

# The Book of Leviticus

The book of Leviticus was written by Moses.  
The word “Leviticus” means “The book of the Levites”.

The Levites were the tribe of Israel that God chose to be priests.

The priests were men chosen by God and set aside to carry out the duties associated with worship and sacrifice. They represented man to God.

This book consists primarily of laws that God gave His people. These laws were given to show them the severity of sin but also to protect them from the results of sin.

Leviticus reveals God’s desire for His people to walk in holiness. The word “holy” is found 91 times in Leviticus. God wants His people separate from the world.

This book also shows us how God wants to be close to His people. It makes abundantly clear how man cannot not get to God except on God’s terms. We discover how an absolutely holy God has made it possible for unholy people to have access to Him.

We learn the way to God is through a sacrifice. The book of Leviticus gives detailed instructions for carrying out sacrifices and religious ceremonies in Israel.

Leviticus opens with God speaking to Moses from within the Tabernacle.

Lev. 1:1–2 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.

The last verse of Leviticus summarizes the book.

Lev. 27:34 These *are* the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai.

To understand this book, we must remember what God told Pharaoh while Israel was still in Egypt. He told Pharaoh to let His people go so they could worship and serve Him. Exodus 4:23, 7:16, 8:1, 9:1, 10:3, 12:31

This tells us, God desires His people to worship and serve Him.

Lev. 11:44 For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

We must remember, all those who enter a relationship with God, enter by faith. It is vitally important to realize, the ceremonies found in the book of Leviticus do not suggest we must work for forgiveness.

Each of the ceremonies found in the book of Leviticus deal with a person who has realized the holiness of God, has recognized their need of His forgiveness, and is coming by faith to Him to obtain the forgiveness they need. Forgiveness has always been a result of someone coming to God in faith. Gen. 15:6 / Eph. 2:8

Those who brought sacrifices did so because they believed what God said. The act of offering a sacrifice did not provide atonement for sin. It was the fact of them bringing a sacrifice in faith that brought atonement.

The question may be asked, why did God establish so many different types of sacrifices. Why not have one sacrifice for all sins?

First, I believe having so many different sacrifices reveals to us that God is a God of order. He wants things done decently and in order.

1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Secondly, I believe God gave several sacrifices to show them, and us, there is no sin He will not forgive.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Thirdly, I believe God gave several sacrifices to show them, and us, that He is interested in every aspect of our lives. He wants us to recognize every detail of our lives is important to Him.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LAITY ABOUT THE SACRIFICES (Lev.. 1-7)

It's important to recognize the division of the first ten chapters of the book of Leviticus. All of these chapters deal with the sacrifices. There are two sections for each sacrifice.

Chapters 1-5 speak to the laity (people who are not clergy or priests).

Chapters 6-10 speak to the priests.

These sacrifices provided a way for the people of Israel to make and keep a right relationship with God.

The sacrifices were more than just a way to gain God's favor. There were sacrifices that were meant to cover the sins of the worshipper, but there were also sacrifices that were a way of saying "thank you" to God.

These sacrifices also point to Jesus Christ, the supreme sacrifice who gave Himself for us.

The sacrificial system that God established tells us several things that are vitally important.

Our approach to God is totally of God.

He has provided everything necessary for us to meet with Him.

He provided the Tabernacle.

He provided the sacrificial system that enables man to approach Him.

He provided the priests who mediated for man in his approach to God.

God waits for the worshipper to come to Him. He will not force anyone to come.

### THE FIVE MAIN OFFERINGS

The first three offerings (burnt, meal and peace) were given primarily to MAINTAIN fellowship with God.

The last two offerings (sin and trespass) were given primarily to RESTORE fellowship with God.

#### THE BURNT OFFERING Chapter 1

Lev. 1:2-3 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering *be* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

This sacrifice was offered for the atonement (cover) of sin.

It must be an animal with no blemish.

This sacrifice dealt not so much with individual sins of the worshipper as much as the his fallen state.

It reminded the offerer of his depravity and his condition without God.

Three types of animals could be used for the offering.

1. From the herd (bull) vv. 3-9
2. From the flock (sheep or goat) vv. 10-13
3. From the birds (turtledoves or pigeons) vv. 14-17

From this we can see that even the poorest of the poor would be able to bring a sacrifice.

The worshipper would bring the animal to the door of the Tabernacle, place his hands on its head (this showed a symbolic transfer of his sins to the sacrifice) and kill it.

The priest would take the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it on the altar inside the Tabernacle.

Lev 1:4-5 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to

make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The worshipper would cut the animal into pieces.

Lev 1:6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.

The entire sacrifice was to be burnt. There was nothing left.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

It speaks of how we should give ourselves TOTALLY to God. As the sacrifice was totally consumed by the fire and the smoke ascended upward, we are to give ourselves totally to the Lord.

This is a picture of Jesus, giving His all for sinful man.

The burnt offering was a voluntary offering and was well pleasing to God.

## THE MEAL OFFERING Chapter 2

Lev. 2:1–2 And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, *to be* an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD:

The word "meat" in the Bible can mean any type of food.

The meal offering was an expression of thanks given by the worshipper. It was not an offering that dealt with sin. It was a way to say "thank you" to the God who had been so good.

This offering was also an outward sign of dedication. The worshipper is saying, "I give myself to the Lord".

### THE INGREDIENTS IN THE MEAL OFFERING

This offering was actually made of fine flour, oil, frankincense and salt.

These items were vital for life, so it meant something to the person making the offering.

Let's look at the ingredients individually.

First, flour. Lev. 2:2

They made flour by grinding grain. They used flour to make bread. Bread was the staff of life.

The grain had to be ground by hand with a stone or a crude grinding wheel. Fine flour involved a lot of hard labor because it had to be ground several times.

Second, oil. Lev. 2:2

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This speaks to our need of being controlled by the Holy Spirit. It also tells us that God is not satisfied with anything other than what is produced by the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Third, frankincense. Lev. 2:2

Frankincense was a resin used in perfumes and incense.

Frankincense was a picture of the pure heart of the worshipper expressing adoration, worship and thanks. It was a sweet aroma to God.

Fourth, salt. Lev. 2:13

Salt is the opposite of leaven. Salt is a preservative. It keeps corruption from getting in.

Our lives should be clean and without the corruption of sin.

### THE PREPARATION OF THE MEAL OFFERING

This offering could be prepared one of three ways.

It could be baked in the oven. Lev. 2:4

It could be baked in a pan Lev. 2:5

It could be fixed in a frying pan. Lev. 2:7

Considering the ingredients (things anyone would have on hand) and the ways the offering could be prepared (more than one method made sure anyone could prepare the offering) it seems obvious, the Lord is making it possible for anyone to be able to bring this offering.

The meal offering is the only offering made without the shedding of blood or an animal sacrifice.

#### RESTRICTIONS INVOLVED WITH THE MEAL OFFERING

No leaven was to be used in this offering. Leaven is a picture of sin. Lev. 2:11

No honey was to be used in this offering. Lev. 2:11

Most likely, honey was forbidden in this offering because it could be viewed as a picture of the sinful pleasures of the flesh.

Part of this offering would be burnt on the altar and part would be eaten by the priest.

Lev 2:2–3 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereof his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, *to be* an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': *it is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

This was voluntary offering and was well pleasing to God.

#### THE PEACE OFFERING Chapter 3

Lev. 3:1–2 And if his oblation *be* a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer *it* of the herd; whether *it be* a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

This offering was not for the atonement of sin. It was rather to express appreciation for God's care and provision.

Any animal without blemish from the herd (3:1), the flock (3:6) or from the goats (3:12) could be offered.

#### THE SIN OFFERING Lev. 4:1 - 5:13

This offering was given by a person who had sinned against God's law in ignorance.

Once he was made aware of his sin, he was to offer this sacrifice.

It showed the fact that the guilty person had repented of their sin and desired forgiveness.

Lev. 4:1–3 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

Four different categories of people are mentioned in relationship to giving this offering.

The Priest. vv. 3-12

The entire congregation of Israel vv.13-21

A leader. vv. 22-26

A commoner. vv. 27-35

It's wonderful to discover that even the poorest offender could provide an offering for sin. If the person can't afford a lamb, he can bring two turtledoves or pigeons.

Lev. 5:7 And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.

If he can't afford turtledoves or pigeons, he can bring a tenth part of an ephah (about five pints) of fine flour.

Lev 5:11 But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put *any* frankincense thereon: for it *is* a sin offering.

It's important to note, there was to be no oil or frankincense added to this offering. This speaks to the fact of how the offender should be heartbroken over his sin. Conviction leaves no place for joy.

