

Leviticus

Introduction

The author of Leviticus is Moses. In Exodus the place to worship God had been prescribed according to God's instruction. The setting of the Leviticus is the plains beneath Mount Sinai, (Exodus 19:1) the book deals with the question of how the Lord may be present with His people. The Israelites were faced with a twofold question in their relationship with their God Yahweh. Where is the Lord's presence? How could they experience that presence after they had left Mount Sinai? In the book of Exodus the place of worship had been established with the building of the tabernacle. Leviticus addresses the remaining issue, the worshiper. Leviticus is concerned with the Lord's word on how we may dedicate our life to Him.

In the Hebrew language the book of Leviticus was called "wayyigra." These are two Hebrew words placed together, "way" and "yigra." Their meaning is "and" and "he called." This word wayyigra is the first word in the book of Leviticus. When the Hebrew text was translated into the Greek language the name was changed to mean "about the Levites." The title Leviticus comes from the Latin translation and means "about the Levites."

Levi was one of the twelve sons' of Jacob and Levi's family was known as the tribe of Levites. Both Moses and Aaron were Levites. God chose the tribe of Levi to become priest and they worked in the tabernacle and later in the Temple. There were members of the tribe of Levi in every town leading the people in worship of God.

Today the Jewish priest's do not have the same duties as they did in the time of Moses. The importance of the book of Leviticus is not lessened by this fact. Much of what is written in the book of Leviticus points to the life and death of Jesus. The book of Leviticus is important for the new believer in Christ to read.

In the Old Testament animals were sacrificed and burnt upon the altar and God accepted this in order for His people to worship Him. Today for the Christian we still are committed to a life of sacrifice but not that of animals. God provided His Son in our place to provide for our atonement. Because of Jesus' sacrifice and death on the Cross we can today be able through Him to worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

The first 5 books of the Bible tell us about several periods in the life of each person. If that person is a Christian, then the books mean this:

- Genesis ... Sin makes a person into a slave of the devil. Sin is when we do not obey God. Everybody is in this group of people. 'Everybody has sinned'. (Romans 3:23) We sin when we do not obey God's laws. Genesis also tells us about people who tried to obey God, including Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.
- Exodus ... God makes people free. So they are not slaves. They are like the Jews who came out of Egypt. Christians are free. In other words, sin does not still control them like slaves. God makes them free when they first believe in Jesus. They believe that Jesus died to save them from the devil. Now they are not the devil's people. Instead they are God's people. We call this 'conversion'.
- Leviticus ... God wants his people to be friends with him. This is a special type of friendship that we call 'fellowship'. God brought the Jews out of Egypt so that they could have fellowship with him. And God frees Christians from sin so that they can have fellowship with him. This is what God wants very much. Leviticus tells us that we can have fellowship with God. We can have fellowship with God because Jesus died for us! That is why Leviticus is important for Christians.
- Numbers ... God's people look for the Promised Land. For the Jews, it was the country called Israel. For Christians it is Heaven and the New Earth. Heaven is the home of God. We call this the Christian's 'walk' with God. God shows his people the way to go. We often call this 'guidance', because God is guiding his people.
- Deuteronomy ... God's people have reached the Promised Land. They are 'home'! Here are the rules that they must obey while still on this earth. There are no such rules in Heaven.

The Layout of Leviticus

We can divide the Book of Leviticus into 8 sections.

- 1. Rules about the sacrifices. (Leviticus 1:1 to 7:38)
- 2. Rules about how to make a priest. (Leviticus 8:1 to 10:20)
- 3. Rules about what are clean and what is not clean. (Leviticus 11:1 to 15:33)
- 4. The Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:1 to 16:34)
- 5. Rules about religion. (Leviticus 17:1 to 22:33)
- 6. Holy days, weeks and years (Leviticus 23:1 to 25:55)
- 7. Blessings and punishments. (Leviticus 26:1 to 26:46)
- 8. Rules about promises and offerings. (Leviticus 27:1 to 27:34)

The 5 Sacrifices

Name of sacrifice	Where to find it in Leviticus	The purpose of this sacrifice	What the people offered (or gave as a sacrifice)	What they did with it
Whole offering	Leviticus 1:1-17	To make God favorable. To give yourself humbly to God.	A perfect bull, sheep, goat, or birds (called pigeons or doves).	They burned everything.
Grain offering	Leviticus 2:1-16	To thank God and also to make him favorable to the offering. To give your goods and your work to God.	Cake or bread with no salt or yeast (yeast makes bread to rise).	They burned some and the priests ate some.
Peace offering	Leviticus 3:1-17 and 22:18-30	To thank God; to be at peace with God; to be happy with other people; to express love to God. Also, after you have carried out a promise completely.	A perfect male or female animal, whatever you can afford.	They burned the fat; the priests and the one offering ate the rest of the animal.
Sin offering	Leviticus 4:1 to 5:13	To ask God to forgive you when you sinned by accident.	It depended who you were. There were various kinds of sin offerings.	They burned the fat for God; they burned the rest outside the camp

Guilt offering	Leviticus 5:14-19	To ask God to forgive you when you sinned against his holy things, or when you hurt somebody else.	A perfect male sheep.	They burned the fat for God, but the priests ate the rest.
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Chapter 1

The place where this book begins is the meeting tent. It was at the meeting tent that the Lord met with Moses. (Exodus 25:22) In the first two verses of the book of Leviticus is an introduction and explain the whole book of Leviticus. They also introduce the first seven chapters.

The book of Leviticus is linked to Exodus by the use of the word “and,” in the first verse is where Moses received God’s Word. “Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting.” The word “Lord” is used to address God but “Lord” is not His name. God’s name in Hebrew is Yahweh and means “I am.”

In verse two the Israelite people are addressed as “the sons of Israel.” Israel is another name for Jacob who is the grandson of Abraham. The phrase “Sons of Israel” means the Jewish people. Note the phrase “anyone among you may bring an offering.” “When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock.” The word “anyone means one person. The offering is not for the whole nation of Israel. Offering meant that the person wanted to offer something to the Lord. This offering was not something he had to do but something he wanted to do. This person wanted to restore his relationship with the Lord. By means of this sacrifice the person offers himself to the Lord. The Hebrew word for offering is “carban” and is used in Mark 7:11. Here the translation uses the word corban and the word means gift.

The offering of cattle, flock, or herd cost the one offering something. Animals were valuable and a measurement of wealth. It is also symbolic of the sacrifice that God made in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus. The offering could not be the gift of money as the wages of sin is death, (Romans 6:23) the animal had to die. This is an important fact to remember. We can only have a right relationship with God because of the sacrifice of God’s Son.

“If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the

Lord.” In a burnt offering the smell of the sacrifice goes up in the smoke and is pleasing to the Lord. It signifies the thing that the Lord wants most of all, to be at one with His people. This is why the whole offering is mentioned first in the book of Leviticus. The Hebrew translation for “whole offering,” which is in some translations “burnt offering” is “olah” and means something that goes up, as the smoke going up to the Lord. The important word of this verse is accepted, as God really wants fellowship with His people. The offering is not about sin but about the sinner who wants to restore his relationship with God. The sinner gives himself to God and therefore is offering himself. The Christian can only have this relationship because Jesus offered Himself. Jesus is our carban/corban, “gift”

When we disobey God’s Word we are a part from Him. When our relationship is broken by our sin we need to make atonement. Atonement means that we are at one with God. When we receive His forgiveness our relationship is restored and we are one with God. By the one seeking redemption through animal sacrifice placing his hand on the head of the animal, he became at one with the animal. He may have during the sacrifice recited Psalm 40, 51 or 66 and the priest may have replied with parts of Psalm 20 or 50. The one seeking atonement wants a whole relationship with the Lord and therefore offers a whole offering.

The importance of the sacrifice is the blood. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4) Christians know that the blood of animals cannot bring atonement for mans sin. It is only the perfect blood of Jesus that can take away the sin that is part of the human nature. Through the death of Jesus God gives us everlasting life. In the Old Testament God recognized the sacrifice of animals as a way to restore mans relationship with Him. The blood was an important part of the ritual and the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar. The priest gave the blood of the animal instead of the sinner’s blood. The Hebrew word for bull meant “son of the herd. That may mean bull but it also could mean young bull.

The skin of the sacrifice must not be burnt on the altar. The one making the sacrifice would remove the skin and later the priest and Levites removed the skin. (2 Chronicles 29:34) Perhaps this was because so many people were offering sacrifices and the skins became the property of the priest.

The priest made the first fire and maintained it. Because there were so many sacrifices sometimes the priest would have to make many fires on the altar. (1 Kings 8:64) The head and the fat of the animal belonged to God only. The priest and the one making the offering never ate the fat.

The one offering the sacrifice had to clean the animal with water. It would not have been right to make the altar dirty with what was in the animal. The word for burn in Hebrew

means to make into smoke. It is the smoke that pleases the Lord. Because the smell is pleasant to the Lord we call this sacrifice a good smell sacrifice. The first three sacrifices in Leviticus are good smell sacrifices.

An animal from the flock is usually a sheep or a goat. As with an offering from the herd it must be an animal that the sinner wants to give to the Lord. It may be that goats were included because of the scapegoat in Leviticus chapter sixteen. Unlike a bull from the herd the hand does not lean on the head. But the one making the sacrifice must kill the animal. He then cuts the animal into pieces and the priest puts the pieces on the altar.

Again the smell of the smoke is pleasing to the Lord and therefore it is a good smell sacrifice. Birds were allowed as a sacrifice because not everyone could afford a bull or lamb or goat. The rules do not change and the bird must be a perfect male. In the case of birds the priest does everything. He kills the bird and pulls off the head. He then pours out its blood and burns the body.

The whole offering means that the person making the sacrifice offers his whole self to God. God gives that person a humble attitude so that they will please God. Read Micah 6:6-8 and Romans 12:1-2.

There are three characters in this chapter, the person offering the sacrifice, the sacrifice, and the priest. In the days of Moses they were all different. For the Christian they are all the same and they all point to Jesus. Jesus was the person offering the sacrifice. They did not kill Jesus. He offered himself so that they could kill him. (John 10:18) Jesus was the offering. This was the body that God had prepared for Jesus. He offered his body to live for us and to die for us. (Psalm 40:6-8 Hebrews 10:5-9) Jesus was the priest. Jesus was a special priest. He was not a Levite. He was 'after the type of Melchizedek'. (Hebrews 5:10)

There are several offerings and they all point to Jesus. A bull (male cow) was a strong animal. Jesus was strong and he worked hard with people. (Psalm 144:14 Mark 1:35-38 3:20 Mark 6:30-45) Sheep or goats did not complain when they suffered. Jesus did not complain when he suffered. (Isaiah 53:7 1 Peter 2:23) Pigeons or doves make a noise that sounds like people who are very sad. Doves do nothing that is wrong. (That is, they are gentle birds.) (Isaiah 38:14 Isaiah 59:11 Mark 10:16)

Chapter 2

The grain offering, as the whole offering was a good smell offering which produced a pleasing odor in the smoke which went up to the Lord, the grain offering was not for the purpose of sin but for fellowship with the Lord. The word for offering in Hebrew is corban and means gift. In later time in Israel the offering could be of any non-animal type of vegetable. In the earlier times the offering was a sacrifice of a meal, hence the term grain

offering. The grain offering was not an obligatory sacrifice but one that was to make willingly. Also there was no specified time for the offering as it was committed by free will to express thankfulness by the sacrifice of a portion of the abundance the Lord had provided.

As was common in the Old Testament leaven was prohibited from the offering, as well as honey because of the fermentation of fruit and honey. Through neither leaven or fruit-honey could be burnt on the altar, both could be brought as an offering to be consumed by the priest.

