

LEVITICUS

INTRODUCTION

The book of Leviticus is the sequel to the book of Exodus. In Exodus information is given for the establishment of the Tent of Meeting, also called the Tabernacle. This, in later times came to be the Temple. Once this was presented to the people of Israel, through Moses' message in Exodus, the need to establish the means of orderly worship, led by priests was needed. Understandings of procedures in celebrations of special days were also to be defined. Hence the book of Leviticus is the logical sequel.

In Hebrew the title of the book was **adqiyw** which is the first word of the book, "*and he called.*" The name Leviticus comes from the Septuagint {LXX} which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text. The Vulgate (Latin translation) followed the LXX by entitling the book "Liber Leviticus."

The book is a carefully organized manual for priests as it explains how and why worship should be carried out in a given manner. It is not limited to this however, and has, within it, historical narrative which is woven into the priestly manual. For the reader the priestly activities are presented and the reader receives an understanding of the symbolic and ritualistic sacrificial activities that are to be conducted by the priests. It becomes a recognition of God's labors on behalf of his people and the responsibility of the worshiper and the one who ministers before the altar.

More recent studies have compared the text of Leviticus with similar information as found in near eastern texts of other religions of the time. Careful study and re-examination of near eastern texts have provided new directions along with questions of the understanding of the book as based on the Graf – Welhausen theory which has dominated the thought of scholars since ca. 1890.

Questions about the writer of the book have been raised. Traditional thought held that this book, along with the other four books of the Pentateuch, were written by Moses. In the 10th century Ibad Itarzam' of Cordoba felt it was written by Ezra. Most scholars seem to hold that it is of a late date, at which time the work of the priests was put into writing and edited by scholars who have never been identified.

The text has been carefully preserved. The finds of portions of Leviticus among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran are not a great help in determining the accuracy of the text. Portions of Leviticus were found in caves 1, 2, 6, 7, and 11. A Targum (*or, commentary*) of Leviticus was also found at Qumran. The text found in cave 11 appears

to have a different recension as its source. The copies from the other caves seem to divide between the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). This translation is based on the text of Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensis. A new and very comprehensive text based on a larger group of sources is being prepared and will be a great help to scholars upon completion.

Leviticus seeks to deal with the Holy and the Common as well as with the Clean and Unclean. What brought about the understanding of things being unclean is not clearly defined. Animals, items of clothing, etc. are simply declared to be either clean or unclean. It is interesting, as one reads the words of this book to note the contrasts: Holy/Common; Clean/Unclean.

The Tent of Meeting was the place before which sacrifices were to be made. God's presence was within the Tent of Meeting. One brought the sacrificial gift to the opening of the Tent of Meeting, thus presenting it to the presence of God who was symbolically within the Tent of Meeting. The tent was also called the Tent of Appointment, or, as it might be translated, The Rendezvous Tent.

The book can be outlined as follows:

I	Regulations concerning Sacrifice	1:1 – 7:38
	1. Instructions for the Laity	1:1 – 5:19
	2. Instructions for the Priests	6:1 – 7:38
II	Institution of the Priesthood	8:1 – 10:20
III.	Uncleanness and its Treatment	11:1 – 16:14
IV.	Prescriptions for Practical Holiness	17:1 – 27:34

There are times when the chapters and verses in Hebrew and the Vulgate do not correspond with the chapter and verse divisions in the English Bibles. When this is the occasion a notation is made, as follows: [H. 8:21].

LEVITICUS

CHAPTER I

I. Worship 1:1 – 7:38

A. The Law of Burnt Offerings 1:1 - 17¹

¹ The Lord called Moses, speaking to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying; “Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them: When any one of you makes an offering to the Lord, you must select an animal from your herds or flocks.

³ “If this offering is to be a burnt offering from one’s herd or flock. The animal to be selected is to be a flawless male, which is to be offered as a burnt offering at the door of the Tent of Meeting, for in that way the offering is presented to the Lord. ⁴ He will lay his hands on the head of the animal to be the burnt offering, and it will be deemed acceptable as a burnt offering to make atonement ² for him. ⁵ Then he will kill the animal before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons, the priests, ³ will present the blood by splashing it on the sides of (*or, over*) the altar. ⁴ ⁶ He will flay the animal and cut it into pieces, ⁷ and the sons of Aaron, the priest, are to put the fire on the altar and arrange the pieces on the altar in an orderly fashion. ⁸ The sons of Aaron, the priest, will lay the head and the suet (*or, pieces of fat*) in order on the wood that is burning on the altar, ⁹ (but the entrails and the hind legs are to be washed with water by the priests). ⁵ The priest is then to burn the entire sacrificial animal, as a burnt offering: a soothing aroma to appease the Lord. ⁶

¹⁰ In the event that the gift for the burnt offering is from the flock, from among the sheep or goats, a flawless male is to be offered. ¹¹ It is to be killed on the north side of the altar and its blood splashed by the priests on the sides (*or, over*) the altar. ⁷ ¹² He will cut the sacrifice into pieces (*or, sections*) with its head and its fat, and the priest is then to lay these pieces in an orderly fashion on the fire of the altar, ¹³ (but the entrails and legs are to be washed with water by the priest prior to burning them on the altar). These are to be a burnt offering, the fragrance of which is to be a soothing aroma for the Lord.

¹ The Law, in Hebrew Scripture explains how the people are to approach God with their sacrifices. These sacrifices were not in order to influence God so that they might receive the favor of God but rather that these offerings were a response to the gifts God has given them not only at that particular time but also a forward look to the benevolence of God toward the individual in the future.

² The Hebrew word translated as “accepted to make atonement” in earlier times perhaps meant “to rub,” but it came to mean “to wipe clean,” or “to efface.” It is not clear how the word developed to the point of meaning an expiation is to take place. The individual who brings the offering apparently is the one who paces his hands on the head of the animal, thus transferring the guilt from the individual to the animal. Some scholars feel it is the priest who does this. It would seem, however, that the movement of guilt from the one offering the animal and transferring it to the animal to be offered would be a more readily understood symbolic action.

³ The Hebrew text varies from the LXX and SP. Additionally some Hebrew manuscripts agree with the LXX & SP. This variant in the MT is used in this translation.

⁴ The blood was considered to be the life giving force. By the death and the splashing of the blood on the sides of the altar it is made evident to the one who provides the animal that the guilt has been transferred and now though death of that animal the atonement, before the Lord, has taken place.

⁵ The hind legs might have traces of excretion on them.

⁶ It was apparently felt that God literally enjoyed the aroma of the sacrifices.

⁷ The containers for washing were located on the west side of the altar. The ashes were in an ash pit on the east side of the altar. The ramp to the altar was on the south side.

14 “If the offering to the Lord is that of birds, then the offering is to be two turtledoves or two young pigeons. 15 The priest is to bring them to the altar and kill the bird by wringing its neck and burn it on the altar, letting its blood drip on the sides (*or, on*) of the altar. 16 He is to remove the crop and its contents (*or, the feathers*)⁸ and these are to be tossed on the east side of the altar, into the ash pit. 17 The priest is to tear the bird, by its wings, splitting the body, though not tearing it apart completely. At that time the priest is to burn the bird on the altar as a burnt offering; a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”

CHAPTER II⁹

B. Law of the Cereal Offering 2:1 – 16

1 “When anyone brings a cereal offering, as an offering to the Lord, this is to be a burnt offering comprised of finely ground flour.¹⁰ He is to pour oil on the cereal, and put frankincense on it also. 2 It is to be given to Aaron’s sons, the priests. The priest will then take a handful of the fine flour, oil and frankincense. This will be burned on the altar by the priest as a memorial portion dedicated to the Lord. 3 What is left of the cereal offering will be for the use of Aaron and his sons. It is the most holy portion of the offering that is being burned with fire to the Lord.

4 “When a cereal offering that has been baked in an oven is brought to the Lord, it is to be made of unleavened fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil. 5 If the cereal offering is baked on a griddle,¹¹ fine unleavened flour, mixed with oil is to be used. 6 The bread is to be broken (*or, crumbled*) into pieces and oil poured on it. It is a cereal offering. 7 If a cereal offering is presented which has been cooked in a pan it is to be made of fine flour with oil. 8 You are to bring the cereal offering to the Lord which is made, using these items. 9 The priest is to take a memorial portion of the cereal offering, burning it on the altar, an offering of fire which provides a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 10 Whatever remains of the cereal offering is to belong to Aaron and his sons. The most holy part of the offerings are to be burned before the Lord.

11 “No cereal offering which is to be brought to the Lord is to be made with leaven,¹² for you are to burn no leaven, nor honey as a burnt offering to the Lord. 12 As to an offering of the first fruits you are permitted to bring these to the Lord, however they will not be an offering on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 13 You are to season all your cereal offerings with salt but you dare not to let the salt of God’s covenant to be lacking from your cereal offering: All your offerings must be salted!¹³

⁸ The Hebrew text is uncertain. The Hebrew word is a hapax-legomenon. It seems that the word “contents” would suit the situation more readily than “feathers.”

⁹ Some scholars feel chapter 3 should precede chapter 2, making for a better read.

¹⁰ Cereal offerings were a very old form of sacrifice. Cf. Abraham & Melchizedek. (Genesis 4:7; 17:18) Oil apparently was thought to be a means of sanctifying the offering. Among the Hebrew people offerings also carried with them the thought of memorial and remembrance, moving the memory from the past to the present. The one bringing the offering is, in effect, present before the Lord in a real sense. The one bringing the offering is remembering and bitterly regrets the absence of those who are being commemorated. Official burnt offerings were always followed by a cereal offering.

¹¹ The griddle would be similar to a frying pan. Such a pan would be very expensive since it would be made of iron.

¹² If that were the case it would be in accordance with the sacrifices made by Egyptians, Canaanites and Babylonians who used leaven in their sacrifices.

¹³ Salt was a symbol of fellowship. To have shared salt with someone else was a way of declaring a permanent friendship.

¹⁴ “If you bring a cereal offering of first fruits to the Lord you are to offer grain as an offering from the new harvest, crushed from fresh heads of grain that have been parched over a fire. ¹⁵ You are to put oil and frankincense on the grain, for it is a cereal offering. ¹⁶ The priest is to bring it as a memorial portion of the crushed grain with the oil and frankincense for it is an offering by fire to the Lord.” ¹⁴

CHAPTER 3

C. Law of the Peace Offering 2:1 – 17 ¹⁵

¹ “If a man makes a sacrifice as a peace offering, if he offers an animal from his herd, it can be either male or female. It is to be flawless for it is an offering to the Lord. ¹⁶ ² He must lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Aaron’s sons, the priests, must throw the blood against the altar, on all sides, for this is a peace offering. ³ Since it is a peace offering which is to be a burnt peace offering the fat which covers the entrails is to be burned. ⁴ Additionally: the fat on the kidneys as well as the kidneys and the fat at the loins, along with the protuberance of the liver, are all to be burned along with the kidneys. ⁵ Aaron’s sons are to bring all these designated parts to the altar of burnt offering and these are to be placed on top of the wood in the fire: it is an offering by fire and a savory aroma to the Lord.

⁶ “If this offering, for a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, is an offering from the flock, it can be either male or female, but it must be flawless. ⁷ If a lamb is to be offered by the donor, himself, he is the one who will bring it as an offering to the Lord. ⁸ He is to lay his hands on the head of his offering and then slaughter it before the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons are to throw the blood against the altar, on all sides.

⁹ “If it is to be a peace offering to the Lord [*of a sheep*] to be given as a burnt offering the donor must set aside the fat, including the entire tail, ¹⁷ to be removed close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails along with all the fat that is connected to the entrails. ¹⁰ The kidneys, along with their fat, and the fat that is on the loins is also to be removed to be used in the burnt sacrifice. The protuberance of the liver and its fat is also to be included. ¹¹ The priest will burn it on the altar as food that is offered by fire to the Lord. ¹⁸

¹² “If the offering is a goat, the donor will offer it before the Lord ¹³ by laying his hand on its head and then slaughtering it before the tent of meeting and the sons of Aaron will throw its blood against the altar on all sides. ¹⁴ Then he will offer it as his offering, to

¹⁴ The farmer brought some of his crop which the Lord had given him, returning some of his agricultural produce as an act of thanksgiving which acknowledged the benevolence of the Lord.

¹⁵ This offering was optional. It served as a way of sustaining the covenant with God and the individual who made the offering. Possible reasons for making this offering were: 1. A confession offering. 2. As a free offering. 2. As a fulfillment of a vow. Cf. Leviticus 7. Scholars are divided as to the name that should be given to this offering: Peace Offering; Thank Offering; Recompense Offering; Wellbeing Offering; Shared Offering; Communal Offering.

¹⁶ There was a difference in these offerings. The worshiper could eat a portion of the meat that was being offered. In the two offerings described in chapters 1 & 2 the eating of meat was only permitted for the priests.

¹⁷ In the middle east there is a variety of sheep that are called “fat tailed or broad tailed sheep” which have huge fat tails which can weigh as much as 15 pounds. In the US the tail is usually docked, for reasons of cleanliness.

¹⁸ Some scholars feel this is an older law. They feel that later this law was altered to only describe a sacrifice of bread.

be a burnt offering to the Lord. The fat covering the entrails, and all the that that is on the entrails, ¹⁵ the kidneys along with all the attached fat, along with the protuberance of the liver are to be removed along with the kidneys. ¹⁶ The priest will burnt them on the altar as food offered by fire for a soothing aroma to the Lord.

¹⁷ “This will be a perpetual law to be carried out throughout all generations: Where ever you live, you are not to eat the fat nor the blood.” ¹⁹

CHAPTER 4

D. Law of the Sin Offering 4:1 – 5:13

1. Purification Offerings for Inadvertent Offences 1:1 – 35 ²⁰

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “Say to the people of Israel: If any of you sins inadvertently (*or, unwittingly*) in anything which has been condemned by the Lord and does one of them:

a. Inadvertent Offenses by the High Priest 1:3 – 12

³ “If an anointed priest (*or High Priest*) sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him make an offering of a faultless young bull to the Lord as a sin offering. ²¹ ⁴ He must bring the bull to the door of meeting, before the Lord, laying his hand on the head of the bull. ²² ⁵ The anointed priest is then to take some of the blood of the bull and bring it into the tent of meeting, ⁶ at which time the priest will dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of the bull’s blood before the Lord toward the entry of the Sanctuary (*or, in front of the curtain of the shrine.*). ²³ ⁷ At that time the priest is to put some of the blood on the horns ²⁴ of the altar of incense, which is located in the tent of meeting, before the Lord, ²⁵ and the remainder of the blood was to be splashed all around the base of the altar of sacrifice, which is located in front of the door of the tent of meeting. ⁸ All of the fat from the bull that is being sacrificed as a sin offering is to be removed from the carcass of the bull being offered as a sin offering, including the fat that covers the entrails, as well as the fat that is on the entrails. ⁹ The two kidneys along with their fat, the fat on the loins and the protuberance of the liver with its fat are to be placed with the

¹⁹ The fat that we consider as “marbling” in the meat could be eaten, but not the suet or leaf lard.

²⁰ The ritual of the sin offering was visible. The one who sinned symbolically transferred his sin on the animal that would be the sacrifice. This is a different approach from chapters 1 – 3, The problem is that of a sin which was done inadvertently or unintentionally. Sin, it was felt, disrupts the relationship between God and humanity and therefore must be atoned. To do that, purification must be made for the sin which has caused uncleanness. This is to take place even though the sin was committed inadvertently (*or, unintentionally*). This is the sole means by which the relationship between God and humanity might be restored.

²¹ Literally: “an offering of purgation.”

²² Laying one’s hand on the head of the bull implies that this animal which is brought to the entry of the tent of meeting is having the guilt of the sin transferred to it. The resulting sacrifice declares, symbolically, that the sin now is being destroyed through the death and burning of the animal.

²³ The curtain separated the holy place from the most holy place. Exodus 26:1. Cf. also Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:35.

²⁴ To have projections (horns or balls) protruding from the corners of an altar apparently was a common practice. Archaeologists have found Canaanite altars which have such “horns”. The significance is unknown.

²⁵ This altar of incense was located in front of the curtain that separated the holy from the most holy portion of the tent of meeting.

kidneys, ¹⁰ just as had been done with the fat of the ox ²⁶ in the requirements of the peace offering. These are to be burned by the priest on the altar of burnt offering. ¹¹ However, the hide of the bull, all its flesh, including its head, legs, entrails and dung, ¹² and all else that remains from the bull are to be carried out by the priest to a clean place outside the camp, to the site of the ash pit where they are to be burned in a wood fire.” ²⁷

b. Inadvertent Offenses by the Entire Camp 4:13 – 21

¹³ “If the entire camp (*or, congregation*) of Israel sins inadvertently and no one is aware of it, and they do anything which has been forbidden by the Lord they are guilty before the Lord. ¹⁴ When they become aware of their sinfulness before the Lord the entire camp (*or, congregation*) is to bring a young bull as a sin offering, bringing it to the tent of meeting.¹⁵ At that time the elders of the congregation are to lay their hand on the head of the bull which is to be slaughtered before the Lord. ¹⁶ At that time the anointed priest will bring some of the blood into the tent of meeting. ¹⁷ The priest is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord in front of the veil. ¹⁸ He will put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense which is before the Lord, in the tent of meeting, and the remainder of the blood is to be splashed all around the base of the altar of sacrifice which is in front of the door of the tent of meeting. ¹⁹ All of the fat is to be taken from the bull by the priest to be burned on the altar. ²⁰ The priest is then to deal with the bull as had been commanded concerning the sin offering, thereby making atonement for the congregation and they will be forgiven. ²¹ He is then to carry those portions of the bull that were not used on the altar of burnt sacrifice, outside the camp, as had been done in the sacrifice of sin offerings, burning it, and thus the priest will make atonement for the congregation and they will be forgiven.”

c. Inadvertent Offenses by the Tribal Leaders 4:22 – 26

²² “When the tribal leaders sin inadvertently by doing deeds which the Lord our God has commanded are not to be done, and consequently become guilty, ²³ because of actions that have been taken, and they have done what had been commanded not to do, ²³ or the sin they have been made aware of the sin they have committed: a faultless young male goat is to be slaughtered as a burnt offering to be presented to the Lord. ²⁸ ²⁴ They are to lay their hands on the head of the goat at the location where sacrificial animals are slaughtered before the Lord as a sin offering. ³⁵ The priest is to take the blood of the sin offering and, using his finger, is to place some blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offerings and is to splash the blood around the entire base of the altar. ²⁶ The priest is then to burn all the fat on the altar, just as would be done in a peace offering; and the priest will make atonement²⁹ for their sin and forgiveness will be received.”