The priest would take a handful of the flour and burn it on the altar.

Lev 5:12–13 Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, *even* a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and *the remnant* shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.

#### THE TRESPASS OFFERING Lev. 5:14 - 6:7

This law seems to relate to doing wrong in relationship with spiritual matters.

Lev. 5:14–15 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering:

The sin offering and trespass offering were closely related.

The sin offering dealt with sin as it related to the human nature. We all have the nature of Adam.

The trespass offering dealt with sin as it related to the actual acts of sin. We all sin every day.

With the trespass offering the offender had to make restitution for what they had done.

Lev. 5:16 And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

Lev. 6:4 Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found,

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIESTS ABOUT THE SACRIFICES Lev. 6-7

Beginning in Leviticus 6:8, we find instructions to the priests concerning the sacrifices. God tells Moses to instruct Aaron and his sons.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ABOUT THE BURNT OFFERING Lev. 6:8-13

The burnt offering was to be left on the altar and burnt all night

Lev. 6:9 Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the burnt offering: It *is* the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.

The priest must wear the clothing God had provided.

Lev. 6:10 And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar.

Every morning, the priest was to carry the ashes of the sacrifice outside the camp and depose of them.

Lev. 6:11 And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place.

The fire at the altar was to never be allowed to go out.

Lev. 6:13 The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ABOUT THE MEAL OFFERING Lev. 6:14-23

This offering was mixture of flour, oil, frankincense and salt. It was burnt it on the altar.

Lev. 6:15 And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the

frankincense which *is* upon the meat offering, and shall burn *it* upon the altar *for* a sweet savour, *even* the memorial of it, unto the LORD.

Part was offered, Aaron and his sons ate what was left. They ate in in the Tabernacle.

Le 6:16 And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ABOUT THE SIN OFFERING Lev. 6:24-30

These verses reveal how serious God is about the sacrifices. He says "it is MOST holy.

Lev. 6:25 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy.

The sacrifice was killed, the fat and inwards after being washed and salted, then burnt upon the altar. The priest could eat what was left of the sacrifice.

Lev. 6:29 All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it *is* most holy.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ABOUT THE TRESPASS OFFERING Lev. 7:1-10

The priest killed the sacrifice and sprinkled the blood about the altar.

Lev. 7:2 In the place where they kill the burnt offering shall they kill the trespass offering: and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar.

Part of the sacrifice was offered and part was eaten by the priest.

Lev 7:3–5 And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul *that is* above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away: And the priest shall burn them upon the altar *for* an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a trespass offering.

Lev. 7:6 Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it *is* most holy.

The priest kept the skin (hide) of the offering.

This reminds us of the coats of skins God made for Adam and Eve. Gen. 3:21

Lev. 7:8 And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIEST ABOUT THE PEACE OFFERING Lev. 7:11-36

This sacrifice was a "thank you" offering.

This sacrifice was offered to thank the Lord for a deliverance or provision.

This shows us there was more to living for the Lord than a lot of rituals and regulations. This offering was given by the one who's heart overflowed with thanks and praise.

We certainly have reason to be thankful. We should express that thanks to the Lord with our lips and with our lives.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

#### THIS OFFERING COULD BE GIVEN FOR ONE OF THREE REASONS

First, simply out of thanks when the worshipper just wanted to say "thank you".

Second, when a vow had been met (when a person vowed to praise the Lord if a prayer was answered)

Third, when the worshipper wanted to thank the Lord, probably after being delivered from a difficult situation.

Along with the animal sacrifice the worshipper was to give cakes and wafers. These were to be unleavened.

Lev. 7:12 If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.

Also, the worshipper was to give leavened bread.

Lev. 7:13 Besides the cakes, he shall offer *for* his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.

It seems strange for leavened bread to be used. We must remember, this leavened bread was not to be offered on the altar, it was to be eaten by the priests.

Lev. 7:8–10 And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered. And all the meat offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is dressed in the fryingpan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it. And every meat offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.

This offering was unique in that the part of the sacrifice that wasn't burnt was to be eaten by the priests and by the worshipper and his family. They actually had a meal that was consumed with an attitude of thanks.

This offering was to be eaten the same day it was offered if it was a thanksgiving offering and by the next day if it was for a vow. If the sacrifice was kept till the third day it was to be burnt with fire.

Lev. 7:15–17 And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering *be* a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten: But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire.

These offerings reveal how God designed his work. Through the sacrifices, He offered a means to provide atonement for the sins of His people, including the priests. At the same time, He established a means to take care of the priests. They ate of the sacrifices and used the skins for clothing.

## ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

Aaron was Moses' brother. God told Moses to anoint Aaron and his sons (male descendants) to be priests.

Up to this time, the firstborn male of each family was the priest for his family (Ex. 13:1-2).

Here, we see God transferring the duties of priest to those of the tribe of Levi.

This anointing gave these men the authority to act on behalf of God and man.

The anointing ceremony made them holy (set apart) in the eyes of God.

### MOSES CALLS AARON, HIS SONS AND ALL THE PEOPLE TOGETHER

God told Moses to get Aaron and his sons, the priestly garments, the anointing oil, a bullock, two rams and a basket of unleavened bread.

Lev. 8:2–3 Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Moses was to gather all the people at the door of the tabernacle. God wanted all the people to see this ceremony so they would know He had anointed Aaron and his sons as priests.

Verse 6 says Moses "brought" Aaron and his sons. This has the same idea as when the priest would "bring" the sacrifice to be offered. In essence, Moses is giving Aaron and his sons to the Lord as priests.

### MOSES WASHED AARON AND HIS SONS

Lev 8:5–6 And Moses said unto the congregation, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.

### MOSES PUT THE PRIESTLY CLOTHES ON AARON

Lev 8:7–9 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound *it* unto him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, *even* upon his forehead, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moses.

## MOSES POURED OIL ON THE TABERNACLE AND EVERYTHING IN IT

Lev 8:10–11 And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them.

### MOSES POURED OIL ON AARON

Lev 8:12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

### MOSES PUT SPECIAL CLOTHES ON AARON'S SONS

Lev 8:13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

### MOSES OFFERED THE SACRIFICES HE HAD BROUGHT Lev. 8:14-30

He offered the bull as a sin offering. Lev. 8:14-19  
This was to deal with the sins of Aaron and his sons.

He offered the first ram as a whole offering. Lev. 8:18-21

He offered the second ram. Lev. 8:22—23

He put blood on the tip of Aaron and his sons right ear, the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot. Lev. 8:23-24 This speaks of how they are to listen to God, do what He says and go where He leads.

He sprinkled oil and blood on Aaron and his sons, and their clothes. Lev. 8:30

Lev. 8:36 So Aaron and his sons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

## AARON'S FIRST SACRIFICE Lev. 9:1-24

They offered a sacrifice, first for themselves and then for the people.

Aaron brings a sacrifice for himself.

Lev. 9:2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD.

The people brought a sacrifice for themselves to be offered by Aaron.

Lev. 9:3 And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering;

Lev. 9:7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

### THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO THE PEOPLE

When Moses, Aaron and his sons did what God told them, the presence of God came, fire came out from the from before the Lord and consumed the sacrifice.

The people rejoiced.

Lev. 9:24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

The fact that fire came from God and consumed the sacrifice proves that God was pleased and He had accepted their sacrifice. God provided His own fire for this sacrifice.

The power of God is still available for those who will give themselves to His will.

## NADAB AND ABIHU OFFER STRANGE FIRE

Nadab and Abihu were the two oldest sons of Aaron's four sons.

Exodus 6:23 And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire.

Lev. 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

We cannot be certain what these men actually did. Many suggestions have been made but we cannot be certain. Whatever they did, it violated the instructions God had given.

**FIRE WENT OUT FROM THE LORD AND KILLED NADAB AND ABIHU.**

Lev. 10:2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

God had warned them about the consequences of violating His method of serving in the tabernacle.

Lev. 8:35 Therefore shall ye abide *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not: for so I am commanded.

If we learn anything from these verses, we should learn the fact that God blesses those who obey Him but He will deal with those who go their own way.

We also learn, God will be honored, either by blessing those who by willful obedience do what He requires or by the punishment of those who choose to disobey.

#### RULES ABOUT WHAT IS CLEAN AND UNCLEAR Lev. 11-15

The word "unclean" means "polluted" or "defiled".

God desires and demands holiness. Sin contaminates. God cannot ignore sin. They were not to come in contact with anything that was considered to be unclean. If they did, they were ceremonially unclean.