In ancient times salt was a very valuable commodity and the requirement for salt to be included in the grain offering was a specific reference to “the salt of the covenant.” Covenants were sealed with salt. This practice is not widely documented in the Old Testament; there are traces of covenant ceremony sealed with salt described in Exodus as “pure and holy.” (Exodus 30:35 Numbers 18:9 2 Chronicles 13:5 Ezra 4:14) The need for salt is further implied in the items provided the priest of the post exilic era. (Ezra 6:9) Leaven symbolized what was not acceptable to God and salt symbolized what made offerings acceptable to Him. Salt symbolized both friendship and communion shedding light on the characterization of Jesus’ disciples as “the salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13)

There are 4 things in a grain offering: flour, oil, incense and salt. As in the whole offering, Jesus is again the offering here instead of Christians. Find how Jesus was like these 4 things. In some passages, Jesus just speaks about these 4 things.

flour	People broke the corn to make flour.	Matthew 15:37 1 Corinthians 11:24
oil	Oil represents (is a word picture of the Holy Spirit.)	Mark 1:10 Luke 4:14
incense	Its smell pleases God.	2 Corinthians 2:15 Ephesians 5:2
salt	It makes things pure.	Matthew 5:13 Mark 9:49

Chapter 3

The last of the fundamental offerings prescribed for the worshiper is the “Peace offering.” Like the first to this offering is also a smell good offering. The Peace offering refers to the

wholeness of community created through sacrifice. A portion of the sacrifice was used for a communal meal, shared by one family and friends. This was a time of joy and celebration focusing on the wholeness of relationships. It is appropriate to see this meal as a confirmation of the bonds that related one to the Lord.

Beyond the words of early Israelite culture, God's commanding word still comes. It does not demand that one respond according to the cultic practices of ancient Israel. But it comes as a Word beyond the words of that culture to affirm the propriety of dedication through the complete giving of self to God, (burnt offering) the spontaneous celebration of God's goodness through the common events of life, (grain offering) and the joyous affirmation of the community which one experiences with both God and persons in the covenant. (Peace offering)

Chapter 4

The Sin Offering

Chapters 4 through 6:7 deal with seven categories of offences requiring Sin and Guilt offerings. In Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27 the sin offering is specified while the guilt offering is demanded in Leviticus 5:14, 17, and Leviticus 6:1. The terminology for these offerings is ambiguous and used synonymously so we must discover the distinction between these two sacrifices. The question becomes what is the difference between the sin and guilt offering in Leviticus 4:1 to 6:7? This question is explained in several ways but let us look at two of them with most agreeing with the second explanation.

- The sin offering refers to original sin. The guilt offering refers to actual sin. When we are born, we all have original sin. It is a result of Adam's original sin in Genesis chapter 3. So, we sin without thought about what we are doing. We sin 'by accident'. We may not even realize that we have not obeyed God's commands. Actual sin is when we choose to sin. We know that we are doing something wrong. The guilt offering in Leviticus 5:14 to 6:7 are for actual sin. The sin offering in chapter 4:1 to 5:13 is for original sin. Notice that the offerings in Leviticus chapters 1, 2 and 3 are not about sin. They bring the person making the sacrifice into fellowship with God. As a result, he or she is able to worship God. But if that person worries about sin, these two offerings in Leviticus chapters 4, 5 and 6 will comfort him or her. (From 'The Law of the Offerings', by Andrew Jukes.)
- Another way to understand it is this. The sin offering is for something that does not hurt people. But the guilt offering is different. It is for sins that have hurt people. This is true even if the sinner did not intend to hurt people. So the guilt offering includes money to pay to the person that the sinner has hurt. (From Bible Commentary by Fausset.)

Beginning in verse 2 the last part of the verse is a sentence without an end. We could translate it as: 'If anyone sins by accident, and does not obey the LORD's commands ...' Then, from verse 3, there are several sections. Each says what various sinners must do. These sinners include:

- ✓ The chief priest, verses 3-12.
- ✓ All the Israelites, verses 13-21.
- ✓ A leader of the people, verses 22-26.
- ✓ One person among the people, verses 27-35 and 5:1-13.

In Leviticus 4:27, 5:1, 5:15, 5:17, and 6:2 the Hebrew translation for the word anyone means soul. The soul is the part of us that lives within us and lives on after the body has died. This truth emphasizes the importance of sin.

The chief priest in verses 3-12 explain if the he should sin by accident must be done. The chief priest was the leader of the Jewish people and if he sinned it would have an effect on every one of the people in the nation. It may be the chief priest had done something in the wrong way unintentionally in the meeting tent. If he committed this act intentionally the punishment was death. We do not know how the chief priest would know how he had sinned in the meeting tent. Perhaps he would read of his error in God's Word or God would show him that he had sinned. Or, perhaps, troubles would occur across the nation such as a poor harvest which would affect the whole nation.

The Hebrew word for 'chief priest' really means 'anointed priest'. Ellicott's Bible Commentary says that the Jews only anointed chief priests. This was probably true when Moses was alive. They anointed people when they poured olive oil onto them. So we have translated 'anointed priest' as 'chief priest'. The Hebrew word for 'anointed' is 'messiahed'. The word 'messiah' is a translation of Christ. That is interesting, because Hebrews 8:26-27 describes Jesus as the ideal Chief Priest. And Hebrews 4:15 says that He was without any sin.

The chief priest had to sprinkle the blood of the bull on the altar of incense and various other places. We must remember that the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) something or someone had to die for that wage, in this case the bull had died instead of the chief priest.

If the chief priest sinned, even by accident, it was a serious matter as it made the tent of meeting unclean. If the tent of meeting was unclean then God could not meet His priest there and the people could not receive forgiveness for their sins.

Also notice that apart from the kidneys, liver, and the fat of the bull, they burned the rest of the animal outside the camp. It was considered unclean until the fire had burnt it

completely. In Hebrews 13:11-13 we learn that Jesus died outside of the camp. Jerusalem was the camp and Calvary where Jesus died was outside of the camp.

If a leader of the people sins he shall make an offer of sacrifice and must press his hand on the head of the goat. By doing this he transfers his sin to the goat. This also reminds us that God transferred our sin to Jesus on the cross.

When the leader becomes aware of his sin it probably means that someone told him of his sin. Here there are differences from the offerings in verses 1-21.

- The offering is a goat.
- One of the priests offers the goat, not the chief priest.
- The priest puts the blood on the horns of the other altar. This is not the one inside the meeting tent, as in verses 1-21. It is the one that is outside it.
- The priest does not burn the animal outside the camp. Bible commentators say that he probably ate its meat himself. It was part of his wages.

The priest burned the fat in the same way of a peace offering.

In Romans we learn that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) We are all born with a sin nature which we inherited from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Since then man has naturally disobeyed God's law. This is a serious matter. Because of this all people have sinned. The rules for a sin offering for the ordinary people when they sin by accident are much like those of a leader except for these differences.

- ✓ A leader must offer a male animal. But a member of the public gives a female animal.
- ✓ A leader must offer a goat. But a member of the public may offer a lamb instead.

These differences are probably because a leader is responsible for other people. So his sin affects other people too. (James 3:1)

Chapter 5

The first verse of this chapter has some commentators unsure of its full meaning. We will explore one possibility of explanation. In a court of law a judge has ordered for all witnesses to give testimony. When a person who is a witness withholds his testimony he is then guilty of sin. It may be that he is unaware of his sin not knowing the importance of his testimony. Still that person is guilty because he did not speak the whole truth or at the least twisted the truth. The Lord will accept a sin offering on his behalf.

In verses two the word "unclean" represents anything that separates us from God. The use of the word here is a religious word and its meaning is not that the body is dirty. There

are questions as to why some animals make a person unclean. Neither is it normally a sin if a person becomes unclean. But it is a sin for an unclean person to join in public worship. A person who joins in public worship who is unclean may not be aware that he is unclean but still it is a sin for him to do so. Like the previous unawareness God is willing to accept a sin offering on his behalf.

Verse three again is a puzzle for commentators to fully understand. In other parts of the Bible this fault does not make a person guilty. There are also other rules that make the person clean again. They may be more here in this verse that we can understand. This may also be related to verses one and two in that the person is unaware of his uncleanness. In the case like the preceding verses God is willing to accept a sin offering.

If a person makes an oath thoughtlessly or without thinking the promise through he has committed a sin. Today we may call this a rash promise. The person has promised to do something and then did not fulfill that commitment. This is a sin in the eyes of the Lord. Once one has realized what he has done God is willing to accept a sin offering.

For the sins of verses one through four the sinner must make confession of his sin towards God in public. By doing this he gives God the honor and humbly admits that God is right.

To make atonement means to become clean again, to restore the relationship with God. Doves and pigeons are similar birds. Often these birds are kept as tame birds. The dove is often used in the bible to be a symbol of the Holy Spirit. However in these verses this is not the case. Instead they point to Jesus who offered Himself for our sins. If a person cannot afford a dove or pigeon he can make an offering of flour. There can be no oil or incense in the flour as this would not be a good smell offering. One tenth of an ephah is about 8 cups full of flour. The portion that is not burnt on the altar the priest can keep. This may be his portion as a wage although Leviticus does not say this.

The Guilt Offering

In verse fifteen the wrong things a person might do may have included the following.

- Bad offerings.
- No offerings.

Part of the wages for the priest was the offerings the people made. People who were unfaithful in their sacrifices and offerings may have also hurt the priest. So this is a guilt offering because it is an actual sin. It is a sin that shows a lack of respect towards God. The word for “value” in Hebrew means “your value.” This may mean that the priest decided the value of the sin committed. A Hebrew shekel at this time weighed about 0.4 of an ounce (12 grams). It is important to take note of the proper value of sin, or the cost. The cost of sin does have value and it matters to God. That is why the priest must check the weight. He must test it against the weight of the shekel in the holy place.

Commentators have given us examples of some of the sinful deeds that people may have done that this passage refers to.

- ✓ A person might not give something that he promised to give to God (Ecclesiastes 5:6).
- ✓ A person might eat the first fruits from his harvest, which belong to God (Exodus 34:26).
- ✓ A person might cut the wool from a first-born sheep (Deuteronomy 15:19).

The cost of a person's sin must be repaid. Restitution was required for the offence. The sinner would have to give one fifth of the value of his sin.

Again in verse sixteen the word "value" means "your value." As before this value is determined by the priest. There is a difference between the LORD's things and his commands. In verse 15, the person took something that belonged to the LORD. In verse 18, he did not. Also, the person or the priest may not know that he has sinned. In verse 15, the priest knows, even if the sinner does not!

Chapter 6

All the sins in verses 2-3 are against people. But they are also against the LORD, because the people are the LORD's people. If we steal from other people, we are in fact stealing from the LORD. He must do everything before he brings his ram to the priest. (Matthew 5:23-24) The priest must decide how valuable it must be as in 5:15. So the sinner must return what he took wrongly. Also, he must bring the ram as a punishment.

A person may sin against the Lord and not be loyal to the Lord in any of these ways.

- ✓ He may lie to his neighbor about something that (his neighbor) gave him to look after.
- ✓ (He may lie to his neighbor) about something that he stole.
- ✓ He may cheat (his neighbor).
- ✓ He may find property that somebody lost. Then he lies about it.
- ✓ He may promise something (to somebody), but he does not intend to do it.
- ✓ He may do any of the sins that people often do.

The rules from Leviticus 1:1 to 6:7 are for the worshiper. There are further rules listed here for the priests. They were the men who worked near and in the meeting tent. Later, they worked in the House of God in Jerusalem. This house had the same things in it as the meeting tent. Three important rules are listed below.

- The fire on the altar must burn all night, verse 9. In fact, it must never go out, verse 13. This rule would continuously remind the Israelites of the importance of the

sacrifices. They carried out these sacrifices because of God's great kindness. He would forgive people because of the sacrifices. He would have fellowship with them because of the sacrifices.

- The priest must wear linen clothes to take the ashes from the whole offering away from the altar. This includes clothes next to his body, what we now call underclothes. People make linen clothes from a plant called flax. But the priest must put on other clothes to take the ashes outside the camp.
- He must burn the fat of the peace offering on top of the whole offering, verse 12. This would make the whole offering easier to burn. The passage does not explain the reason for this rule. But it seems right that the peace offering should be close to the whole offering. People gave whole offerings in order to offer the whole of them to God. And the peace offering was evidence that God had accepted their offering. Now they could have fellowship with God.

