corpses] upon the dead bodies [or, corpses] of your idols; and my soul will abhor you. [Lev. 26:30]

This verb, *abhor*, is found mostly in this chapter of Leviticus (and 2Sam. 1:21 Job 21:10 Jer. 14:19 Ezek. 16:45). It is the word *gâ' al* (גָּאֵל) [pronounced *gaw-GAHL*] and it means *loathe, abhor*; it is a strong term for intense hatred. Strong's #1602 BDB #171. This is something which has been fouled, soiled and rejected. *Sun-pillars* is a different word from those found early in this chapter—it is the word *chammân* (חַמָּן) [pronounced *khahm-MAWN*] and it is a Pillar used in idolatrous worship. Freeman claims that these images were supposed to be identical to the sun-god Baal. 2Chron. 34:4 indicates that these were put on the top of the altars of Baal and it is possible that they appeared to be rising flames. This helps to explain why we find mention in the Bible of these sun-pillars (or, possibly sun-images) being cut down (Ezek. 6:4) or broken (Ezek. 6:6). Freeman suggests that they were possibly made of stone when they were placed as a fixture on the altar and made of wood when placed elsewhere.

We often find mention in Scripture of the worship of idols *in high places*. The heathen believed themselves to be closer to their gods when on a mountain or hill or even a housetop. Even the Hebrews became involved with this practice, although it was expressly forbidden by Holy Writ. Freeman gives us the following references: Jer. 19:13 32:29 Zeph. 1:5.

The word for *idols* here is actually found for the very first time. *Gillûwl* (גִּלְוָל) [pronounced *gool-LAW*] is translated consistently *idol* in the Authorized Version (this word is found but twice in the Pentateuch: here and Deut. 29:17) and five times in Kings, once in Jer. 50:2 and almost 40 times in Ezekiel. Rotherham footnotes its meaning as *Lit.: "rounded or rolled things."* Translators have rendered this word as *piled-up heaps or log, blocks, shapeless things, doll-images, dingy things, contemptuous designation of an idol*. I wonder if these might not be phallic images, which would represent life and fertility as idols, yet God associates them here with carcasses. The idols are at best, related to demons, not to God; other than that, they are man making an idol out of himself (designing God to be what he thinks God should be), and in that sense, the idol is dead. God will cause the throwing of the carcasses of the idolatrous Jews on top of the pillars and other idols—that is, their carcasses.

We have a brand new figure of speech found in this verse called a *catachresis* [pronounced *CAT-a-chree-sis*] where the correct and proper usage of a particular word is stretched in order to make a point, set up a contrast or for emphasis. There is often something analogous between the word and the way it is used. Bullinger gives the examples *beautiful to the ear or her voice was but the shadow of a sound*. Bullinger adds: *this figure does not mislead; it merely acts as spice or condiment does to food*. *Carcass* or *corpse* is not the correct word to use in relationship to these *idols*, which, as we have seen, are representations of idols, but not necessarily statues of animals or men. These are words applied to flesh and blood, not to stone and wood. My personal guess, as I have stated, is that these *idols* are actually phallic statues or shapes, which represent life, eroticism and procreation, which God associates with death.¹⁴⁸

And the Word of Yahweh came to me saying, "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them and say, 'Mountains of Israel, listen to the Word of the Lord Yahweh. Thus says Lord Yahweh to the mountains, the hills, the ravines and the valleys: "Observe, I Myself am going to bring a sword on you, and I will destroy your high places [places of idolatry]. So your altars will become desolate, and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will make your slain fall in front of your idols. A will also lay the corpses of the sons of Israel in front of their idols; and I will scatter your bones around your altars. In all your dwellings, cities will become waste and the high places will be desolate, that you altars may become waste and desolate, your idols may be broken and brought to an end, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be blotted out.'" (Ezek. 6:1–6). And Josiah also removed all the houses of the high places which were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made provoking Yahweh; and he did to them just as he had done in Bethel. and all the priests of the high places who [were] there he slaughtered on the altars and burned human bones on them; then he returned to Jerusalem (2Kings 23:19–20). And they tore down the altars of the Baals in his [Josiah's] presence, and the incense altars that were high above them, he chopped down; also the Asherim, the carved

¹⁴⁸ Bullinger, p. 674–675.

images, the molten images, he broke in pieces and ground into power and scattered [it] on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them (2Chron. 34:4). Also see 2Kings 23:8.

"And I will lay your cities waste and I will make desolate your sanctuaries and I will not smell your tranquilizing scents. [Lev. 26:31]

Masada,¹⁴⁹ which likely means *mountain fortress*, was a high rock plateau, a natural fortress, located on the western shore of the Dead sea in the eastern Judæan Desert. It was recognized as a bastion of strength by Alexander Jannaeus, a Hasmonæan ruler over Judea, circa 100 BC. Herod the Great lived there early in his bid for power over Judea, but later moved to Samaria, but likely was responsible for rebuilding Masada in approximately 35 BC. Masada had walls, towers, a palace, cisterns and store rooms. During the first war against the occupying Romans, Masada was taken over by the Zealots, a large Jewish group, and they lived there in relative peace from several years near 70 AD. Two years after Jerusalem fell to the Romans, this impregnable stronghold was attacked in autumn of 72 AD and later during the winter and spring of 73 AD. During the second major campaign, the Romans created a breach in the walls. The 960 Jewish men women and children at Masada destroyed their belongings, killed one another and committed suicide rather than allow themselves to be taken by the Romans. Only two women and five children were still alive when the Romans entered into the fortress of Masada. Except for a short time during the 5th and 6th centuries, when some Monks erected a small church and lived there, Masada has remained deserted until today.

When Josiah, a king of Judah, died in 609 B.C., the throne was assumed by Jehoiakim and he ruled between 608 and 598 B.C.¹⁵⁰ Through slavery and injustice, he built an extremely expensive palace, destroyed within a decade and today, there is not a stone in Jerusalem which can be identified as being a part of this great palace. Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon force Jehoiakim to do obeisance to him and Nebuchadnezzar stole all of the riches of Solomon's temple and carried away captive my prominent Jews. Jerusalem revolted and Babylon returned and attacked Jerusalem in 597. The city surrendered in March, resulting in more Jews being carried away as slaves and more plundering of Jerusalem. Judah's final king, Zedekiah, revolted, which caused Jerusalem to face a 2½ siege which ended in 586 BC when the surrounding walls of Jerusalem were torn down and the temple, palace and homes burned. As ZPEB puts it, *no known, significant remnant of the pre-exilic city survives to the present.*¹⁵¹

"Thus says Yahweh of the armies, the God of Israel, "You yourselves have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they are in ruins and no one lives in them because of their wickedness which they committed so as to provoke Me to anger by continuing to burn sacrifices to serve other gods whom they had not known—they, you, nor your fathers. Yet I sent you all My servants, the prophets, rising early and sending, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abominable thing which I hate.' But they did not listen or incline their ears to turn from their wickedness so as not to burn sacrifices to other gods. Therefore, My wrath and My anger were poured out and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, so they have become a ruin and a desolation as it is in this day...thus your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as it [is] this day." (Jer. 44:2–6, 22b).