²⁶ The Hebrew word translated as “ox” is a word that can be used for male or female. Why it was used here, when a male animal was required is a mystery.

²⁷ The items that were burned outside the camp were burned, not on an altar but on a sacrificial refuse heap. Something is being done on behalf of the person who sinned unwittingly, providing atonement, and the allaying of God’s wrath.

²⁸ A process of emotional and spiritual catharsis takes place by public admission of their iniquity and their movement to rectify the evil that had been done.

²⁹ The Hebrew word is an Akkadian loan word meaning to wipe away or to wipe clean. A similar word is found in Arabic which means “to clean.”

d. Inadvertent Sin by the General Populace 4:27 – 35

²⁷ “If any person of the general populace ³⁰ sins inadvertently by doing something which the Lord had commanded should not be done, that person is guilty. ²⁸ When the person who has sinned is made aware that such a sin has been committed, a flawless goat, male or female, is to be brought to the Lord because of the sin that has been committed. ²⁹ The individual is to place his hand on the head of the goat which is to be slaughtered as a sin offering. ³⁰ The priest is to take some of the blood, and with his finger he is to place some of the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and splash the remainder of the blood all around the base of the altar. ³¹ All of the fat is to have been removed from the goat which is now a peace offering and the priest will lay it on the altar to become a soothing odor to the Lord. In this manner the priest will make atonement for the sin and the one providing the offering will be forgiven.

³² “If he brings a lamb as a sin offering, he is to bring a faultless female lamb, ³³ and he is to lay his hand on the head of the lamb that is to be a sin offering. It is then to be slaughtered in the place where slaughtering normally takes place, for it is to be a burnt offering. ³⁴ The priest will then take some of the blood from the sin offering and, with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and splash the remainder of the blood around all sides of the base of the altar. ³⁵ All of the fat is to be removed from the lamb, in the same manner as is done in a peace offering, and the priest is to burn it on the altar, laying it on the fire, as is done in other offerings to the Lord, and thus the priest will make atonement for the sin of the person who committed it, and he will be forgiven. ³¹.

CHAPTER 5

1. Instances When a Sin Offering Might be Required 5:1 – 13

¹ [“If any sin takes place in which the person has not spoken up upon hearing an accusation against him, ³² he has consequently become a witness, whether he has seen or come to know about the matter, yet does not speak of it, – he will bear the iniquity. ² Or: if anyone has contact, by touching a carcass, whether a wild or domestic animal or a swarming creature, and is unaware of it, in addition to a ritual impurity, - that person will also be guilty. ³ Or: if anyone touches human uncleanness, no matter what sort it might be, though it is the sort that causes human uncleanness, and is unaware of it, upon learning of it that person is then guilty of uncleanness. ⁴ Or: when anyone makes a rash oath, for any purpose, be it for good or evil, if it is unrealized by the person uttering such an oath, and is made aware of it, that person is guilty. ⁵ When a person realizes his guilt in any of these situations, it is his responsibility to confess his sin which has been committed. ³³ ⁶ Under these circumstances the individual is to bring to the Lord, as a penalty for the sin that has been committed, a female from the flock, be it a sheep or a

³⁰ Literally: “people of the country.”

³¹ One of the weaknesses of the sacrificial system is seen in that the use of this system was rather mechanical in nature. There is no ritual to cover the sin of deliberate rebellion or conscious rebellion against God, such as adultery or blasphemy. It is worthy of note that there is a ritual of atonement, (*wiping out the evil*), for intentional sin. This comes later in the prophetic messages and the ultimate atonement through Jesus Christ.

³² Some scholars feel that verses 1 – 6 are a later interpolation.

³³ Verses 5 – 10 are instructions as to how these sin offerings are to be carried out in cases of inadvertent sin.

goat, as a sin offering, The priest is then to make atonement on behalf of the one who sinned.

7”In the event that the situation is such that the one who has sinned inadvertently is unable to afford to bring a sheep to the Lord as a sacrifice, as a penalty for the sin that had been committed, - two turtledoves³⁴ or two young pigeons are to be brought. One is to serve as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. 8 These are to be brought to the priest who will then offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. These are to be brought to the priest who will first offer one as a sin offering. He is to wring the neck of the bird but the neck is not to be severed.³⁵ 9 The priest is to sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the remainder of the blood is to be drained out at the base of the altar for it is a sin offering. 10 The second bird is to be offered as a burnt offering in accordance with the rules for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make atonement on behalf of the person who has committed the sin, and that person is then forgiven.

11 “If the one who has sinned inadvertently is unable to offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, he is to bring, as his sin offering for the sin he has committed, a tenth of an ephah (*or, about a quart*) of choice flour as a sin offering for his misdeed, but he is not to put any frankincense on the flour. 12 This is to be brought to the priest and the priest is to scoop up a handful of the flour as a memorial portion, and turn it into smoke on the altar, being joined with the other offerings that are being burned as a sin offering in the presence of the Lord. 13 It is in this manner that the priest will make atonement on behalf of the person who sinned inadvertently, whatever that sin might have been, that individual will be forgiven. Just as with the grain offering, (the remainder of the flour will become the possession of the priest [*for his use*]).”

E. Law of the Trespass or Guilt Offering 5:14 – 6:7

14 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 15 “Anyone who commits a trespass³⁶ or sins unintentionally in any matters dealing with the holy things of the Lord, you are to bring a sin offering as your gift to the Lord. It is to be a ram with no defects, from your flock, a ram or the equivalent converted into silver using the shekel of the sanctuary.³⁷ It is a guilt offering. 16 Restitution must be made for the holy thing to which you have not shown respect. Because of this you are to add one fifth to it and give it to the priest. The priest will then make atonement on your behalf with the sacrifice of the ram as a guilt offering and you will be forgiven.

17 [“If anyone among you sins without being aware of it, doing anything that is against the Lord’s commandments, doing that which should not be done, you have incurred guilt, and therefore deserve punishment. 18 You are to bring a ram from your flock, which is in perfect condition, or its equivalent, to the priest as a guilt offering, and the priest will make atonement on your behalf for the sin you unintentionally committed, and you will be forgiven. 19 It is a guilt offering because you have incurred guilt before the Lord.”]³⁸

³⁴ A turtledove is no doubt the genus ‘onomatopoeic.’ This would be a smaller variety of dove that made a low murmuring sound. The name is derived from the Akkadian name of the bird: ‘turtu.’

³⁵ TAN: “pinching its head at the nape of the neck without severing it.”

³⁶ MFT: “commit fraud.” Hebrew: “*ma’al*” which is an act of infidelity toward God.

³⁷ The silver shekel of the sanctuary was a standard weight of silver, the equivalent of the weight of eleven grains of wheat, of 2/3 of an ounce.

³⁸ Some scholars feel verses 17 – 19 are a later interpolation.

CHAPTER 6 ³⁹

¹ [H. 5:20] The Lord said to Moses: ² [H. 21] “When any of you commits sin and wrongdoing against the Lord by deceiving his neighbor, by committing fraud, embezzlement, breaking a pledge, ⁴⁰ theft, or oppression of his neighbor, ³ [H. 22] or has found what is lost but lied about it by swearing falsely in any of a variety of deceit that might be committed which would result in sin. ⁴ [H. 23] At that point, when one has sinned and become guilty, and would like to restore what has been taken by fraud, embezzlement, breaking a pledge, theft, or oppression of his neighbor, ⁵ [H. 24] or any thing wherein one has sworn falsely; as a reparation you are to repay the principle amount along with one fifth in addition as the total amount to be repaid. You are to make amends by repaying the owner as soon as you realize your guilt. ⁶ [H. 25] You must bring the priest a guilt offering to the Lord, as an evidence of your desire to make reparation, This guilt offering is to be a ram from your flock, in perfect condition, or the equivalent in silver, as a guilt offering. ⁷ [H. 26] The priest is then to make atonement before the Lord, on your behalf, and you will be forgiven for any of the wrongdoings you may have done, thereby incurring guilt.” ⁴¹

F. Ritual Instructions for the Priest 6:8 [H. 6:1] – 7:30

1. The Burnt Offering 6:8 [H. 6:1] – 13 [H. 7] ⁴²

⁸ [H. 6:1] The Lord said to Moses, ⁹ [H. 2] concerning Aaron and his sons, saying: “This is the ritual of the burnt offering which is to remain on the burning firewood (*or, hearth*) of the altar, all night, until morning, and the fire is to be kept burning all night. ¹⁰ [H. 3] The priest is to put on his linen vestments after he has donned his linen undergarments (*or, shorts*) which are to be next to his body. He is then to take the ashes that remain from the fire that has burned all night on the altar of burnt offerings, and place them alongside the altar. ¹¹ [H. 4] Then the priest is to remove the vestments he has worn and replace them with other (*or, clean*) garments, at which time he is to carry the ashes out to a clean place outside the camp. ⁴³ ¹² [H. 5] During this time the fire on the altar is to be kept burning. It is not to go out. Each morning the priest must add wood to the fire, then lay the offering to be burned on the fire, that the offering might be turned into smoke, which includes the fat pieces from the sacrifice which are offerings of wellbeing (*or, peace offering, fellowship offering*) ⁴⁴ ¹³ [H. 6] The fire on the altar is to be a perpetual fire, not allowed to go out. ⁴⁵

³⁹ Chapters 6 & 7 seem to duplicate chapters 1 – 5. Scholars have suggested numerous theories as to why this took place. No one knows why the author, or editor, of Leviticus chose to include this apparent duplication. Chapters 6 & 7 seem to be directed toward Aaron and his sons, where as, chapters 1 – 5 are directed toward the worshipers and how and why sacrifices are to be made.

⁴⁰ The Hebrew word is uncertain.

⁴¹ One of the questions that has not been resolved by scholars is: Does the animal that is being sacrificed die in the sinners place or does it provide compensation to God, for God’s law, because the sinner has made the sacrifice.

⁴² Leviticus makes clear that disobedience against the will and way of God has social and spiritual dimensions.

⁴³ The priest is to approach the altar in official robes. He is to leave the tent of meeting in other clothing if he goes outside the camp..

⁴⁴ Scholars differ in their attempts to translate the meaning of the Hebrew word for this burnt offering.

⁴⁵ The perpetual fire is a signal of the uninterrupted worship offered by wayward people. A different view is found in 9:24 and in II Chronicles 7:1.

14 [H. 7] “This is the ritual of the grain (*or, cereal*) offering: The sons of Aaron are to make this offering before the Lord, in front of the altar. 15 [H. 8] A handful⁴⁶ of choice flour is to be taken by the priest along with oil and frankincense that is on the offering, and this is to be the memorial portion which is to be turned into smoke as a soothing aroma to the Lord. 16 [H. 9] Aaron and his sons are to eat what is left of this grain (*or, cereal*) offering. It is to be eaten in the holy place as unleavened cakes (*or, bread*): in the court of the tent of meeting. It is in this place that it is to be eaten. 17 [H. 10] It is not to be baked with leaven (*or, yeast*), [God declares that he] has given it as their portion of his offering by fire: it is most holy, as holy as the sin offering and the guilt offering. 18 [H. 11] Every male among the descendants of Aaron is permitted to eat it, for this is perpetually decreed by the Lord, from the burnt offerings, to be theirs across all their generations. Because it is holy, anyone who touches these unleavened cakes will be holy.”⁴⁷

2. The Cereal Offering 6:14 [H.12] – 23[H. 16]

19 [H. 12] The Lord said to Moses: 20 [H. 13] “This is the offering that Aaron and his sons are to offer to the Lord on the day that he is to be anointed: ⁴⁸ one-tenth of an ephah of choice flour⁴⁹ as a regular offering, one half of which is to be offered in the morning and other half in the evening. 21 [H. 14] It is to be prepared with oil on a griddle, well soaked, as a grain offering of baked pieces⁵⁰ which are to be presented to the Lord as a soothing aroma. 22 [H. 15] So the priest, anointed from the Aaronic succession, will prepare it: it is the Lord’s, a perpetual sacrifice, to be burned entirely into smoke. 23 [H. 16] Every cereal (*or, grain*) offering of a priest must be totally burned. It must not to be eaten.”

3. The Sin Offering 6:24 [H. 17] – 30 [H. 23]

24 [H. 17] The Lord said to Moses: 25 [H. 18] “Speak to Aaron and his sons. Inform them of the ritual of the sin offering. The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the Lord at the spot where the burnt offerings are also slaughtered. It is most holy! 26 [H. 19] The priest who offers this sacrifice is to eat of it. It must be eaten in the holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. 27 [H. 20] What ever touches the flesh of this sacrifice will become holy. In the event that some of its blood is spattered on a vestment you must wash away the spatter of blood in the holy place. 28 [H. 21] A clay cooking pot in which it was boiled is to be broken.⁵¹ However, if it is cooked in a bronze pot, that pot is to be scoured and then washed with water. 29 [H. 22] All the males among the priesthood are to eat of it, for it is most holy. 30 [H. 23] [Under no circumstances is the flesh of any sin offering to be eaten if the blood thereof is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place. It is to be burned with fire.”]⁵²

⁴⁶ A more literal translation than “handful” would be: “remove some of the choice flour with a cupped hand.”

⁴⁷ MFT: “anyone who touches these most sacred offerings shall be taboo.”

⁴⁸ Literally: “on the day he is anointed.” This was the starting point and this offering then became a regular offering within the Hebrew sacrificial system.

⁴⁹ About two quarts.

⁵⁰ The Hebrew word is uncertain. Some scholars translate it as “a crushed cereal offering.”

⁵¹ The earthen pot would absorb the fat and therefore needed to be broken. The bronze pot could be scrubbed.

⁵² Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation.

CHAPTER 7

4. The Guilt Offering 7:1 – 10

¹ “This is the ritual of the guilt (*or, reparation*) offering. It is most holy. ² The place where the slaughter of the burnt offerings is to take place, the slaughter of the guilt (*or, reparation*) offering is also to take place. ⁵³ The blood of the animal that is sacrificed is to be scattered around the sides of the altar. ³ All of the fat is to be burned: the fat on the broad tail, ⁵⁴ the fat covering the entrails, ⁴ the two kidneys, along with the fat in the area of the loins, the appendage of the liver, which is to be removed along with the kidneys. ⁵ The priest is to burn them on the altar, turning them into smoke as an offering by fire to the Lord as a guilt (*or, reparation*) offering. ⁶ Every male among the priests is to eat of it: it is to be eaten in its entirety for it is most holy, and therefore must be eaten in the holy place.

⁷ “The guilt (*or, reparation*) ⁵⁵ offering is like the sin offering. There is one law governing both offerings. The priest who makes the atonement with this sacrifice is to have the meat for himself that is designated for the priest. ⁸ In these offerings, the priest who offers the burnt offering for anyone, is permitted to keep the hide of the sacrificial animal for himself. ⁹ Every cereal (*or, grain*) offering which is baked in an oven, or all that is prepared on a pan or griddle, [*whatever is not placed on the altar*] belongs to the priest who offers it. ⁵⁶ ¹⁰ All other cereal (*or, grain*) offerings, whether mixed with oil, or dry, are to belong to the sons of Aaron eternally.

5. Peace Offerings 7:11 - 21

¹¹ “This is the ritual for sacrifices that are peace (*or, well being*) offerings that are to be made before the Lord: ⁵⁷ ¹² If this is an offering for thanksgiving. Such an offering is to be made with flour mixed with oil, unleavened bread, spread with oil, and cakes of unleavened bread, made of choice flour, and soaked in oil. ¹³ Additionally, along with your offering of thanksgiving, or sacrifice of well-being, ⁵⁸ you are to bring some cakes of leavened bread. ¹⁴ From this offering the priest is permitted to eat one cake from each offering. This is to belong to the priest who dashes the blood on the altar as a sign of God’s providing well-being for the person making the offering. ¹⁵ The meat of this peace (*or, well-being*) offering, which is being slaughtered, for a thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being, is to be eaten on the day in which the sacrifice is offered. You must not eat any of flesh that remains on the following day. Nothing is to be kept until morning. ¹⁶ If this sacrificial offering is intended as a votive or thanksgiving (*or, a free-will*) offering, the flesh is to be eaten on the same day but if some remains it may be eaten on the following day. ¹⁷ In the event that any of the flesh still remaining, is to be burned as a sacrifice on

⁵³ The laying on of hands on the head of the animal which is to be sacrificed is not mentioned here, but no doubt was also administered. Additionally, it is not mentioned that only unblemished animals were to be sacrificed.

⁵⁴ There is a variety of sheep that has a broad tail which consists mainly of fat, in amounts that, on occasion, reach a weight of 15 pounds. This would be a sizable amount of fat which would keep the fire burning on the altar for a long time.

⁵⁵ Some scholars designate this offering to simply being a “purification offering.” That being the case the requirements for sacrifice are identical.

⁵⁶ Some of these offerings are simply raised up (*or, waved*) before the altar and thus, having followed the ritual, the bread would belong to the officiating priest.