This whole offering was probably the one in Exodus 29:38-42. The priest would make this offering in the morning and in the evening for all the people. This was an additional offering from that the people gave in Leviticus Chapter one. They would probably give their own whole offerings on special occasions, for example, birthdays. (Job 1:4-5)

In verses 14-23 we are given further rules for the grain offering. The priest burned a portion of the offering on the altar and the rest was for them and their descendants. Jews discussed the last sentence of verse 18 for many years after. (Haggai 2:12)

Verses 19-23 discuss the grain offering for the priest. We have not read about this before, as it is different than the regular grain offering. Nobody is to eat this offering as the priest is to burn the whole offering. The chief priest made this offering on the first day of his service which is also the day that he is anointed. It appears the chief priest made a grain offering on each day after but the regular priest only made the offering on their first day of service. The priests were anointed with oil which came from the olive. If one became a King or a priest, he was anointed with oil.

In verses 24-30 we have further rules for the sin offering. In verses 25 the word "Holy" does not mean very, very good. The meaning is that it now belongs to the Lord. The place in the Jewish religion, the meeting tent (tabernacle), had a yard around it and that was called the Holy Place.

Two types of sin offering are distinguished in this passage. The priest must not eat the sin offering that are for the atonement of the holy place. The priest did eat other sin offerings, although they are very, very holy. These were probably the sin offerings that the priest offered for all the Israelites. These offerings were eaten by the priest to show that God had accepted them and he was allowing them to have fellowship with Him.

Chapter 7

Verses 1-6 give a few further rules for the guilt offering. This passage tells us what the priest must do with the ram. All the fat must be offered up to the Lord. This is similar to the rule for the sin offering and the peace offering. We also learn what the priests are to do after they have burned the fat, liver, and kidneys. The men in the priest families could then eat the meat.

Verses 7-10 tell us the parts of the offering that belong to the priest. From each offering the priest are allowed to have a part. From the whole offering they receive the leather. God provides for His priest. The offerings become their meat, their bread, and even their clothes.

The one making the sacrifice knew that the priest was accepting the offer on God's behalf. This was clear because the priest took the proper parts for themselves. The priests also know that God approved because He was sharing the gift of the offering with them.

Peace Offering

In verses 11-21 we have further rules for the peace offering. A cow, bull, ram, sheep or goat is used for the peace offering. The peace offering may be a sacrifice to say thanks to the Lord. The one making the offering must also give an offering of cakes, bread and biscuits. The one making the sacrifice receives back the meat from the peace offering. He then can eat it with his family and friends but it must all be consumed in that same day. There is an exception, he can eat some of the meat on the second day but must burn what is left before the third day. This may be for health reasons but there is a more serious meaning also. If they eat any of the meat on the third day then God will not accept any of the offering. God will only accept fresh meat and so we must offer our thanks to him for His daily kindness. (Limitations 3:22-23)

In verse 19-21 the word unclean means this. The unclean person cannot come near to the meeting tent. 'Cut off' means that the LORD would punish a person if he came unclean near the tent of meeting.

Rules about Blood, and Rules for the Priests

There are uses for fat which include use in medicines, bandages, candles, and as oil. People could also use it to start fires.

Only the animals that the Jews used for sacrifices (cattle, sheep and goats) were animals that the people could not eat the fat. The fat belonged to the Lord. The Jews could eat the fat from other clean animals. Blood is important. Life is in blood, Leviticus 17:11, and life belongs to God.

The breast is the front part of the animal and this part of the animal belonged to the priest. A recent Jewish Rabbi has described the wave offering. One waves the meat up and

down and left and right. For a Jew, this reminds him that everything in heaven and earth belongs to God. He waves the meat to give it to God. But God gives that meat to the priest. The Jewish people believed that people thought and loved with the heart. The breast being close to the heart meant that the gift of the breast was an expression of love. In time wicked priest came along and did not obey this rule. (1 Samuel 2:12-14) These priests had no love for the people that they served.

Chapter 8

God told Moses to appoint Aaron his brother and his descendants as priest for the Israelite people. God told Moses how he should appoint Aaron. Here in chapter eight Moses is following the instructions given in the book of Exodus. Everything in this ceremony is important. The priests were given authority to act on both God and the Israelites behalf. Without the priest there could be no sacrifices. The table below shows what happened at the ceremony.

What happened?	Why?
The Israelites gathered at the meeting tent.	God wanted them to see that he had appointed Aaron and his sons to be their priests.
Moses washed Aaron and his sons. (They probably bathed their whole bodies.)	This part of the ceremony was to show that they had to be clean (free) from sin.
Moses put splendid clothes on Aaron.	These splendid clothes showed that he was the chief priest. God had separated him to carry out holy duties.
Moses poured oil on Aaron.	Oil is a word picture of the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit came on Aaron, to give Aaron the power to do his work.
Moses put clothes on Aaron's sons.	These were also special clothes. These clothes showed that they too were priests. But they were not the chief priest.
Moses offered the bull as a sin offering.	It was necessary to deal with the priests' sins before they could deal with other people's sins.

Moses offered the first ram as a whole offering.	This showed that the priests had to give themselves completely to God for his service.
Moses offered the second ram.	This was a special sacrifice for the ordination.
Moses put blood on the priests' right ears, hands and feet.	This showed that they must obey God. They must obey what he tells them. They must do what he says. And they must go where he sends them.
Moses splashed oil and blood onto the priests and their clothes.	This showed that they and their clothes were only holy because of sacrifice.
They had to repeat the ceremonies for 7 days.	At the end of the week, they would be ready to begin their work as priests.

In Exodus 28:4 we can find a list of the special garments that the priests were to wear. They were called holy garments in Exodus 28:2. The garments being holy meant that the priest could only use them when in the tent of meeting and only the chief priest could wear them. Their meaning was not that the priest was special but that God was special. The chief priest was anointed with olive oil and the oil was poured on him. The oil had special mixtures in it. (Exodus 30:22-33) These materials included the substances called myrrh, sweet calamus, sweet cinnamon and cassia. They all came from plants and they gave a special smell to the oil.

Moses had all the people gather for this special occasion of anointing the chief priest; he wanted all to be a witness that God had appointed Aaron and his sons to be the priests. It was a public ceremony because the priest served everybody. Some commentators say that Moses only washed the hands and feet of Aaron and his sons. (Exodus 30:19-21) Other bible commentators believe that Moses washed their whole bodies on this occasion. (Leviticus 16:4) Normally before the priests would serve God they would just wash the hands and feet. Jesus seems to refer to this in John 13:10.

The ephod was a short coat, which fitted round the chief priest's body. It fastened over the shoulders. The chief priest wore the ephod under the breastpiece. (Exodus 28:6-8) The upper body of the priest is where the breastplate was worn. The breastplate contained the Urim and Thummim. The words Urim and Thummim mean light and perfection. The Urim and Thummim helped the chief priest to know God's purposes, as in 1 Samuel 14:4. The priest could use the Urim and Thummim to determine God's will in

a particular situation. We read in Exodus 28:30, "Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord."

The gold plate had words on it. They said, "Holy to the LORD" (Exodus 28:36). This did not mean that the chief priest's special clothes were very, very good. It meant that the chief priest took the people's sin on himself (Exodus 28:38). That was why he alone could go into the most holy place.

In Exodus 30:22-29 and Exodus 40:9-11 Moses is told to anoint the tabernacle and everything that was in it. "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy." You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, and the altar shall be most holy. "You shall anoint the laver and its stand, and consecrate it.

Aaron was now wearing clothes that were beautiful and impressive. But the ceremony to appoint him was not complete. He needed to receive the oil before he would be the chief priest. In the Bible, oil is often a word picture for the Holy Spirit. Here, the Holy Spirit is separating Aaron for his special work for God. As the chief priest, he alone will be able to enter the most holy place. Moses did not anoint the sons of Aaron.

Aaron and his sons had to make a sin offering. Since Adam all are guilty of sin, (Romans 3:10-19) Therefore, the priests and even Aaron the chief priest needed to make a sacrifice for a sin offering.

On the altar there are four horns which pointed upward towards God in Heaven. As we have stated before that everything in the meeting tent had to be clean so Moses also had to make atonement for the altar.

Aaron and his sons were ordained. To be ordained means to appoint someone to be a priest or minister for service to the Lord. In verse 22 the ordination of Aaron and his sons is described.

Moses now puts blood on three parts of the priest's body.

- The priest's ear: he must always listen to what God is saying to him.
- The priest's hand: he must always do what God wants him to do.
- The priest's foot: he must always go where God tells him to go.

All Christians are priest, as we learn from 1 Peter 2:9. All Christians must use their ears, hands, and feet for Jesus. Notice also that the blood touches the priests and the altar. This links the priests with their job, which is to help people to come to know God through Jesus.

After the ordination service, Moses who had been the Chief Priest was no longer so, Aaron was now the Chief Priest. For the next seven days these offerings had to be repeated. Aaron and his sons during this time could not leave the meeting tent or they would become unclean. The ordination of the priests is a very serious matter, as God is holy and separate from man, so too His priests had to be separate from man, they had to be consecrated.

Chapter 9

After the seven days of ordination Aaron is now the Chief Priest. Now Moses, on God's behalf, gives Aaron instructions. The leaders that were gathered were the elders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Aaron had four sons whose names were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. (1 Chronicles 6:3)

Even though they had not yet left the meeting tent they had to offer a sin offering. Aaron, the Chief Priest, had to offer a sin offering for himself on all public occasions. The Israelite people must also offer a sin offering as well as the other offerings. These sacrifices would take the place of their sin. This was in preparation for the event that would happen in verse 23; God's glory would appear to all the Israelites.

Sometimes the Lord would appear as a bright cloud. This happened in many places in the Bible including Exodus 33:9, Numbers 16:42, Matthew 17:5. On the occasion in verse 23 we know that the Israelites also saw fire from Heaven. We read this in verse 24. But all saw God's Glory.

The instructions that Moses gave were the word of God. Some believe that words are not always important but the Word of God is always significant. God does not waste words. For the Christian the Word is the name for Jesus. (John 1:1) Here, 'the word' means the command that the LORD had given to the Israelites.

Moses and Aaron blessed the people when they came out of the meeting tent and the blessing they gave probably can be found in Numbers 6:24-26. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace."

God's Glory probably appeared as it had in Exodus 40:34. Here, the glory appeared to show that the priests had authority from God to do their work. The fire which came down from Heaven burned all that which had not been burnt on the altar. Here, it showed that God had given authority to Aaron's family to be the priests. He approved of them and he accepted their sacrifices. Another similar place where fire came from God was Acts 2:3. As God's chief priest, Jesus had offered his own blood to God (Hebrews 9:12). And God accepted Jesus' sacrifice. So then, God showed his glory to the first Christians. Fire came down and it rested on each of them.

There are two important things to notice here in what is happening.

- ✓ Both Aaron and the people offer whole and sin offerings. The sin offering is for atonement. This means that God will forgive their sin. The whole offering is for fellowship. It means that Aaron and the people can come near to God as his friends.
- ✓ When Aaron and the people obey the rules for the offerings, the glory of the LORD appears. Christians offer Jesus as their offering. And when they obey him, the glory of the LORD appears in their lives.

Chapter 10

The two older sons of Aaron were Nadab and Abihu. A censer was a flat pan that carried fire. What they did was not legal. It was wrong, for several possible reasons.

- ✓ They should have put fire into the *censers from the altar, Leviticus 16:12. But perhaps they did not take their fire from the altar.
- ✓ Perhaps they tried to enter the most holy place. Only the chief priest could do this. He could only do it once a year on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus chapter 16.
- ✓ Perhaps they decided to do this in order to oppose Moses and Aaron. Perhaps Nadab and Abihu thought that they themselves should be the chief priests.
- ✓ Perhaps Nadab and Abihu had drunk too much wine. So the LORD gave Aaron another rule in verse 9.

Other people in the Bible had died in similar manner which may help us to understand. (Numbers 16) The people in this instance had decided to oppose the Lord. They had been warned by Moses about the severity of their actions. But they still decided to approach the meeting tent, with fire in their censers that God would not accept. Fire came from the LORD and it killed 250 men (Numbers 16:35). Opposing God's work on purpose can be very dangerous and Moses had warned Nadab and Abihu that they must obey God. (Leviticus 8:35) What Nadab and Abihu had done opposed the work of God in His meeting tent and this is why their punishment was so severe. Numbers 15:30-31 clearly tells us that anyone who does not obey the Word of God shall be cut off from the people. What Nadab and Abihu did was not an accident. They sinned on purpose. Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 4:17 that judgment begins among God's people.