Then the city was broken into and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden through the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him.. Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah and he passed sentence on him. And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon. Now on the seventh day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. And he burned the house of Yahweh, the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he turned with fire. So all the army of the Chaldeans who [with] the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem (2Kings 25:4–10 see also 2Chron. 36:19).

¹⁴⁹ This information all comes from ZPEB, Vol. 4, p. 112.

¹⁵⁰ The bulk of information found here came from ZPEB, vol. 3, p. 476.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 476.

""Furthermore [lit., and] I will cause the land to become desolate [lit., I will cause desolation of the land] so that your enemies who settle in it will be astonished [or, appalled] at it. [Lev. 26:32]

There is a play on words here, completely lost in the English language. Shâmêm (שָׁמֵם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*] has two distinct meanings: *to be desolate* and *to be appalled*. These meanings are not confined to particular stems, but can be found in all stems. We first find this word in the Hiphil (causal) stem where Yahweh causes the desolation of the land; then even the enemies of the Jews are *astonished, appalled, awestruck* by the devastation and destruction which they themselves brought upon Jerusalem, Masada and many other important Jewish cities.

We now have unquestionable occupation by foreign troops in this verse. **Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against His people and He abhorred His inheritance. Then He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles and those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them and they were subdued under their power** (Psalm 106:40–42). Other nations have attacked and have beaten down various Israeli strongholds and they have moved in to occupy the territory. We can only guess at all the emotions that the Romans had upon entering into Masada, expecting a fierce battle and finding naught but silence and almost a thousand dead bodies; they were awe-struck at the horror of deaths of all these men women and children as they entered into Masada. **"I will make this city a desolation and an object of hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters."** (Jer. 19:8).

""And I will scatter you among the Gentiles (or, nations) and your land will be a desolation and your cities will be a waste. [Lev. 26:33]

God knows all of history—He is omniscient. His eyes see everything, including our every thought, our every deed, now throughout all of time. The Jews have not set one foot into the promised land and God is already warning them about being scattered throughout all of the Gentiles, as they find themselves today. **"So they will know that I am Yahweh when I scatter them among the nations and spread them among the countries."** (Ezek. 12:15). **Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe in His Word, but grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of Yahweh. Therefore, He swore to them that He would cast them down in the desert and that He would cast their seed among the Gentiles, and scatter them in the lands** (Psalm 106:24–27). **You have given us as sheep to be eaten and you have scattered us among the nations. You sell your people cheaply and you have not profited by their sale. You make us a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and a derision to those around us. You make us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. All day long, my dishonor is before me and my humiliation has overwhelmed me** (Psalm 44:11–15). The Exodus generation, although they were all saved, were hard-hearted and rebellious, and God struck them down in the desert. Generations later, their *spiritual* and physical seed, the generations that rejected God also and His provision, He scattered throughout the nations.

It is amazing and a testimony to negative volition that the Jews who believe that the Old Testament is God's Word do not seem to recognize that there is a reason they have been scattered throughout the Gentile nations—that reason is covered in this chapter of Leviticus. God's Word is up to date.

""Then the land will enjoy [or, be pleased with its Sabbaths; as long as it lies desolate and you [are] in a land of hostility, then the land will rest and it will [be caused to] enjoy [or, to be pleased with] its Sabbaths. [Lev. 26:34]

Râtsâh (רָצָה) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. Owens indicates that it literally means *to be satisfied with a payment*; however, that does not appear to be the way it is used in the Bible. *To be pleased with* seems to be the primary meaning, as found in Gen. 33:10 Deut. 33:11 Job 34:9 Prov. 16:7.

The Jews have not been in the land, they have only just received the commandments concerning the Sabbath year for the land, and already they are being told that they will be scattered throughout the Gentile nations while their land enjoys its Sabbath years (as the Sabbath day was for man and the Sabbath year was for the land). **To fulfill**

the Word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until seventy years were completed (2Chron. 36:21).

"All of the days of lying desolate, it will rest, which it did not rest in your Sabbaths when you dwelt upon it. [Lev. 26:35]

Notice how the tenor of this passage has gone from, *if you do this*, then I will do that to *this is what you will do and this is what I will do*. Israel will not obey God insofar as having here Sabbath years every seven years; therefore, the land will rest all of those years at once.

Israel not observing all her Sabbaths is not all that they will do wrong. Don't think that they attempted to observe all of the feast days and all of the sacrifices, and yet fell down in the area of the Sabbaths. Israel went through a number of changes throughout the centuries that they were in the land. Sometimes there was a revival when they appeared to attempt to follow God's laws, including His ceremonial laws; and there were times when Israel simply pursued other gods, committing spiritual adultery. There were times in Israel's history, particularly when we come to the time of Christ, where they adhered to the letter of the Law, even associating the Law with their own salvation; and they had their ways around the Law as well. The Sabbath taught grace. God had done everything that there was to do for man in 6 days; and so God then rested on the 7th—not because He was tired, but because everything had been done. Man was to rest on the Sabbath and recognize what God had provided. The Sabbath taught God's all-sufficiency and God's grace. When Israel rejected God's Sabbaths, she was also rejecting God's grace and provision. Now, I can guarantee you that, in addition to not observing the various Sabbath days which God had designated, Israel was falling short in a number of other areas as well. However, when Israel did not observe God's Sabbath days, she was rejecting God's sufficiency and His grace. For that reason, God would remove the Jews from the land which He had given them in grace.

"And those remaining I will send faintness into their hearts; [and I will send them] in the lands of their hostilities; the sound of a driven leaf will put them to flight [lit. the sound of a driven leaf will chase them]; furthermore [lit., and] they will flee, fleeing [as] from the sword; and they will fall when none pursues. [Lev. 26:36]

The word translated faintness is found only in this verse, but it is very similar to the adjective for *tender, delicate, soft*. The word here is *môrek* (מֹרֵק) [pronounced *MOE-rek*^e] and it very likely came from *rak* (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*^e] a word found more often (Gen. 18:7 33:13 Deut. 20:8 2Chron. 13:7 Prov. 15:1 25:15). Strong's #4816 BDB #940.

We have both the word for *flee*, *nûṣ* (נָצַח) [pronounced *noose*] and its substantive *mânôṣ* (מַנּוֹס) [pronounced *maw-NŌS*], meaning, of course, *fleeing, flight, a place of escape*. Falling here could mean falling in battle or just falling from exhaustion. The point is that there is not a noble remnant still fighting, but a small contingent which has been neutralized by their own fears.