We find the same truth taught in the New Testament.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

It is God who declares what is clean or unclean. In these chapters, He describes what is considered clean and unclean.

The unclean person was barred from participating in worship, in offering sacrifices and in having access to the tabernacle, They were also removed from the fellowship and communion with the congregation of Israel and required to live "outside the camp".

In certain instances, the priests would determine the cleanness or uncleanness of a person. In Lev. 10:9-10, God tells the priests to not drink strong drink so they will be able to have discernment in knowing the difference between the clean and the unclean.

Lev. 10:9-10 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;...

#### ANIMALS THAT ARE CLEAN OR UNCLEAR Lev. 11

##### GOD TELLS THEM THEY ARE NOT TO EAT ANYTHING UNCLEAR

Only the land animals that have a split hoof and chews the cud may be eaten. Lev. 11:2-8

Only the water animals that have fins and scales may be eaten. Lev. 11:9-12

Only the air animals that are non-vulture like may be eaten.

Any bird that feeds on dead carcasses is not to be eaten. Lev. 11:13-19

Insects that may or may not be eaten. Lev. 11:20-23

THOSE WHO TOUCH THE DEAD CARCASS OF AN UNCLEAN ANIMAL SHALL BE UNCLEAN  
Lev. 11:24-28

Not only were they not to eat the unclean animal but they were forbidden to touch the dead body of an unclean animal.

We see a very important principle here. Contamination is spread from the evil to the good. That's why avoiding all types of sin is so important.

They were not to touch the dead body of the animals that creep on the ground. Lev. 11:29-31

GUIDELINES CONCERNING DEAD ANIMALS AND COOKING Lev. 11:32-36

GUIDELINES CONCERNING DEAD ANIMALS AND SEED Lev. 11:37-38

It was not uncommon for an unclean animal to get in the cooking area and fall into one of the vessels.

Throughout the above verses we find God giving the remedy for those who became unclean. God has the remedy to our sin problem.

God never tells Israel why one thing is unclean and another is clean. He doesn't have to tell them.

Some of the possible reasons could be....

- Some animals are actually dirty.
- Some animals have a cruel nature.
- Some animals eat food that was considered unclean.
- Some animals were especially close to the ground when they walked.

God does tell them why He wants them clean. He is holy and He wants a holy people.

Lev. 11:44-45 For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

We may not agree with what God tells us to not participate in, but He is God. He owes us no explanation. We are to obey, whether we understand or not, whether we agree or not.

#### THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN AND UNCLEANNESS Lev. 12

The woman who had a child would be ceremonially unclean. This means, she wouldn't be allowed to attend public ordinances or eat of the offering which she might otherwise.

Lev. 12:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

The male baby was to be circumcised on the eighth day.

Lev. 12:3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

If the woman gave birth to a male, she was considered unclean for seven days.

Lev. 12:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

If she gave birth to a female, she was considered unclean for two weeks instead of one.

Lev. 12:5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

It has been suggested the extra period of uncleanness for the female child was a reflection of the stigma of Eve's deception. The truth is, we don't know the reason.

Verses 4 and 5 speak of “the blood of her purifying”. The term “the blood of her purifying” seems strange to us but it can be explained simply. God has designed the female in such a fashion to be able to give birth. During pregnancy, the baby gets all it needs to develop and survive from its mother. For this purpose God has given the female an extra quantity of blood and nutrients. Before pregnancy, this is evacuated periodically. During pregnancy, these fluids etc. are retained in order to form and develop the fetus. After the birth, these fluids eventually revert back to their usual process.

The time of purifying was 33 days if it was a male and 66 days if it was a female child.

Adding the 7 days mentioned in verse 2 and the 33 days in verse 4, we discover the mother would be considered unclean for 40 days if she had a male child. Adding the 14 days and 66 days mentioned in verse 5, we discover the mother would be considered unclean for a total of 80 days if she had a female.

#### RULES CONCERNING VARIOUS UNCLEAN THINGS Lev. 13-15

Instructions dealing with diseases of the skin (leprosy etc.) 13:1-46

In the Bible leprosy is a picture of sin. We find it being dealt with carefully and severely. Extreme caution was used if leprosy was even suspected. If it was determined that a person did have leprosy, they were removed from the population until they were declared to be healed. The threat of it spreading to others was of utmost concern. Leprosy was a disease that could not be hidden for long. Soon, it was obvious to all.

Instructions dealing with the garments of lepers 13:47-59

Instructions dealing with the cleansing of leprosy 14:1-57

Only the priest could declare a person clean. He was to meet the leper outside of the camp to examine him. The priest did not heal the leper. He merely examined the person to see if the leprosy had been healed.

#### RULES CONCERNING BODILY FLUIDS Lev. 15

The context of these verses seem to indicate that some of these issues are because of sexual sin.

#### THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur) Lev. 16

This is an amazing chapter. The book of Leviticus has thus far dealt with offerings, priests and regulations. None of these have completely dealt with all sin.

Even though many sacrifices were made throughout the year, there were some sins that still remained unacknowledged and therefore without atonement. The Day of Atonement dealt with all these.

We find this event mentioned in Ex. 30:10

Exodus 30:10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

Every day, priests went in the Holy Place to do their service. However, none of them went into the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is an annual holy day. It was the most important day on the Hebrew calendar. On this day a sacrifice was offered to atone for the sins of the people of Israel. The priest went into the Holy of Holies to present the blood of the sacrifice. The people waited outside. When he came out, they knew their sin had been covered for another year.

This offering dealt with the sin of the priests and the entire nation of Israel, not just an individual.

Lev. 16:33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

The Day of Atonement was a solemn day for the people of Israel. It was a day of national fasting, mourning and repentance. It was a day observed as a Sabbath day, a day of rest.

It was a day when they were to focus on their condition, confess and repent.

Lev. 16:31 It *shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

#### THE PROCESS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT ARE AS FOLLOWS

It is noteworthy to mention, God starts His instructions with a warning about what happens when His instructions aren't obeyed. Verse one starts with a reminder of the death of Aaron's sons who offered strange fire and died in the process.

Lev. 16:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;

God told Moses that Aaron could not go into the Holy of Holies anytime he wanted to. If he went in at the wrong time, he would die.

Lev. 16:2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the veil before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

#### AARON (OR THE HIGH PRIESTS THAT WOULD COME AFTER HIM) BRINGS THE ANIMALS NECESSARY FOR THE SACRIFICES.

He would bring a bullock and a ram that he would offer for his own sin and the sin of his family (the tribe of Levi).

He would bring two goats from the congregation to be offered for the sin of the people.

Lev. 16:3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

He would offer the bullock and the ram for his own sin and the sin of his family, but only after he had done what is described in verse four.

#### AARON (OR THE HIGH PRIESTS THAT WOULD COME AFTER HIM) WASHES AND DRESSES

Aaron was not to wear the usual garments of the high priest (the costly attire, the ephod, breastplate etc.) He was to wear linen garments. These more common garments were worn because this was a time of sorrow and repentance. Even though these garments were not expensive or extravagant, they were holy.

He would wash at the brazen laver in the tabernacle and put on the clothes he was instructed to wear.

Lev. 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

#### AARON PRAYED A PRAYER OF CONFESSION OVER THE BULLOCK

Lev. 16:6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Aaron does not actually kill the bullock until verse 11.

#### THE SCAPEGOAT IS CHOSEN

Aaron is instructed to bring two goats. He took the two goats to the door of the tabernacle. One goat was to be offered as a sacrifice and one was to be set free. He cast lots to determine which goat would live and which one would die.

Lev. 16:7–8 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

#### AARON OFFERED A SACRIFICE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY

Aaron offered sacrifice for himself and his family (the tribe of Levi). Even though they were God's chosen,



they were not perfect. They needed to deal with their own sin before they could deal with the sin of the people.

Lev.16:11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself:

#### AARON (THE HIGH PRIEST) BURNT SWEET INCENSE

He collects the blood of the bullock, then He then took a censer of live coals and sweet incense, he passed through the holy place, opened the veil and entered the holy of holies. He poured the incense on the burning coals. This filled the holy of holies with a fragrant smoke.

Lev. 16:12–13 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

The cloud from the incense would hide the mercy seat where God was.

#### AARON SPRINKLES THE BLOOD OF THE BULLOCK ON THE MERCY SEAT

He would take the blood of the bullock which he had in a basin, dip his finger into it, and sprinkle it before the mercy seat seven times.