Aaron remained silent in order to give honor to God. Aaron knew that the judgments of God were just. As shocked as Aaron must have been to see his oldest sons die that way his love for God was more important than his love for his sons. Aaron's cousins took the bodies of Nadab and Abihu to bury them, as Aaron being the Chief Priest could not touch a dead body.

Not to make hair untidy meant not to let it hang down loose untied. People would untie their hair when they are in mourning. They also tore their clothes. The priests were to stay near the meeting tent; if they went away they would become unclean. The work of the priest was more important than their personal feelings. Matthew 26:39 tells us that Jesus did the same. His work was more important than his feelings.

It would be understandable to think that Aaron would have thought after the deaths of Nadab and Abihu it would be impossible to be a Chief Priest. God is holy, and people are unholy. Already two of his sons were dead and it might have seemed that his whole family would die. If Aaron was thinking such thoughts these words of God would have brought him some comfort. Aaron’s descendants would continue to be priests according to the words of God. It would be important for them to learn to separate holy and unholy things. It would be the responsibility of Aaron’s descendants to teach the Israelite nation these things.

Many Bible commentators believe that alcohol was part of the reason for the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. Water was only a healthy drink if the water was pure so drinks with alcohol in that day were safer.

In Leviticus chapters 11 to 15 we are told what is clean and what is unclean. It was the priest’s job to tell the people what was clean and what was not. It is the job of Christians today to teach people what is clean and what is unclean, what is right and what is wrong.

However, on this day, God had clearly not accepted the sin offering that Aaron’s 4 sons had made. The deaths of Nadab and Abihu proved that. So it would be wrong for Eleazar and Ithamar to eat an offering that God did not accept. That was why they had to burn the sin offering. This explanation satisfied Moses.

These verses tell us what priests should do. Remember, all Christians are priests.

Revelation 1:6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.	We are to be His Kingdom
Exodus 29:44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me.	We are to be consecrated ministers
1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said, “Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the	We are to obey God's Word

Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.	
Romans 12:1-2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.	Are bodies are a consecrated living and holy sacrifice
Ephesians 5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.	We are to be holy and blameless
1 Peter 1:15-16 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."	We are to be holy because He is holy

Chapter 11:1 to 15:33

Rules about what is clean and what is unclean

- ✓ The most important idea in Leviticus is holiness. This means two things. If you have 'holiness', you are very, very good. Really, only God is holy. That is, only God is perfect; only God has no sin. But he says that his people are holy too. They become holy because they belong to him. And he is changing their lives.
- ✓ Because his people are holy, they must be separate for him. In chapters 11 to 15, we find rules that make God's people separate from other people. There are several groups of rules in these chapters.
- ✓ Chapter 11 tells us what food is clean or unclean. Remember, unclean does not mean dirty in Leviticus. God's law did not allow the Israelites to eat the meat from any unclean animals.
- ✓ Chapter 12 tells us about women who have a baby. They are unclean after the baby's birth. This does not of course mean that they were dirty. It means that they cannot go to the House of God.

- ✓ Chapters 13 and 14 tell us about various diseases of the skin. These diseases make people unclean. Here, ‘unclean’ means that they could not live with the other people in the Israelites’ camp.
- ✓ Chapter 15 tells us about liquids from the body that made the Israelites unclean.

Chapter 11

In Leviticus 10:10 God told Aaron that he must learn what is holy and what is not, what is clean and what is unclean. As God had chosen the Israelites to be a separate people, God also separated the animals to be clean and unclean. In Genesis 7:2 the Israelites already had an idea what was clean and what was unclean. Soon the Israelites would be entering the Promised Land, but the Promised Land was not perfect. The Promised Land was not Heaven and it was not like the Garden of Eden. In the Promised Land there were both clean and unclean. God told the Jewish nation they must not eat the unclean animals.

There were all kinds of clean animals which provided good food for the Israelites to eat. The unclean animals may have seemed good too for food but God told them not to eat them. The Israelites had to trust that God’s decision was right. We do not know why some of the animals were clean and some were not, but we can see some of the reasons.

- Some unclean animals are actually dirty.
- Some unclean animals seem to behave in a cruel manner. So they did not behave as the Israelites should behave.
- Some unclean animals eat food that was unclean for the Israelites. For example, those animals eat meat that comes from unclean animals.
- Some unclean animals do not provide a healthy meat.
- Some unclean animals are especially close to the ground when they walk.

By following these rules the Israelites learned not to only please themselves. They could not eat whatever they wanted to eat. They must always trust and obey God for what was right for them to eat.

Here is a description of each of these birds. We cannot be sure what all these birds actually are in verses 8-19.

Name of bird	Description
vultures, ravens	birds that eat dead animals
eagles, kites, hawks	birds that catch and eat smaller birds
osprey	an eagle that catches and eats fish

owls	birds that catch and eat small animals at night
cormorant, heron, stork	birds that live near water; they catch and eat fish and small animals
hoopoe	a bird that made its nest in dirty places
gull	a bird that lives near the sea

Locusts are important in several places in the Bible, including:

- Exodus 10:12-19. They started the 8th plague. The 10 plagues were the bad things that happened to the King of Egypt and to his people.
- Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6. They were part of the food that John (called the Baptist) ate.

Verses 29-40 You can read something below about each animal.

Name of animal	Description
weasel	like a very big and long rat
rat	like a very big mouse
great lizard	an animal that can live in water or on the land; lizards have skins that shine
gecko	a lizard that makes a low sound
monitor lizard	a lizard up to 4 feet long
wall lizard	a type of lizard
skink	another type of lizard
chameleon	a lizard that can change its color

God's people must be holy. The word 'holy' is in Leviticus over 50 times. It is holiness (or 'the quality that a holy person has') that makes God's people different from other people.

Chapter 12

Bible commentators do not agree on why a woman is unclean after giving birth to a new born child. These may be two main explanations to the question.

- ✓ The woman is unclean because she bled during the birth. She is also unclean each month during the period when she bleeds (15:19). So, she is unclean because of the blood.
- ✓ The woman is unclean because of original sin, which affects her baby too. Because of the birth of her baby, sin continues in the world. Of course, the birth of her baby should be good news. But the fact that sin affects even her new baby is very sad.

The birth of a new born child is an important occasion for the mother and father. Because the birth of a child has made the women to become unclean she would become especially aware of holiness. The mother would think about how God wants her to bring up the new child. The mother has a special responsibility to teach the child about God.

People circumcise a boy by cutting away a piece of skin that only boys and men have. This is a way of showing that they believe in the promises that God gave to Abraham. Circumcise is also a symbol of cutting away the flesh which is sinful. However, many people do it because of tradition, not because they believe.

After forty days the woman becomes clean again. The number forty is an important number in the Bible. For the woman to become clean she must offer the sacrifices in verses 6 to 8.

The following verses have the number forty in them. Study these verses. After forty days something new happened.

Genesis 7:9-12 1 Samuel 17:16 1 Kings 19:8 Matthew 4:2 Deuteronomy 2:7 Deuteronomy 8:2

Chapter 13

This next section of Leviticus is about skin diseases. The priests said there were 72 different kinds of bad skin disorders. Today we are not sure what the modern names for these skin disorders are. There are many skin cancers, as well as other skin diseases. Some modern writers call them all leprosy. This comes from the Greek word lepros which defines the skin as becoming rough. Being not sure what the skin diseases are in verses 13:1-46 we have not given them medical names.

In the text the wording suggest that the one with the disease is a man, but women can also become infected. An unclean person, one who has a skin disease could not go into

'God's house, the tabernacle later the Temple. The priests determined who was clean and who was not.

Persons who were unclean with skin diseases could not live with other people. They had to live outside of the camp while the Israelites were traveling in the wilderness years. Once the Israelites began to live in cities unclean people, had to live outside the city gates. The reason for this was that some skin diseases can spread from one person to another. Also God's law told people to live away from people who had skin diseases, this true even for the King. (2 Kings 15:5)

Verses 2-8 describe a skin disorder that was a lump. It is probably true to say that the skin breaks open. Bad, watery material may come out from it. The Priest would tell the person to live alone for seven days and then another seven days. This would give the disease time to grow. If it did not grow then the person was declared clean. After he washes his clothes then he can return to God's house.

Verses 9-11 probably dealt with leprosy. The white part of the skin became watery, with bad stuff in it. The priest did not have to wait for the disease to develop. He knew that it was leprosy. So he did not have to tell the person to live alone before he declared that person unclean. He declared that the person was unclean immediately. So the person must go and live outside the camp.

Verses 12-17 describe two diseases.

- ✓ In verses 12-13, the person's skin is white, but there is no watery material. So, other people cannot get the disease from the person who has it. Probably the material that colors the skin has gone. It is not a real disease.
- ✓ In verses 14-17, the person's skin probably has red places that contain a watery material. The unclean person must live outside the camp. So, really, the priest must go to him. If the red places are white, he is clean. If not, he is unclean and he must remain outside the camp.

A boil on the skin requires the priest to determine if it is just a boil or if it is leprosy. A boil will soon heal but leprosy does not.

A burn on the skin causes a red or white spot to form on the skin and the burn does not heal. The priest must then determine whether it is dangerous for other people or not. Commentators think that we now call this disease psoriasis.

A sore place on the head or the chin is probably the modern name for ringworm. Ringworm is contagious.

Commentators have given us three possible reasons why these rules are here. Probably, all three reasons are correct!

(1) God may have given these rules to protect the health of the Israelites. Some of these diseases are very dangerous, and they could spread quickly, especially in a camp. So, God told the priests to examine people with skin diseases carefully. They must separate anyone who seemed to have such a disease.

(2) These rules may exist for social reasons. People may be afraid of someone who has a bad skin disease. They may be cruel to that person. But these rules protect that person. There would be a separate place where the person could live safely. It was clear what the person had to do in order to obey God's law. The priests would make sure that other people dealt with that person in a proper manner.

(3) God wanted to teach the Israelites about sin. Of course, disease is not sin. And most people who suffered these diseases were not ill because of any particular sin. But the nature of these types of disease teaches lessons about the nature of sin. For example, the priests had to check whether the disease seemed deeper than the skin. So we cannot know a person's true character if we merely look at that person. Sin enters right into a person. It goes beyond that person's body into their spirit. Another example is that serious diseases would spread. And in the same manner, sin takes control of a person. Its effects always grow worse until it has ruined that person's life. Also, it was necessary to separate a person from other people while that person had the disease. In the same manner, sin separates us both from God and from a right relationship with other people.

The people made their clothes from wool or out of a plant called flax, the cloth from flax was called linen. Here mildew is a disease. Mildew grows on plants as well as cloth and leather. Mildew is similar to the skin diseases in verses 1-46 because it changes the color. Mildew spreads through the cloth and can spread to other clothes. Ultimately the mildew will destroy the cloth. It will not only make the clothes unclean but the person who touches it will be unclean as well.

There are two ways that the Hebrews made their clothes out of linen and wool.

- Sometimes they knitted the clothes. People use a long needle to knit. 'Knit' means to join the threads (lines) of wool together.
- Or they weaved (wove) the lines together. Weave means 'make into cloth'. People usually need a simple machine to do this. They set out many rows of thread (lines of linen). Then they pass one thread forwards and back through the rows.

The rules for mildew are similar to the rules for those of the skin. The priest would have to decide if the clothes were unclean. Clothes with mildew would have to be destroyed in order to keep it from spreading.

First the priest would have to wait to see if the mildew spread. If the mildew was not spreading, then the owner would have to try to wash the mildew out of the clothes. If the

mildew was spreading, then the priest would have to burn the clothes. Even if the mildew does not spread the priest could not allow any mildew to be present in the clothes. Therefore, the priest would have to tear out the sections of the clothes that had the mildew. The owner then would have to repair the clothes.

There are two reasons for these rules about mildew in the cloth. It is probable that both reasons are correct.