This tells us that not only will there be periods of great destruction of the cities of the Jews, but there will be a remnant who will be emotionally devastated by what they have witnessed, suffering through states of instability, nervousness, paranoia and great emotional distress.

"And they will stumble a man with his brother as if to escape a sword [lit. as if the face of the sword], though none pursues; The power to stand before the face of your enemies is not to you. [Lev. 26:37]

Although the NASB, the NIV and the NRSV all translate this verse as *they will therefore stumble over each other...*(or words to that effect), no meaning is lost by translating that portion of this verse literally as **they will stumble a man with his brother**. There is no word for *escape* here; they are stumbling over one another as if they are facing a sword—this still refers to the remnant which has been stricken by overpowering panic.

The phrase, *power to stand*, is one word (Strong's #8617), used only here and in Psalm 139:21. We know its meaning because it is closely related to a very common noun (Strong's #4725) and the verb *to take a stand* (Strong's #6965). I mention Strong's numbers, as these three words are spread pretty far apart in Strong's Lexicon.

""And you will perish among the nations and the land of your enemies will eat you up. [Lev. 26:38]

Jerusalem is not longer a city of the Jews and the land given Israel by God is not longer occupied exclusively by the Jewish race; for centuries, this land has been eaten up by the enemies of Israel. For those today who are in the land, everywhere they look, they see their enemies. Their enemies have eaten great chunks of land given to Israel by God and their enemies stand against them in great hatred. It was only since World War II that there was such a thing as Israel again.

""And the remaining ones of you will pine [or, waste] away in their iniquity [or, guilt] in the lands of your¹⁵² enemies [lit., your lands of hostilities] and furthermore in the iniquities [or, guilt] of their fathers with them they will pine [or, waste] away. [Lev. 26:39]

The power of influence of a father over his son or daughter cannot be over emphasized. A degenerate father, a father estranged from God can cause the ruin of his own children. The errant father or a father who does not have God in his life can cause pain, misery and heartache in the souls of his children, the ones he supposedly loves the most in all the world. Without God, at best he can offer his orientation to the divine established laws; but usually he only passes on his arrogance and ignorance. These Jews are the ones who are to stand for God as a priest-nation, revealing God in all of his glory to the surrounding heathen nations and they are nothing more than wasted lives, the walking dead, leading sad, meaningless lives, waiting for death. **For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How can we sing Yahweh's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand become lame; may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you. If I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O Yahweh, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, [those] who said, "Raze it, raze it to its very foundation." O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us. How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock (Psalm 137:3–9).**

And the Word of Yahweh came to me [Ezekiel] saying, "...say to the house of Israel, 'Thus you have spoken, saying, "Surely our transgression and our sins are upon us and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?"' (Ezek. 33:10). Because bread and water will be scarce, they will be appalled with one another and waste away in their iniquity (Ezek. 4:17).

Joshua's farewell words should be quoted again: **"And it shall come about that just as all the good words which Yahweh Elohim spoke to you have come upon you, so Yahweh will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which Yahweh your God has given you. When you transgress the covenant of Yahweh your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down to them, then the anger of Yahweh will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you" (Joshua 23:15–16).**

What we have seen in this passage is an outline of the cycles of discipline which Israel, in apostasy, will go through. God has also summed these up. **"Moreover, I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the Gentiles which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by. So you will be a reproach =, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the gentiles who surround you, when I execute judgements against you in anger, wrath, and raging rebukes. I, Yahweh, have spoken. When I send against them the evil arrows of famine which were for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you, then I will also intensify the famine upon you and I will break the staff of bread. Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild animals, and they will bereave you of children;**

¹⁵² Many Samaritan, Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts have *their* instead of *your*.

plague and bloodshed also will pass through your land [lit., pass through you], and I will bring the sword on you. I, Yahweh, have spoken." (Ezek. 5:14–17).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

God's Faithfulness to Israel

"But [if] they are caused to cast their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their unfaithfulness which [iniquities] they acted unfaithfully against Me and also in having walked against me in opposition [to Me]; [Lev. 26:40]

When you are out of fellowship, the first place to begin is with God's mercy. You throw before God your iniquity; you confess your sins to Him. You recognize what you have done wrong in His eyes. We get off cheaply as believers in Jesus Christ because He paid for every sin that we have ever committed and every sin that we will ever commit. When we are way out of fellowship and have been out of fellowship for a long time (or even a short time), the place where we begin is rebound—naming our sins to God.

Rebound is a doctrine taught in both the Old and New Testaments. "Go, and proclaim these words toward the north and say, 'Return faithless Israel,' declares Yahweh; 'I will not look upon you in anger [lit., cause My countenance to fall]], for I am gracious,' declares Yahweh. 'I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against Yahweh your God.'" (Jer. 3:12–13a). I will go to return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction, they will earnestly seek Me (Hos. 5:15).

"Also I walked against them in opposition and brought them into the land of their hostilities; or [if] their uncircumcised heart then [being] humbled and then they accept [willingly] [the responsibility for] their iniquity; [Lev. 26:41]

This is a difficult verse; let's see what the other translators have done first:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I also walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they then accept the punishment for their iniquity,
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I also must needs go in opposition to them, and bring them into the land of their foes,—save only that if even then their uncircumcised heart shall be humbled, and even then they shall accept as a payment the punishment of their iniquity...
KJV	And <i>that</i> I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity;
NASB	I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,
NIV	...which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin,
NRSV	...so that I, in turn, continued hostile to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity,
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...also I walk to them in opposition, and have brought them into the land of their enemies—or then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and then they accept the punishment of their iniquity,—

We have actually seen the first portion of this verse before; the phrase **so that I walked against them in opposition [to them]** is found in vv. 23–24, 27, 40; and the other phrase, **lands of hostility [against] them (or, lands of their hostilities)** in vv. 32, 36, 38–39. Between these two phrases is the 1st person, Hiphil perfect, 3rd masculine plural

suffix of *bôw* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *bo*] which means, in the Qal stem, *come in, go, go in*; however, in the Hiphil, the causative stem, it means *to take in, to bring, to come in with*; and, when we examined this word before, we noted that it is translated quite consistently by the KJV when found in the Hiphil stem. The subject is God, the object is *them*, and the verb is in the perfect tense, meaning either completed action or the action of the verb is viewed as a complete action. The translations differ here because this is obviously future, so *will bring* or *bring* are apropos; however, in the perfect tense, *brought* or *have brought* would be reasonable translations.