⁵⁷ These offerings might be presented following the fulfillment of a vow, or as a voluntary offering based on gratitude.

⁵⁸ This no doubt includes confession and peace offerings.

the third day. ¹⁸ In the event that some of the flesh of this sacrifice is eaten on the third day, this is unacceptable, nor will it be credited to the person who made the original sacrifice. It will be an abomination. The person who eats that remaining flesh will incur guilt.

¹⁹ “Flesh that has touched anything that is unclean is not to be eaten, but is to be burned. Any other flesh, however, that is clean is permitted to be eaten. All who are [*ceremonially*] clean are permitted to eat that flesh. ²⁰ Anyone who eats of the flesh from the sacrifice of peace (*or, well-being*) who is unclean is to be cut off ⁵⁹ from relatives. ²¹ Anyone who touches any unclean thing – human or animal uncleanness – and then eats from the sacrifice of peace (*or, well-being*) ⁶⁰ is to be cut off from relatives.”

6. Concerning Blood 7:22 – 27

²² [The Lord spoke to Moses, ⁶¹ saying: ²³ “Say to the people of Israel: You must not eat any fat ⁶² or an ox, sheep or goat. ²⁴ The fat of an animal that died, not having been slaughtered, or was torn apart by wild animals, may be put to use for any purpose, but it is never to be eaten. ²⁵ Anyone who eats the fat of any animal that is given as a sacrifice to the Lord as a burnt offering – whoever eats of it is to be cut off from his relatives. ²⁶ You must never, under any circumstances eat any blood, whether from a bird or an animal, no matter where you live. ²⁷ Any of you who eat any blood are to be cut off from relatives.”]

7. The Portion of the Pieces of the Well-being Offering 7:28 – 36 (?)

²⁸ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁹ “Inform the people of Israel, saying: Anyone among you who would offer your sacrifice of well-being (*or, peace*) to the Lord must personally bring ⁶³ your offering to the Lord. ³⁰ This must be done with your own hands, bringing the offering to the Lord which is intended to be a burnt offering. You are to bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be elevated ⁶⁴ before the Lord. ³¹ The priest is then to burn the fat, turning it into smoke on the altar, but the breast is to belong to Aaron and his sons. ³² The right thigh (*or, leg*) ⁶⁵ of your offering of well-being (*or, peace*) is to be given to the priest as an offering. ³³ The individual, from among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood and fat of the offering of well-being (*or, peace*) is to have the right thigh as his portion. ³⁴ I have taken the breast that was elevated before the Lord, along with the thigh that is also offered by the people of Israel as their sacrifices of well-being (*or, peace*) and given these to Aaron the priest and his son as a deserved gift from the people of Israel which is to be perpetually continued. ³⁵ This portion is to be

⁵⁹ The Hebrew word “piggel” means, literally, “rotten.” Some scholars feel that person should be isolated lest, having disobeyed the law of God, he might be infectious. Other scholars feel this involves the loss of civil rights or excommunication. The penalty for disobedience must be paid.

⁶⁰ Some Hebrew manuscripts insert: “is a swarming thing.”

⁶¹ Some scholars feel verses 21 – 27 are a later interpolation.

⁶² The Hebrew word possibly means “suet.”

⁶³ Literally: “with his own hands.”

⁶⁴ In the past these were called “wave offerings” because of an implication that people felt was present in the Hebrew word.

⁶⁵ Archaeologists feel this was also a practice within Canaanite culture. In the excavations at Lachish near a Canaanite temple many bones of the right leg were found.

allotted to Aaron and his sons from the offerings that are to be burnt as offerings to the Lord, as priests. ³⁶ These are the commands of the Lord to be given to the people of Israel: an are to continue to be given them in all generations.

8. Conclusion 7:37 – 38

³⁷ This is the ritual of burnt offerings, cereal (*or, grain*) offerings, sin offerings, guild offerings. These are also the offering ordinances, and the sacrifice of well-being (*or, peace*). ³⁸ They have been commanded by the Lord, the commands having been given to Moses on Mount Sinai when he commanded the people to bring offerings to the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai.

CHAPTER 8

II. The Ministry 8:1 – 10:20

A. Consecration of Aaron, Priest of the Sanctuary 8:1 – 30

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² "Bring Aaron, his sons, the vestments, the anointing oil, the bull that is to be sacrificed as a sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of bread, ³ and assemble the entire congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting." ⁶⁶ ⁴ Moses did exactly as he had been commanded by the Lord. When the congregation had assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting, ⁵ Moses spoke to the congregation, saying: "This is what the Lord has commanded to take place at this time."

⁶ Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons into the presence of the people, at which time they were washed with water. ⁶⁷ ⁷ Moses placed the undergarments on Aaron and covered these with a vestment (*or, robe*) ⁶⁸ which was held in place by a sash that went around the priest. Next the highly decorated band of the ephod was fastened around him, which tied the ephod to him. ⁸ Moses then tied the breast-plate on him and placed the Urim and Thummim ⁶⁹ in the pocket of the ephod. ⁹ After this a turban was placed on Aaron's head. The turban had a golden rosette, ⁷⁰ for it was a holy crown. All this was done in accordance with the commandment of the Lord.

⁶⁶ As far as is known, there were no ceremonies of consecration of priests in the neighboring tribes. Within Judaism the priesthood was to become the responsibility of one who demonstrated a pure devotion to God, willing to be a servant of God, and approved by the general populace. To be a priest required the highest degree of moral authority. The writer assumes that the reader understands the significance of the word "vestments." Scholars assume that not all the thousands were to gather at the tent of meeting but that the elders of each tribe were there and could report what had taken place. There was an area of open space between the tent of meeting and the encampment by tribes. It was into this space that the people gathered – whether all the people or representatives. From our view of the situation either could have taken place.

⁶⁷ The washing of Aaron and his sons was ceremonial, a sort of baptism into the responsibility of being a priest. It was important that the priests be clean, externally and spiritually. To be casual had no place in the worship at the tent of meeting. The worship of God was considered to be a very serious matter and not to be approached lightly.

⁶⁸ The vestment was apparently either a striped weave or a checkered weave. This was held in place by a sash. Scholars assume that the sash must have been similar to the sash worn by Egyptian Pharaohs. Some translate the Hebrew word as a "cape." The turban was a length of cloth, wound around the head which had a small solid gold medallion on it which was located just above the forehead.

⁶⁹ The Urim and Thummim were means by which decisions were able to be made. There is no information concerning how it was used. Some translators do not call them by name, simply translating it as "the sacred lots."

⁷⁰ The golden rosette symbolized the holiness which the Lord had demanded. Some scholars translate the word as "the royal diadem (*or, sacred crown*),"

10 Moses then anointed the tent of meeting with the anointing oil ⁷¹ along with all its contents, and consecrated them. 11 He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar, seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, the basin and its base, thus consecrating them. 12 He poured some of the anointing oil on the beard of Aaron, anointing, to consecrate him. 13 Then Moses brought the sons of Aaron forward and clothed them in vestments, fastening sashes around them and tied caps on them as the Lord had commanded.

14 He then brought a bull for the purification offering, ⁷² and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull which was to be offered as the purification offering. 15 He then slaughtered the bull and Moses took the blood, and, with his finger put blood on each of the horns of the altar, thereby purifying the altar. ⁷³ He then poured out the blood at the base of the altar. Then he consecrated the altar to make atonement for it. 16 Moses removed all of the fat that was on the entrails (*or, intestines*), the long lobe of the liver, the two kidneys with their fat, and burned these on the altar. 17 He then took all that remained of the bull, that is, the hide, meat, offal, taking it outside the camp, this was burned with fire, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

18 Then he brought the ram which was to be the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 19 Then he slaughtered it and Moses splashed the blood round about the altar. 20 When he had hacked the ram into pieces Moses burned the head, the pieces, and the suet, on the altar as a burnt offering, a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. 21 After having washed the entrails and legs with water, ⁷⁴ Moses also placed these parts on the altar and the entire ram was turned into smoke, as a pleasing odor to the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

22 Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination. Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of this ram. 23 and it was slaughtered. Moses took some of the blood and placed it on the lobe (*or, the ridge*) of Aaron's right ear, right thumb and right big toe of Aaron's foot. 24 Then Aaron's sons were brought forward. Moses then placed some blood on the lobe (*or, ridge*) of the right ear of each of Aaron's sons. He also placed blood on their right thumbs and the big toes of their right feet. ⁷⁵ Then Moses threw the remainder of the blood against the altar on all sides. 25 He took the fat, the broad tail, ⁷⁶ and all the additional fat that was on the entrails, the long lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, along with the right thigh, 26 and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the Lord, he took one cake of unleavened bread, one cake ⁷⁷ of bread made with oil, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat and on the right thigh. 27 He placed all these items on the palms of Aaron as well as Aaron's sons, and

⁷¹ The anointing oil was prepared by a perfumer or apothecary from oil with a variety of scents which were added.

⁷² If God was to be present on this occasion the tent of meeting had to be purified.

⁷³ Scholars do not understand the purpose of the horns on the altar. Canaanite altars also have horns, one in each corner of the altar.

⁷⁴ These parts needed to be washed since they might be defiled with filth.

⁷⁵ To smear blood, symbolically, showed a connection to the sacrifice. They had been cleansed with water, and now connected with the sacrifice of ordination through the blood that was placed on them.

⁷⁶ There is a breed of sheep that has very fat tails. Some tails have weighed as much as 15 pounds. On rare occasions a device has been attached to the sheep to raise it up so the sheep can walk more easily.

⁷⁷ MFT translates the word as "pancake." The more descriptive translation might be "patty."

raised them as an elevation ⁷⁸ offering, [*thus dedicating these items*] before the Lord. ²⁸ Then Moses took these items from their hands and turned them into smoke on the altar, along with the burnt offering. These items of the ordination sacrifice were offered as a pleasing odor, an offering by fire, to the Lord. ²⁹ Moses then took the breast and raised it as an elevation offering before the Lord. This was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

³⁰ Then Moses took some of the anointing oil along with some of the blood that was on the altar, and sprinkled them on Aaron and his vestments. He did the same with the sons of Aaron, sprinkling them, and their vestments with anointing oil and blood. It was in this manner that he consecrated Aaron and his vestments, along with the consecration of Aaron's sons and their vestments

³¹ Moses said to Aaron: and to Aaron's sons, ""Boil the flesh at the entrance to the tent of meeting, and eat it there along with the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I have commanded: 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.' ³² Whatever remains of the flesh and the bread you are to burn with fire. ³³ You are to remain in the tent of meeting for seven days, remaining there until the days of your ordination are completed. It will take seven days for your period of ordination to be completed. Seven days is the length of time it will take to ordain you. ³⁴ What you have done today, the Lord has commanded must be done each day to make atonement for you. ³⁵ You must remain at the entrance of the tent of meeting, day and night, for seven days, performing what the Lord has charged, so that you do not die, for this is my command to you." ³⁶ Aaron and his sons did all that the Lord commanded them through the words of Moses.

CHAPTER 9

B. Ceremonies of Installation 9:1 - 24

¹ On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel. ² He said to Aaron: "Take a bull calf ⁷⁹ from the herd for a sin offering, ⁸⁰ and a ram for a burnt offering, both in perfect condition, and offer them to the Lord. ⁸¹ ³ Inform the people of Israel, saying: 'Take a male goat for a sin offering and a calf and a lamb, ⁸² both yearlings, in perfect condition, for a burnt offering, ⁴ and an ox ⁸³ and ram as offerings of well being (*or, peace*), to be sacrifices before the Lord, along with a cereal offering mixed with oil. Today the Lord will appear to you.'"

⁷⁸ In the past this was called a wave offering since the Hebrew word seems to include movement to and fro in its meaning. More recent scholarship has found that "as an elevation" more clearly presents the meaning of the Hebrew word.

⁷⁹ Judaism has felt that the command to Aaron to take a bull calf to be used as a sin offering is to atone for his having made the golden calf. Cf. Exodus 32. Judaism also feels that the command to use a ram for a burnt offering is a reference to Genesis 22.

⁸⁰ The sin offering was made with the thought of its including Aaron, his sons, and all the people of Israel. Even the most dedicated and consecrated people commit sin and need forgiveness.

⁸¹ Up to now Moses had made all the sacrifices. Now the one who is chosen will begin making the sacrifices and offerings for the people. Now Aaron and his sons are to be responsible in carrying out the commands of God concerning such matters.

⁸² To be called a lamb the animal had to be no older than one year. If it was older it would be considered to be mutton.

⁸³ The Hebrew word form does not designate the sex. Either male or female apparently could be used. This is also the case in verses 17 and 19.

5 They brought what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting. The entire congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. 6 Moses said, “This is what the Lord commands you to do, and the Presence of God (*or, the Glory of the Lord*) will appear before you.” 7 Moses then said to Aaron: “Move close to the altar, and sacrifice, as your own sin offering, and your burnt offering, thereby making atonement for yourself and for the people; and sacrifice the offering of the people and make atonement for them: as the Lord has commanded.”

8 Aaron moved close to the altar and slaughtered the calf for a sin offering, which was for himself. 9 The sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger into the blood and put it on the horns of the altar; the rest of the blood he poured out on the base of the altar. 10 The fat, the kidneys, and the appendage to the liver from the sin offering were burned on the altar and thus turned into smoke, as the Lord had commanded Moses. 11 The flesh and the hide were burned with fire outside the camp.

12 Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. Aaron’s sons brought him the blood and he splashed it against all the sides of the altar. 13 They brought him the burnt offering piece by piece, along with the head, which he turned into smoke on the altar. 14 He washed the entrails and legs and they were placed with the burnt offering and turned into smoke on the altar.

15 Next he presented the people’s offering. He took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and slaughtered it and presented it as a sin offering in the same manner as had been done with the first one. 16 He presented the burnt offering, and sacrificed it in accordance with the regulations. 17 He presented the cereal (*or, grain*) offering, taking a handful of the grain and turning it into smoke on the altar. This was in addition to the morning burnt offering.

18 He slaughtered the ox and the ram as a sacrifice of well-being (*or, peace*) for the people. Aaron’s sons brought him the blood which he splattered all around the sides of the altar, 19 the fat parts of the ox and ram, the fat tail, the fat covering the entrails, the two kidneys along with their fat, and the appendage to the liver were all to be placed on the altar. 20 First they placed the fat on the breasts which were on the altar, and the fat was turned into smoke. 21 The breasts and the right thigh were raised as an elevation (*or, wave*) offering ⁸⁴ before the Lord, by Aaron, as an offering before the Lord, in accord with the command of Moses.

22 Aaron then lifted up his hands toward the people, blessing them, and he came down after sacrificing the sin offering, and the offering of well-being. 23 Moses and Aaron entered the tent of meeting, and then came back out and blessed the people and the Presence of the Lord (*or, the glory of the Lord*) appeared to all the people. 24 [Fire flared from the Lord, and it consumed the burnt offering and the fat that was on the altar.] ⁸⁵ Upon seeing this, the people shouted ⁸⁶ and prostrated themselves on their faces. ⁸⁷

⁸⁴ See: footnote 56.

⁸⁵ Some scholars feel that this is a later interpolation.

⁸⁶ The Hebrew word translated “shouted” signifies a shout of gladness for this was the way God showed his approval.

⁸⁷ We see that worship and ritual end the pomp and ceremony and prayer then gives us an understanding of majestic holiness.

CHAPTER 10

C. Nadab and Abihu 10:1 – 20

¹ Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu ⁸⁸ each took his own censer (*or, fire pan*), and laid a glowing ember (*or, fire*) on it, along with incense, and presented an unholy offering (*of incense*) before the Lord. This however, was not what the Lord had commanded. ⁸⁹ ² Fire flashed from the presence of the Lord, consuming them, and they died before the Lord. ⁹⁰ ³ Moses then said to Aaron, "The Lord has said, 'I must be sanctified, among those who are near to me. I must be honored in the presence of the people.'" ⁹¹

Aaron was silent.

⁴ Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come here and take the corpses of your relatives ⁹² away from the front of the tent of meeting to a place outside the camp." ⁵ They then came and carried them, by their vestments (*or, coats*) to a place outside the camp, and Moses spoke, ⁶ to Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, saying, "Do not dishevel your hair (*or, bare your heads*) or tear your vestments, lest you die, for then the wrath of God will strike the entire congregation. ⁹³ This was the work of the Lord. ⁷ Do not go beyond the door of the tent of meeting or you will die. The anointing oil from the Lord is on you." They did exactly as Moses had said.

⁸ [The Lord spoke to Aaron: ⁹⁴ ⁹ "Neither you, nor your sons, are to drink any wine or intoxicating drink, when you enter the tent of meeting, so you do not die. This is a statute that is to remain permanently throughout all generations. ¹⁰ You must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean. ¹¹ You must teach the people concerning all the commandments and statutes which the Lord has told them through Moses."]

¹² Moses said to Aaron Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, ⁹⁵ "Take a grain (*or, cereal*) offering that is left over from the offerings to the Lord, by fire, and eat it, and eat unleavened, beside the altar, for it is most holy. ¹³ You are to eat it in a holy place, for it is deservedly yours, and your sons, intended to be for you, from the offerings by fire to the Lord. This is my command! ¹⁴ However, the breast is to be an elevated

⁸⁸ These are the two oldest of Aaron's four sons. Tragedy and triumph go hand in hand in the Bible and in all of life.

⁸⁹ In doing this, which had not been commanded by the Lord, these sons of Aaron committed a sacrilege, for such action was considered to be 'unholy' or 'illicit.' The exact nature of their offence is obscure.

⁹⁰ Divine retribution came quickly for these two sons of Aaron when they approached worship, and God, refusing to follow the guidelines.

⁹¹ The German writer, Heinrich Heine wrote: "God will forgive me. That is his job." This passage is in sharp contrast.