1. God gave these rules for a practical reason. It was a lot of work to make clothes by hand. People would not want to destroy clothes if they had just a small amount of mildew. But that mildew could spread and it could cause great damage. It was better to deal with the problem as soon as possible.
2. Like the rules about skin diseases, there are lessons here about the nature of sin. Sin does not just spoil our lives, it also spoils the products of our work, including our work for God. It was not wise to neglect even a little mildew on clothes. And it is foolish to allow any sin to remain in our lives. It can only ever cause damage and trouble.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 tells what a person must do if he has a skin disease. The priest has declared that this person is unclean and he has moved outside of the camp or city. Now the person has become well and this chapter describes what that person must do next. Verse 34 also gives us rules for a person who has mildew growing on their walls.

The priest would have to go outside the camp, as the person could not enter the camp until he was determined to be clean. The priest would use a clay pot to splash the blood of the bird onto the person who had the skin disease. Everything the priest would use for this ceremony was the color red, the color of blood. For the Christian he is reminded of the blood of Jesus. Only by the death of Jesus can we be free of sin. For the Jews this would remind them of the blood of the sacrifices.

One of the birds had to die and the other was allowed to go free. In the book of Leviticus this is an important principle. Something has to die so that someone or something can go free. It is the same principle for people who love Jesus. Because Jesus died for their sins they can go free.

The person would also have to shave their head and wash with water. This manifested to everyone that his previous state had ended. During the next week the person could move back into the camp but he could not go back home for another seven days. After another seven days he must shave and bathe again, after that he was completely clean.

After this the person had to make several offerings. He had to make a guilt offering, a sin offering, a whole offering, and a grain offering.

In verses 14-20 the ear, thumb, and toes mean the following things.

- The ear means what you hear from God.
- The thumb means what you do for God.
- The toe means where your feet go for God.

The rules here are very much like the rules for ordination of the priest. Once this was done the person was allowed to join God's people again. The people of God are like priests as God wants all his people to be holy. For the Christian the blood reminds them of Jesus' blood and the oil reminds them of the Holy Spirit. When a person becomes a Christian the blood of Jesus frees them of their sin and the Holy Spirit enters into their life and changes them.

Poor people were unable to afford the usual offerings but birds were not expensive. So the poor were still able to make a sin offering, a whole offering, a guilt offering, and a grain offering.

Once the Israelites entered the Promise Land they found that it was not perfect. They faced problems like mildew that destroyed the homes. The people would check and if they found mildew they would remove it immediately.

These rules help us in the way we react to sin. People have to be careful of sin. They should examine their own lives, behavior and attitudes carefully. And they should deal with sin as soon as they recognize it.

Priest had to examine each house carefully. Mildew that was on the surface of the walls was not a serious problem. If the mildew was deeper than on the wall the priest would not allow anyone to enter the house for seven days. The priest would then examine the house again and if the mildew had not spread he would follow the ceremony in verses 48-53. If the mildew had spread, then the owner would have to remove the walls and rebuild them. If after that the mildew returned then the house would have to be destroyed.

The ceremony for the house is much like the ceremony for a person with a skin disease. Property rules in the Promised Land are important. This is because there is a relationship between the covenant and the land.

Chapter 15

This next chapter is about substances that come out of the body that are unclean. Verses 2-15 are about discharges that come out of the male body because of illness. Verses 16-24 are about substances that come from a healthy male or female body. Verses 25-30

are about blood that flows from a female body due to illness. All these things are about the parts of the body that people use during sex. And they all make a person unclean.

In previous chapters we have discussed the many things that can make a person unclean. This chapter speaks of unclean substances that come from inside the body. These substances come even from a healthy body.

Many commentators believe that God is still teaching lessons about sin in this chapter. Jesus also taught that sin comes from inside the body. (Mark 7:14-23) Jesus was not speaking about unclean substances but about evil thoughts and wrong desires that can cause people to do wicked things. Jesus taught that this was the real lesson to learn from the rules about unclean things.

Commentators are also not sure what the liquid is. The Hebrew word seems to be referring to a sticky liquid. It may be one of these liquids.

- Some commentators think that it is semen. This normally comes from a man during sex. Probably verses 2-15 are not about semen. Verses 16-18 are about semen.
- Other Bible commentators think that the man has a sex disease. Perhaps it is a disease that we call gonorrhea. R.K. Harrison argues this in his book about Leviticus. There are many other similar diseases.

Verses 13-15 discuss the rules that make a person clean again. The person must wash himself and his clothes. He must bring two of either pigeons or doves. Then the priest will offer them to the Lord. Then that person will be clean and he can go to the house of the Lord.

Semen can come from a man who is not ill. Semen sometimes comes from a man's body while he is asleep, or it may happen when he is lying with a woman. Of course, it is not wrong for these things to happen. It is not wrong for a man to lie with his wife. Commentators are not sure why relations between married people make them unclean until the evening. There were similar rules for a soldier if semen came from his body during the night. He could not go back to his army until the next evening. (Deuteronomy 23:10-11)

When a woman has a period it makes her and anyone who touches her unclean. In verses 25-30 when a woman has a disease she is unclean. Once she becomes well she must give sacrifices. The woman brings two birds to the priest and he offers them as a sin offering and a whole offering. Then the woman becomes clean again.

Paul too warned people who want to eat the bread or to drink the wine at church (1 Corinthians 11:27-31). They must not do this if there is sin in their lives. Israelites had to examine themselves before they went to God's house. They had to make sure that they

were clean. And Christians must examine themselves before they take the bread and wine. They must be free from sin – not by their own efforts, but because Jesus died for them.

Chapter 16

In the whole of the Old Testament this chapter is the only one that discusses the Day of Atonement. The Jewish nation to this day still considers the Day of Atonement to be a very sacred day of each year. The Day of Atonement is called Yom Kippur although this name is not in the book of Leviticus. In the Christian world the Day of Atonement is called Good Friday the day that marks when Jesus was crucified.

Here are some important facts about the Day of Atonement.

- ✓ It happened exactly 6 months after the Passover every year.
- ✓ The people had to be genuinely sorry for their sins. And they had to act in a humble manner. For example, they did not eat food on that day.
- ✓ The people would be very aware of their sins on that day. They remembered that they had done very many wrong things. They did this while the chief priest carried out his duties. Also, they did this by their own humble actions during the day.
- ✓ The chief priest was alone between God and the people. First, he had to make atonement for his own sins. Then he made atonement for the people’s sins. Each time, he took blood into the most holy place (verses 14-15).
- ✓ This was the only day in the year when the chief priest entered the most holy place.
- ✓ This was the day when the Israelites sent a goat into the desert to take away their sins.

The following table will help us to understand the important ceremony for the Day of Atonement.

Verse number in Leviticus chapter 16	What happened?	Why did it happen?
Verse 29	On the Day of Atonement, the Israelites do not work. They do not eat food.	This is a very serious day when they must be humble in front of the LORD.
Verse 3	The chief priest brings a bull and a ram.	These are his own sin offering and whole offering.
Verse 4	The chief priest puts on linen clothes.	

Verse 5	The Israelites bring 2 goats and a ram.	The ram is their whole offering. The goats are a special sin offering.
Verse 9	The chief priest chooses which goat must take sin away.	
Verse 11	The chief priest kills the bull as a sin offering.	It makes atonement for himself and his family (that is, the priests).
Verses 12-14	The chief priest takes the bull's blood into the most holy place.	He splashes the blood in front of the ark.
Verse 15	The chief priest kills one goat and he takes its blood into the most holy place.	It makes atonement for the sins of the Israelites. He splashes the blood in front of the ark.
Verses 18-19	The chief priest puts some of the blood of both the bull and the goat onto the altar.	This makes the altar clean.
Verse 21	The chief priest puts his hands on the other goat. He confesses all the Israelites' sins.	That goat (which is still alive) must carry the Israelites' sins away.
Verse 21	A man takes the goat. He leaves it in the desert.	
Verse 23	The chief priest takes off his linen clothes. He bathes, then he puts on other clothes. Then he offers the 2 rams.	The rams are the whole offerings from the chief priest and the Israelites.
Verse 27	Another man takes the dead bull and the dead goat. He burns their bodies outside the camp.	These animals were the sin offerings.

Verses 26 and 28	The two other men must bathe before they return to the camp.	
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In verse 1 we see rules as a result of the death of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-5. The purpose of the rules is so this did not happen again.

The Hebrew word for “Mercy Seat” is “kapporet.” Various Bibles translate the word into different meanings, here are a few.

- Mercy seat (King James Version, KJV).
- Covenant box (Good News Bible, GNB)
- Atonement cover (New International Version, NIV)
- Throne of mercy (Jerusalem Bible, JB)
- Atonement Slate (Word Biblical Commentary)

A throne is a seat upon which a King sits. Translations that make ‘kapporet’ into a seat probably depend on verses like Psalm 99:1. “The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!”

The cherubim are special servants of God. There was an image of one on each side of the ark. But the word ‘kapporet’ may not mean ‘seat’ or ‘throne’. The KJV and JB translations decided that it did. As in Psalm 99:1, it was the place where God sat. There, he had mercy (or he did not punish) his people. Other translations, like the NIV, decided that it meant ‘cover’. Notice that there is no word for atonement in this verse in the Hebrew Bible. Here is part of a note on Leviticus 16:6 by C.I. Scofield.

The meaning of the word ‘atonement’ in the Old Testament is not the same as it is for Christians. For Christians, it includes the work of Christ as sacrifice and redeemer. In the Old Testament, atonement translates Hebrew words which mean ‘a cover’ or ‘to cover’. The offerings in Leviticus ‘covered’ the sins of Israel until Jesus died on the cross. They did not take away those sins, Hebrews 10:4. These are the sins which God ‘passed over’, Romans 3:25. It was the cross, not the offerings in Leviticus, which made a total and complete redemption. God was able to use the offerings in Leviticus to continue with his guilty people. This is because these offerings looked forward to the cross, Hebrews 10:1.

J.E. Hartley, in the Word Biblical Commentary on Leviticus, does not agree with either seat or cover. Instead, kapporet comes from a word that means ‘to atone’, or ‘to forgive sin’. So, kapporet becomes ‘atonement slate’. A slate is a thin piece of material, probably stone. When God looks down to the ark, God sees the slate with blood on it. So this atones for (or covers) the people’s sins, until the death of Jesus.

The curtain divided the two parts of the meeting tent. Exodus 26:31-32 describes it. The kapporet divides God from the chief priest. The chief priest is in the most holy place for the Israelites. He brings the blood there on behalf of the people. Jesus died at Calvary instead of everybody in the world. And he brought his own blood into the most holy place in heaven (Hebrews 9:12).

In verses 8-10 the word for scapegoat is “Azazel” and commentators do not really know what this word means. The word Azazel may mean remove. This would mean that the goat took away the sins of the people from them into the desert. Scapegoat then would mean the goat that takes away sin. The important thing is this. People could not take their own sin away. Something or someone had to do it for them. Christians believe that Jesus was that ‘someone’. (John 1:29)

The altar that is ‘in front of the LORD’ is the one outside the meeting tent. When the chief priest took the coals and the incense behind the curtain, the smoke would hide God from him. This meant that he would not die. God allowed the chief priest to enter the most holy place on this day only.

Verse 16 refers to different kinds of sin. There are the sins that people know about. There are the sins that they do not know about. And there is the unclean state of people. These are all types of sin that God forgave (Exodus 34:7). But he did not forgive people who refused to accept his covenant love, (Numbers 15:30) such people had chosen, on purpose, not to have a relationship with him. So they received none of the benefits that God gave by his covenant. Remember, the ark contained signs of God’s covenant with his people. God would see these signs as he looked through the ‘covenant slate’ onto the ark. The words ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ here do not mean whether the people were dirty or not. And they do not mean (as elsewhere in Leviticus) whether the people could join in public worship. These words mean that the people were separate from God because of sin.

Chapter 17

The first two verses in this chapter remind us that these are the words of God as spoken to Moses. These are not Moses’ commandments but are God’s commandments. This chapter gives us three important rules that the Israelite people had to follow.