So far we have: *"Also I walked against them in opposition and brought them into the land of their hostilities..."* In connection with this portion of the verse, we find fulfillment in 2Kings 24:10–16: *At that time, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. And Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came into the city while his servants were besieging it. And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of Yahweh and the treasures of the king's house and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon, king of Israel had made in the temple of Yahweh, just as Yahweh had said. The he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. So he led Jehoiachin away into exile to Babylon; also the king's mother and the king's wives and his officials and the leading men of the land, he led away into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of valor, seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths, one thousand, all strong and fit for war, and these the king of Babylon brought into exile to Babylon (see also 2Chron. 36:10–12).*

Then we begin to have serious differences with the conjunction *ʾô* (וְ) [pronounced *ôh*] which is rendered *at least* (Gen. 24:55), *if* (Lev. 26:41), *otherwise* (2Sam. 18:13), *also* (Prov. 30:31), *and* (SOS 2:7 3:5) and *then* (Ezek. 21:10).¹⁵³ This usually is translated *or* and sometimes *or, rather* (when a preference is implied). Here, another fundamental option is covered, so I have translated this *or [if]*.

Then we have one of the places where most translators agree: *uncircumcised heart*. Jews were circumcised to indicate their relationship with God and Gentiles were not circumcised, indicating that they were not related to God. When Yahweh speaks of an *uncircumcised heart*, this is someone who is not related to Him on the inside. That is, this is a reference to unbelieving Jews or believer Jews who behave like unbelieving Gentiles. This is also a picture of their volition. The adverb that follows could be rendered *then* (it can indicate a logical progression) and the verb is the 3rd masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *kâna* (כָּנַע) [pronounced *kaw-NAH*], a word which properly means *to bend the knee* and means *to humble, to be humbled*. The Niphal stem is usually the passive, but this can be used to describe action which is in progress or development; often the helping verb *being* is added to indicate this usage.¹⁵⁴

The connective *then* is found once again and a word we have seen before in Lev. 26:34, *râtsâh* (רָצַח) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. God obviously does not want them *to be pleased with* their iniquity. This is again one of those time when the same word is used in this chapter to form a contrast. They are to *accept willingly* not their *iniquity*, but, *the guilt for their iniquity*—which is one of the renderings of the word *ʾâvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *aw-VONE*], a word which is pretty consistently rendered *iniquity* in the KJV. I prefer *guilt* or *punishment for wrongdoing*, depending upon the context. In case you are put off by the less than smooth translation, recall that several times in this chapter the same verb is used twice, once to display pleasure and once to display displeasure. In v. 34, the land *enjoys* its Sabbaths, as it was not allowed to *enjoy* them while the Jews were in the land as they were out of fellowship. However, the Jews in this verse have rebounded (this is looking off into the future—actually, to two future occurrences) and have accepted the guilt and punishment for their iniquities.

One of the problems with hard-headed believers is that they do not want to admit that they are wrong. Some people have been married to others who are never wrong and it is tough being in that kind of a marriage—if

¹⁵³ These translations come from the Authorized Version.

¹⁵⁴ Zodhiates, p. 2278.

anything goes wrong, they are obviously the guilty party, since their partner is never wrong. Some unbelievers are never saved because they hold to views which are anti-God and will not relinquish these views. Some believe that war and capital punishment are wrong no matter what, and when they hear that the Bible takes a different stand, they become closed to the gospel. Others may oppose the Bible's stand on immorality, on homosexuality, on bestiality and these things are such a part of their life, that they refuse to believe in Jesus Christ. Therefore, in evangelism, it is important to never make an issue out of a person's sins or out of places in the Bible that they will disagree with. Everyone is going to disagree with something in the Bible at some time or another. The Bible is God's Word and we are filled with evil, often under the control of the old sin nature, and it is not in our nature to agree with everything that God says or does. Others have witnessed a terrible tragedy or have suffered some awful heartache and cannot reconcile that with God's existence. In salvation, the issue is Jesus Christ and His efficacious work on the cross. The other viewpoints can be dealt with later.

We have a similar problem with arrogant believers. They hold to a particular viewpoint and will not let go of that viewpoint no matter what. What we find in this verse is the opposite of these mindsets. The uncircumcised heart, whether this is an unbelieving Jew or a reversionist believer, they have humbled this heart—they have bowed down to God's Word and God's direction; and they have accepted responsibility for their iniquity.

Don't you have a teenaged son or daughter that when they do something that is wrong, you would be happy if they just acknowledged that what they did was wrong? That confession could make all the difference in their recovery. Because of how degenerate our advertising has become and how pervasive human viewpoint has become, I taught teenagers who thought it was okay to get drunk if you mostly didn't drive when drunk; they thought that pre-marital sex was okay if you took the proper precautions; that getting loaded was okay if you didn't hurt anyone. Some of them could have made marvelous strides as believers or even as unbelievers¹⁵⁵ had they just admitted that they were wrong.

"Then I will remember my covenant with Jacob and also My covenant with Isaac and also My covenant with Abraham—I will remember and the land I will remember. [Lev. 26:42]

Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against His people and He abhorred His inheritance. Then He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles and those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them and they were subdued under their power. Many times He would deliver them; they, however, were rebellious in their counsel and sank down in the iniquity. Nevertheless, He looked upon their distress; when He heard their cry; and He remembered His covenant for their sake. And relented according to the greatness of His grace. He also made them [his] compassion in the presence of all their captors. Save us, O Yahweh, our God and gather us from among the nations to give thanks to Thy holy name and glory in Thy praise. Blessed by Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting." And let all the people say, "Amen." Praise Yahweh! (Psalm 106:40–48).

God is omniscient; He knows the end from the beginning; He knows our every thought, motivation and action and everything that we could have done and every possible variation in life had we made another choice; and He knows this perfectly for all humanity, believers and unbelievers from Adam to beyond the millennium for billions upon billions of people. God does not suddenly remember that He made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; God does not snap His finger one day and suddenly say, "Damn, I forgot, that land belongs to the Jews...let Me take care of that." This is an anthropomorphism. To the Jew today who believes that the Old Testament is God's Word—he looks at God's promises and wonders has God forgotten the Jew and has God forgotten His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He may never even express those thoughts and he may even try to drive them from his conscious mind, thinking that such thoughts are blasphemous—but he thinks them. When God returns in the flesh and Israel is given the land as far as the eye can see in all directions; it will be as if God had forgotten Israel all of these years but suddenly remembered His promises to the Jewish race.

"But the land will be forsaken by them and [the land] will enjoy her Sabbaths [caused] to be desolated [or, appalled] without them and they will accept [favorably] [the guilt of] their iniquity

¹⁵⁵ The laws of divine establishment apply to believers and unbelievers alike.

because and on account of [or, by the cause (of)] they had rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. [Lev. 26:43]

ʿĀzaḇ (עָזַב) [pronounced *aw-ZA^BV*] means *to leave, to forsake* in the Qal, and *to be forsaken* in the Niphal (or passive) stem. The land was forsaken by the Jews; they knew in advance, right here, prior to going into the land, how to lose it, and they did. Shâmêm (שָׁמֵם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*] has the two distinct meanings: *to be desolate* and *to be appalled* as we saw in v. 32. Here it is found in the Hophal stem, which is the causative passive stem (it is the passive of the Hiphil). Those who see the land desolate, as God is not dwelling therein and no one moved into the promised land to cultivate it during the first dispersion from it; and enemies who saw the land after the ejection of the Jews were appalled by what they saw.