Lev.16:14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

This is a beautiful picture of Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice, entering into the presence of God with His own blood.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

#### THE SCAPEGOAT IS OFFERED

Aaron goes back into the court of the tabernacle to deal with the two goats he brought. (cf. vv. 7-8)

Lev.16:15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

We see in this a most beautiful picture of Christ. He not only died for the sin of mankind but rose again. He becomes the beautiful fulfillment of both, the goat that was slain and the goat that was set free.

This sacrifice is an atonement for the sin of the people.

Lev.16:15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people ...

Aaron reenters the Holy of Holies with the blood of the goat and sprinkles it mercy seat and the holy place.

#### AARON (THE HIGH PRIEST) CLEANSSES THE TABERNACLE

Even though no one other than priests were allowed in the tabernacle, it was a place where sin was dealt with. Therefore, God demanded that it be cleansed.

Lev.16:16-19 tell how he sprinkles blood of the bull and the goat throughout the tabernacle.

No other priest was allowed in the tabernacle while Aaron (the High Priest) made atonement.

Lev.16:17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

#### THE LIVE GOAT IS SET FREE IN THE WILDERNESS

One goat was killed to picture substitutionary death. The other goat was set free to picture the removal of sin.

Lev.16:21–22 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon

him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

The person who let this goat free must wash his clothes and bathe before he comes back to the camp.

Lev. 16:26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

AARON BATHED AGAIN, CHANGED INTO HIS HIGH-PRIESTLY GARMENTS AND OFFERED TWO RAMS

Lev. 16:23–24 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and shall leave them there: And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

AARON BURNT THE FAT OF THE OFFERING ON THE ALTAR

Lev. 16:25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

THE BODIES OF THE SACRIFICES WERE BURNT WITHOUT THE CAMP

Lev. 16:27 And the bullock *for* the sin offering, and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy *place*, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

Those who burnt these bodies were to wash their clothes, and bathe, then he could return to the camp.

Lev. 16:28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

#### GOD INSTITUTES THE ANNUAL DAY OF ATONEMENT Lev. 16:29-34

Every year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, Israel was to observe the Day of Atonement.

Lev. 16:29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

It was a time when they were to search their hearts and humble themselves before the Lord. They were to do no work. They were to focus on the Lord and being right with Him.

Thank the Lord, we do not need a Day of Atonement today. Our Lord became the supreme sacrifice. His death and resurrection, not only atones for our sin, it removes it totally.

#### REGULATIONS FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL Lev. 17

THE SACRIFICES WERE TO BE OFFERED ONLY AT THE TABERNACLE

This prohibition was to keep private persons from presuming to be their own priests.

Lev. 17:3–4 What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth *it* out of the camp, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

Lev. 17:9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

This means, the only meat the Israelites could eat was that which had been offered as a sacrifice.

GOD FORBAD THE PEOPLE TO EAT BLOOD

Lev. 17:10 And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

The blood of the sacrifices was drained from the body of the animal.

Blood was something that should be considered precious because it represented life (“the life of the flesh is in the blood”).

Lev. 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

Also, the blood was that which would atone for sin, they were not to make it an ordinary thing.

It's interesting to discover, in hot climates blood is subject to speedy putrefaction. It is very difficult to digest. God gives instructions, not only for the spiritual significance but because of the physical benefit of his people.

**THEY COULD NOT OFFER ANIMALS THAT HAD DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES OR HAD BEEN KILLED BY OTHER ANIMALS**

This was probably prohibited because the blood would not have been properly drained.

Lev. 17:15 And every soul that eateth that which died *of itself*, or that which was torn *with beasts, whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

If someone disobeys and eats, they are to wash their clothes and bathe. They are unclean until morning. If they refuse to do this, they remain guilty.

Lev. 17:16 But if he wash *them* not, nor bathe his flesh; then he shall bear his iniquity.

#### INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND MARRIAGE Lev. 18

God commanded His people to not be like the world when it comes to sex and marriage.

Lev. 18:3 After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.

**INCEST IS FORBIDDEN Lev. 18:6-17**

**MARRYING YOUR WIFE'S SISTER WHILE SHE IS STILL ALIVE IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life *time*.

**HAVING SEX WITH A WOMAN WHO IS HAVING HER PERIOD IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.

**ADULTERY IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:20 Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

**GIVING YOUR CHILDREN AS SACRIFICES IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

Many idolaters burnt their children as a sacrifice to their gods. They believed it pleased their god.

**HOMOSEXUALITY IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination.

**BESTIALITY IS FORBIDDEN**

Lev. 18:23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it *is* confusion.

**DO NOT DEFILE YOURSELVES IN THE UNGODLY NATIONS Lev. 18:24-30**

God says that nature itself rebels against such unnatural activity as mentioned in the previous verses. He

illustrates this by saying “the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants”.

Lev. 18:25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

God warns Israel to not do as the Canaanites have done. If they do, they will suffer the same consequences.

Lev. 18:26–28 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations; *neither* any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which *were* before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you.

## BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER Lev. 19

### HONOR YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER

Lev. 19:3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

No doubt, God established these guidelines so children would recognize the wisdom of their parents and obey them.

He also gave these guidelines in order that parents may see the great responsibility of leading their children in a godly manner.

### LEAVE SOME HARVEST FOR THE POOR

They were to leave the corners of the field unharvested so the poor could gather for food. They were to leave some grapes for the poor to gather.

Lev. 19:9–10 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

### DO NOT STEAL, CHEAT OR LIE

Lev. 19:11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

### DO NOT MAKE A VOW AND NOT KEEP IT

Lev. 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

### DO NOT DEFRAUD

Lev. 19:13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

### DO NOT MISTREAT THE AFFLICTED

Lev. 19:14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

### DO NOT GOSSIP OR BE A TALEBEARER

Lev. 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.

### DO NOT HATE OR HOLD A GRUDGE.

Lev. 19:17-18 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

God deals with the heart. Even having bad thoughts about someone grieves him.

## DO NOT MIX UNLIKE KINDS

God says it is wrong to mix different kinds of livestock. He said they were not even to mix different types of seed when they were sowing their fields.

Lev. 19:19 Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.

## DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF ADULTERY WITH A SLAVE

This deals with a man who lies with a slave girl who is engaged to be married.

If the slave woman had been free, she was to be put to death along with the guilty man. (Deut. 22:24)

Since she was a slave, it is assumed she had less control and is less guilty. Neither, the man nor the woman is to be put to death. She is to be scourged and the man is to bring a male sheep for a trespass offering. Lev. 19:20-22

## REGULATIONS ABOUT PLANTING TREES AND HARVEST Lev. 19:23-25

Once inside the land of Canaan, they were to plant trees but not harvest the fruit for the first three years.

The fourth year, the fruit was considered holy, they were to give it to the Lord. They gave the fruit to the priests. (cf. Num. 18:12-13, Deut. 18:4)

In the fifth year, they could eat the fruit. God promised a good harvest if they obeyed his instructions.

The principle behind the instructions about fruit trees deals with the fact that the firstfruits always belongs to the Lord. Since the fruit of a young tree is apt to be imperfect, it could not be offered to the Lord.

The lesson is obvious, we are to serve the Lord before ourselves and he deserves our best.

## DO NOT EAT MEAT WITH THE BLOOD STILL IN IT, DO NOT USE DIVINATION OR MAGIC

Lev. 19:26 Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.

They were to drain the blood before the meat was consumed. (cf. Lev. 17:10)

They were forbidden to use anything in an attempt to tell the future. (cf. Deut. 18:14) This deals with the practice of observation. Those who subscribed to this superstition believed in signs. They believed watching the movement of a snake, the motion of clouds, the flight of birds, and many other “signs” could predict the future.

The word “enchantment” has the idea of muttering spells or communicating with spirits.

We are not to look to signs to tell us about the future. We are to trust God and let him take care of us no matter what happens.

## INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HAIR AND BEARDS

Lev. 19:27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.

This verse refers to a practice of cutting part of their hair in a form of worship to their gods. The Arabs did this to honor their god, Bacchus.

The trimming of the hair or beard may seem unimportant to some but doing so connected them with the ungodly, therefore it was forbidden.

Cutting the corners of the beard was also a practice done as a sign of mourning. Even though it was a practice done while in a state of mourning, it was still connected to their heathen beliefs, and therefore forbidden.

These verses make it clear, dressing or having an appearance like the world displeases God.

## DO NOT CUT YOURSELF OR MAKE MARKS ON YOUR BODY

Lev. 19:28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

The “cuttings in your flesh for the dead” refers to the ungodly practice of cutting themselves as a sign of

mourning the death of someone.