⁹² They were first cousins. For Aaron and his remaining sons to remove the corpses would render them unclean, and they would not be able to do their duties in the tent of meeting.

⁹³ Total dedication was required of Aaron and his sons, as priests. Therefore they were told that they were not only not to touch the corpses, but also not to mourn, nor show any signs of grief.

⁹⁴ Some scholars place verses 8 – 11 after verse 20, for a better read. If this is the case there is no reference to any feelings of guilt because of the death of Nadab and Abihu, but rather simply giving suggestion about personal appearance. Other scholars feel these verses are a later interpolation.

⁹⁵ Verses 12 – 15 seem to be an interruption of the story.

offering, and the thigh is to be a gift (*or, peace*) offering are both of which are able to be eaten in any clean place, for these have been assigned to be for you, and your sons and your daughters who reside with you, from among the sacrifices that are to be made, as offerings for the well-being (*or, peace*) of the people of Israel. ¹⁵ The thigh that is offered is to be elevated (*or, uplifted*). These offerings are to be celebrated together, the thigh and the breast, with an offering of sacrifice by burning the fat, to be an elevated (*or, uplifted*) offering before the Lord. These are allotted to you, for they are deserved, and are to be so designated: for this is the Lord's command."

¹⁶ [Then Moses inquired carefully about the goat used in the sin offering, learning that it had already been burned. ⁹⁶ Moses was angry toward Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, and said, ¹⁷ "Why was it that you did not eat the sin offering in the sacred area? It is most holy and God has declared that it should be given to you that you might bear the guilt of (*or, remove the guilt of*) the congregation, thereby making atonement on their behalf before the Lord. ¹⁸ The blood of the goat was not brought into the sanctuary. It was your responsibility to eat (*or, you should have eaten*) the flesh of this sacrifice in the sanctuary as I had commanded." ¹⁹ Aaron responded to Moses, saying: "See: today they offered their sin offering and yet such things have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today would it have been acceptable to the Lord?" ²⁰ When Moses heard that he agreed.

CHAPTER 11

III. The Dedication of National Life (*or, Laws of Purification*) 11:1 – 15:33

A. Clean and Unclean Animals 11:1 – 47

¹ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ² "Say to the people of Israel. 'These are the creatures you may eat among all the land animals. ³ Among the land animals you may eat animals that have a parted hoof that is completely divided, and chews it's cud. These animals you are permitted to eat. ⁴ However, among those who chew their cud or have a parted hoof, you are not to eat the following: the camel, because while it chews it's cud it does not have a parted hoof and therefore is unclean to you, ⁵ the rock badger, ⁹⁷ because it chews it's cud but does not have a parted hoof and therefore it is unclean to you, ⁶ the hare, ⁹⁸ because it chews it's cud but does not have a parted hoof and therefore is unclean to you, ⁹⁹ ⁷ the pig, for while it has a parted hoof it does not chew it's cud and therefore is unclean to you. ⁸ You are not to eat the flesh of these animals nor are you to touch their dead carcasses, for they are unclean to you.

⁹ "Among the creatures that live in the water you may eat all the fish that have fins and scales. ¹⁰ Any other creature which is found in the sea or streams that has no fins or scales, or the creatures that swarm in the water, all of which are detestable to you and are not to be eaten. ¹¹ These will always remain as detestable to you, and the flesh is not to be eaten. The carcass is to be regarded as detestable. ¹² Everything in the water that has no fins and scales is detestable.

⁹⁶ Some scholars feel verses 16 – 20 are a later interpolation.

⁹⁷ Genus: *Hydrotus*.

⁹⁸ Genus: *Lepus europaeus*.

⁹⁹ Moses was in error since the hare wiggles its nose which might give the impression of chewing its cud but does not chew cud.

13 “These are the birds that you will consider to be detestable. They are not to be eaten. They are detestable. ¹⁰⁰ The eagle, the black vulture, the osprey, ¹⁴ the buzzard, every variety of kite, ¹⁵ every variety of raven, ¹⁶ the ostrich, the night hawk, the sea gull, every variety of hawk, ¹⁷ the small owl, the fisher owl (*or, cormorant*), the long-eared owl, ¹⁸ the barn owl, the tawny owl, the Egyptian vulture, ¹⁹ the stork, every variety of heron, the hoopoe, and the bat.

²⁰ “All winged insects that move on all four legs are to be detestable to you. However, among the winged insects that move on four feet you are permitted to eat those who have jointed legs above their feet, so that they can leap on the ground. ²² Of these you are allowed to eat the following: all varieties of desert locust, all varieties of bald locust, the cricket, and all varieties of the long and short horned grasshopper. ²³ All other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you.

²⁴ “By eating these you will become unclean, and whoever touches the carcass of any of these animals will be unclean until the evening. ²⁵ Anyone who carries any part of the carcass of any of these animals must wash his clothing and remain unclean until evening. ²⁶ Every animal that has divided hoofs but they are not completely divided, or does not chew its cud is unclean to you. Every person who touches one of these animals is unclean. ²⁷ All creatures that walk on their four paws, walking on all fours, are unclean to you, and whoever touches the carcass of any of these animals is unclean, and must wash his clothing and be unclean until evening. ²⁸ Anyone who carries the dead carcass of any of these animals is unclean and must wash his clothing and remain unclean until evening. To you these animals are all unclean.

²⁹ “These are the unclean creatures that swarm on the earth: the mole rat, ¹⁰¹ the mouse, and every variety of dabb lizard, ¹⁰² ³⁰ the gecko, the monitor lizard, ¹⁰³ the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. ³¹ These are all unclean to you, along with everything that swarms. Whoever touches one of them when they are dead will be unclean until evening. ³² Anything on which any of these unclean creatures falls becomes unclean, whether it is an article made of wood, cloth, skin, or sacking, or any article, regardless of its purpose, it is to be dipped into water and it remains unclean until evening, at which time it will be declared clean. ³³ If any of these creatures falls into any earthen vessel, its entire contents will be unclean, and you are to break the earthen vessel. ³⁴ Any food which could be eaten is unclean if water from one of these unclean vessels touches the food, and any liquid that could be drunk, if it is in such a vessel, will be unclean. ³⁵ Everything on which a portion of a carcass falls is unclean, whether an oven, or a stove, - - it is to be broken into pieces. These are all unclean, and they will remain unclean for you. ³⁶ On the other hand, a spring or a cistern which holds water will be clean, while whoever touches the carcass that is within that spring or cistern will be unclean. ³⁷ In the event that any part of an unclean carcass falls on seed that is kept to be sown, it is clean: ³⁸ but if water is put on the seed and any part of a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.

³⁹ “If any animal which is eatable dies, whoever touches the carcass will be unclean until evening. ⁴⁰ Whoever eats of its carcass must wash his clothing and will be

¹⁰⁰ The identification of some of the birds in verses 13 – 19, based on the Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁰¹ This has often been translated, incorrectly, as “weasel.”

¹⁰² The identification of the creatures in verses 29 – 38 is often uncertain.

¹⁰³ This has often been translated as “crocodile.”

unclean until evening, and those who carry the carcass must wash their clothing and be unclean until evening.

⁴¹ “All swarming creatures on the earth are detestable and are not to be eaten. ⁴² Whatever slithers when it moves,¹⁰⁴ and whatever moves on all fours, or whatever has many feet, all the creatures that swarm on the earth, are not eatable, for they are detestable. ⁴³ You are not to make yourselves detestable with any creature that swarms. You are not to defile yourselves with them and thus become unclean. ⁴⁴ I am the Lord your God; therefore sanctify yourselves, be holy, for I am holy. Do not make yourselves detestable with any swarming creature that moves on the earth. ⁴⁵ I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You are to be holy, for I am holy!

⁴⁶ “This is the law that pertains to land animals, birds, and every living creature that moves through the water, and every living creature that swarms upon the earth, ⁴⁷ so that you can make a distinction between what is unclean and what is clean, and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that is not to be eaten.”

CHAPTER 12 ¹⁰⁵

B. Purification of Women after Childbirth 12:1 – 8 ¹⁰⁶

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “Tell the people of Israel; ‘When a woman has borne ¹⁰⁷ a male child, she will be considered to be ceremonially unclean for seven days, as in the time of her menstruation, when she is also considered to be unclean. ³ On the eighth day the flesh of the foreskin of the male child is to be removed by circumcision. ¹⁰⁸ ⁴ Then she is to remain at a place of ceremonial uncleanness for thirty-three days ¹⁰⁹ during which time she is not to touch any holy things, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed. ⁵ However: if the child is a girl, she will be unclean for two weeks, just as she would during the time of her menstruation. In addition she is to remain in a place of ceremonial uncleanness for the period of blood purification for sixty-six days.

⁶ “When the time of her purification is complete she, whether following the birth of a son or daughter, must bring a yearling lamb to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting to become a burnt offering. ¹¹⁰ ⁷ The priest will offer it before the Lord, thereby making atonement for her. At that time she will be cleansed and the period of blood purification is ended. This is the law that prevails whether the child is male or female. ⁸ In the event that she is unable to afford a lamb, she is to bring two turtle-doves of two young pigeons, one to become a burnt offering, and the other as a sin offering, and thereby the priest will make atonement on her behalf, and she will be cleansed.”

¹⁰⁴ Literally: “moves on its belly.”

¹⁰⁵ Some scholars feel this chapter should follow 15:30.

¹⁰⁶ The contents of this chapter are not intended to say that childbirth is sinful, or a result of sin. Its real concern is with the secretions that occur. Therefore this chapter deals with bodily secretions.

¹⁰⁷ The Hebrew word, “ragria” literally means “bring full seed.”

¹⁰⁸ Circumcision is a mark of inclusion into the fellowship of the congregation. Cf. Genesis 21:4; Exodus 4:25. It is thought that the 8th day is the best for the circumcision of a child. Cf. a good commentary for thoughts from the medical profession concerning circumcision.

¹⁰⁹ Literally: “for blood purification.” This is also the case in verse 5.

¹¹⁰ So: literally. Perhaps it might be stated better by using the words: “an offering of purification.”

CHAPTER 13

*C. Diagnosis and Treatment of Infectious Skin Diseases 13:1 – 14:47*¹¹¹

1. Diagnosis 13:1 – 59

¹ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: ² “When a person has a swelling on his body, or has an eruption of a spot on the skin, that individual is to be brought into the presence of Aaron the priest or one of his sons (*or, descendants*) who are priests. ³ The priest must examine the diseased skin on that individual’s body and the hair gives evidence of disease, having turned white, and the diseased area appears to have gone beyond the epidermis, after having examined the afflicted area, the priest will announce his decision, that the disease is infectious,¹¹² and is to be declared by the priest to cause the individual to be ceremonially unclean. ⁴ If the spot on the skin is white but does not appear to have gone beyond the epidermis, and the hair has not turned white, the priest will have the person isolated for seven days. ⁵ The priest will re-examine the individual on the seventh day, and, having examined, has determined that the disease has abated, and thus has not spread to any other area of the skin, he will again be isolated by the priest and he will wash his clothes and be clean. ⁶ The priest will again examine him on the seventh day, and declare that this individual as ceremonially clean, for it is only an eruption and he is ordered to wash his clothing and be clean. ⁷ However, if the eruption has spread in the skin after his cleansing, even though he has shown himself to the priest, he must, yet again, show himself to the priest. ⁸ The priest must make another examination, and if the eruption has spread in the skin the priest will declare that the individual is unclean, having an infectious skin disease.

Psoriasis ⁹ “When a person contracts an infectious skin disease he is to be brought to the priest. ¹⁰ The priest must make an examination, and if there is a white swelling in the skin and the hair in that area has turned white, and there is raw flesh visible in the swelling, ¹¹ it is a chronic infectious skin disease in the skin of his body, and the priest must declare him to be ceremonially unclean but will not confine him, for he is unclean. ¹² If the disease breaks out in the skin, so that the entire skin of the person is afflicted, from head to foot, in so far as the priest can see, ¹³ the priest must make an examination, and the priest will announce that it is an eruption that has not spread on the skin, and the priest must announce him as being ceremonially clean of the disease, since it has all turned white, and thus he is ceremonially clean. ¹⁴ But: if raw flesh appears on that individual he will be declared to be ceremonially unclean. ¹⁵ The priest must examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be ceremonially unclean. Raw flesh is ceremonially unclean, for it is evidence that this is an infectious skin disease. ¹⁶ However, if that raw flesh again turns white, he is again to be presented to the priest. ¹⁷ The priest is to give him an examination and if the priest discovers that the raw flesh has turned white (*or, healed*), the priest will then pronounce the person who had been ceremonially unclean due to an infectious disease, to be ceremonially clean. He is clean!

¹¹¹ The word used in Hebrew is “cara’arh.” It describes a lesion, scale, discolorment and other general skin problems. When Jerome translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin (the Vulgate) he used the Latin word “lepra.” From that time on the skin problems described in this chapter were all classed as leprosy.

¹¹² The Hebrew word is usually translated as “leprosy.” This Hebrew word is a word describing numerous skin diseases and thus is not clearly understood.

Boils ¹⁸ “When a person has had a boil on his body that has healed, ¹⁹ and a white or reddish spot appears in the place where the boil had been, it must be shown to the priest. ²⁰ The priest must make an examination and in the event that it seems that the change in appearance of the skin seems deeper than the epidermis, and its hair has turned white, the priest is to declare that individual to be ceremonially unclean, because he has an infectious skin disease which has broken out in the former boil. ²¹ On the other hand, if the priest examines it and finds that the hair on it has not become white, nor does the spot seem deeper than the epidermis, but has abated, the priest is to isolate him for a period of seven days. ²² If, during this time, the problem has spread, the priest must declare him to be ceremonially unclean. It is diseased. ²³ If the spot remains unchanged, not having spread, it is the scar of the boil, and thus the priest must pronounce him ceremonially clean.

Burns ²⁴ ”If the body has a burn, with raw flesh from the burn becoming a spot that is reddish white or white, ²⁵ the priest must examine it. If the hair on the spot has turned white and the problem seems to be deeper than the epidermis, it is an infectious skin disease. ²⁶ The priest must examine it, along with the hair on the spot. If the hair is not white and the problem does not appear to be deeper than the epidermis, it has abated and the priest must isolate him for a period of seven days. ²⁷ The priest must examine him after the seven days of isolation and if it is spreading on the skin the priest must declare him to be ceremonially unclean. This is an infectious skin disease. ²⁸ If there has been no spread of the problem on the skin, it has abated, since it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest must declare him to be ceremonially clean for it is the scar of the burn.

Scalp afflictions ²⁹ “When a man or a woman exhibits a diseased condition on their scalp or facial hair, ³⁰ the priest must examine the disease. If it, upon observation seems to be deeper than the epidermis, and the hair in it is yellow in color, and thin, the priest will declare that individual to be ceremonially unclean. It is an infectious disease of the head and facial hair. ³¹ If the priest examines the itching disease (*or, scabies*), and it seems to be no deeper than the skin, the priest is to isolate the person for a period of seven days. ³² On the seventh day the priest is to examine the itch, to determine that the itch has not spread, nor has any yellow hair within it. It is also to be determined that it is not deeper than the skin. ³³ Men are to shave but not shave where the itch is located. The priest is to isolate the person for an additional seven days. ³⁴ On the seventh day the priest must examine the itch and if it has not spread in the skin, and appears to be no deeper than the epidermis the priest is to declare that individual to be ceremonially clean. The person must wash his clothing so it is clean. ³⁵ However: if the itch spreads in the skin, after the pronouncement that the person was clean, ³⁶ the priest must examine him and if the itch has spread to other portions of the skin the priest need not look for yellow hair for that person is ceremonially unclean. ³⁷ When it is judged that the itch has abated, and black hair has grown in it, the itch is declared healed and the priest will pronounce him ceremonially clean.

Patches of white skin ³⁸ ”When a man or woman has patches of white on the bodily skin, ³⁹ the priest is to make an examination and if these spots on the skin are dull white, they are a rash that has broken out. That person is ceremonially clean.

Baldness ⁴⁰ ”If anyone loses the hair on his head, he is simply bald and is ceremonially clean. ⁴¹ If hair is lost from the forehead and temples, he has baldness of the forehead but he is ceremonially clean. ⁴² If there is a reddish-white diseased spot on the

bald head or bald forehead, it is an infectious disease that is breaking out on a bald head or bald forehead. ⁴³ The priest must examine the person with this ailment, and if there is a diseased swelling which is reddish-white, on the bald head or bald forehead, which resembles an infectious disease, can be found on the skin or body of persons, ⁴⁴ that person has an infectious disease and is ceremonially unclean. He is to be pronounced ceremonially unclean by the priest. The disease is on his head.

Treatment of people with infectious diseases ⁴⁵ “Those people who have an infectious disease are to wear torn ¹¹³ clothes and the hair on his head is to be disheveled. The mustache is to be covered. ¹¹⁴ He is to cry out: “Unclean, unclean.” ⁴⁶ He is required to remain unclean for as long as he has the infectious disease, for he is ceremonially unclean. He must live alone, residing outside the camp.¹¹⁵

Unclean clothing ⁴⁷ “With clothing: – when an infectious disease appears in woolen or linen cloth, ⁴⁸ whether in the warp or woof of linen or wool, or in leather, or anything made of leather, ⁴⁹ if the disease appears in the form of greenish or reddish color in the garment, it is an infectious disease, and the garment must be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰ The priest is to examine the disease, and then lay the diseased garment aside for seven days. ⁵¹ He must examine the disease on the seventh day. In the event that the disease has spread during the intervening time, whether in the warp or woof of linen or wool, or anything made of leather, ⁵² the article of clothing is to be burned in the flames since it carries an infectious disease.