Near the end of the verse, we have an interesting construction. Yaʿan (יָאֵן) [pronounced *yah-AHN*] comes from an unused root which means *to pay attention*. BDB calls it properly a substantive (meaning *purpose, intention*), although it is always found as a preposition or a conjunction, and translated *on account of, because*. However, it is found in the verse, followed by the conjunction *and*, then the veyth preposition (*in, into, at, by, with, against*) and the word *ya'an* again. Literally, what we have is *because and by the cause (of)*. This is strong—it screams out at you in the Hebrew. This is emphatically the problem and the reason why the Jews forsook the land: they rejected God's ordinances and their souls abhorred His statutes.

"Yet for all that when they are in the land of their hostilities, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them [lit., I have not rejected them nor have I abhorred them] so as to destroy them completely and break My covenant with them, for I am Yahweh their God. [Lev. 26:44]

"Yet again there will be heard in this place, of which you say, 'It is a waste, without man and without animal,' in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without animal...there shall again be in this place, which is waste, without man or animal, and in all its cities, a habitation of shepherds who rest their flocks....If My covenant day and night [is] not, the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David, My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and I will have mercy on them." (Jer. 33:10b, 12b, 26b). "For I am with you," declares Yahweh, "To deliver you; for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely, but I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished." (Jer. 30:11).

You cannot read this and think that God has somehow spiritualized Israel and that He has no plans for the land of Israel or for His people the Jews. When you witness to a Jew, tell him that God has not forgotten him and God has not forgotten his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "For Yahweh, your God, is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant which your fathers which He swore to them. Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, [as] from one end of the heavens to the other. Has there been done similar to this great thing, or has any heard like it? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes. To you it was shown that you might know that Yahweh, He is God; there is no other besides Him. Out of the heaven He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire." (Deut. 4:31–36). God has never deserted them and God has never rejected them utterly. The book of Hosea tells us that no matter what the Jews have done and no matter what they do, God has loved them from the beginning and He will always love them and His relationship to them is eternal. He has not forgotten. I have had relationships with some women which I could never renew because of what happened in the relationships and because I am flawed human being. God has never utterly cast down Israel; God has never forgotten. **God has not rejected His people, whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says** (Rom. 11:2a)? The key here is foreknowledge. God did not choose the Jews and later on decide, "You know, these people are just not working out as planned; I think I just need to try something a little different. When God chose Israel in eternity past, He foreknew every failure that they ever would have. Yahweh will return for His first love and He will cleanse and nurture her and no matter how unfaithful Israel has been—no

matter how she has Rejected his true Lord, Yahweh, Jesus Christ, He will give her everything that He has promised; He is faithful to the uttermost.

""And I will remember for their sake the covenant with their forefathers whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the Gentiles that I might be their God—I am Yahweh.""

[Lev. 26:45]

To man, it looks as though God has suddenly remembered, but God had never forgotten Israel, whom He chose to bring forth out of Egypt.

My impression here, and in the next chapter, is that there is a break in continuity here. Moses sums up what has occurred to day in the book of Leviticus and presents these laws to the people of Israel. Chapter 27 occurs later, whether it be a few days or a few weeks.

The verb here must be touched upon.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	These are the statutes, ordinances, and laws which the Lord made between Him and the Israelites on Mount Sinai by Moses.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	These are the statutes and the regulations and the laws, which Yahweh granted between Himself, and the sons of Israel,—in Mount Sinai, by the mediation of Moses.
KJV	These are the statutes and judgements and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.
NASB	These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.
NIV	These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the LORD established on Mount Sinai between himself and the Israelites through Moses.
NRSV	These are the statutes and ordinances and laws that the LORD established between himself and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	These are the statutes, and the judgments, and the laws, which Jehovah hath given between Him and the sons of Israel, in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

I would have given a "D" to the translators for this verse, with the exception of a "B-" to both the KJV and *The Emphasized Bible* and an "A-" for *Young's Translation* (even though I disagree with it). First of all, this is filled with wâw conjunctions, as we see in *The Emphasized Bible* and in *Young's Translation*. Every translation seems to have the word *between*, which is a fine translation for the word bayin (בֵּין) [pronounced *bah-YIN*] or bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]. When found once, this word is translated *in the midst of*; however, here, it is found twice, and that corresponds most closely to our word *between*.

The biggest problem which I have with this verse is the verb. It is the Qal perfect of nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], a word translated **84 different ways** in the Authorized version. It is translated *cause, shoot forth, strike, hang up, count, commit, utter*, etc. You should be thinking, what is the connection between any of these verbs? Really, there is none. It can actually mean *give, place, put, set*; context should guide us. This is why I brought into the translation here the two occurrences of bayin. If this word should have been translated *given* or even *granted*, then it should be followed by the lâmed prefixed preposition (*to, for*). However, we have the word bayin, used twice, meaning between. Contextually, God has placed these things between Himself and the sons of Israel.

The second problem is that some translations leave out *by the hand of*, which is incomprehensible to me. Moses wrote these things down as God spoke them to him. That is what this verse confirms. Why try to hide what it says? Therefore, the correct translation is:

These are the statutes and the ordinances and the laws which Yahweh placed between Himself and the sons of Israel near Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. [Lev. 26:46]

This is a conclusion of these laws spoken by God to Moses. Now, it is obvious that God has given these laws to Israel so why can't I just translate it *give* and be done with it? After all, that is almost a correct rendering of what is here. The reason I spend one page explaining why the translation is what it is, is to allow me to explain what is meant. The laws and the ordinances and the statutes aren't given to Israel for their benefit—they are placed between God and man. These things are a barrier between God and man. **Man cannot reach God because the Law is placed between he and God.** Even though the Hebrew is very poetic and not always a precise language, God speaks to us through his word and tells us in this verse that Moses wrote all of this down, that these were directly from God, and He, God, placed these laws between Himself and mankind. The Law is not some wonderful, marvelous thing so that we can now behave properly and God will finally love and bless us. The law is against us. When we are in court for a crime that we have committed, the prosecutor or the judge reads aloud the law which we have been purported to have broken. The Law is a friend to those who obey it. Do not for one instance presume that the Law is your friend—God's Law sentences you to eternal damnation; these ordinances sentence us to spent the rest of eternity in the Lake of Fire. It is only through the love and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ that we have a way to God. Jesus stands between God and man as a mediator; the Law stands between God and man as an impassable barrier. There is nothing that we can do to cross that barrier. *For He Himself is our peace who made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in His flesh the enmity—the Law and the commandments—in ordinances, that in Himself, He might make the two into one new man, establishing peace; and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity (Eph. 2:14–16). And you, being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all the trespasses, having blotted out the handwriting in the ordinances this is against us, that was contrary to us, and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14). And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were reconciled (I Peter 2:24).*