God is not forbidding the mourning during a death of a loved one, but he is forbidding the ungodly practice. The child of God should mourn the passing of a loved one but they should not sorrow as those who have no hope. (1 Th. 4:13)

The phrase, “nor print any marks upon you” refers to the ancient custom of putting marks on their body in honor of their gods or objects of worship. It was a symbol of their dedication to their gods.

#### DO NOT PROSTITUTE YOUR DAUGHTERS

Lev. 19:29 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.

This probably refers to the temple prostitutes. It was a common practice of the idol worshippers for a parent would cause their daughter to be a prostitute.

The ungodly idolaters believed the sex act pleased their god and brought them closer to them.

If this type of ungodliness was conducted at their temples, it would obviously spread and fill the land with wickedness.

#### KEEP THE SABBATHS AND REVERENCE THE HOUSE OF GOD

Lev. 19:30 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

God has always established a regular time whereby he can meet with his people. We see that in the garden of Eden where God came in the cool of the day.

We should realize the importance of leaving all our obligations and meeting with the Lord and his people. This should be a vital part of our lives. Without it, we cannot have a close walk with the Lord.

#### DO NOT FOLLOW FAMILIAR SPIRITS

Lev. 19:31 Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

Do not seek direction from those who associate with spirits. The Holy Spirit should be our only guide.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

It is dangerous to venture into the world in an attempt to discern the future. By doing so, we open ourselves up to the influence and control of evil spirits.

#### HONOR THE AGED

Lev. 19:32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

The term “hoary head” speaks of those of old age. When they enter a room, the younger should rise in respect of them. God taught his people to have respect for the elderly.

This verse includes the words “and fear thy God”. There are people who have not lived in a manner that deserves respect. In spite of this fact, we should honor them simply because God tells us we should.

Lev. 19:33–34 And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. *But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

Israel was to welcome strangers in hope of bringing them into the knowledge of the truth. They, not only were to not to mistreat them, they were to treat them as family. They were to remember how they once were strangers when they lived in Egypt.

We should adapt this same mentality in our day. Our focus should be on the possibility of winning them to the Lord.

#### BE HONEST ON ALL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Lev. 19:35-36 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

#### PUNISHMENT FOR VARIOUS SINS Lev. 20

##### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE WHO SACRIFICE CHILDREN TO MOLECH Lev. 20:1-5

God dealt severely with idolatry. He commanded those who gave their children to Molech be stoned to death.

Lev. 20:2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever *he be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth *any* of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

Molech was the fire-god of the Ammonites. The image of Molech was made of brass and hollow inside. His face was that of a calf, his arms stretched out like a man holding his hands out to receive something. They started a fire to heat this image, once it was hot, the priest of Molech would lay the baby in the hands of the image.

We can certainly understand why God would be so severe. How could they forget him and give worship to a dead god after all he had done for them?

Also, if idolatry goes unchecked it will spread and contaminate the entire nation.

We may be shocked at the cruelty of the parents who would give their own children to a god but many parents today give their children to the gods of this world, pleasure, popularity and possessions. They are equally guilty.

If the people refuse to deal with the one who gave their children to Molech, they will suffer the judgment of God. Lev. 20:4-5

##### DO NOT TURN TO MEDIUMS AND WITCHCRAFT

Lev. 20:6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

Verse 27 says the person with a familiar spirit or is a wizard shall be put to death.

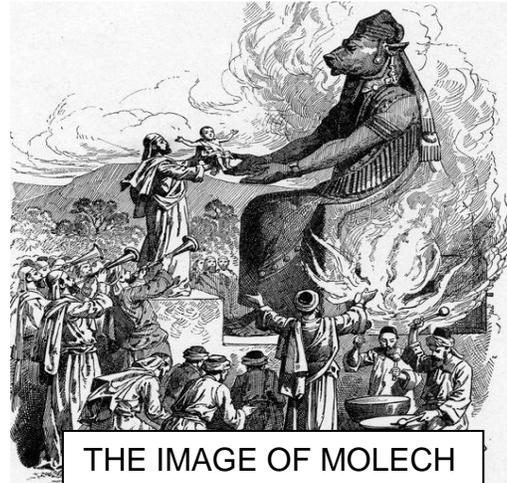
##### DEATH FOR CURSING FATHER OR MOTHER

Lev. 20:9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

##### PUNISHMENT FOR SEXUAL SINS Lev. 20:10-21

##### BE SEPARATE FROM THE PEOPLE DWELLING IN THE LAND OF PROMISE Lev. 20:22-26

Once again, we see how God wants his people to be different from those of the world.



THE IMAGE OF MOLECH

#### RULES CONCERNING PRIESTS Lev. 21-22

##### RULES FOR THE REGULAR PRIESTS Lev. 21:1-9

##### THE PRIESTS ARE TO KEEP THEMSELVES SPIRITUALLY CLEAN

In chapters 21-22 we see God's desire for his priests to be clean and walk a separated life. We should remember, in the New Testament era all believers are priests (1 Pet. 2:9). Therefore, all believers should set themselves to the task that (with the help of God) I will live clean and holy before the Lord.

The priests were to avoid contact of dead bodies. Lev. 21:1-4

Priests were to be especially careful to not do anything that would make themselves unclean and therefore, unfit to carry out his priestly duties.

Since touching dead bodies would make a person unclean, the priest was to avoid actually touching the dead even as he performed his duties of trying to comfort those who had lost a loved one to death.

The only exception would be if the dead person was one of his immediate family. Lev. 21:2-3

The priests were not to shave their heads, trim the edges of their beards or cut themselves. Lev. 21:5

As described in Lev. 19:27, these were practices done by the ungodly as a form of dedication to their god.

The priest must be holy because of the importance of his duties for the Lord and the people. If he becomes unclean he would not be able to perform the duties of his ministry.

Lev. 21:6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.

The priest is not to marry a prostitute, a woman of suspicious character or a divorced woman.

Lev. 21:7 They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he *is* holy unto his God.

God tells the people to make sure their priests were to be holy. Holiness was vitally important because of the seriousness of their duties. When they offered sacrifices it was viewed as bread for God.

Lev. 21:8 Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, *am* holy.

The daughters of the priest were held to a high standard of conduct. If she is guilty of adultery, she is to be put to death.

Lev. 21:9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.

#### RULES FOR THE HIGH PRIESTS Lev. 21:10-15

The high priest was different than the regular priests. He wore the high priestly garments mentioned in Exodus 28. The high priest was the religious head of the people. The office of high priest was held for life. He was the only one who could enter the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. Only he was to wear the Urim and the Thummin in order to discern the Lord's will and direction.

The high priest made sure all the responsibilities of the priests were carried out.

During New Testament times, the high priest was the president of the Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin was a group of 70 men and the high priest (making a total of 71) who ruled over Israel. The High Priest headed up this group. They acted much like our Supreme Court. They met daily at the Temple to hold court. The high priest's religious influence was weakened by the power of the scribes and Pharisees. They had limited authority because of the governments that ruled over Israel, as Rome did during Jesus' day.

Caiaphas was high priest when Jesus was arrested and tried. His reaction to Jesus is found in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 26:57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

Matthew 26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

The requirements for the high priests were more stringent than those for the regular priests.

Lev. 21:10 And *he that is* the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;

Lev. 21:11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;

## RULES FOR PRIESTS AND HIS FAMILY Lev. 22

The priests must live a clean and holy life. They must respect the offerings and the name of the Lord. Just as the sacrifice was to be without blemish, no priest could serve in the tabernacle if he was blemished.

Lev. 22:2 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name *in those things* which they hallow unto me: I *am* the LORD.

These verses look ahead to the descendants of Aaron and to those priests that would come after Aaron. If any of Aaron's descendants are unclean, they are to not come near the holy offerings. If for any reason they become unclean, they are not to do the duties of their priesthood until they are made clean again.

Lev. 22:3 Say unto them, Whosoever *he be* of all your seed among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I *am* the LORD.

The phrase, "that soul shall be cut off from my presence" means, God will put him to death.

### EATING THE PORTION OF THE SACRIFICE THAT GOES TO THE PRIEST Lev. 22:4-16

As described earlier, the priest received a portion of some of the sacrifices. He and his family were permitted to eat this food. The entire immediate family (unless they were unclean) were permitted to partake of this food.

God gave some guidelines as to who could eat and who couldn't.

If the person has leprosy, they are not to eat. If they touch a dead body, they are not to eat.

Lev. 22:4 What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue; he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him;

If they have touched something unclean, they are not to eat. Lev. 22:5-6

Visitors and temporary workers were forbidden to eat. If someone outside of the priest's family is a guest of the priest, they may not eat of the portion of the sacrifice assigned to the priest.

Lev. 22:10 There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.

There is an exception, if the priest has a slave living with him.