⁵³ “On the other hand, if the priest examines the garment and the disease has not spread in the clothing, be it warp or woof, or anything made of leather, ⁵⁴ the priest is to command that the article which appeared to have the infectious disease is to be washed, and it is to be laid aside for another seven days. ⁵⁵ The priest must then examine the article which appeared to have the infectious disease, after having been washed. If the diseased spot has not changed color or spread, it is unclean and is to be burned in the flames. It makes no difference if the infectious spot is on the outside or the inside of the garment.

⁵⁶ “If the priest makes an examination and the infectious disease has abated after having been washed, he is to tear the spot out of the cloth, whether warp or woof, or out of leather. ⁵⁷ In the event that it reappears in the garment, warp or woof, or anything made of leather, that garment in which the infectious disease appears, it is to be burned in flames since it carries an infectious disease. ⁵⁸ However, if the garment, warp or woof, or anything made of leather, in which the infectious disease has disappeared, when washed, it is to be washed a second time and then it is ceremonially clean.

Summary ⁵⁹ ”This is the ritual that is to be followed to determine whether cloth, of wool or linen, either warp or woof, or anything of leather, to determine whether any article of clothing is clean or unclean.”

¹¹³ The Hebrew word used here is only used in the book of Leviticus. A different word is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. If there was a difference in meaning in these two words for “tear” it has become lost over the centuries.

¹¹⁴ These are all ways in which one showed lament because of a death. In effect, the person who was declared unclean was dead to Hebrew society.

¹¹⁵ There were designated places outside the camp that were declared “clean.” There were also “unclean” places. This is where the people with infectious diseases had to live, as outcasts.

CHAPTER 14
2. Treatment 14:1 -52

a. The Beginning of the Treatment Ritual Outside the Camp 14:1 - 9

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “When it is reported to the priests, this is to be the ritual to be followed when dealing with infectious diseases for the time ¹¹⁶ of cleansing; The person’s healing is to be brought to the priest’s attention; ¹¹⁷ ³ and as a result of this information the priest must go to the camp of the person who is reportedly healed. The priest must examine the individual, and if the priest feels he is actually healed of his infectious disease, ⁴ the priest will demand that two clean, live birds are to be brought, along with cedar-wood, crimson yarn, ¹¹⁸ and hyssop. ¹¹⁹ ⁵ The priest will command that one of the two live birds is to be slaughtered, over fresh water which is in a clay pot. ¹²⁰ ⁶ The priest will then take the living bird, along with the cedar-wood, the scarlet yarn, and the hyssop, and dip them into the blood of the bird that had been slaughtered over the fresh water. ⁷ At this time he will also sprinkle some of the bloody water on the person who has been healed of the infectious disease seven times, after which the priest will declare that the individual is now ceremonially clean. The live bird is also released at this time. ¹²¹ ⁸ The individual is now to be cleansed by washing his clothes, shaving his hair, and bathing himself. After that he is clean. Then he will enter the camp, but must remain outside his tent for seven days. ⁹ On the seventh day he will again shave the hair on his head, his beard and his eye-brows. All his hair is to be shaved. Then he must again wash his clothes, bathe himself in water, and he will be clean.”

b. The Continuing of the Treatment Ritual at the Camp 14:10 -

¹⁰ On the eighth day he is to bring two yearling male lambs, in perfect condition, and one yearling ewe lamb, also in perfect condition, and a grain offering amounting to six pints of finely ground grain, ¹²² mixed with oil, and a pint of oil. ¹²³ ¹¹ The priest who cleanses will place the person to be cleansed, along with the offerings that have been brought, before the Lord, at the door of the tent of meeting. ¹² The priest is then to take one of the two male yearling lambs, offering it as a guilt offering along with the pint of oil, and lift them up as a celebration (*or, elevation*) offering ¹²⁴ before the Lord. ¹³ He is to slaughter the lamb in the place where the slaughter of a sin offering, as a burnt offering, normally takes place, for the sin offering and the guilt offering belong to the priest, and

¹¹⁶ Literally: “day.” Since the cleansing ritual was to take place for several days the word “time” is used.

¹¹⁷ Literally: “is to be brought to the priest.” Since verse 3 says the priest is to go to the person, it seems logical to make an emendation in the translation.

¹¹⁸ The Hebrew word, literally, gives the idea of “stuff.” Since crimson yarn is found in several other writings within Hebrew Scripture, the word “yarn” was selected.

¹¹⁹ The exact vegetation that is to be brought is unclear. Many scholars feel the vegetation mentioned here is marjoram. The exact significance of some of these items is not clear. When the priest declares that the person no longer has the infectious disease the ritual is to begin – right at the camp where the people with infectious disease are living. After this first ritual the location moves to a place before the tent of meeting.

¹²⁰ In this way the blood is preserved and will be used later in the ritual. The word “fresh” implies that it is water from a stream, i.e. running water.

¹²¹ Some scholars feel the symbolism is that the infectious disease is now dead (the dead bird) and the person now has new life and is free to go home, within the camp (the live bird returning to its nest).

¹²² Literally: “three-tenths of an ephah.”

¹²³ Literally: “a log of oil.” The same word is used in verse 12.

¹²⁴ See footnote 78.

that site is most holy. ¹⁴ The priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering and place it on the right ear lobe of the person who is being cleansed. He will also place some of the blood on that person's right thumb and the great toe of his right foot. ¹⁵ The priest will then pour some of the oil in the cupped palm of his left hand, ¹⁶ and dip his right finger into the oil that is in his left hand, and sprinkle some of the oil with his finger, seven times, before the Lord. ¹⁷ Some the remaining oil in his hand will be placed, by the priest on the right ear lobe of the person who is being cleansed. He will also place some of the oil on that person's right thumb and the great toe of his right foot, placing it on the blood of the guilt offering. ¹⁸ The last of the oil that is in the priest's cupped hand he will put on the head of the one who is being cleansed. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf before the Lord: ¹⁹ The priest will offer the sin offering, before the Lord, for the sins of the one who is being cleansed from his uncleanness. ²⁰ \The priest will offering the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. It is in this manner that the priest will make atonement on his behalf and he will be clean.

²¹ "But if he is poor ¹²⁵ and unable to afford much, a single male lamb would suffice for and elevated offering as a guilt offering on behalf of the one who is now considered to be cleansed of an infectious disease. In addition one-third of the usual amount of fine flour mixed with oil which was normally required would be needed for someone who is poor. A pint of oil is also required. ¹²⁶ ²² In addition two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, (such as he can afford) are needed: one for a sin offering and the other for a guilt offering. ²³ These are to be brought to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to be before the Lord on the eighth day for his cleansing. ²⁴ The priest will take the lamb to be a guilt offering and the pint of oil. These are to be raised by the priest as an elevated offering before the Lord. ²⁵ The priest will slaughter the lamb of the guilt offering, and take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the right ear-lobe of the one who is being cleansed. He will also put some of the blood on the right thumb and on the great toe of his right foot. ²⁶ Then the priest is to take some of the oil, pouring it in the cupped palm of his own left hand, ²⁷ and sprinkle some of the oil, with his finger, seven times, before the Lord. ²⁸ Then the priest, taking some of the remaining oil in his hand, he will place it on the right ear-lobe of the person receiving cleansing, after which he will put oil on that person's right thumb, and on the great toe of the person's right foot, placing it on the blood of the guilt offering. ²⁹ The last of the oil that is in the priest's hand he will put on the head of the one who is being cleansed. Then the priest will make atonement on behalf of the Lord. ³⁰ He will offer the two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, (such as he can afford), ³¹ one ¹²⁷ for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering along with the grain offering, and it is in this manner that the priest will make atonement on his behalf and he will be clean. ³² This is the ritual for the cleansing of someone with an infectious disease who is unable to afford the offerings for his cleansing."

¹²⁵ The ritual is such that even the poor would surely be able to provide for the possibility to receive the cleansing by the priest and return to home and family. Since the person had been declared unclean it would be impossible to return home or to be with family and friends until the determination of cleanness would be made and the ritual accomplished.

¹²⁶ The amount of (olive) oil is the same for both those who could afford and those who were poor.

¹²⁷ So: Hebrew. LXX & Syriac read: "such as he can afford, one."

3. *Infectious Diseases in Houses 14:33 – 53* ¹²⁸

³³ The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ³⁴ “When you come into the land of Canaan, which I will give you for your possession, and I place an infectious disease in a house in the land which you possess, ³⁵ the one who will own the house must go to the priest and say to him, ‘It seems to me that there is some kind of disease in my house.’ ³⁶ The priest must then declare that the house must be emptied prior to the priest’s entering the house to examine it for the infectious disease. If this is not done everything that is in the house will become unclean. After the house has been emptied the priest is to enter the house to inspect it. ³⁷ The priest will then inspect the house. In the event that there is an infectious disease in the house, the walls will have greenish or reddish spots, and if it appears to be deeper than the surface, ³⁸ the priest will leave the house, and, shutting the door, it will remain empty for seven days. ³⁹ On the seventh day the priest will return to the house, make an inspection, and if the infectious disease has spread on the walls of the house, ⁴⁰ the priest must command that the stones on which the disease appears are to be removed and thrown into an unclean area outside the city. ⁴⁰ He will order that the inside of the house be scraped thoroughly [*of the plaster that covers the walls*], and the plaster ¹²⁹ is to be dumped in an unclean area outside the city. ⁴¹ He is to oversee the thorough scraping of the plaster ¹³⁰ and the dumping it in an unclean area outside the city. ⁴² Other stones are to be taken and put in place of the stones that have been removed, and the house is to be coated with new plaster.

⁴³ “If the disease reoccurs in the house after the stones have been removed and the house has been scraped, and new plaster is in place, ⁴⁴ the priest is to enter and make an inspection of the house and if the disease has spread in the house it is to be declared to be unclean. ⁴⁵ The priest is to declare that the house is to be torn down, and all its stones, timber and plaster are to be removed to an unclean place outside the city. ⁴⁶ Anyone who enters the house while it is closed [*during the time the house is declared to be unclean*] will be ceremonially unclean until evening. ⁴⁷ Anyone who sleeps in the house must wash his clothing; and all who eat in the house must wash their clothing also.

⁴⁸ “If the priest comes and makes an inspection, and the infectious disease has not spread in the house, after having been plastered, the priest must declare that the house is clean and the infectious disease is healed. ⁴⁹ In order to cleanse the house the priest will take two birds, along with cedar wood, crimson yarn, and hyssop, ⁵⁰ and slaughter one of the birds over fresh water in an earthen pot and sprinkle the house seven times. ⁵² This is the manner in which the priest will cleanse the house – with the blood of a bird and fresh water, and with the living bird and the cedar wood, hyssop and crimson yarn; ⁵³ after which he will release the bird to fly out of the city and into an open field. It is in this way that he will make atonement for the house and the house will be clean.”

4. *Summary 14:54 - 57*

⁵⁴ “This is the ritual for any infectious disease: itch, ⁵⁵ skin diseases, diseases of clothing, and houses, ⁵⁶ for swelling, or eruption of a spot, ⁵⁷ to make a decision whether it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the ritual for dealing with infectious diseases.”

¹³¹

¹²⁸ Some scholars feel this might be lichen or mildew. Other feel it is mineral efflorescence, or dry rot.

¹²⁹ Literally: “mud” or “daub.”

¹³⁰ So: Syriac. Hebrew: “have brought to an end” here and in verse 43.

¹³¹ It is to be noted that cleanliness of individuals and property are dominant in these rituals.

CHAPTER 15

5. Ritual Concerning Sexual Secretions and Discharges 15:1 – 53 ¹³²

Long term, Male: ¹ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: ² “Say to the people of Israel: when any man has a genital ¹³³ emission, his discharge makes him definitely unclean. ³ The uncleanness of his discharge is such, that regardless of whether his genital organ allows an emission to flow or is stopped from flowing, it is uncleanness for him. ¹³⁴ ⁴ Every pallet ¹³⁵ on which the person with the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits is unclean. ⁵ Anyone who touches his pallet (*or, bedding*) must wash his clothes, take a bath, and then remain unclean until evening. ⁶ Anyone who sits on anything on which the one with the discharge has sat is unclean and must wash his clothes, take a bath, and then remain unclean until evening. ⁷ All who touch the body of the person with the discharge must wash their clothes, take a bath, and then remain unclean until evening. ⁸ If the person with the discharge spits ¹³⁶ on people who are clean, they must wash their clothes, take a bath, and then remain unclean until evening. ⁹ Any saddle ¹³⁷ on which the person who has the discharge rides is unclean. ¹⁰ Anyone who touches anything that was under him, will be unclean until evening and if one carries anything like that must wash his clothes, take a bath, and be unclean until evening. ¹¹ Everyone who is touched by the one who has the discharge, without his having washed his hands with water, must wash their clothes, take a bath, and remain unclean until evening. ¹² Any clay pot that the person who has the discharge touches, is to be broken, and every bowl that is made of wood must be rinsed with water.

¹³ “When the person who has the discharge is cleansed of his discharge he is to count seven days for his cleansing. He must wash his clothes, and take a bath, and he will be clean. ¹⁴ On the eighth day he must take two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and come into the presence of the Lord at the entry to the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. ¹⁵ The priest must use one of them as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest will thereby make atonement, before the Lord, for his discharge.

Short term, Male: ¹⁶ “If a man has an emission of semen, he must have a complete bath in water, and he will be unclean until evening. ¹⁷ Everything on which the semen falls, be it cloth or leather, must be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. ¹⁸ If a man has intercourse with a woman and ejaculates semen, both of them must bathe in water and be unclean until evening.

Short term, Female: ¹⁹ “If a woman menstruates, and it is her regular menstruation period, she will be unclean for seven days, and whoever touches her will be unclean until evening. ²⁰ Everything on which she lies during her menstrual period will be unclean. Everything she sits on will be unclean. ²¹ Whoever touches her bed must wash

¹³² This chapter can be described as dealing with social hygiene.

¹³³ The Hebrew word is “basher” which means flesh. It is used in this chapter for both men and women, hence this translation.

¹³⁴ The subject matter, based on the continual emission is surely gonorrhoea.

¹³⁵ The word “bed” in our day does not convey the situation in the time of the writing of Leviticus. A bed might be a piece of carpet, or a pad on which one slept, on the floor. In later generations the situation improved somewhat.

¹³⁶ Already at this early time sputum was considered to be a vehicle of infection.

¹³⁷ Literally: “something for riding.” Thus it may be a saddle blanket, or it might be a cart.

his clothes, take a bath, and be unclean until evening. ²² Whoever touches anything on which she sits, must wash his clothes, take a bath, and be unclean until evening. ²³ Whether it is the bed, anything on which she sits, when he touches it he will be unclean until evening. ²⁴ If a man has intercourse with her and some of her menstrual flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days, and every bed on which he lies will be unclean.

Long term, Female: ²⁵ "If a woman has a discharge of blood that continues for many days, this taking place at a time other than her usual menstruation period, all of the days that this takes place she is unclean. ²⁶ Even the bed on which she lies during the days of her discharge is unclean, just as it would be at the time of her regular menstruation. ²⁷ Whoever touches any of these things must wash his clothes, take a bath, and be unclean until evening. ²⁸ In the event that she is cleansed of her discharge, she must count seven days. After that she will be clean. ²⁹ On the eighth day she is to take two turtle-doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entry to the tent of meeting. ³⁰ The priest will offer one of them as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest will make atonement on her behalf, for her unclean discharge.

³¹ "It is in this way in which you are to keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defying my tabernacle that is in their midst." ¹³⁸

Summary: ³² This is the ritual for those who have a discharge: for him who has an emission of semen, and thus becoming unclean; ³³ for her who is suffering humiliation due to her continual discharge, for every one: male or female, who has a discharge and for the man who has sexual relations with a woman while she is unclean.

CHAPTER 16

IV. The Annual Ritual of Atonement 16:1 – 39

A. Priestly Preparation 16:1 - 5

¹ The Lord said to Moses following the death of Aaron's two son, when they approached the Lord, [*carrying illicit fire*] and died as the result of their action; ² The Lord told Moses: ¹³⁹

"Inform your brother Aaron not to come inside the sanctuary [*of the holy shrine*] inside the curtain, into the presence of the mercy seat that is located above of the ark [*of the covenant*] lest he die, ¹⁴⁰ for I appear in the cloud that is above the mercy seat, ¹⁴¹ ³ This is how Aaron is to approach me, -- with a young bull, to be sacrificed as a sin offering, and a ram that is to be sacrificed as a burnt offering. ⁴ [He is to be clothed in the white linen robe (*or, tunic*), and wearing a white linen undergarment against his body. for these are the holy vestments. He is to bathe his body in water prior to putting on these

¹³⁸ Some scholars place verses 31 – 33 after chapter 12:8.

¹³⁹ ANET p, 420d.

¹⁴⁰ To go into the holy of holies, not wearing the proper vestments, and with appropriate sacrifices was a dishonor to God. Possibly he had not been informed of the protocol. If he was to be the priest he must, in all circumstances, realize that he is the priest of God and his dress and demeanor must reflect this. Not to appear properly in the holy of holies would be considered as an unclean act.

¹⁴¹ The holy seat was the place of meeting, just as Mount Sinai had been, when Moses received the ten commandments.

vestments.] ¹⁴² 5 Additionally, he is to take two male goats as a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. ¹⁴³

II. Early Form of the Ritual 16:6 - 10

⁶ “Aaron is to offer the bull, as his personal sin offering, in order to make atonement for himself, and his household. ¹⁴⁴ ⁷ He must also take the two goats, presenting them before the Lord, at the entrance to the tent of meeting; ⁸ Aaron is also to cast lots to determine which of the goats is to be a sacrifice to the Lord, and which is to be for Azazel (*or, goat of removal*). ¹⁴⁵ ⁹ Aaron must present the goat which had the lot fall on it to be the goat for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering, ¹⁰ but the goat which had the lot fall on it to be for Azazel, was to be presented live before the Lord, to make atonement, through it, that it might be sent into the wilderness, to Azazel.