1. When the Israelites killed animals for meat, they had to offer them to God as peace offerings (verses 3-9).
2. The Israelites could not eat the blood of animals (verses 10-12).
3. The Israelites might hunt animals. Or they might find animals that were already dead. There were special rules about the meat of those animals (verses 13-16)

When the people killed animals they had to offer them to the Lord. So whenever the people killed bulls, cows, sheep or goats, they had to take them to the meeting tent. There, they sacrificed those animals as peace offerings. When the people did this the Lord would receive His part. (Leviticus 3:1-17) The priest would also receive a portion. (Leviticus 7:11-18) Then the man who killed the animal could eat the rest with his family and friends. Failure to obey this rule would make that person “blood guilty.” In those days this was similar to murder and that person would be “cut off from the people.” A person who was “cut off” meant that the LORD would punish that person. And the LORD would separate that person from his family or nation, perhaps by death. This rule lasted only while the Israelites were in the wilderness. Once they were in the Promised Land they did not have to go to the meeting tent to kill their animals. (Deuteronomy 12:21) God taught the Israelites that He provided their daily meals. As the Israelites offered their meat to God He shared it with them and they fellowshiped with Him. Today this is why we thank God for each meal that we receive; we thank Him for His provision.

The Israelites believed that evil spirits lived outside of their camps. In order to appease these evil spirits the Israelites would offer sacrifices to them. In verse seven God is forbidding them to continue this practice of making sacrifices to bad spirits. In Exodus 32:1-6 we are reminded that the Israelites were easily persuaded to have false gods. God forbids us to do this, as we must not give honor to evil spirits that belongs to God alone.

Verses 10-12 tell us that God does not want us to eat blood. Blood is precious to God as the blood represents life. Blood also represents the life of a person who offered it. All life belongs to God, as He is the creator. The Jewish people still obey this rule today. Meat with no blood in it is called Kosher.

The blood of Jesus, who is their sacrifice, is the life of the Christian. The death and shed blood of Jesus gives the Christian life. To be a Christian one must receive the blood of Jesus into their life. (John 6:53)

What the blood of Jesus means to a Christian.

- Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:7. His blood means that God can forgive us.
- Hebrews 10:22. His blood allows us to come into the place where God is.
- Revelation 12:11. His blood helps us to defeat evil things.
- Revelation 7:15. His blood means that we can always live with God

Chapter 18

In Egypt where the Israelites were in bondage and in Canaan where the Israelites would settle the people did have sexual relations with their close relatives. This was not pleasing to God and He was angry with them. We can see the results of God’s displeasure in

verses 24-30. God was saying that these rules were for all people, not just the Israelites. People's conscience should tell them that such behavior is wrong, (Romans 1:18-27)

Improper sexual relations will ruin a person's life. Wrong desires do not have to control one's life. God's law, which is good and perfect, should rule one's life.

Verses 7-16 give us a list of a man's family that he should not have sexual relations with. There are several reasons why God gave this law:

1. A child born as a result of incest may not be perfect. So these laws are partly for reasons of health.
2. The father's shame in verses 7 and 8 tells us that the marriage relationship is very important. This is another reason to avoid incest.
3. God wanted his people to understand who their close relatives were. They had a duty to respect and to look after their close relatives. This list showed that they were not just responsible for their parents or their children. There were many other people to whom they owed duties as close relatives. God gave these rules so that people would have a good life – see verse 5.
4. People should not do whatever wrong things they desire to do. They should not do things just because they feel strong emotions. They must learn to do the things that God wants them to do. People do feel very powerful emotions about sex. And those emotions often cause people to do wrong things. God has given rules so that people can learn to obey him.

Here is the list:

- ✓ Mother, verse 7.
- ✓ Father's wife (not the man's mother), verse 8
- ✓ Sister, verse 9
- ✓ Granddaughter, verse 10.
- ✓ Stepsister, verse 11. A stepsister is the daughter of your father but not of your mother.
- ✓ Aunt on your father's side, verse 12. 'Father's side' means 'his part of the family'.
- ✓ Aunt on your mother's side, verse 13. That is, the 'mother's part of the family'.
- ✓ Aunt who is the wife of your father's brother, verse 14
- ✓ Daughter-in-law (your son's wife), verse 15.
- ✓ Sister-in-law (your brother's wife), verse 16.

In verses 17-18 are more about marriage than incest. It is wrong to marry more than one person in the same family, verse 17. Or (it is wrong to marry) your wife's sister while your wife is still alive. The two women would compete for their husband's love, as Rachel and Leah did. (Genesis 30:1)

In the Old Testament a man was allowed to have more than one wife. Such marriages can cause problems as we see in 1 Samuel 1:6-7. In the New Testament we see that God prefers a man to have just one wife. (1 Timothy 3:2) It may be that in the Old Testament God allowed some things because the people would not obey Him. (Mark 10:5)

Verse 20 again tells us that adultery is a sin. (Exodus 20:14) The usage of the word neighbor does not mean someone who lives near. It can also mean someone who is far away. (Luke 10:29-37)

We are not to offer our children as a sacrifice to a false God. In verse 22 it is a clear statement that homosexuality is a sin, it is an abomination. (Romans 1:27) People are not to have sexual relations with animals.

Chapter 19

God's Commandments

In verse two God tells His people to be holy because He is holy. In the book of Leviticus this is the most important thing that is taught. We are also taught this by Jesus in Matthew 5:48. God's people have been redeemed by the blood of His Son Jesus. God's people now belong to Him and cannot do whatever they want to do but must do what God wants them to do. God's people are separate from the people of the world and should not behave as the people of the world.

In Deuteronomy 6:5 we are told to love God but Leviticus teaches us to obey God. In John 14:15 Jesus tell us that if we love Him we will obey His commandments. The two become the same, as we demonstrate our love for God by obeying His commandments.

There are a few Jewish experts that think the Ten Commandments are in this chapter. The Ten Commandments are in Exodus 20:1-17. They also appear in Leviticus Chapter 19 in the following verses.

- Commandments 1 and 2 are in verse 4.
- Commandment 3 is in verse 12.
- Commandments 4 and 5 are in verse 3.
- Commandment 6 is in verse 16.
- Commandment 7 is in verse 29.
- Commandments 8 and 9 are in verses 11 to 16
- Commandment 10 is in verse 18.

An explanation is given to us in verse 3. The relationship we are to have is both with God and other people. This causes us to forsake the things we desire, as it is our duty to God

and other people, these duties are more important than our own desires. We should respect our parents' authority; by that means, we will learn to respect God's authority too.

God's people must learn to control their own desires. A person who was greedy would want to eat the first fruits of a tree. But that would be against the command of God. There is a proper time for one to eat the fruit of a tree. He must wait three years and in the fourth year the fruit belongs to God. The fruit tree would be weaker if the fruit was allowed to ripen in the first three years. With better cultivation of the modern day this may not be the case. Still the lesson here is that the first fruits belong to God.

The blood of animals is important, as it represents the animal's life. Before eating the meat of an animal the people had to drain the blood away. It was atonement for the animal's life.

These two things were considered to be magic.

1. Divination. This means that you use something to tell people about the future. For example, people might watch a snake's movements. They thought that this was a sign. It would show them what would happen in the future.
2. Witchcraft. Here, it means this. You tell people what would be the best time to do something. People might watch the sky to try to work this out.

These things were wicked because the people prayed to spirits instead of praying to God. We are not even allowed to worship or to pray to the holy angels. (Revelation 22:8-9) If we are not to pray to a holy spirit then certainly we should not pray to a wicked one.

People would cut themselves to show their sadness when someone would die. They would also tattoo themselves by cutting pictures into their bodies. These tattoos are very hard to remove. God tells us not to do these things.

In verse 31 people use magic to contact the spirits of the dead people. King Saul did this in 1 Samuel 28:8-25. God does not want His people to do this. In fact, the act of King Saul is one reason for his death. (1 Chronicles 10:13-14) Anyone who has the knowledge to speak to the spirits of the dead has gained that knowledge through the Devil. God's people are to pray to God and God alone.

By virtue of age the elders in society have gained wisdom. For this reason we are to honor the elders and seek the lessons they have learned in their lifetime. As people become older they become weaker, yet they are strong in their knowledge and deserve our respect.

Rather if someone is a native or a foreigner still we are not to abuse them and give them proper respect. We are commanded by Jesus to love our neighbor and everyone is our neighbor. (Mark 12 30-31) This is not only true for the people but also those who judge

over the people. The Israelites were God's chosen people but God cares for all His creation. Christians believe that God sent His son to save people from every nation. (John 3:16 Matthew 28:19)

Chapter 20

In Leviticus 18:21 Molech is mentioned. Molech is a false god and his followers offered their children to their god Molech. The Israelites are instructed by God to stone to death the followers of Molech who sacrifice their children. Commentators are not sure who "the people in your country are." There are two possibilities.

- ✓ A group of leaders of the people.
- ✓ The ordinary people.

This rule applied to any foreigners that were living amongst the Israelites. This was a proper punishment for the wicked sin of child sacrifice. In verse three the Hebrew words "I will be against" means "I will turn my face against." This may be a reminder that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It could also mean that every part of God is against this practice. The punishment is that God would cut off or separate that person. This would mean that the people who serve Molech were no longer a part of God's people. The most important aspect of this is the translation of the word children. The Hebrew word is tserah. It really means 'seed'.

- God made his promises to Abraham and to his tserah, Genesis 12:7, 15:18 and 24:7. These promises are not only for Abraham.
- The tserah does not only mean Abraham's children. It means children who share the same God with Abraham. It includes us, if we believe God.
- Thus when an Israelite gives his tserah to Molech, he spoils God's plans. God will not allow this to happen. So the punishment is death.

Even if the people do not stone the follower of Molech to death, still God will be against that person.

People still try to speak to people that are dead. They try to do this through the use of mediums and spiritists. Mediums and spiritists say they are able to make contact with the dead. Christians do not believe that they can actually do this. God says that we should not even try. This sin was one of the reasons for King Saul's death. (1 Samuel 28 1 Chronicles 10:13)

Again in verses 7 and 8 we read the main message of Leviticus. Be holy, because I (the LORD) am holy. In Leviticus the word holy appears 60 times. Only in the books of Psalms and Isaiah does the word holy appear this many times.

In verse 9 we see the word curse. In this usage it does not mean to use profanity. Its meaning is that a person wants bad things to happen. Often people use magic in their curses. In Luke 6:28 says Christians are not to curse people, Christians are to bless people.

Verses 10-16 is a repeat of Leviticus 18:6-23 but here there are punishments added. The punishments should be helpful in persuading people they should be holy. If a person does these wicked things then God will be against them. That person deserves a death that brings shame. God will punish that person if the Israelites do not do it. People should know that shame and punishment are the results of wicked behavior. The words “they are responsible for their own deaths” means that their blood is on them. It was usual for the Israelites to stone people to death as a punishment, but in verse 14 they burnt the people.

God was sending His people to Canaan. The Canaanite people would have to be removed. The Canaanite’s were bad people and did not obey God’s Word. For this reason they had to be expelled from where the Israelite people were going to live.

Christians are to be separate, holy, consecrated; Christians are not to be as the people of the world. Christians are to be holy because our God is holy. (1 Peter 1:14-15 Romans 13:13 Galatians 5:19-21 Colossians 3:8)

Chapter 21

All the priests in Israel came from the Levites family and were descendants of Aaron. It was their responsibility to serve the people and to serve God. For the priest to do that they had to be holy, as God is holy. The priests were not to do as the other Israelite people did. An example was that the Priest could not attend funerals as being in contact with the dead would make them unclean. The priest could not serve in the meeting tent and later in the Temple if they were unclean. The priests could bury their closest relatives and then go through the process to become clean again. Their work for God was more important for all other occasions. The verses in this chapter give us contain rules about priests’ marriages, their families, and their proper behavior.

Verses 5-8 give us a list of things the priests could not do. Priests from other religions did these things but God did not want His priests to do as they did. God’s priests were not to cut themselves as this would make them unclean and they would not be able to serve in His house. Priests of other religions had sexual relations with other women but God’s priests were not allowed to do this. God’s people must respect the Priests of God and their families.

The penalty for a daughter to have sexual relations with another man besides her husband was very severe. She was to be burned because she had made herself unclean and her father the Priest as well.