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Return to Beginning of Chapter](#)

[Return to The Leviticus Homepage](#)

Leviticus 27

Leviticus 27:1–34

Outline of Chapter 27:

Vv. 1–8	Determination of the value of a vow in relationship to the age of the vower
Vv. 9–13	Regulations concerning the use of animals in a vow
Vv. 14–25	Property valuation with respect to vows and the Year of Jubilee
Vv. 26–34	Miscellaneous regulations concerning vows, animals, and chêrem

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

Introduction: Lev. 27, the final chapter of Leviticus, is rather anti-climatic. However, almost anything after Lev. 26 would be. It reminds me of running several miles and then, to cool down, you walk a half mile. The NASB Study Bible lists this as an appendix to Leviticus, which seems very apropos. They seem to consider Lev. 26 as the concluding chapter of Leviticus. We are still very near Mount Sinai. This will be the last time Yahweh will command Moses *at* Mount Sinai. I am not completely comfortable with my explanation as to the nuts and bolts of Leviticus as to where God spoke to Moses. Throughout Exodus, Moses went up to Mount Sinai on two occasions, as it clearly states and received his instructions *in* (or *on*) Mount Sinai. The prefixed preposition *bêyth* denotes proximity only, so it can be used and Mount Sinai can be very near by, as in eyeshot. With the tabernacle having been built, I would have thought that Moses would have spoken to God from there, but this is never mentioned throughout Leviticus, except once or twice at the beginning. What I might lean toward is that God spoke these things to Moses while he was up on Mount Sinai, but he just did not record them until later or put them in final form until later. In other words, the writings of Leviticus were just not placed in chronological order.

Should all of this be in the introduction to the book of Leviticus?

In any case, this particular chapter deals with vows, and things, such as animals, houses and land, dedicated to God and the determination of value of said items given over to God. I would assume that when one paid taxes, they did not always have cash on hand, so that some would set aside their properties and other things to God (which therefore needed a value established for it). What also appears to be the case is that when something is bought back from the Tent of God, an additional 20% charge was generally added. Vows were never commanded in the OT, but they were carefully regulated, as this chapter attests. The NIV Study Bible viewpoint was that a vow was simply an expression of thanksgiving, over and above the normal things offered to God.

Determination of the Value of a Vow in Relationship to the Age of the Vower

Again, Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, [Lev. 27:1]

There is a slight change from the other two dozen times God spoke to Moses. Instead of the *wâw* conjunction, we have the *wâw* consecutive (formally known as the *wâw* conversative). Chiefly, the *wâw* consecutive continues the thought of a previous perfect tense; and the last verb in Lev. 26 was in the perfect tense where these were the laws that God placed between himself and the people of Israel.

"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying to them, 'When a man makes an extraordinary vow in your determination of the value [lit., valuation] of souls to Yahweh: [Lev. 27:2]

Determination of value is the Hebrew word 'êrek^e (עֵרֶק) [pronounced *Ā-rek^e*] and we have seen this same word used for *order*, *row* in Ex. 40:23.

This is the title of the next discourse. *Making an extraordinary vow* is not something which God has commanded man to do; it is just that the demonstrative Jew often felt a need to make a promise to God (as some people are

wont to do nowadays). Sometimes this is our bargaining position with God. We want something to stop hurting, we want a material object really bad, so we make a vow to God—"You do this for me and I will promise that I will never do this again." I have nothing against vows; however, they seem to do nothing more than reveal to us that the promises that we make to God are meaningless, and usually entered into from the strength of the flesh (which is weakness).

ZPEB defines a vow as *a pledge or oath of a religious character, and a transaction between man and God, in which man dedicates himself or his service or something valuable to God...generally a promise made in expectation of a divine favor eagerly sought.*¹⁵⁶ This chapter will cover vows made on one's own behalf and vows a material possession given over to God. We will cover the **Doctrine of Vows and Oaths (not finished yet!!)** in Num. 30:15.

" 'When your determination of value is of a male from a son of twenty years old up to a son of sixty years old—your valuation is fifty shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary. [Lev. 27:3]

Fifty shekels of silver is approximately 1¼ lbs. or 0.6 kg. When one makes a vow, an amount had to be paid according to this person's age; all of us were purchased by Jesus Christ for the ultimate price.

" 'If she [is] a female, then your determination of value is thirty shekels. [Lev. 27:4]

A woman had to bring less for her vow; this may have been impacted directly by earning power—which the woman had very little.

" 'And if a from a son of five years old up to a son of twenty years old, your determination of value is twenty shekels for a male and ten shekels for a female. [Lev. 27:5]

It appears that the price of the vow is less because it is more difficult for the younger person to have that kind of money.

" 'If from a son of a month even unto a son of five years, then your determination of value is of the male is five shekels of silver, and for the female, your determination of value [is] three shekels of silver; [Lev. 27:6]

Again, a smaller amount for the younger the person. Here a vow is not made by the child but on behalf of the child. We see the same determination of value in Num. 18:16.

" 'And if from a son of sixty years and above—if a male, then your determination of value is fifteen shekels, and for a female, ten shekels. [Lev. 27:7]

The amount is greater than that of a child and less than that of the prime age. I don't quite follow why a determination of value is not given for one above sixty, unless there is just less to vow about.

" 'And if he is poorer than your determination of value, the he will present himself before the priest and the priest will value him according to that which the hand of him who is vowing reaches, so the priest will value him. [Lev. 27:8]

Recall that the phrase, *the hand reaches* to is a reference to one's financial ability.

¹⁵⁶ Vol. 5, p. 890.

Regulations Concerning the Use of Animals in a Vow

" 'And if an animal of which they approach—an offering to Yahweh—all that one gives of it to Yahweh is holy [or, set apart]. [Lev. 27:9]

One is making a vow and they come to God with an animal for sacrifice—that animal is set apart to God.