C. Elaborate Form of the Ritual 16:11 - 28

¹¹ ”Aaron must present the bull, as a sin offering for himself and for his household. He is personally to slaughter the bull as a sin offering for himself. ¹² He is then to take a censer filled with glowing embers from the altar that is before the Lord, along with two handfuls of fine spicy incense, bringing it behind the curtain, ¹⁴⁶ ¹³ and place the incense on the fire before the Lord, so that the cloud of incense covers the mercy seat that is above the ark of the covenant. If this is not done, he will die. ¹⁴ Then he must take some of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it, with his finger, on the front of the mercy seat. This is to be repeated seven times, using his finger to sprinkle blood from the bull on the mercy seat.

¹⁵ “Then he must slaughter the goat as a sin offering, for the people and bring its blood behind the veil, and do as he had done with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it on the mercy seat, and on the area in front of the mercy seat. ¹⁶ It is in this manner that he is enabled to make atonement for the sanctuary, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel, that all their transgressions and sins might be atoned, for the tent of meeting remains in their midst in spite of their uncleanness. ¹⁷ No person is to enter the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make the atonement in the holy of holies, until he comes out and has made atonement also for himself, for his household and for all the congregation of Israel. ¹⁸ Then he is to come out of the tent of meeting, to the altar that is before the Lord, and make atonement on its behalf, and taking some of the blood of the bull and of the goat, he must place that blood on each of the horns (*or, corners*) of the altar. ¹⁹ Next he must sprinkle some of the blood on it, with his finger, seven times, cleansing and hallowing it, from the uncleanness of the people.

¹⁴² Some scholars feel verse 4 is a later interpolation.

¹⁴³ Even though Aaron was the High Priest, he was stripped of all his power and honor, when appearing before the mercy seat in the holy of holies.

¹⁴⁴ The first responsibility of the high priest was to make atonement for himself and his family. It was only then that he could dare to carry out the ritual of atonement for the people of Israel.

¹⁴⁵ The name Azazel is a bit problematical. It might be understood in 3 different ways. 1. A proper name. 2. A name for powerful evil. 3. The name is that of a wild being in the wilderness. The word is often translated as “scape-goat.” The goat is thought of as being covered with the sins and guilt of all the people of Israel, and becomes a visible sign of the removal of all the sins and guilt of the people. The origin of the name Azazel is not known. Azazel seems to be considered, by the people of Israel as the chief leader of the evil spirits.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. ANET p. 325c.

20 “When that has been completed, atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he must present the living goat. 21 Aaron then must place both of his hands on the head of the live goat, confessing over the goat the acts of rebellion, transgressions and sins of the people of Israel, putting (*or, transferring*) them to the head of the goat, and then sending the goat away into the wilderness, by someone who has been designated for that task.¹⁴⁷ 22 The goat will bear all the iniquities of the people on itself, as it is taken to a desert region where the goat will be set free in the wilderness.

23 “Then Aaron must come to the tent of meeting and must take off his linen garments which he had worn when he went behind the curtain into the holy place, and leave them in the tent of meeting. 24 He is then to bathe his body in water in the holy area of the tent of meeting, after which he must don his vestments. Thereafter he must come out and offer his [*personal*] burnt offering along with a burnt offering for the people. 25 The fat of the sin offering must be burned on the altar, becoming smoke. 26 The one who sets the goat free [*in the barren wilderness, distant from the camp*] for Azazel, upon returning, is to wash his clothing and take a bath, and after that can return to the camp. 27 The bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, the ones whose blood had been brought in to make atonement in the holy place, are to be removed to a place outside the camp. Their hide, flesh and dung are to be completely consumed by fire. 28 The individual who has the responsibility of burning them, [*upon completion of the task*] must wash his clothes and bathe in water. That having been completed he is allowed to return to camp.

D. Other Procedures for the Observance of the Ritual 16:29 - 34

29 “This will be a statute that is to be observed: In the seventh month,¹⁴⁸ on the tenth day of the month and you are to deny yourselves [*of any pleasure*] (*or, you are to fast*). You are not to do any work: you nor the alien who lives in your midst. 30 On this day atonement is being made for you, to cleanse you of your sins, following which you will be clean before the Lord. 31 It is a Sabbath, a time of complete rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves [*of any pleasure*] (*or, you are to fast*). This is a permanent statute! 32 The priest who is anointed and ordained in his father’s place, must make atonement, wearing the linen vestments, -- the holy vestments. 33 He must make atonement for the sanctuary, and he must make atonement for the tent of meeting, and for the altar, and make atonement for the priests, and for the entire congregation of the people. 34 This is a permanent statute for you. You must make atonement for all the people of Israel, and for all their sins!” Moses did as the Lord had commanded.

CHAPTER 17

V. The Holiness Code 17:1 – 26:10¹⁴⁹

A. Rules for Slaughtering Animals 17:1 - 9

1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 2 “Tell Aaron and his sons, and all the people of Israel: This is what the Lord has commanded, 3 If anyone in the house of Israel kills an

¹⁴⁷ The Hebrew seems to be somewhat uncertain.

¹⁴⁸ The month was called “Tishrei.” It occurred in September/October. The day of atonement was to be kept as one would keep a Sabbath and fast day.

¹⁴⁹ Some scholars feel that this Holiness Code is a later interpolation, stemming from the time of Ezekiel. This concept is based on the Graf-Wellhausen theory, dating from the late 19th century. While there is no objective evidence, the theory is still accepted by many scholars.

ox,¹⁵⁰ lamb or goat [in the camp, or kills it outside the camp,]¹⁵¹ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to present it as an offering to the Lord, before the tabernacle of the Lord, he will be considered as guilty of bloodshed. He has shed blood and will be outcast from his relatives (*or, the people*).⁵ This is the order to the people of Israel; which they may bring their sacrifices that they would offer in an open field, may be brought to the Lord, to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, offering them as sacrifices of well-being (*or peace offerings*)¹⁵² [The priest will sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord, at the entry to the tent of meeting, and burn the fat into smoke which is a pleasing odor to the Lord.]¹⁵³ This is available so that the people will no longer slaughter their sacrificial animals for the he-goat demon (*or, satyr*) before whom they prostrate themselves.¹⁵⁴ This is a law to them that is permanent – across all generations. 8 You are also to say to them: Any man of the house of Israel, or any resident alien, among them who offers burnt offerings or other sacrifices,⁹ and does not bring these offerings to [the entrance of the tent of meeting]¹⁵⁵ to sacrifice to the Lord, will be outcast from his relatives (*or, the people*).”

C. Prohibition of Eating Meat with Blood 17:10 - 14

¹⁰ “If any person of the house of Israel, or the resident aliens among them, eats any blood, I will reject that person¹⁵⁶ who eats blood, and I will make that person an outcast from his relatives (*or, the people*).¹¹ The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you that you might be enabled to make atonement for your souls¹⁵⁷ on the altar, since, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement. ¹² Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No one among you is to eat blood, not you, nor the resident aliens who live in your midst. Blood is not to be eaten. ¹³ Not anyone of the people of Israel and not anyone among the resident aliens who reside among you, and therefore anyone who hunts an animal or bird that is permitted to be eaten must drain the blood on the ground and then cover it with dirt.

¹⁴ “The life of every creature is its blood.¹⁵⁸ Therefore I have informed the people of Israel: You must not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is in its blood. Whoever eats blood will be an outcast from his relatives (*or, the people*).”

¹⁵⁰ The Hebrew word could be either male or female.

¹⁵¹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Prior to this time all sacrifices were under the direction of Moses, and apparently could be performed by individuals. This practice was now continuing, in which individuals of the people of Israel would make sacrifices. It is clear, a bit later in this chapter, that these sacrifices were not made in the presence of God, before the tent of meeting but near one’s tent or outside the camp. They were apparently made to some other being, one of which is described in verse 7 as ‘the goat demon’ or a ‘satyr,’ which stems from Greek Mythology. It is readily conceivable that superstition would become the basis for such sacrifices which were considered unclean and blasphemous. Such illicit sacrifices were done by individuals.

¹⁵² With these offerings, while they are sacrificed, the person bringing the offering is permitted to take the meat that is offered, and share it with members of his family or his neighbors.

¹⁵³ Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation.

¹⁵⁴ Literally: “play the harlot.”

¹⁵⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁵⁶ Literally: “I will set my face against that person.”

¹⁵⁷ The Hebrew word ‘nepes’ is usually translated as ‘life.’

¹⁵⁸ LXX and Syriac have: “blood of it.”

D. Prohibition from Eating Carcasses 17:15 – 16

¹⁵ [“All persons, citizens or aliens, who eat what dies of itself, or what has been killed by wild animals, must wash their clothes and bathe themselves with water, and remain unclean until evening. Then they will be clean. ¹⁶ However: if they do not wash their clothes and take a bath, they will bear their guilt (*or, remain unclean*).”] ¹⁵⁹

CHAPTER 18

E. Unlawful Sexual Relations 18:1 – 30 ¹⁶⁰

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “Inform the people of Israel: I am the Lord your God. ³ You must not copy the practices of the land of Egypt, where you resided, nor are you to follow the practices of the Canaanites who reside in the land into which I am bringing you. You are not to engage in their activities. ¹⁶¹ ⁴ You must only obey my rules and my laws. I am the Lord, your God! ⁵ Therefore keep my rules and obey my laws, living in accordance with them. I am the Lord.

⁶ “You are not have sexual intercourse with close relatives. I am the Lord. ¹⁶² ⁷ Do not have sexual intercourse with your father or your mother. She is your mother, and you are not to have sex with her. ⁸ You are not to have sexual intercourse with any of the wives of your father. ⁹ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, ¹⁶³ whether she was born at home or elsewhere. ¹⁶⁴ ¹⁰ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your son or daughter. ¹¹ You are not to have sexual intercourse with the daughter of any wife of your father, since she is your sister. ¹⁶⁵ ¹² You are not to have sexual intercourse with your paternal aunt, for she is the nearest of your father’s relatives. ¹³ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your maternal aunt, for she is the nearest of your mother’s relatives. ¹⁴ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your paternal uncle, nor with his wife, for she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your daughter-in-law, for she is the wife of your son. ¹⁶ You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister-in-law, for she is your brother’s wife. ¹⁷ You are not to have sexual intercourse with a woman and her daughter or her son’s daughter, or her daughter’s daughter, for this is depravity. ¹⁸ You are not to marry a woman who is a rival sister to your wife. ¹⁶⁶

¹⁹ “You are not to approach a woman to have sexual intercourse if she is menstruating. ²⁰ You are not to have sexual intercourse with the wife of a relative, for this is to defile yourself with her. ²¹ (You must refuse to sacrifice any of your children to Moloch. ¹⁶⁷ I am the Lord.) ²² Do not have sexual relations with a man, as with a woman.

¹⁵⁹ Some scholars feel this chapter is a later interpolation.

¹⁶⁰ The purpose of this chapter is to prevent unions that would bring disastrous results. In this portion of Leviticus where holiness is emphasized, this must become a part of one’s character, not external appearance. In verses 1 – 4 and 24 – 30 the word “you” is a plural form.

¹⁶¹ Literally: “walk in their statutes.”

¹⁶² Cf. ANET p. 173b.

¹⁶³ This command includes half-sisters.

¹⁶⁴ The meaning of the Hebrew is obscure. Some scholars feel it is a euphemism for being illegitimate.

¹⁶⁵ The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁶⁶ This must not have been known in earlier times. Jacob married sisters in Genesis 29:28. The verse could be translated: “You are not to have sexual intercourse with the sister of your wife, taking her as a second wife.”

¹⁶⁷ Moloch was an Ammonite deity. I Kings 11:7 Children were to become burnt offerings to Moloch.

It is abhorrent. ¹⁶⁸ ²³ You must not copulate with an animal for thereby you defile yourself. A woman also must not give herself to copulate with an animal. It is a perversion.

²⁴ “Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways. These are the practices of the nations that I am casting out before you. These are ways in which they defiled themselves. ²⁵ It was in this way that the land became defiled: and I have punished them for their evil deeds. The land is spewing out its inhabitants. ²⁶ You must keep my statutes and ordinances and not commit any of these abominations: not you, nor the resident aliens who reside in your midst, ²⁷ (for the inhabitants of the land who were living there before you committed all of these abominations, and the land became defiled, ²⁸ or else the land will spew you out for defiling it, just as it spewed out the nation that lived there before you. ²⁹ Now – keep my warning in mind – do not commit any of these abominations that were done before you, and do not defile yourselves by doing them! I am the Lord your God!”

CHAPTER 19

E. Holiness of Behavior 19:1 – 37

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses: ² “Inform the assembly of the people of Israel, saying: You must be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy. ¹⁶⁹

³ “Every person among you must revere both his mother and his father, and you must keep my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

⁴ “Do not turn to idols, ¹⁷⁰ or make cast metal images: I am the Lord your God.

⁵ “When you offer a sacrifice of well-being (*or, a peace offering*) to the Lord, you must make the sacrifice in such a way that it will be accepted. ⁶ It is to be eaten on the same day that it is offered as a sacrifice, though it can also be eaten on the day after the sacrifice. Anything that is left over on the third day may not be eaten for it is tainted. ⁷ It is not acceptable as food on the third day for it has become an abomination (*or, is rotten*) and therefore is not acceptable. ⁸ Anyone who eats of it will bear the consequences because he has profaned the Lord’s holy thing. That person is to be cut off from the society of the people of Israel.

⁹ “When you reap the harvest on your land, you are not to reap your field to the very edges of the field, nor are you to gather the gleanings after you have harvested. ¹⁷¹ ¹⁰ You are not to strip your vineyards bare, some must be left for the poor and the resident aliens who live in your midst. I am the Lord your God.

¹¹ “You must not steal, cheat, lie, or rebuke your fellow citizens. ¹⁷²

¹² “You must not swear, using my name falsely, thereby profaning the name of your God. I am the Lord.

¹³ “You are not to defraud your neighbor or commit robbery. ¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Cf. ANET pp. 34c, 35c, 181d.

¹⁶⁹ Holiness is an expression of moral integrity.

¹⁷⁰ The Hebrew word used here is only used here in Leviticus. The root word from which this word comes means “weaking” thus giving the added thought that idols are not only false gods but also showing the powerlessness of such gods.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Ruth 2.

¹⁷² “Your fellow citizens” seems to include, not only Israelites, but also strangers and resident aliens. Cf. ANET p. 35a. 166d.

¹⁷³ Cf. ANET p.166d.

“You are not to keep the wages earned by a worker until morning.¹⁷⁴

14 “You are not to curse a deaf man and are not to trip a blind man by placing a stumbling block in the way. You must be in awe of your God. I am the Lord.

15 “You are not to render an unfair decision and show no preference to either the poor or the rich. Your neighbor must be judged in a just manner.

16 “You are not to spread slander¹⁷⁵ among your people.

“You are not to seek the death of your neighbor for personal gain.¹⁷⁶ I am the Lord.

17 “You are not to have hatred toward any relative, nor are you to reprove (*or, you are to reason with*) your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself.

18 “You are not to show vengeance or harbor a grudge against any of your own people, but you are to have love toward your countrymen as you love yourself. I am the Lord.¹⁷⁷

19 “You must keep my statutes.

“You must not let your animals cross-breed.

“You must not sow two kinds of grain in one field.

“You must not weave two different kinds of yarn to make a garment.

20 [“If a man has sexual intercourse with a slave who is designated for another man, but the ransom has not yet been paid, but there is to be an inquiry.¹⁷⁸ They will not be put to death because she has not been freed; 21 but he must make a guilt offering for himself to the Lord, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. A ram is to be offered. 22 The priest is to make atonement for him, and the ram is to be a guilt offering before the Lord for the sin he has committed. The sin that has been committed will then be forgiven.

23 “Upon arriving in the land and you plant all kinds of fruit trees you are to regard their fruit as taboo for three years. It is forbidden¹⁷⁹ that you eat the fruit. You must not eat it.]¹⁸⁰ 24 In the fourth year all the fruit is to be set apart for rejoicing in the Lord. 25 In the fifth year you are permitted to eat the fruit. This is to be done that the yield will be increased for you. I am the Lord your God.¹⁸¹

26 “You are not to eat any meat that has blood in it.

“You are not to practice enchantment (*or, divination*) or soothsaying.

27 “You are not to trim¹⁸² the hair at your temples, or trim the corners of your beard.

28 “You are not to make gashes in your flesh, at the time of a loved one’s death, nor are you to give yourself tattoos. I am the Lord.

¹⁷⁴ This points out the meager hand to mouth existence of laborers.

¹⁷⁵ The Hebrew word is uncertain. Cf. ANET p. 35b.

¹⁷⁶ The sentence includes “profit by the blood of your neighbor.” The Hebrew word translated as “seek the death of” is unclear.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. ANET p. 426d.

¹⁷⁸ The Hebrew possibly could be translated as “damages must be paid.” The Mishnah says “he must be scourged.” No one is to be put to death because she was a slave and therefore his property.

¹⁷⁹ The Hebrew word is “un-circumcision.” Cf. ANET p. 169b.

¹⁸⁰ Some scholars place verses 20 – 23 after 20:12.

¹⁸¹ It is strange that the scholars who place verses 20 – 23 do not include the two verses that follow since they are directly related to verse 23.

¹⁸² Literally: “round off.”

29 “You are not to degrade your daughters by making them [*temple*] prostitutes, lest the land become prostituted and filled with depravity.

30 “You must keep my Sabbaths, and revere my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

31 “Do not turn to ghosts or wizards; do not inquire of them, for you will become defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

32 “You will rise before those who are aged, and defer to those who are old, and you are to be in awe of your God. I am the Lord.