Leviticus 21:10-15 are the rules for the Chief Priest. The oil was from a fruit called the olive. The Chief Priest was anointed with this oil on the first day that he became the Chief Priest. The special clothes that the Chief Priest wore showed the people that he was the Chief Priest. (Exodus 28:1 to Exodus 29:9)

Because the Chief Priest was closer to God than anyone else he was held to a higher standard. The Chief Priest always had to be close to God and must always be ready to serve Him. He had to always be holy before God. Unlike the priest the Chief Priest could not bury a close relative, neither could he show mourning. The Chief Priest had to be clean and holy at all times in order to be ready to serve God. The standard for marriage was higher for the Chief Priest as well. He could only marry a woman from his own people. This probably means that he could only marry a Levite woman. This probably was because his son would become the next Chief Priest.

In this last section of this chapter deals with people who had something wrong with their bodies. For centuries the priests were descendants of Aaron. But not all of them could be priest. This was because they had certain illnesses or other problems with their bodies.

Commentators are not in complete agreement as to what these illnesses or problems were. An example would be the “very ugly” in verse 18. The translation leans to the “very ugly” may mean the person could not speak properly. It is clear that for someone to serve God he had to be in good health.

The rules showed that the priest had to be perfect. The rules were about their bodies but the lesson is about their lives. It is sin that spoils a person’s relationship with God. And it is sin that spoils someone’s work for God.

The men who had these problems still had that special relationship with God. Their illnesses and problems were not sin. These men still ate the food that God had given to the priests. They were even allowed to eat the most holy food. But because of their problems God did not allow them to do all the things that other priests did.

“Come near to God’ means this: serve the Lord in His house. The food in verse 16 is the food from the offerings of meat and flour that the priests made.

Below are places where you can find the holy food and the most holy food (verse 22).

Holy Food	Most Holy Food
Leviticus 7:31-34	Leviticus 6:22
Numbers 18:12-13	Leviticus 7:1,6
Numbers 18:15	Leviticus 2:3,10

Numbers 18:26	Leviticus 6:9-11
Numbers 18:14	Leviticus 24:8-9

Chapter 22

If a priest is unclean, then he is not allowed to eat the food from the offerings. If the priest ate the food, then they would bring shame to God’s holy name. This would be a very serious matter and an unclean priest who ate the food of an offering would be cut off by God. Only the priest or members of their family could eat the holy offerings. A priest could be unclean for a long time. This could be because of an illness such as a skin disease.

Verses 10-16 these verses tell us two things.

- The people who could eat some of the priest’s food. God considers that families are important. So the whole family (unless they are unclean) eats the priest’s sacred food. That includes people who live permanently in his house. So even the priest’s slave may eat the offerings. But visitors and temporary workers must not eat these things.
- What to do if someone ate the holy food by accident. This should not happen. The priests should teach the people about these rules. But if someone makes a mistake, that person must make a payment to the priest. That person must pay for the food that he should not have eaten. And he must add an extra fifth (20%) to his payment.

The Lord God is perfect and therefore the animals that the Israelites offered must be perfect. God deserves and we should offer the best gifts that we can offer. The whole offerings and the peace offerings are mentioned here, in both offerings perfect animals had to be offered.

The rules about the care of young animals are a lesson that God cares about the things that He has created. This includes rules about the birds and trees. (Deuteronomy 20:19-20 Deuteronomy 22:6-7)

In verses 31-33 God explains why the Israelites must not do anything to shame the name of God. The Israelites are a holy nation; God’s chosen people, whom He brought out of the land of Egypt. God made them free and separated them so they could be His people. The Israelites must not do anything that would bring shame to God’s name. If an unclean priest ate from the holy offering, if the people gave bad gifts, if the animals were offered in a cruel manner that would bring shame to God’s name. Any behavior that gave the impression that God is not holy and perfect would give the wrong impression to the people

of the world. The Israelite people must always bring honor to God, by their actions they must show that God is holy and perfect.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 tells us about special days in the Jewish calendar. This chapter contains a list of the holy days for the Jewish people. They include the important Jewish holidays which are usually in April, June and October. And there is the Sabbath Day, which is in every week through the whole year.

All of these holy days and special times and are still important for the Jews today.

Special Time	Date in our Calendar	Bible reference
Sabbath Day	7th day of every week (our Saturday)	Genesis 2:2-3 Exodus 20:8-11 Leviticus 23:2-3 Numbers 28:9-10
Passover	The day of the full moon, in March or April	Exodus 23:16 Leviticus 23:15-22 Leviticus 25:8-9 Numbers 28:26-31
Unleavened Bread	The week after the Passover	Exodus 23:14-17 Leviticus 23:6
First Harvest	During the week of Unleavened Bread	Leviticus 23:9-14
Second Harvest (Pentecost) (Also called Shavuoth.)	50 days after the Passover (so, during May or June)	Exodus 23:16 Leviticus 23:15-22 Leviticus 25:8-9 Numbers 28:26-31
Day of Trumpets	The day of the new moon before the Tent Parties and	Leviticus 23:23-25

(Also called Rosh Hashana or the Jewish New Year's Day).	Final Harvest (during September or October)	Numbers 29:1-6
Day of Atonement (Also called Yom Kippur)	9 days after the Day of Trumpets	Leviticus chapter 16 Leviticus 23:26-32 Numbers 29:7-11
Tent Parties and Final Harvest (Also called Tabernacles, Sukkoth, or the Feast of Shelters)	6 months after the Passover (so, during September or October)	Leviticus 23:33-43 Numbers 29:12-38 Deuteronomy 16:13

About these special times:

Verses 2-3 **The Sabbath.** This is the 7th day of the week, our Saturday. The word 'Sabbath' means 'day of rest'. It is a special opportunity for God's people to worship Him each week. In Genesis 2:3, God made the Sabbath (or 7th day) very special. After He created the world, He himself rested on that day. When the Jews went from Egypt to Israel, God provided their food. He gave them a special, extra amount of the food called manna before each Sabbath, Exodus 16:22-30. He did that so that they were able to rest and to worship Him on the Sabbath. So they did not even have to make food or to collect food on the Sabbath. (Manna was something like bread that God sent from heaven.)

The Jews could only do simple jobs on the Sabbath. They could not do any of their usual work whatever. It was their special day to worship God. They rested from their work so that they had time to worship him.

Most Christians worship God on the 1st day of the week, that is, Sunday. They do this because Jesus became alive after his death on a Sunday. That is why many Christians keep Sunday as a Sabbath. They do not work on this day. Instead, it is their special day for rest and worship.

Verses 4-5 **The Passover.** This was a most important time for the Jews. It was during March or April. In it, the Jews remembered the event just before God freed them from Egypt.

God allowed a terrible trouble to happen in Egypt. We call that event 'the 10th plague'. The oldest son in every family in Egypt died, in just one night. But God told each Israelite

family to kill a lamb and to put its blood round their door. When God saw the blood, he would 'pass over' that house. That is why the day was called the Passover. On that day, God saved the Israelites from death (Exodus chapter 12).

The Passover is important for Christians, as well as Jews. But Christians call it 'Easter'. Jesus died on the Friday before Easter day. The Bible calls Jesus: 'the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.' On Easter Sunday, Jesus became alive again after his death.

Verses 6-8 **The Time of Unleavened Bread.** People usually add yeast to bread to make it 'rise'. They do this before they cook it. 'Unleavened' means that there is no yeast in the bread. Thus, it does not 'rise' or 'get bigger'. Bread that does not rise is flat.

At the Time of Unleavened Bread, the Jews remember the events immediately after the first Passover. God led them out of Egypt at once. He did it so quickly that there was not even enough time for their bread to rise. They had to work hard like slaves when they lived in Egypt. But God made them free at once. That was the time when the Jews became a nation.

Verses 9-14 **The First Harvest.** There are several types of grain. The first one that becomes ripe in Israel is called barley. Ruth 1:22 tells us that Naomi returned home 'at the start of the barley harvest'. The priest had to hold up (or wave, verse 11) a bundle of barley plants in front of the LORD. This was also called a 'wave offering'. It was God who provided all the crops in the Israelites' new country. God gave them that country after they left Egypt. And that country (Canaan, afterwards called Israel) had good land. So, by this ceremony, the Israelites gave the first grain of each harvest back to God. And with it, they gave a whole offering (chapter 1) and a corn offering (chapter 2).

Verses 15-21 **Pentecost and the Second Harvest.** The word 'Pentecost' means '50th'. If we include the first and last days, this means 7 weeks. Here, the harvest is for grain that we call wheat. People use it to make bread. Pentecost was a special occasion at the beginning of the wheat harvest. Again, it reminded people that their food came from God.

Pentecost is very important for Christians. They sometimes call it 'the church's birthday'. It was on the day called Pentecost that God sent his Holy Spirit. You can read about that event in Acts chapter 2.

Verse 22 The Israelites should not just thank God for their harvest by means of a ceremony. Also, they should thank God by means of the way that they harvested their crops. They should leave some food in the fields so that poor people and foreigners would find something to eat. They should always remember to provide for poor people. Ruth 2:7-8 describes how people did this.

Verses 23-25 **Day of Trumpets.** Today we make trumpets from a metal called brass. And we use them to make music. The Jews did not use brass. They made their trumpets from the horns of animals like cows. Horns grow on the heads of these animals. Numbers 10:1-10 also mentions silver trumpets. The Jews used the trumpets to sound an alarm. Also, they sounded trumpets on any important national occasion.

The Day of Trumpets was at the beginning of the 7th month in the Jewish calendar. As the 7th day of the week was special and holy, so was the 7th month. The Day of Atonement, Tent Parties and Final Harvest happened during this month. The trumpets reminded people about these things:

The trumpets should remind the Israelites that, in the future, God will rule his people as their king. Each year, God dealt with his people's sins on the Day of Atonement. But at a future time, God will deal with all sin. He will come to live among his people.

For Christians, this should remind them about Jesus' return. He has promised to come back to this world. He will overcome sin, death, and the devil's power. And Jesus will rule with the authority and power of God the Father.

Verses 26-32 **The Day of Atonement.** Leviticus chapter 16 tells us what the chief priest did on the Day of Atonement. He put blood into the most holy place, as a special sacrifice, so that God would forgive the people's sins.

Here we read what the ordinary people did. The words 'to atone' mean 'to make at one'. (In other words, to be united as friends with God.) It was the day when people were sorry for their sins. They saw their sins as God saw them. They were 'at one' with God, in other words, they agreed with his opinion. Christians believe that atonement can only happen by the death of Jesus. His death means that now we do not have to offer the gifts in the Book of Leviticus.

Verses 27, 29 and 32 contain the rule that the Jews must not eat on this day. In fact, the Hebrew words are much stricter than what appears in our translation. People should not do anything to give themselves pleasure.

This day is not usually a Saturday, so it would not normally be a Sabbath. But the LORD told the people that it would be a day for rest, like the Sabbaths (verse 32).

Verses 33-43 **Tent Parties and Final Harvest.** This was the time when the Jews gathered the last of the harvest from the fields and gardens. They also remembered that God had 'gathered' them at last from Egypt. They lived in tents as they went from Egypt to Israel. To remember this, they lived in shelters or tents for a week during September or October. But they did not make their 'tents' for this week from animal skins, as people usually did. Instead, they used the branches of trees to make 'tents' (that is, shelters).

That is why verse 40 refers to various trees, like the palm tree and the willow. This time became a really happy party. The LORD will complete all that he is doing for his people. And that is a wonderful reason to be joyful in front of the LORD.

For Christians, the harvest is a very important occasion. It is the time when Christians thank God for their food. But each church chooses a different day in autumn for this event. Many churches put fruit, food and flowers in the church and they have a happy ceremony. They thank God for all the good things that he provides. Afterwards, Christians take the fruit, food, and flowers away. They give these things to poor people, to ill people, or to old people who live near the church. So Christians share the good things that God has given to them.

In the book of Matthew Jesus told a parable about the harvest. The parables describe the events that are to come at the end of the age. The parable is told in Matthew 13:24-30 and He explains the parable in Matthew 13:36-40. The story is about how weeds and wheat grow together and how at the harvest they are separated. This is an example of how God will separate the people at the end of the age. God will separate the people that belong to Him from the people who have rejected Him.

Chapter 24

The lamp stand in God's house has seven branches on it. On each branch there was a lamp. Each lamp burned oil made from the olive. The rules pertaining to the lamp stand are found in Exodus 27:20-21. The Israelites pressed the olives and made the oil by hand. This made the oil much purer and it did not give off much smoke.