Lev. 22:11 But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat.

If the priest's daughter is married to a stranger (someone from another family) she is not permitted to eat.

Lev. 22:12 If the priest's daughter also be *married* unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.

The priest's daughter who is a widow or divorced with no children is permitted to eat.

Lev. 22:13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.

If someone eats of the offering by accident, he must add one fifth to it and give it to the priest.

Lev. 22:14 And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth *part* thereof unto it, and shall give *it* unto the priest with the holy thing.

### FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE OFFERINGS Lev. 22:19-33

## SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DAYS Lev. 23

The Lord appointed certain days where his people were to commemorate important events. We find in these special days a time of celebration and rejoicing. God isn't a dictator that just barks demands to his people. He is a loving father who wants to bless his people.

#### SEVENTH DAY SABBATH Lev. 23:3

The word "Sabbath" means 'day of rest'. God intended the Sabbath to be a day when his people could worship him without any distraction.

God instructed his people to observe a day of rest in order to remember how he rested (ceased his work) on the seventh day of creation.

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exodus 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

The Old Testament day of rest was Saturday, the seventh day of the week.

Since the Lord's resurrection, the day of rest for God's people is Sunday, the first day of the week. We worship on Sunday because he rose the first day of the week. An earnest look at the early church practices will show they met on the Lord's day, Sunday.

#### PASSOVER Lev. 23:4-5 (cf. Ex. 12:1-13)

This was a very important time for the people of Israel. It was the time when they remembered how God passed over those who had the blood applied to their door when the Lord smote the first born in Egypt. (Ex. 12)

#### THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD Lev. 23:6-8 (cf. Ex. 12:14-20, 13:8-10)

The feast of unleavened bread came immediately after Passover. They were remembering how God led them out of Egypt with such haste there wasn't time to let their bread rise.

For seven days, they were to eat no leaven or allow any leaven in their homes.

Before this celebration began, they cleaned their entire house to make certain there was no leaven anywhere.

#### THE WAVE OFFERING OR FIRST FRUITS Lev. 23:9-14

One of the days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread would be a Sabbath. The day following this Sabbath was the celebration of First Fruits.

God instructed them to bring a sheaf of the first harvest to the priest. The priest was to wave these sheaves before the Lord in a way to recognize it came from him and to thank him for his provision.

God had given his people a new land and a new life. They were to always remember their substance came from God. This celebration serves as an aid to make sure they didn't forget.

They were to also bring a lamb as a burnt offering.

Lev. 23:12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

They were not to eat until they had done as God instructed.

Lev. 23:14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

#### DAY OF PENTECOST Lev. 23:15-22

The word "Pentecost" means 'fiftieth'. Pentecost gets its name from counting fifty days from the Sabbath following Passover.

Pentecost marked the beginning of wheat harvest and a year of God's blessings. Again, it reminded God's people how their provision came from God.

Pentecost is important to the New Testament Christian because it is the birthday of the church. It was on the Day of Pentecost when the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to his people.

Acts 2:1-2 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

They weren't to just thank the Lord for his great provision, they were to remember those who had less and leave some harvest for them.

Lev. 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

DAY OF TRUMPETS Lev. 23:23-25

The trumpets were made from the horns of animals. They used trumpets to alert the people of various events. Much like the old time military, they had a different sound for different occasions.

This day is called a "sabbath" because it was to be a day of rest. Lev. 23:24

The trumpets were sounded in all the cities and towns. They blew from the sunrise to sunset.

DAY OF ATONEMENT Lev. 23:26-32

Leviticus 16 tells us what the priests did on the Day of Atonement. These verses tell us what the people did.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES Lev. 23:33-44

This feast reminded God's people about the forty years their fathers lived in tents while in the wilderness.

For seven days, they moved from their homes and lived in shelters they made from tree branches. This was a time of rejoicing for the people of God. It caused them to look ahead and trust God to continue his care for them.

Lev. 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

This speaks to the fact that those who are saved are in a world that is not their home. We are pilgrims and strangers here. We dwell in temporary bodies of flesh. One day, we will leave these earthly tabernacles and go home.

#### OIL AND BREAD FOR THE TABERNACLE Lev. 24:1-9

Oil for the tabernacle lamps Lev. 24:1-8

The oil for the lamps in the tabernacle was to be provided by the people.

Lev. 24:2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

Aaron was to make sure the lamps in the tabernacle were taken care of each day. The lamps had to be trimmed and the oil refilled. Either Aaron did this himself or made sure one of the other priests did.

Lev. 24:4 He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually.

The priest was to make sure the shew bread was placed in the tabernacle every day. Lev. 24:5-9  
This is mentioned in Ex. 25:30.

#### THE PUNISHMENT FOR BLASPHEMY Lev. 24:10-16

Blaspheming God is to be punished by death Lev. 24:10-16

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth Lev. 24:17-23

## SPECIAL YEARS IN JEWISH CALENDAR Lev. 25

### THE SABBATH YEAR Lev. 25:1-7

Not only were there to be Sabbath days but there were to be Sabbath years. They were to plant crops for six years and let the land rest the seventh year. They were not to sow the fields or prune the vines.

Lev. 25:3–4 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

They were not to reap that which came up voluntarily during the seventh year.

Lev. 25:5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: *for* it is a year of rest unto the land.

Even though the land owner was not to harvest what grew during the year of Sabbath, that which grew on its own could be taken by anyone.

Lev. 25:6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee,

God promised to bless the sixth year's produce if they will obey him. (v. 21) By obeying the Lord, they had as much from one year's crop as they usually had in two.

This command shows us one more time how the bible is indeed the word of God.

- No man would give this type of instruction. They wanted as much produce as possible and would not take a year off.
- No man could control the extra produce that came during sixth year. God did what man couldn't do, he provided twice as much harvest as usual.

### THE YEAR OF JUBILEE Lev. 25:8-24

The Year of Jubilee took place every fifty years. It began on the Day of Atonement.

God gave some very specific instructions about the Year of Jubilee.

- No sowing or reaping during this year

Lev. 25:11 A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.

- It should be a time to move closer to the Lord. This was a very holy time for God's people.

Lev. 25:12 For it *is* the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

The Year of Jubilee was a wonderful time for many people because it gave them an opportunity to start over. Land and property was returned to its original owner.

Lev. 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

- Land that had been sold reverted back to the original owner

Lev. 25:13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.

The land belonged to the Lord. It was an inheritance he gave to his people. Therefore, they were to hold their property dear and not sell it off permanently. To enable them to keep their land, the Lord instituted the Year of Jubilee when all land was returned to its original owner. In this way, no one ever lost their inheritance.

Lev. 25:23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye *are* strangers and sojourners with

me.

The price of the property would be determined by how many years there were to the next Year of Jubilee, when it would be returned to the original owner.

Lev. 25:16 According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.

If because of unavoidable circumstances, someone was forced to sell their land, the person buying it could not take advantage of the situation and pay a lot less than it was worth.

Lev. 25:17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I *am* the LORD your God.

- God makes provisions for those who have faced hardships

If someone became poor and had to sell his property, a family member could buy it back for them.

Lev. 25:25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away *some* of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.

God said if they would trust him and obey, he would bless them and take care of them. Lev. 25:18-22

If this person did not have a family member who would or could buy the property, he could buy it back later when he was able. The price would be determined by how much he received when he sold it and how many years till the next Year of Jubilee.

Lev. 25:26–27 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession.

If he is not able to pay that price, the property will remain in the possession of the one who bought it until the next Year of Jubilee.

Lev. 25:28 But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

There were two exceptions concerning the redemption of property.

The first dealt with houses inside the city (walled city)

The houses in the cities (in walled city) were viewed in a different manner than those in the country. Those in the country were connected to the land. Those in the city were assumed to be for business or at least not a place of dwelling. Therefore, there were different guidelines for the houses in the city than those in the country. If an owner sold a house in the city he could buy it back anytime within a year. If he did not buy it back by the year's end, he forfeited the right to repurchase it and it was not returned to him at the Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:29-31

The second dealt with the land owned by the Levites (the priests)

- The Levites could not lose their land permanently

The Levites always had the right to repurchase the city property and was protected by the release of the Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:32-34

God instructs those who are able to “relieve” those who have fallen into need, whether they be home born or a stranger (someone who had moved into the area and accepted the beliefs of the people of Israel). It does us well to note the wording of verse 35. It says “if a brother be WAXEN poor, and FALLEN in decay”. This suggests the fact that the person was working and doing all they could to provide for himself and his family. In spite of his efforts, he has fallen into need. This may be speaking about someone who has been the victim of a cheat or crook.