" 'He will not substitute [anything] for it [lit., change it] and he will not exchange it, [whether] a good for a bad or a bad for a good—and if in exchanging, he exchanges an animal for an animal, then it is and [also] its exchange is holy [or, set apart]. [Lev. 27:10]

Once something has been set apart to God, it may not have something substituted for it. It does not matter if the person doing the substitution assures the priest that the new item is better. If such an exchange takes place, then both things are holy, or set apart to God, and therefore belong to God. In the degenerate times of Malachi, men promised one animal and then sacrificed another. "You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is?' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says Yahweh of the armies, "and you bring what was taken by robbery, and [the] lame or sick; so you bring a tribute offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says Yahweh. "But cursed is the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to Yahweh, for I am a great King," says Yahweh of the armies, "and My name is feared among the Gentiles!" (Mal. 1:13–14). When one offered an unclean animal, it had to be accompanied by a 20% overage.

" 'And if any animal [is] unclean which is [lit., are] not caused to approach—an offering to Yahweh—then he will bring the animal before the priest; [Lev. 27:11]

Here we have a person making a vow and it is done with an animal which is unclean.

" 'And the priest will value it—between good or bad—according to your determination of value, O priest, so it is. [Lev. 27:12]

God is speaking directly to the priests here. The priest determines the value of the animal.

" 'And if in redeeming, he redeems it, he will add his fifth to your determination of value. [Lev. 27:13]

The double use of *redeems* means that the person chooses to redeem that animal; he is adamant about it.

Property Valuation with Respect to Vows and the Year of Jubilee

" 'And when a man sanctifies [i.e., sets apart as holy to God] his house, a holy thing to Yahweh and the priest values it [i.e., determines its value] as either [lit., between] good or bad—as the priest values it, so shall it stand. [Lev. 27:14]

Here a man has set aside his house as God's, or has dedicated his house to God—perhaps for a vow—the priest values it and there is to be no haggling. It is possible that his house is being offered up in leu of taxes, which the man may not have the money for.

" 'And if he who sets it apart redeems his house, he will add a fifth of the determination of value in money and it will be his. [Lev. 27:15]

The man has set the property apart as God's and has later decided to redeem it. He must purchase it for its value plus 20%.

" 'And if a man sets apart [or, sanctifies] of the field of his possession to Yahweh then your determination of value is according to its seed; a sowing of a homer of barley-seed at fifty shekels of silver; [Lev. 27:16]

The value of the field is dependent upon whether anything has been planted.

" 'If¹⁵⁷ out of the Year of Jubilee, he sanctifies his field, according to your determination of value it stands; [Lev. 27:17]

This is again spoken to the priests and they determine the value of the field if set apart to Yahweh at the Year of Jubilee.

" 'But if after the [Year of] Jubilee, he sets apart his field, then the priest will calculate to him the money according to its years which are left until the Year of the Jubilee, and he will deduct [or, diminish] from your determination of value. [Lev. 27:18]

The value is determined and then it is proportionally diminished according to how long until it must be returned to the family in the Year of Jubilee.

" 'And if in redeeming he redeems the field, the one who set it apart then will add a fifth of the determination of value in money to it and it stands to him. [Lev. 27:19]

The land or home dedicated to Yahweh, given to the priests, could be redeemed at any time by the redemption price plus 20%.

" 'And if he does not redeem the field or if he has sold the field to another man, it is not redeemable any more. [Lev. 27:20]

He has not repurchased the field but has sold it, which confuses me, as it seems as though he would not be allowed to sell that which has been dedicated to Yahweh.

" 'And the field, when it is released [or, when it goes back] in the [Year of] Jubilee, is set apart to Yahweh as a field devoted to the priest—it is his possession [or, property]. [Lev. 27:21]

If the field was first dedicated to God, then sold, and the Year of Jubilee comes around, then the land does not revert back to the person who dedicated and then sold it, but reverts to the ownership of the priests.

" 'And if the field of his purchase, which is not a part of his possession [or, property] by inheritance, he sets apart to Yahweh; [Lev. 27:22]

So here a person has purchased a field and that field is not originally his or his families (which means that it would revert back to the original family in the Year of Jubilee).

" 'Then the priest will calculate to him [or, with reference to it] the amount of your determination of value until the Year of Jubilee, and he has given your determination of value in that day—a holy thing to Yahweh; [Lev. 27:23]

It is slightly infuriating to have a portion of a thought in each of verses 22–25. The two possible renders given at the beginning of the verse are a result of the several meanings of the prefixed preposition *lâmed* and the fact that the Hebrew does not have a neuter gender. The Greek Septuagint renders this as *to him*. Here the field which was purchased has a value determined proportionate to the number of years remaining until the Year of Jubilee.

¹⁵⁷ The Samaritan, Septuagint and Syriac codices read *And if*.

" 'In the Year of the Jubilee the field reverts to him from whom he bought it, to him whose [is the] possession of the land [by inheritance]. [Lev. 27:24]

The original owner receives the land back. God gave the land to the various tribes of Jews and returns it to the family under those circumstances.

" 'And all determination of values will be according to the shekel of the sanctuary—twenty gerahs will make a shekel. [Lev. 27:25]

As would be expected, in the ancient world, they lacked standard units of measurement—that is, a cubit was used by many peoples, but their precise notion of the exact length of a cubit varied somewhat. So it was with shekels. We have what is called a commercial standard in Gen. 23:16 and in this verse we have the standard as set by the sanctuary (or, the tabernacle). This may have changed from decade to decade, but it was the priests who determined how much was due for each person concerning their vows. The value of one's *coin* was determined by weight and not by number. We even followed this in the original minting of our coins. A dime used to weigh exactly one-fifth of a half dollar and a quarter was exactly 2.5 times the weight of a dime and all three were minted in silver. The silver dollar was exactly four times the weight of the quarter (hence the name, quarter because it was a quarter of a dollar). After awhile, the Jews used some standard shapes for silver (also for gold and copper)—discs, bars and rings—but value was still determined by weight. It was not until around the seventh century BC that actual coins were minted, the king's mark imbedded in the metal to insure the coins purity and value.

We have the meaningless penny as our smallest unit of exchange and the Jews had the gerah, which weighed between eleven and twelve grains and was valued at about three cents. This gives us the approximate value of a shekel as being sixty cents.

You might think it difficult to get any spiritual meaning out of this—however, the sanctuary, the holy habitation of God, determines the value of all things. Man's opinion of worth is meaningless unless it is in accord with God's opinions.

Miscellaneous Regulations Concerning Vows, Animals, and Chêrem

" 'However [lit., surely], that which is a first-born belongs to Yahweh—of animals. No man may set it apart, whether ox or sheep—it is [already] Yahweh's. [Lev. 27:26]

Ex. 13:1–2 reads: Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Set apart to Me every first-born, the first opening of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and animal; it belongs to Me." That which already belongs to God cannot be dedicated to God.

" 'And if it is among the unclean animals, then he has redeemed [it] at your determination of value, and he has added its fifth to it; and if it is not redeemed, then it is sold at your determination of value. [Lev. 27:27]

If the unclean animal is not redeemed, then it is sold.