33 “When an alien resides in your land, you are not to oppress him. 34 The alien who resides in your land is to be treated by you as a citizen in your midst, and you are to love the alien as you love yourselves, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

35 “You are not to cheat in measuring length, weight, or quantity. 36 You must have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin.¹⁸³ I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 “You are to obey my statutes and all my ordinances, observing them faithfully. I am the Lord.”

CHAPTER 20¹⁸⁴

*F. Penalties for Pagan Practices 20:1 – 27*¹⁸⁵

1 The Lord said to Moses: 2 Say to the people of Israel:

“Any of the people of Israel or those who are resident aliens in Israel, who give any of their children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the land¹⁸⁶ are to pelt that person with stones. 3 I, myself, will reject them¹⁸⁷ and I will excommunicate¹⁸⁸ them from society, because they have given their children to Molech, polluting my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. 4 In the event that the people of the land should ever look the other way, when they give their children to Molech, and do not put them to death, 5 I will excommunicate them and their families, and will cast them out of society – they and all who follow their devotion to Molech.

6 “Anyone who resorts on mediums or spirits, devoting themselves to them, I will excommunicate from society, and ostracize them. 7 In the light of this it is important that you consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 8 Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord, I am your sanctifier. 9 Everyone who curses his father or mother is to be put to death.¹⁸⁹ Having cursed their father and mother their blood is on them.

10 “If a man has sexual intercourse with his neighbor’s wife,¹⁹⁰ both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death. 11 Any man who has sexual intercourse with his

¹⁸³ An ephah was about two thirds of a bushel. A hin was about a gallon. Cf. ANET p. 34c, 35a, 388d.

¹⁸⁴ There seems to be a great deal of repetition of chapter 8 in this chapter.

¹⁸⁵ A similar collection of warnings is found in ancient writings from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Cf. ANET pp. 156 – 188. Biblical collections, as compared with collections from other lands seems to have a greater respect for human values.

¹⁸⁶ Early in the history of the people of Israel ‘the people of the land’ were the common citizens. In later years the expression seems to refer to people who were in leadership position within the communities.

¹⁸⁷ Literally: “I will set my face against them.”

¹⁸⁸ Literally: “cut them off.”

¹⁸⁹ Cf. II Samuel 16:5 ff.; Job 3.

¹⁹⁰ In Hebrew the phrase is repeated. Cf. ANET p.173b,182b.

father's wife – both of them are to be put to death, for they are guilty.¹⁹¹ 13 If a man has sexual intercourse with another man (they both have committed a loathsome thing). They are both to be put to death, their blood is on them.¹⁹² 14 If a man takes a wife and her mother, that is a depravity. They are to be burned with fire, both the man and the women, so that there be no more wickedness among them. 15 If a man has carnal relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and the animal also must be killed. 16 If a woman has carnal relations with an animal both the woman and the animal are to be killed. Their blood is upon them.

17 "If a man has sexual intercourse with a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, it is a disgrace, and they are to be excommunicated from society, for he has had sex with his sister and will be subject to punishment. 18 If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman who is menstruating, both of them are to be excommunicated from society. 19 (You are not to have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister, or your father's sister, (*i.e. your aunts*) for they are members of your immediate family, and they are to pay the penalty for their crime.) 20 If a man has sexual intercourse with his uncle's wife, he is subject to punishment. They will be childless. 21 If a man has sexual intercourse with his brother's wife, it is an impurity, and they will be childless.¹⁹³

22 "Therefore you must keep my statutes and my ordinances, and observe them. If this is done the land to which I will bring you, in which you will settle, it will not spew you out. 23 You are not to follow the customs of the nations I have expelled from the land that I am giving to you, for they have done these things and I have loathed them. 24 I have declared to you – You will inherit the land and I will give it to you that you may possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God. I have set you apart from the other nations. 25 It is for this reason that you must make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and birds, for you are not to bring any abomination on yourselves by animals or birds, or anything other creature that is on the earth which I have designated to be unclean. 26 You are to be holy to me, and I have set you apart from the other nations, for you are mine.

27 "Any person, male or female, who is a medium or wizard, is to be put to death. They are to be pelted to death with stones. Their blood is upon them."¹⁹⁴

CHAPTER 21

G. Miscellaneous Regulations Concerning Priesthood and Sacrifices 21:1 – 22:33

1 The Lord said to Moses: "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, telling them: No one is to defile himself for someone who has died among their relatives.¹⁹⁵ 2 The exceptions are: his nearest blood relatives: his mother, father, son, daughter and brother. 3 Additionally: his virgin sister, (who is close to him because she has no

¹⁹¹ Literally: "their blood is upon them."

¹⁹² Cf. ANET p. 181d.

¹⁹³ The Levirate Marriage Law is ignored or had not yet been developed. Cf. Ruth.

¹⁹⁴ Some scholars feel this verse is a late addition and omit it. There is to be a clear separation of the people of Israel from the other nations. They are the covenant people of God who must observe spiritual purity, and the desire to do the will of God. Cf. ANET p. 184d.

¹⁹⁵ One who was having outward signs of mourning was not in the position to carry out the duties of a priest.

husband). He may defile himself for her. ¹⁹⁶ 4 He is not to defile himself as a husband among his relatives, and thus profane himself. ¹⁹⁷ 5 Priests are not to make bald spots on their heads, ¹⁹⁸ or cut gashes in their flesh. 6 They are to be holy to their God, for they are the ones who offer the Lord's offering by fire, the food of their God: therefore they are to be holy. 7 They are not to marry a prostitute or a woman who has been defiled. They are not to marry a divorcee, for they are holy to their God, ¹⁹⁹ 8 Priests are to be considered (and treated) as those who are holy, for they offer the food of your God. They are to be considered holy by you, for I am the Lord. I am the one who provides cleansing for, (*or, sanctify*) you, for I am holy. 9 When the daughter of a priest profanes herself through prostitution, she thereby profanes her father; she is to be burned to death.

¹⁰ "The high priest ²⁰⁰ [on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the vestments,] ²⁰¹ must not dishevel his hair, nor tear his vestments [*in a time of grief*]. ¹¹ He is not to go where there is a dead body; he is not to defile himself, even for his father or mother. ¹² He is not to go outside the sanctuary, nor is he to profane the sanctuary of his God, [for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him.] ²⁰² I am the Lord. ¹³ He is to marry a virgin from his own tribe (*or, he is to marry a girl in her teens*.) ¹⁴ He is not to marry a widow, a divorcee, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute. ¹⁵ This is required that he will not profane his children among his relatives. I am the one who sanctifies him."

¹⁶ The Lord said to Moses: ¹⁷ "Inform Aaron: None of your descendants [through their generations] ²⁰³ who has a blemish may approach to offer food to his God. ¹⁸ No one who has a blemish is to draw near, be it blindness, lameness, a mutilated face, ²⁰⁴ one leg that is longer than the other, ¹⁹ a broken foot or a broken hand, ²⁰ a hunchback, ²⁰⁵ dwarf, one who has a blemish in his eyes, an itching disease, scales (*or, scabs*), or crushed testicles. ²¹ No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any blemish is to come near to offer the Lord's offerings by fire. Since he has a blemish he is not permitted to come near to offer food to his God. ²³ He is permitted to eat the bread of his God, ²⁰⁶ [of the most holy as well as the holy.] ²⁰⁷ ²³ He is, however, not to come near [the veil, or approach the most sacred altar] ²⁰⁸ because of his blemish, for thereby he would profane the sanctuary of God. I am the Lord, I sanctify them."

¹⁹⁶ The wife of the priest is not mentioned. She was considered to be a part of him so it was no doubt assumed that he would defile himself under those circumstances.

¹⁹⁷ The Hebrew is obscure.

¹⁹⁸ This is a symbolic gesture of grief and mourning. Cf. ANET p. 427b.

¹⁹⁹ A stricter law is found in Ezekiel 44:22. The marriage to a prostitute might involve a temple prostitute who served in the worship of fertility gods, not simply a practicing 'lady of the evening.'

²⁰⁰ Literally: "the priest who is chief among his brothers."

²⁰¹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²⁰² See footnote 201.

²⁰³ See footnote 201.

²⁰⁴ The Hebrew word is not exactly clear. The KJV has "a flat nose." Other translators have, "a split nose." The thought must be that of an obvious defect.

²⁰⁵ The Hebrew word "gibben" is not clear. It might give the thought of a misshapen brow or forehead. Recent translators seem to prefer, "hunchback."

²⁰⁶ No one of the priestly class who was mutilated or had impediments could serve as a priest, but could eat the sacred food.

²⁰⁷ See footnote 201.

²⁰⁸ See footnote 201.

24 So Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons, and all the people of Israel.

CHAPTER 22

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “Instruct Aaron and his sons to be exceedingly careful with the sacred donations that the people of Israel consecrate to me, so that my name might not be profaned. ²⁰⁹ [for these sacred donations are dedicated to me.] ²¹⁰ I am the Lord. ³ Inform them. If there is anyone among your descendants, who over the succeeding generations, approaches these sacred donations which have been dedicated to me by the people of Israel, having an uncleanness, that person will be excommunicated from my presence. I am the Lord. ⁴ None of the descendants of Aaron who has an infectious disease, an eruption, or a bodily discharge is permitted to eat of the sacred things, or while clean, touches anything that is unclean, through contact with the dead, or has an emission of semen, ⁵ or has had contact with creeping things, by which he is made unclean, -- whatever his uncleanness might be -- ⁶ the person who touches any such thing will be unclean until evening and is not permitted to eat any of the sacred donations unless he has washed his body with water. ⁷ At sundown he will be clean and thereafter is permitted to eat any of the sacred donations, for they are his food. ⁸ Anything that died of natural causes or had been killed by wild animals is not to be eaten under any circumstances for it is in that way that they would bring guilt, death, and impurity into my sanctuary. ²¹¹ for having profaned it. I am the Lord: I sanctify them.

¹⁰ “No lay person is to eat of the sacred donations. No slave or hired person of a priest is permitted to eat of the sacred donations, ¹¹ but if a person buys a slave, who then becomes the priest’s property by purchase, that slave may eat of this food, which is also true for those who are born in his household. ¹² If a priest’s daughter is married to a person who is not a priest, she is not permitted to eat of these sacred donations: ¹³ but if the priest’s daughter is a widow or is divorced, and is childless, and returns to live in her father’s house, as she had done in her youth, she may eat of her father’s food. No lay person is permitted to eat of it. ¹⁴ In the event that a man eats of the sacred donation, not realizing its significance (*or, unintentionally*), he must add twenty percent to the value [*of that portion which he has eaten*] and present this sacred donation to the priest. ¹⁵ No one dare profane the sacred donations of the people of Israel, which they have offered to the Lord, ¹⁶ causing them to become guilty, which requires a guilt offering, by eating of the sacred donations. I am the Lord, I sanctify them.”

¹⁷ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁸ “Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel, and say to them: When anyone of the house of Israel, or any of the resident aliens in Israel presents an offering, whether it is a payment because of a solemn vow, or a spontaneous gift that is offered for a burnt offering, ¹⁹ in order to be acceptable it must be a male bull, sheep or goat, with no imperfection, for any imperfection would cause it not be acceptable. ²⁰ No animal that has any imperfection is to be offered for it will not be acceptable on your behalf.

²¹ “When anyone offers a sacrifice of well-being (*or, a peace offering*), to the Lord, as a fulfillment of a vow or as a free-will offering, from his herd or flock, to be

²⁰⁹ The sacred offerings must always be treated with respect.

²¹⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²¹¹ The precise meaning is unknown. A possible translation might be: “Priests must keep my requirements so that they do not become liable to punishment and die for having made it impure.”

acceptable it must be faultless (*or, perfect*); there dare be no imperfection. ²² Any animal that is blind, maimed, having a discharge, lameness, or scabs, is not to be offered to the Lord, nor is it to be placed on the altar as a burnt offering to the Lord. ²³ An ox, or a lamb, who has one leg that is longer or shorter than the other legs (*or, that is deformed, overgrown or stunted,*) may be presented as a free-will offering; ²¹² but it is not to be accepted for a vow. ²⁴ Any animal with bruised, crushed, torn or cut testicles is not to be offered to the Lord. Such actions should not take place in the land [*I am giving you.*] ²⁵ You are not to accept any such animals from foreigners to be presented as food for your God, since they are mutilated, and possess imperfections; they will not be accepted on your behalf.”

²⁶ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying; ²⁷ “When an ox, sheep, or goat is born, it must remain with its mother for seven days. On the eighth day it is acceptable to be used as a burnt offering to the Lord. ²⁸ You are not to slaughter any animal from your herd or flock, on the same day as its offspring. ²⁹ When you offer an animal for sacrifice as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord, you are to sacrifice it in such a manner that the sacrifice will be acceptable on your behalf. ²¹³ ³⁰ It is to be eaten on the same day in which it is sacrificed; you are not to leave any of its flesh until the next day. I am the Lord.

³¹”This is the way you are to keep my commandments and observe them. I am the Lord. ³² You are not to profane my holy name, for I am to be hallowed (*or, sanctified*) among the people of Israel. I am the Lord; I sanctify you. ²¹⁴ ³³ It is I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.”

CHAPTER 23

H. The Ecclesiastical Year 23:1 – 44

1. Sabbath 23:1 – 4

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² “Say to the people of Israel – these are the appointed festivals of the Lord that you are to proclaim as sacred religious gatherings.

³ [“You are to work for six days, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day, a time of complete rest, a sacred occasion; for you are not to work. It is the Sabbath of the Lord, and is to be observed in all your dwellings.] ²¹⁵

⁴ “These are the appointed sacred occasions in which you will celebrate at the appointed time of celebration for each.

2. The Passover and Unleavened Bread 23:5 - 8

⁵ “In the first month ²¹⁶ on the evening ²¹⁷ of the fourteenth day of the month, is the Passover offering to the Lord. ⁶ At twilight on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of the unleavened bread to the Lord. You are to eat unleavened bread each day for seven days. ⁷ On the first day you are to take part in a holy convocation, and you

²¹² That offering would be presented to the Lord and then the animal would be returned to the person who is offering the sacrifice, to be eaten the same day by members of the family or, in addition, other members of the extended family.

²¹³ Care must be taken that the animal be sacrificed in accordance with the laws of sacrifice.

²¹⁴ To sanctify is to set the people of Israel apart, as a holy nation, and chosen people.

²¹⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²¹⁶ The first month in the Hebrew calendar was Nisan (March/April). The date of celebration was Nisan 14 – 15.

²¹⁷ Literally: “between the evenings.”

are not to labor at your occupation. ⁸For these seven days you are to participate in a holy convocation, and you are not to work at your occupation.”

3. *First Fruits* 23:9 – 14

⁹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁰ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, When you come into the land which I am giving to you, and you reap your harvest you are to bring one newly harvested sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ The priest will elevate the sheaf before the Lord, that you might find acceptance: on the day following the Sabbath the priest will elevate it. ¹² On the day when you elevate the sheaf you are to offer a faultless yearling lamb as a burnt offering to the Lord. ¹³ The accompanying grain offering is to be two tenths of an ephah ²¹⁸ of fine flour mixed with oil, to be offered to the Lord by you, as a pleasing aroma. The accompanying drink offering is to be one fourth of a hin ²¹⁹ of wine.¹⁴ You are not to eat any bread, parched grain or fresh grain, from the new harvest of grain, until you have brought the offering to our God. This is a statute which is to stand forever throughout your generations in all the places where you might live.”

4. *Festival of Weeks* 23:15 – 22

¹⁵ “You are to count from the day after you brought the sheaf to be elevated as an offering, for seven weeks. When these are completed, ²²⁰ ¹⁶ the counting is to continue until the day following the seventh Sabbath, fifty days, at which time you are to present an offering of new grain to the Lord. ¹⁷ From your place of residence (*or, your settlement*) you are to bring two loaves of bread as an elevation offering each made with two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour, baked with yeast (*or, leaven*), as first fruits to the Lord. ¹⁸ Along with the offering of bread you will also bring seven faultless yearling lambs, one young bull from the herd, and two rams. These are to be a burnt offering to the Lord along with their grain offering and their drink offerings, for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. ¹⁹ You are also to provide a male goat as a sin offering, and two yearling male lambs as a sacrifice of well-being (*or, a peace offering*).²⁰ The priest will elevate the bread before the Lord, ²²¹ along with the two lambs. ²²² These will be holy to the Lord, for the priest. ²¹ [On that same day you are to proclaim a holy convocation. No one is to work at his occupation. This is to be an eternal statute in each of your settlements across all generations.] ²²³

²² [“When you reap the harvest of your land you are not to reap to the very edge of your fields, nor are you to gather the gleanings of your harvest. Some is to be left for the poor and the resident aliens: I am the Lord your God.”

5. *New Year Festival* 23:23 – 25

²³ The Lord said to Moses: ²⁴ “On the tenth day of the seventh month, on the first day of the month ²²⁴ you are to observe a day of complete rest, a holy convocation, which is to be commemorated with the sound of trumpet blasts. ²⁵ You are not to do any occupational labor, and you are to present to the Lord an offering by fire.”

²¹⁸ About four quarts.

²¹⁹ About a quart.

²²⁰ This would be the month of Tishri.

²²¹ So: Vulgate. Hebrew: “in addition to the sheep.”

²²² The meaning is unclear.

²²³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²²⁴ The month is Tisti which is September/October.

6. Day of Atonement 23:26 – 32

26 The Lord said to Moses: 27 “On the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of atonement: it will be a holy convocation to you, You are to fast,²²⁵ and present the Lord’s offering by fire. 28 You are to do no work for the entire day, for it is the day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. 29 Whoever does not fast during the entire day will be cut off from the people. 30 Anyone who does any kind of work on that day will be destroyed by me in the midst of the people. 31 You are to do no work: this is an eternal statute throughout your generations in all your settlements (*or, where ever you live*). 32 This will be to you a sabbath of complete rest, you are to fast, on the evening of the ninth day of the month to the next evening you are to keep the Sabbath.”