- Those who have should help those who have not

The Lord tells those who are able to help, to do so. They are to “relieve him”. The help may be in the form

of supplies, goods or a loan. The lender is to charge no interest or demand more to be given back than he gave. Lev. 25:35-37

- Instructions for those who had to sell themselves as slaves

If a brother become so poor that he had to sell himself as a slave, he should be treated as a brother and not a slave.

Lev. 25:39 And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant:

They are to be set free from bondage the Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:40-41

God tells them the reason they are to treat the brother in this fashion. All of Israel, including this brother, belong to him. They are to serve no one but him.

Lev. 25:42–43 For they *are* my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God.

- Instructions for the slaves the people of Israel had

The people of Israel were permitted to keep slaves of other nations. They could not make a fellow Israeli a slave.

Lev. 25:44–45 Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

Even though slavery was cruel, it could be a means whereby some could be provided for. Many were so poor they could not survive unless someone provide a means of support. Lev. 25: 47

Slavery was also a means whereby someone could repay a loan. They would sell themselves to the person they owed until the debt was paid.

For whatever reason, the people of Israel were to treat their slaves in a humane manner.

A man of Israel may become poor and sell himself to a foreigner that is living among them. The man who had sold himself to be a slave could be redeemed by his relatives or he could pay for himself when he was able. Lev. 25:47-55

If no one buys him, he goes free the Year of Jubilee

Lev. 25:54 And if he be not redeemed in these *years*, then he shall go out in the year of jubile, *both* he, and his children with him.

## PROMISES AND WARNINGS Chapter 26

BLESSING FOR OBEDIENCE Lev. 26:1-13

God reminds them to not make any idols or images to worship.

Lev. 26:1 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the LORD your God.

Lev. 26:2–3 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

God describes some of the blessings he will give to those who obey. Lev. 26:4-13

He promises rain, full harvest and trees that bare well. vs. 4

He promises the growing season will be longer than usual. vs. 5

He promises peace in the land. They can live without fear. vs. 6

He promises victory in battle. vv. 7-8

He promises to walk with them and be close. vv. 11-13

## PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEYING Lev. 26:14-39

God warned them about what would happen if they choose to disobey him. vv. 14-15

- Disobedience would bring emotional problems

God said their peace will be replaced with terror. How awful to be afraid all the time and have the fear that things are going to get worse.

Lev. 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror....

- Disobedience would bring physical problems

God said he would smite them with consumption and the burning ague.

Lev. 26:16 .....consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

- Disobedience would bring defeat

God said their enemies would overcome them.

Lev. 26:17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

If they continue to rebel in spite of these judgments, God promised to intensify his punishment. The plagues would be multiplied. Lev. 26:18-30

Lev. 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

God said he would break their pride. The more they rebel, the more intense his work would be.

Their heaven would be as iron, meaning God would stop the rain. Their earth would be as brass, meaning no produce.

Lev. 26:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

- Disobedience would bring bareness

They will labor in vain

Lev. 26:20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

The land and the fruit trees will not bare.

If they continue to disobey after these judgments, God promised things would get even worse.

Lev. 26:21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.

- Disobedience would bring wild animals

God will send wild animals to destroy

Lev. 26:22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your *high* ways shall be desolate.

God fulfilled this several times. He sent serpents in Num. 21:6. He sent lions in 1 Kgs. 13:24, 1 Kgs. 20:36 and 2 Kgs. 17:25. He sent bears in 2 Kgs. 2:24.

God said, if you walk against me, I will walk against you. He will no longer be there to provide and protect.

Lev. 26:23–24 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

God said, when you gather in your fenced in cities in an attempt to escape the enemies attack, I'll send them in after you and you will not escape.

Lev. 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant: and when ye are

gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

- Disobedience would bring famine

Lev. 26:26 *And* when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

They had public ovens where they would bake their bread. God said, the time will come when the food will be so scarce, ten woman can bake all the bread they have in one oven.

When we remember how bread was their staple of life and how it was their main food substance, we realize how devastating this would be.

Once again God says, if after all of this, you still refuse to repent, I will make the judgment even worse.

Lev. 26:27–28 *And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.*

- Disobedience would bring cannibalism

Lev. 26:29 *And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

The people of Israel will be driven to cannibalism. But, not just cannibalism, but cannibalism to the extent to where they will eat their own children.

As unbelievable as this seems, it did happen on more than one occasion. 2 Kgs. 6:29 and Lam. 4:10

Famine causes people to do the unimaginable.

- Disobedience would bring spiritual famine

God now moves from the physical effects of his judgment to the spiritual. He said he would show them how worthless their idols were.

Lev. 26:30 *And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.*

The “high places” were altars built on top of hills that were set up in order to worship idols. God would destroy the high places and those who worshipped there.

God said “my soul shall abhor you”. God hates their sin. Once again, he says he will remove his presence from them.

God would not accept their sacrifices.

Lev. 26:31... *I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.*

God tells them he will not accept their sacrifices. Even though they are living in disobedience, they continue to bring sacrifices to offer to God and act like everything is alright. God is not pleased and their efforts grieve him.

We can live in disobedience while acting as though we are right with the Lord. We may go to church, sing songs, teach lessons, preach sermons and act like we are right with the Lord. But God is not fooled, he knows our hearts. Our Christian acts do not please him if our hearts are not right.

As devastating as the physical judgments were, the spiritual judgments were worse. We may suffer terribly but no suffering is as bad as the type that comes when God backs off and lets us suffer the results.

- Disobedience would bring dispersion

God would scatter them and the land would be left empty.

Lev. 26:33 *And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.*

While the land is left empty, it will get the sabbath rest God desired.

Lev. 26:34–35 *Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye *be* in your enemies' land; *even* then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest;*

because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

Those who live during these judgments will be left in fear. They will run from a leaf being blown in the breeze as though a strong enemy was pursuing them. They will fall over each other as they flee from enemies who were not even there. Lev. 26:36–37

Those who are still alive will end up dying in their enemies lands. This will be the result of their sin and the sins of their fathers. They saw the consequence of their father's sin and ended up doing the same. They learned nothing from the example of their parent's failure. Lev. 26:38–39

#### THE RESULTS OF REPENTANCE Lev. 26:40-45

God's punishment is always designed to bring the guilty party to repentance, forgiveness and restoration.

God said, if you will admit your fault, recognize the judgment you have suffered is what you deserve, and confess your sin, I will forgive you. I will remember my promise to your fathers and to you and I will put my blessings back on you and the land. Lev. 26:40–45

What a blessing it is to know that no matter how far we have strayed, the Lord is waiting and willing to forgive us and restore his blessings on us.

### VOWS Chapter 27

At times the people of Israel expressed their commitment to the Lord through vows. Simply put, a vow was a promise. The person making the vow would promise to give something to the Lord. He may be giving himself, a member of his family or part of his property.

The vows dealt with in this chapter are voluntary vows. God does not demand these people make such promises. However, once the vow was made, they were expected to keep it.

Deuteronomy 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

What better way to end this book that is full of rules and regulations than to provide a way do something for the Lord on a voluntary basis? Every believer should have a desire to do something for the Lord. Every believer should want to give something to the God who has been so good.

We should give God our best. He deserves more than our leftovers.

These vows could be made for various reasons. It may have been made when the offerer felt especially blessed. It may have been because the person making the vow realized how good God was and wanted to give himself totally to his service. The offerer may have wanted his children to please the Lord and devoted them to his service as a result. The vow have been made in times of distress or danger when the person promised a gift to God if he would deliver him.

The reason for the vow does not really matter. When a vow is made, for whatever reason, God took it seriously.

Chapter 27 reminds us to do be careful what we say or what we promise.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Ecclesiastes 5:5 Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

There were times when someone would make a vow and then change their mind. God knew some would make promises and regret it later. This chapter deals with how God provided a way whereby the person could be released from his promise. He deals with those who made vows but did not keep them.

Once the vow was made, that which was promised to God was considered God's property. God provided a way whereby the person making a vow could redeem (pay for or buy back) that which he had promised. He names the price that should be paid if anyone fails to keep their vow.

Once he did what God required, he was released from the vow. For lack of a better way to word it, God allowed them to exchange what they had promised with something else. By giving money in exchange for

the gift, the person was redeeming the gift and, at least partially, fulfilling his promise.

God is not excusing the one who breaks his promise but he is making it clear that if we make a promise and don't keep it, we will pay in some manner.

Since the promises dealt with in this chapter deal with giving something to the service of the Lord, the payment was given to the priest to be used towards the Lord's work, probably for the expense of the tabernacle.