" 'However, no devoted thing which a man devotes to Yahweh of all that he has, of man, of beast and of the field of his possession is sold or redeemed; every devoted thing it [is] most holy [lit., holy of holies] to Yahweh. [Lev. 27:28]

Chêrem (חֵרֵם) [pronounced *KHĀ-rem*] is found here for the first time. It is something completely devoted to God or completely in God's possession, whether good or bad. Some things that were taken in battle were designated chêrem—they were not to be taken or used or sold by the Jews—these things were destroyed or burned. They completely belonged to God. When used in a negative sense, this word is often rendered *cursed thing*.

(Deut. 7:26 13:17 Joshua 6:17–18 1Sam. 15:21). In Lev. 27:221, 28–29 Num. 18:14, *chêrem* is used in the good sense of something which has been set aside for God's exclusive ownership.¹⁵⁸ That which was *chêrem*, belonged to God, which meant, in turn, it was a possession of the Levitical priesthood (Num. 18:14). If memory serves, this was later called *corban* and some would place their possessions under *corban* so that they would not have to share them with their needy parents. The corresponding verb means *to utterly destroy*. When any item is declared *chêrem*, then this item cannot be sold or repurchased.

When something was dedicated to Yahweh, this was much more intense than dedicating it to sacred use. Whatever was dedicated became completely God's. **So Yahweh said to Joshua, "Israel has sinned and they have also transgressed My covenant which I command them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they had also put [them] among their own things. Therefore, the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies."** (Joshua 7:10a, 11–12a). When a nation was particularly degenerate, all of their possessions were declared under the ban—*chêrem*—and they belonged only to Yahweh. When Israel took from these things, Israel was disciplined for it. The remainder of Joshua 7, vv. 20–26, deals with Achan who kept out those things set apart to God.

In the New Testament, we have the word *Corban* used one time in Mark 7:11, and this is a marvelous example of a word which later became a term with a strict theological meaning, yet it was not used that way originally. This word is taken from the Hebrew *qor'bân* (קָרְבָּן) [pronounced *kor-BAWN*], which means *the thing brought near* or *the thing one approaches with* or, more simply, *offering*. However, *Corban* means more than that—in the NT, this was actually like *chêrem*—something totally belonging to God. However, the Jew declaring something *chêrem* retained his personal usage of it (another distortion) for the remainder of his lifetime.

" 'Every devoted thing which is to be completely removed from among men will not be redeemed; in dying, he will die [or, possibly, in dying, it will die] [or, less literally, No person devoted to destruction may be redeemed; he must be put to death]. [Lev. 27:29]

The alternate rendering of this verse is very close to the NIV version, which communicates more clearly what is being said, although it is less literal word for word. The corresponding verb to *chêrem* is *châram* (חָרַם) [pronounced *khaw-RAM*] and, while it is usually translated *completely devoted to*, *devoted to*, or *completely destroyed*, the connection between the two is that it is completely removed, either from man's use or from the planet earth. When God has determined that something or someone should be removed from among men—that is, killed—if he does not, God will require his life. King Saul sinned against God inasmuch as God had told Saul to destroy Amalek and all that he had, including all of the men and women and children and livestock (1Sam. 15:3), and Saul does not (v. 9). King Saul even felt remorse for not following God's instructions and Samuel, the prophet, told him, **"You have rejected the Word of Yahweh and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel."** (1Sam. 15:26b).

However, a parallel may be observed here. Our Lord was set apart, dedicated completely to God. He followed this will of His Father and not the will of man, nor His Own will. In going to the cross, He was completely devoted to God and utterly removed and utterly destroyed. In dying, He died on our behalf.

" 'And all tithe of the land, or the seed of the land, [or]¹⁵⁹ of the fruit of the tree, it [is] Yahweh's, set apart unto Yahweh. [Lev. 27:30]

The tithe is not something which is *chêrem*, but it is holy and set apart to God. Now would be a good time to look over the **Doctrine of Tithing—not finished yet!!** The Levitical priesthood was supported through the tithing of the sons of Israel, just as those in the clergy are supported through the freewill offerings of the members of their church. **If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?** (1 Cor. 9:11). **And the one who is taught the Word should share all good things with him who teaches** (Gal. 6:6).

¹⁵⁸ It appears to have a completely different meaning in Mic. 1:2 and Hab. 1:15–17, where it is translated *net*.

¹⁵⁹ Almost all the codices (the Western Samaritan, Jonathan's, Septuagint, Syriac and the Vulgate) have *or* inserted here.

" 'If a man in redeeming, redeems out from his tithe, his fifth he will add to it. [Lev. 27:31]

A man chooses to give some personal item, perhaps an animal or a portion of land as all or part of his tithe and then finds the wherewithal to repurchase it—he must redeem it and add a 20% to it. Something which is tithed is God's.

" 'And all the tithe of the herd and of the flock—all that passes by under the staff [of the herdsman]—the tenth is set apart unto Yahweh. [Lev. 27:32]

Passing under the staff is simply a way to designate all of the herd and flock, as they all pass under the shepherd's staff. A shepherd would tithe from his flock or herd by causing them to pass through a narrow gate. He would count them with his rod and every tenth sheep (or whatever kind of livestock) received a tap of the rod, which was colored with ochre. This left a mark on every tenth animal. **"In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the Negev, in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks will again pass under the hands of one who numbers them,"** says Yahweh (Jer. 33:13). See also Ezek. 20:37 (you know that Ezekiel will allude to this, as he seems to refer to almost every law and ordinance from the book of Leviticus). This of course was not done every time sheep were counted, but when the sheep were counted simply for bookkeeping, they were still caused to meander through a narrow gate and the shepherd counted them with his staff, which was made of wood and was about six foot long with a crook on the end of it.

Tithing is not spiritual giving, as tithes were required and it was a specific set amount. Spiritual giving is described in II Cor. 9:7–8: **Each one should [give] just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, [so that] you may have an abundance for every good deed.**

" 'He will not inquire between good and bad, nor will he substitute [for] it [or, exchanges it]; and if in exchanging it, he exchanges it, it and the thing exchanged [for it] is set apart—it will not be redeemed. [Lev. 27:33]

As in v. 9, if such an exchange takes place, then both things are holy.

" 'These are the commandments which Yahweh commanded Moses regarding the sons of Israel in the proximity of Mount Sinai. [Lev. 27:34]

This will be the last time where we see God's commandments coming from Mount Sinai. This verse unquestionably declares Mosaic authorship as dictated by Yahweh.

God spoke of this generation many times later. **Therefore, let us fear so that, while a promise remains unclaimed of entering into His rest, that we should not come short of it. For indeed, we have had good news preached to us, just as they [the Exodus generation] also; however, the Word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed entered that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter into My rest,"** although His works were completed from the foundation of the world (Heb. 4:1–3).