In verses 5-9 we are talking about the showbread. This was special bread that only the priests could eat. (Matthew 12:4)

The bread is called showbread because it shows various things.

- ✓ It 'shows' that there were 12 tribes (or large families) in Israel. So it showed that God was with his people.
- ✓ The frankincense reminded (or 'showed') people what God had done for them. Frankincense is a sticky material that people get from trees. It has a sweet smell.
- ✓ They made the bread from the best flour. People must do everything as well as they can for God.

Blasphemy is when someone speaks badly against God. The person who committed blasphemy against God would be locked in prison until God told them what to do with him. The Lord told Moses that the man must die. The Israelites would take the man outside the camp, or city gate, and stone him to death.

In verses 17-22 the law here means if a man does damage he must undo the damage as best as he can. If a man kills another man on purpose then he too must die. God did not allow a murderer to pay money in order to save his life (Numbers 35:31). But the other types of damage a man causes he must repay. If a man kills another man's animal, then he must replace the animal. Verse 20 is called the "eye for an eye" verse. Its meaning is that if a man causes damage to another man or his property, then he is responsible for it. In other words the offender's punishment must have a proper relation to the offence. Some commentators think that the person responsible must suffer the same loss that he had caused. Thus, we have the course of an eye for an eye. Jewish Bible commentators do not agree with this position. They also say that there is no record in Jewish history of such a punishment. With the exception of murder, most people paid money for the damage that they had caused. (Numbers 35:31) So 'an eye for an eye' really means this: There is a more severe punishment if the damage is worse. The punishment is less severe if the damage is minor. And the judge must deal with everyone alike, whether they are important or not.

In Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus explained that the purpose of the law was to put a limit upon the punishment that a judge could enforce. God's people should not show cruelty but should deal with people kindly. People should be forgiving just as our Heavenly Father is forgiving.

Chapter 25

This chapter talks about special years in the Jewish calendar. As there is a Sabbath day there is also to be a Sabbath year. After the seventh Sabbath year there must be a Jubilee year which comes every 50th year. These holidays are about freedom. On the seventh year the land is free from seed and harvest. On the fiftieth year the people are free. The idea of the Jubilee Year reminds the Jews of these things.

- The LORD had made them free from Egypt.
- The land belonged to the LORD, and the Jews could not always own it.
- The Jews must trust God to provide their food.
- The land itself must be free from seeds and harvests in some years.

The Jewish people had to prepare for the Sabbath years and the Jubilee year. Life for the Israelites would be simple in the Sabbath years, as it was for them when traveling from Egypt to Israel. And for most people they would not live through more than one Jubilee year. We get a larger meaning of the Sabbath by understanding the Sabbatical years. The Sabbath is not only about a pause from our normal work, it become a special time when we worship God. It is especially about the rest and freedom that He gives His people. (Hebrews 4:9-11) in Matthew we learn that Christians have already started to receive that rest and freedom. (Matthew 11:28-30) This is only the beginning as in the

future God will defeat all His enemies. (1 Corinthians 15:20-28) Then God will establish His rule in the New Jerusalem, and His people will always have perfect rest and freedom as they worship Him. (Revelation 21:1-5)

We do not know whether a proper Jubilee Year has ever happened. The Bible does not mention any such occasion. The Jubilee Year was part of God's perfect plan for the Israelites. But perhaps it will not happen until God has created the New Earth. Then He will live among His people. And all these things will be possible.

The Jubilee Year began on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 23:26-32). So it began when God forgave his people's sins. And during that year, God gave freedom to all his people. They returned to the places where their families lived. If they had sold their family's land, God gave the land back to them again. God was making these things right again. And this should remind us that, in the future, God will make everything right.

Verses 32-34 There were 13 tribes, or large families, that came out of Egypt with Moses. Each tribe contained descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob. One of these sons, Joseph, had two tribes. They were called by his sons' names, Ephraim and Manasseh. 12 of the tribes had land in Canaan. One tribe, called Levi, had no land. Instead, they had homes in 48 cities in Canaan. The priests belonged to this tribe. And the other members of this tribe helped the priests. They were the Levites. The cities were called 'Levites' cities'. Most of the Jews possessed land. The Levites' possession was houses. Outside their cities, the Levites also had fields, which they could not sell. The Levites had two important jobs to do:

- ✓ They had to help the priests in the house of God.
- ✓ They had to teach the people God's laws and rules.

Chapter 26

The Israelites came from and were going to a land in which the people worshiped many gods. They made idols out of carved stone, wood, and metal, these idols represented the spirits that they were worshiping. In Genesis God created the heavens and the earth. Before God there was nothing made that was made. Therefore, all gods are manmade and false. The Lord God is the one God and there is none other like Him. He is the only God and the Israelites are His chosen people, they are to worship no other god.

From April to October the Israelites would beat the corn so that it would store better. People grew grapes to make their wine. Water often was not pure and would make the people sick. Therefore, they mostly drank wine because it was safer. So the promise from God was there would be plenty of bread and wine. But this depended upon their obedience to God. They would also be able to protect themselves against enemies. A

sword is a long knife that soldiers used. The wild animals were probably dangerous animals, for example lions and bears.

In verses 11-13 God reminds them about these things.

- Who he is.
- What he has done for them.

God also promised the people that He would live with them. When in the wilderness God lived in the tent of meeting and later when in Israel God lived in the Temple that Solomon built.

When the animals had heavy work the people would put yokes on them. Sometimes they would put these yoke on people too. While the Israelites were in Egypt they had to work hard because they were slaves. Now God had freed them and life was not so hard for them. Now the Israelites were not under the yoke of the Egyptians. They did not have to do heavy work for other people.

If God's people failed to be obedient to God then He would punish them. "My face will be against you" means this. A prideful attitude is not a good thing. It tends to make people think that they do not need God.

In verses 21-26 If the people continued not to obey God, worse things would happen.

- Wild animals would kill their children. These animals would include lions and bears. They lived near Jericho when David was king, 1 Samuel 17:34-36 and 2 Kings 17:25.
- Their enemies would kill them. These enemies lived in the countries round Judah and *Israel. There are examples in Judges 2:11-15, 2 Kings 17:18-20 and Isaiah 10:5-11.
- There would be bad diseases that would make people die. The diseases would kill many people. Also, their enemies would kill them.
- There would not be much food. One oven would contain bread for 10 families. That is not enough to satisfy their hunger. So they would remain hungry.
- There would not be much food. One oven would contain bread for 10 families. That is not enough to satisfy their hunger. So they would remain hungry.

Verses 27-33 If they continued not to obey God, even worse things would happen!

- They would have so little food that they would even eat their children. There are examples in 2 Kings 6:28-29 and Lamentations 2:20.
- God would destroy their high places. These were places usually at the top of hills, where people worshipped their false gods. They burned sacrifices to these gods on the altars.

- God would also empty the places where they worshipped him. He also would empty their land. Even their enemies would be surprised to see this.
- The Israelites would have to live in other countries. God would scatter them with his sword. 'God's sword' means the swords of the enemies that God sent against his people.

Every seventh year the land is supposed to rest. This means that the people did not plow and plant the land during that year. Every seven years is the Sabbatical year and the land is supposed to rest. The people did not obey God's laws. Therefore the land did not rest on the Sabbath Years. God would allow their enemies to carry them away and allow the land to rest. But although the people sinned, God promised not to destroy their families completely. God's people, the Israelites, would continue to exist. In the end, he would again rescue them and he would bring them back to their own country.

Chapter 27

When a person makes a special promise to the Lord to give another person, such as a son or daughter, then that person shall serve the Lord in a special way. The payment or worth of that person is something that commentators are not in complete agreement with.

There are two main ideas:

1. Perhaps this payment was to buy back the person from the LORD. Commentators who think this give the example of Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11:34-40. Jephthah gave his daughter to the LORD. Afterwards, he wanted to change his mind. If these commentators are right, then Jephthah had to pay this money instead. But the Book of Judges seems not to describe the mere payment of money.
2. Perhaps the person who gave the gift had to pay money too. The other person would work for God for his whole life. This is what happened to Samuel in 1 Samuel 1:21-28. If these commentators are right, then it was not possible to buy back a person from the LORD.

A shekel is a weight measurement of 0.4 of an ounce. Because women were not as strong as men they had a lower value. People who were promised to the Lord would help the priest in their tabernacle or Temple duties. In countries near to Israel the people would sacrifice their children to their false god's. The Lord did not allow this in Israel.

In verse eight the person here is someone who is offering to the Lord. That person must stand in front of the priest. The priest will then decide how much a poor man will have to pay.

God immediately accepts the gift that someone promises to Him. The gift becomes the property of God even before the priest receives it. The one giving the gift cannot change his mind or change the gift, such as offering a different animal, before he hands over the gift. If he tries to do that, then both animals belong to God. The gift could be an animal that is being offered as a sacrifice. The giver cannot buy that gift back. When he had promised it to God, God had accepted it and when God accepted it the animal became holy. God will not accept any other payment so the man has to sacrifice that animal. If a man gives an animal that is not acceptable as a sacrifice, such as a donkey or a horse, the priest cannot sacrifice it. Usually the priest would sell the animal at a proper value and the money would be used for the house of God.

If the giver becomes sorry that he gave the animal to God, then he can buy it back. But he must be aware that he has done something wrong. He is taking back something that he has given to God so he must pay back with a 20% penalty.

To dedicate means to sit aside and to make holy. If a man sells his house to be used by the priests then he must pay 20% above the price to buy it back. Once you have given something to God and take it back you must pay a penalty. A person can also give some of his land to God. Usually the family could regain the land in the jubilee year. If the giver wanted the land back before the jubilee year he would have to pay 20% above the cost.

The translation of gallon in Hebrew is “homer.” A “homer is close to fifty gallons. The Hebrew word of donkey is “homer.” A homer of seed is what a donkey can carry. Two things are not clear here to Bible commentators.

1. Who does work on the field that the man has dedicated to the LORD? Does the man who dedicated the field work on it? Then perhaps, he gives the harvest to the priests. Or do the priests work on the field? Bible students are not sure about the answers.
2. Who sells the field to somebody else in verse 20? Is it the man or the priests? Again, commentators are not sure about the answers. Perhaps this is about land that the man has already sold. Usually, he would own the land again in the Jubilee Year. But the man has given his rights over the land to the LORD, so he cannot buy the land back. So in the Jubilee Year, the land will become the LORD's.

The rules for a temporary gift of land to the Lord are as follows. Whenever someone bought land he only owned it till the jubilee year. In the jubilee year the land went back to the original owner. If the buyer of the land gave it to the Lord, it would be only a temporary gift until the next jubilee year.

The first born of cow or sheep belongs to the Lord. (Exodus 13;2 Exodus 34:19-20) If the first born of an animal is a donkey, then it is unclean. The owner can buy it back from the Lord. Exodus 34;20 says that the owner must give a lamb to the Lord. That is the price of

the donkey. If the owner does not want to buy back the donkey, he must kill it. The owner then may decide to again give the donkey to the Lord but it would not be used for a sacrifice. The only animals that the priests sacrificed were cows, bulls, sheep and goats.

It is more serious to devote something to the Lord. A person can buy back something dedicated to the Lord but he cannot buy back something devoted to the Lord. Something devoted becomes most holy to the Lord. Often, the people destroyed these things completely in order to hand them over to the LORD. (Joshua 6:17-19) We see this happening in certain battles. (1 Samuel 15:17-23)

In verse 29 if a judge decided that a person's crimes deserved death, that person was devoted to the Lord and could not be ransomed. The judge making that decision had handed that person over to the Lord. This judgment was only for the worst of crimes, such as killing someone or a person by purpose fighting against the Lord. (Leviticus 24:13-17)

A tithe is one tenth or 10%. The farmer's rod was used to make the animal pass under and into a narrow gate. This way the farmer could count his animals and every tenth one belonged to the Lord, that animal was holy. It was possible for a person to buy back a tithe at a 20% penalty.

God gave these rules to the Israelites because he wanted to have a relationship with them. He wanted to forgive their sins so that they could have fellowship with him. God wanted his people to be able to worship him in the beauty of holiness.