The priest was to determine the price that had to be paid according to God's directions

Lev. 27:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons *shall be* for the LORD by thy estimation.

#### THE LAW CONCERNING PERSONS PROMISED TO THE LORD vv. 1-8

A worshipper may dedicate himself or a member of his family to the service of the Lord.

This was the type of vow Hannah made concerning Samuel.

1 Samuel 1:27–28 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD....

The value of the person that had been dedicated to God was determined by age and sex. If they were between twenty and sixty years old, the person who made the vow had to pay fifty shekels.

The years between twenty and sixty would be considered to be the strong time of a person's life and would be the most valuable in service for the Lord. For this reason, the amount to be paid was the highest required.

Lev. 27:3 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

If a female was dedicated, thirty shekels should be paid. The price for a female was less probably because she would not be able to do as much physical labor as a man.

Lev. 27:4 And if it *be* a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels.

If the person dedicated was from five to twenty years old, twenty shekels should be paid if it was a male and ten if a female.

Lev. 27:5 And if *it be* from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

If the person dedicated is from one month to five years old, five shekels should be paid for the male and three for the female.

Lev. 27:6 And if *it be* from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation *shall be* three shekels of silver.

If the person dedicated is sixty years old or older, fifteen shekels should be paid for the male and ten for the female.

Lev. 27:7 And if *it be* from sixty years old and above; if *it be* a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

If the one who made the vow was too poor to pay the price given, he was to present himself before the priest and the priest would set the price to be paid.

Lev. 27:8 But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.

#### THE LAW CONCERNING ANIMALS PROMISED TO THE LORD vv. 9-13

Once an animal was promised to the Lord as a sacrifice, it became "holy" and could not be taken back by the offerer. In other words, it had been set apart for the Lord and that could not be reversed.

Lev. 27:9-10 And if *it be* a beast, whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD, all that *any man* giveth of such unto the LORD shall be holy. He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he shall at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy.

It doesn't take too much imagination to see how a person could promise to give his best animal and afterwards regret doing so. God said, once you promise to give it to me, it becomes mine.

They could no longer use the animal as before. It must be sacrificed, assuming it is without blemish.

If the animal is unclean and not worthy to be sacrificed, the value must be determined by the priest. Once the worth is established, that amount must be paid, plus twenty percent.

Lev. 27:11-13 And if *it be* any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the LORD, then he shall present the beast before the priest: And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad: as thou valuest it, *who art* the priest, so shall it be. But if he will at all redeem it, then he shall add a fifth *part* thereof unto thy estimation.

The twenty percent extra was probably intended to prevent someone from making a rash vow.

#### THE LAW CONCERNING HOUSES AND LANDS PROMISED TO THE LORD vv. 14-25

If someone vowed to give their house, the priest was to determine its value. The house would be sold and the money dedicated to the work of the tabernacle.

Lev. 27:14 And when a man shall sanctify his house *to be* holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand.

If the owner changed his mind and decided to not give his house, he was to pay the amount the priest determined it to be worth, plus twenty percent.

Lev. 27:15 And if he that sanctified it will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his.

No one was permitted to vow his entire estate for that would leave his family without an inheritance. If someone vowed a portion of his field and afterward changed his mind, he had to pay for the land. The value of the property was determined by the amount of seed it took to sow the field. The price to be paid was fifty shekels of silver for every homer of barley seed it took to sow the field.

Lev. 27:16 And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD *some part* of a field of his possession, then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver.

The value of the land would also be determined by the number of harvests it would yield before the next Year of Jubilee.

Lev. 27:17 If he sanctify his field from the year of jubile, according to thy estimation it shall stand.

Lev. 27:18 But if he sanctify his field after the jubile, then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubile, and it shall be abated from thy estimation.

If he pays for the land, he must pay twenty percent more than the amount determined by the priest.

Lev. 27:19 And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him.

If the owner sold the property after he promised it to the Lord, he was penalized by losing the land. When the Year of Jubilee came, the land was sold and the money given to the priests for the Lord's work.

Lev. 27:20–21 And if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more. But the field, when it goeth out in the jubile, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted; the possession thereof shall be the priest's.

If someone bought land and wanted to dedicate it to the Lord, he had to pay the amount determined immediately. The land would revert back to its original owner at the Year of Jubilee so he could not totally dedicate it to God.

Lev. 27:22–24 And if *a man* sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which *is* not of the fields of his possession; Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, *even* unto the year of the jubile: and he shall give thine estimation in that day, as a holy thing unto the LORD. In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, *even* to him to whom the possession of the land *did*

*belong.*

The amounts were to be calculated and paid with the shekel of the tabernacle. This type of coinage was the most pure and most valuable.

Lev. 27:25 And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

#### THINGS THAT COULD NOT BE PROMISED BY A VOW vv. 26-34

There were three things that God said could not be included when making a vow.

- The firstlings of beasts

Lev. 27:26 Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD'S firstling, no man shall sanctify it; whether *it be* ox, or sheep: *it is* the LORD'S.

The firstborn of animals were already claimed by the Lord and could not be dedicated by a vow.

An unclean beast could be redeemed by paying what the priest determined the animal was worth, plus twenty percent. In this case, the priest would sell the animal.

Lev. 27:27 And if *it be* of an unclean beast, then he shall redeem *it* according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth *part* of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation.

- Things that had been “devoted”

Lev. 27:28 Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, *both* of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing *is* most holy unto the LORD.

The word “devoted” is the Hebrew word ‘Cherem’. It means “a doomed object”. It has the idea of devoting to destruction.

This was a vow that was made usually during times of war. It dealt with a promise to totally annihilate an enemy if God would give victory over them.

An example of this type of vow is found in the following scriptures.

Numbers 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

This vow was totally irreversible. There were no provisions made to redeem it.

There was to be no mercy given the enemy. They were all to be put to death.

Lev. 27:29 None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; *but* shall surely be put to death.

The value of this vow becomes evident when we remember the spoils of a victory went to the victor. When a nation overcame a city or nation, they went in and took possession of everything. There were times that great wealth was gained by such a victory. The people making this vow were promising to give all that up.

The idea behind this vow was the fact that the enemy had become so ungodly they deserved severe judgment.

An example of such an ungodly people is found in Joshua.

Joshua 6:17 And the city shall be accursed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Achan violated God's instructions when he took some of the “stuff” of the enemy that was supposed to be totally annihilated.

Joshua 7:11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it*

even among their own stuff.

The result of Achan's sin led to the defeat of the people of Israel, Achan's execution, the execution of this family and all he owned being destroyed. Joshua 7:5, 24-26

A similar case is found when King Saul violated God's instructions when God told them to totally destroy all Amalekites.

1 Samuel 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

- Tithes

No one could make a vow or promise that was connected to the tithe because the tithe already belonged to the Lord.

God's people were to give their first tenth to God. The tenth involves more than just their income. They were to give the first tenth of their produce from their fields, of their livestock, and of their income.

Giving the first tenth was recognizing the fact that all they possessed actually belonged to the Lord. By giving the tithe they were acknowledging God to be the owner of the land, the one who provided the fruits and their dependence on him.

Lev. 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land, *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD'S: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

Grain and fruit could be redeemed at the price determined by the priest, plus twenty percent.

Lev. 27:31 And if a man will at all redeem *ought* of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth *part* thereof.

The tithe of livestock was determined by "passing under the rod".

Lev. 27:32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

The term "whatsoever passeth under the rod" refers to the method of choosing the animal to be given as a tithe. The owner would shut the animals in a fold in which there was one narrow gate. He would dip a rod into a red liquid. As the animals passed through the gate, the owner touched every tenth one to mark it for a tithe to be given to the Lord.

This kept the owner from examining the animal and selecting the one he would want to give. They believed God controlled the process.

## CONCLUSION

God ends this book with a statement that summarizes it's content.

Lev. 27:34 These *are* the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai.

As we have walked through the book of Leviticus we have been exposed to many of God's requirements for his people, Israel. We've seen instructions about Israel's sacrifices, diet and social requirements. We must guard against getting bogged down in the legalities of this book. Instead we should see the beauty of how an absolutely holy God wants to fellowship with absolutely unholy mankind.

The regulations made a way whereby they could commune with, serve, and worship the God of the universe.

It would do us well to take from this book the fact of how we can also have a close walk with this God. It should however, make it abundantly clear to us that we don't go to him on our own terms. We go on his terms or we don't go at all.

But, those who are willing to pay the price and obey God's word completely, will be able to walk into the holy of holies and find a God who will astound them.

They will never be the same.

During the process of their journey they will discover, the end was worth the effort.