7. Tabernacles 23:33 – 44

33 The Lord said to Moses: 34 “Tell the people of Israel: On the fifteenth day of the seventh month and continuing for seven days, there will be a festival of tabernacles (*or, booths*) to the Lord. 35 The first day will be a holy convocation: you will do no laborious work. 36 For seven days you are to present burnt offerings to the Lord: on the eighth day you will hold a holy convocation and present a burnt offering to the Lord: it is a solemn assembly:²²⁶ You must not do any laborious work.

37 “These are the appointed festivals of the Lord, which you are to celebrate as times of holy convocations, times for the presenting of additional burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings to the Lord, each on the appropriate day – 38 apart from Sabbaths of the Lord, apart from your gifts, apart from all your votive offerings, and apart from your free-will offerings, which you give to the Lord.

39 [“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the harvest of the land, you are to keep the festival of the Lord, lasting for seven days, as times of complete rest, on both the first and eighth day. 40 On the first day you must take the fruit of _____²²⁷ trees, branches of palm leaves, branches of leafy²²⁸ trees, and willows (*or, poplar*) trees along the brooks, and you will rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. 41 You are to keep this festival to the Lord, seven days in the year. It is to be kept in the seventh month, as an eternal statute throughout your generations. 42 You must live in tabernacles (*or, booths*) for seven days: all citizens of Israel must live in tabernacles (*or, booths*). 43 In this way all your generations will know that I made the people of Israel live in tabernacles (*or, booths*) when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”]²²⁹

44 It was in this way that Moses declared to the people concerning the appointed festivals of the Lord.

²²⁵ The Hebrew has the word “afflicted” with the idea of denial or denying oneself, hence, fasting.

²²⁶ The meaning of the Hebrew word “’asereth” is uncertain.

²²⁷ The meaning of the Hebrew word “hadar” is uncertain. Some translate it as “citron” but this is seriously questioned by scholars. “Majestic” or “goodly” have been used by other translators.

²²⁸ The meaning of the Hebrew word “aboth” is uncertain.

²²⁹ Some scholars feel verses 39 – 43 are a later interpolation.

CHAPTER 24

J. Miscellaneous Rules on Ritual and Ethics 24:1 – 23

1. Lamps 24:1 – 4

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² “Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives ²³⁰ for the lamps within the tent of meeting, that the lamps might be kept burning continuously. ³ Aaron is to set this up outside the veil of the curtain of the holy of holies ²³¹ within the tent of meeting, before the Lord. Aaron must keep them ready [to burn] before the Lord regularly, from evening to morning. This is to continue through all generations. ⁴ He is to keep the lamps on the pure golden ²³² lamp-stand in order that they are always ready to use.”

2. The Bread of the Presence 24:5 - 9

⁵ “You are to take choice flour, and bake it into twelve cakes (*or, loaves*) using two-tenths of an ephah ²³³ for each cake (*or, loaf*). ⁶ These are to be arranged in two rows, ²³⁴ on the table of pure gold. ⁷ Pure frankincense ²³⁵ is to be placed with each row, to be a token offering for the bread, as a burnt offering to the Lord. ⁸ Every Sabbath Aaron will set them in order before the Lord. This is to be done regularly as a sign of the covenant and commitment of the people of Israel, and is to be done forever. ²³⁶ ⁹ These loaves will be, for Aaron and his descendants, for they are permitted to eat them in a holy place, for they are a most holy portion for the priests, ²³⁷ of the offerings by fire to the Lord, which are to continue perpetually.”

3. Blasphemy and Retaliation 24:10 – 23

¹⁰ The son of an Israelite woman whose husband was Egyptian was mingling with the people of Israel, and he and another Israelite of pure descent got involved in a brawl. ¹¹ The man of mixed parentage blasphemed the Name ²³⁸ in a curse. (His mother’s name was Shalomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. ¹² He was put in custody, until the mind of the Lord could be ascertained.

¹³ The Lord told Moses: ¹⁴ “Take the one who cursed out of the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, ²³⁹ and let the entire congregation stone him. ²⁴⁰

²³⁰ This would be the finest oil, the equivalent to our “extra virgin olive oil.” This meant that households were asked to give up their prized olive oil, for which, in the wilderness, there was no source of further supply.

²³¹ The Hebrew word is “eduth” which means “treaty” or “testimony.” The location of the lamp-stand is known from other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. The altar of incense was to be in front of the holy of holies. To the left in front of the altar of incense was the lamp-stand. To the right was the table for the bread of the presence. This was to be placed on a small wooden table that was covered with gold. For information concerning the design of the lamp-stand see Exodus 37:17 – 24; 40:25 – 26.

²³² Literally: “pure lamp-stand.”

²³³ See footnote 218.

²³⁴ In Hebrew it says: “two rows’ while Josephus says “in two heaps.”

²³⁵ Cf. Leviticus 2:2.

²³⁶ The Hebrew in this sentence is uncertain. Possibly it means “from the people” or “as a gift from the people.”

²³⁷ Literally: “for him.”

²³⁸ God was often called “the Name.” This is the point of contention in the story of the tower of Babel. The Hebrew people were not allowed to pronounce the tetragram which we often transliterate as YAWEH. When the Masorites inserted the vowels they used a different combination of vowels so the name would be mispronounced. The result of that is the word “Jehovah.”

²³⁹ In effect they were transferring the blasphemy they had heard back onto the man of mixed nationality.

15 [Speak to the people of Israel, saying: Anyone who curses God will bear his sin. 16 Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death;] ²⁴¹ the entire congregation is to stone the blasphemer. This includes resident aliens as well as Israelites. When the Name is blasphemed, that person is to be put to death. ²⁴² 17 [Whoever kills a human being is to be put to death. 18 Anyone who kills an animal must make restitution for it: life for life. 19 Whoever maims (*or, causes disfigurement to*) his neighbor is to suffer the same injury as had been done by him. ²⁴³ 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, the injury that was inflicted is the injury that is to be suffered. 21 Whoever kills an animal must make restitution for it, but if a human being is killed, the one who killed is to be put to death. 22 There is one law which is for both aliens and Israelites. I am the Lord your God.”] ²⁴⁴

23 Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and the blasphemer was taken outside the camp and was stoned to death. The people of Israel did exactly as the Lord had commanded.

CHAPTER 25

K. The Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee 25:1 – 55

1. Sabbatical Year 25:1 – 2, 20 – 22

1 The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai: 2 “Say to the people of Israel, When you enter the land which I give you, the land is to be kept as a Sabbath to the Lord. 3 For six years you are to prune your vineyard, gathering its fruits; 4 but the seventh year is to be a Sabbath which will involve complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: you are not to sow your field or prune your vineyard. 5 You are not to harvest whatever grows on your land or gather the grapes that grow on your un-pruned vines: it is to be a year of complete rest for the land. 6 You, your male and female slaves, your hired and your forced laborers who live with you may eat what the land yields during the sabbatical year. 7 Your livestock and the wild animals in your land will be able to eat, as food, whatever the land might yield [*during the sabbatical year*].” ²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ The procedure for stoning came to be as follows: The one who brought the accusation that brought about the death penalty was first to stone. He was to drop a large stone on the head of the accused, who usually was lying down. Then the others who heard, in this case, the curse, were permitted to throw stones at the accused. Following that all the other members of the congregation were also to throw stones. This would not only kill the accused but would become a kind of cairn over the deceased, as a reminder of the evil that had taken place.

²⁴¹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²⁴² Cf. ANET p. 34c.

²⁴³ Cf. ANET p. 175b, 417c.

²⁴⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. The “*lex talionis*” was an important principle. Later in Hebrew history this was not always followed.

²⁴⁵ The writer makes a differentiation between harvesting and eating. One is intending to gather all that has been growing, the other is occasional picking what is ripe and eatable. Some scholars place verses 18 – 22 at this point and then return to verse 23, following verse 17.

2. Year of Jubilee 25:8 – 14 ²⁴⁶

⁸ “You must count seven weeks (*or, Sabbaths*) of years, so that seven weeks of years equals forty-ninth years. ⁹ Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month, ²⁴⁷ the trumpet is to sound loudly through the entire land, for this is the day of atonement. ¹⁰ You must hallow the fiftieth year, at which time you must proclaim liberty through the entire land, to all its inhabitants. This will be a time of jubilee for you, for you must return, every one of you, to your own property and every one of you to your family. ¹¹ The fiftieth year will be a jubilee for you: you will not sow or reap the volunteer growth, or harvest the un-pruned vines. ¹² This is a jubilee which will be holy to you. You will eat what grows in the field.

¹³ “In the year of jubilee every one of you will return to his own property. ¹⁴ When you sell something to your neighbor, or purchase something from your neighbor, you must not take advantage of one another. ¹⁵ When you buy something from your neighbor you must take into account the number of years since the jubilee. The seller must only charge you for the crop years that remain. ¹⁶ If the years are many you must increase the price, and if the years remaining are few, you must diminish the price, based on the number of harvests that are being sold. ¹⁷ You must not cheat one another, for you must be in awe of your God, for I am the Lord your God. ²⁴⁸

¹⁸ “Because of this you must observe my statutes faithfully and keep my ordinances, so that you will be able to live safely on the land. ¹⁹ The land will yield its fruit and you will be enabled to eat your fill, and feel secure as you reside there.”

1 Sabbatical Year (continued) 35:20 – 22

²⁰ “When you wonder, what will we eat in the seventh year if we are not to sow or reap a crop in that year: ²¹ I will order my blessing to provide that the crop will be sufficient for a three year food supply. ²² When you sow on the eighth year you will still be eating from the old crop until the ninth year, when the harvested crops come in. Prior to that you will eat of the old crop.”

3. Conclusion of the Law of Jubilee 25:23 – 24

²³ “The land will not be sold into perpetuity, for the land is mine: You are strangers and tenants. ²⁴ Throughout all the land you possess, you are to provide for the redemption of the land.”

4. Law of Redemption 25:25 – 28

²⁵ [“If your relative ²⁴⁹ becomes poor and sells a portion of his property, his nearest relative must come and redeem what his brother has sold. ²⁵⁰ ²⁶ If that person has no one who will redeem the property, but if he prospers and finds sufficient means to redeem it, ²⁷ the amount of years since the sale must be calculated and the difference is to

²⁴⁶ The main purpose of the year of Jubilee is to prevent the utter ruin of debtors. Cf. Amos 2:6. The emphasis of this chapter is holiness, not the amassing of vast holdings of people, lest they succumb to materialism. In this year of Jubilee the people are required to live a simple life. The sabbatical year demonstrates that God is the great provider. The word “Jubilee” is a form of the Hebrew word “yobhel.” Probably a ram’s horn (*or, shofar*) was used to make the sound, since the trumpet, as we know it, did not arrive until much later in history.

²⁴⁷ The month was called Tishri. September/October.

²⁴⁸ Land could not be sold in the conventional sense. Payment of property amounted to the purchase being a lease until the next jubilee year.

²⁴⁹ Literally: “brother.”

²⁵⁰ Some scholars feel verses 25 – 34 are a later interpolation.

be refunded to the person to whom it was sold, and the property is to be returned. ²⁸ But if he is not able to have sufficient funds to get the property back for himself, then what had been sold will remain in the hands of the one who bought the property, until the year of jubilee, when it will be returned.”

5. Law of Redemption of Houses 25:29 – 34

²⁹ “If a man sells a house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a year of the sale. After one year has elapsed since the sale, the right of redemption has ended. ³⁰ If the house in a walled city, after one year, has not been redeemed it will then pass in perpetuity to the purchaser, through all generations, and it will not be released at the time of the year of jubilee. ³¹ If the house is in a village that has no walls around it, it will be classed as open country: it can be redeemed or it can be released in the year of jubilee. ³² In cities of the Levites, the Levites will have the right of redeeming their property forever (*or, without any limitation*) in cities belonging to them. ³³ Such property as may be redeemed from the Levites -- houses sold in that city that belong to them -- and they are to be released in the year of jubilee, because the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the people of Israel. ³⁴ (The open land around the cities of the Levites may not be sold; for that is their permanent possession.”)]

6. Law of Loans to the Poor 25:35 – 38

³⁵ “If your brothers become poor and are unable to support themselves, becoming dependant on you, ²⁵¹ you must support them; they will live with you as resident aliens. ³⁶ Do not deduct interest in advance or interest added on at the time of repayment, as additional profit, but be in awe of your God; let them live with you. ³⁷ You are not permitted to lend your money at interest taken in advance or to provide them food for a profit. ²⁵² ³⁸ I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, who is giving you the land of Canaan to be your God.”

7. Law on Hebrew Slavery 25:39 – 55

³⁹ “If any who are dependent upon you are so impoverished that they sell themselves to you, you are not to make them serve as slaves. ⁴⁰ They are to remain with you as hired servants or as indentured servants. They will serve you [until the year of jubilee. ²⁵³ ⁴¹ At that time they, and the children of their family will be free of your authority; they will return to being their own family, returning to their ancestral property. ⁴² They are my servants, they were brought by me from the land of Egypt: they are not to be sold as one might sell a slave.] ⁴³ They are not to be ruled over, by you, in a ruthless manner, but are to look upon God with awe. ⁴⁴ [As for male and female slaves in your possession, such slaves are to come into your possession only from surrounding nations. These are the only source for male or female slaves. ²⁵⁴ ⁴⁵ You are permitted to acquire them from among the resident aliens who live among you and from their families that are with you, who have been born in your land; that they may be your property. ⁴⁶ You are permitted to bequeath them, as a possession to your children. They are allowed to be

²⁵¹ The Hebrew is uncertain.

²⁵² Cf. ANET p. 35b.

²⁵³ Some scholars feel that verses 40c – 42 are a later interpolation. The command is that the poor be treated with dignity in a brotherly fashion. They are to be considered as hired servants.

²⁵⁴ Some scholars feel that verses 44 – 46 are a later interpolation.

treated as slaves, but as your fellow Israelites. No one dare rule over them with harshness.]²⁵⁵

⁴⁷ “If a stranger or resident alien prospers, while any of your family members is in need and they sell themselves into slavery to a resident alien, or to a member of an alien’s family, ⁴⁸ [after having sold themselves they have the right to be redeemed by one of their brothers, ⁴⁹ or their uncle, or their uncle’s son who might redeem them, or anyone else within their family, a blood relative, who may redeem them, or, if it is possible they can redeem themselves. ⁵⁰ They are to compute the total from the year in which they sold themselves to their owner who is an alien, until the year of jubilee: the price of their redemption will be based on the number of years: the time they were with their owner. The time is to be rated as the time of a hired laborer. ⁵¹ If many years remain, they are to pay for the redemption in proportion to the purchase price. ⁵² and if only a few years remain until the year of jubilee, this is to be computed based on the years of service which is due for their redemption.] ⁵³ Just as a laborer who is hired for a year, so they will be under the aliens’ authority. The alien, however, will not be permitted to rule harshly over them in your sight. ⁵⁴ [If they have not been returned in these ways, they, and their children will be freed in the year of jubilee.] ²⁵⁶ ⁵⁵ To me the people of Israel are servants, they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.”

CHAPTER 26 ²⁵⁷

L. The Great Exhortation 25:1 – 46

¹ “You must not to make idols for yourself nor erect any carved images or pillars. You are not to place figured stones on your land for the purposes of worship; for I am the Lord your God. ² You must keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

³ ”If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments, observing them faithfully, ⁴ I will provide you with rains, and the land will yield plentiful harvests, and the trees of the fields will yield abundant fruit. ⁵ Your threshing will overtake your vintage, and your vintage will overtake your sowing. You will eat your fill and live securely in the land. ⁶ I will provide you with peace in the land and you will be able to lie down, with no fear of attack. I will remove the dangerous animals from the land, and there will be no attacks with the sword in your land. ⁷ You will pursue your enemies and they will die by your sword as you pursue them. ⁸ Five will give chase to a hundred, a hundred of you will chase ten-thousand, and you enemies will fall be by the sword before you. ⁹ I will look upon you with favor and make you fruitful and multiply your population. I will maintain a covenant with you. ¹⁰ Your supply of food will last until you must clean out the storage bins for the new harvest ¹¹ I will make my dwelling place in your midst, and I will not spurn you.. ¹² I will walk in your midst, and will be your God,

²⁵⁵ Slavery in Israel was designed that the slave would be treated as humanly as possible. As a result it could be considered as less degrading and demoralizing than in other nations.

²⁵⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. It is difficult to calculate how the year of jubilee worked out across the centuries, due to a lack of information. We know from history that it was supported in the post-exilic time. Whether it was regularly supported in the time preceding the post-exilic time is questionable.

²⁵⁷ This chapter is a sermon presenting the way of life and the way of destruction. It is very similar to the suzerainite treaty texts of Mesopotamia, Aaramians, Hittites, Assyrians, along with the Ras Shamra Tablets which are Ugaritic. The message begins with the command: “You are not to manufacture unreal gods for yourselves.

and you will be my people. ¹³ I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you might no longer be their slaves: I have broken the thongs that bound you, and enabled you to walk with your heads held high.

¹⁴ “But: if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, ¹⁵ if you spurn my statutes, and abhor my ordinances, so that you will not do all my commandments, breaking my covenant, ¹⁶ I will do this to you: I will bring terror on you, contagious infections, ²⁵⁸ fever ²⁵⁹ that causes loss of eyesight and causes your life to wane. You will sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will eat it. ¹⁷ I will set my face against you, and you will be routed by your enemies; and fear will dominate you. You will be struck down by your enemies, and your foes will dominate (*or, rule over*) you, and you will flee even though no one pursues you. ¹⁸ Yet in spite of this you will not obey me. I will continue to punish you seven-fold for your sins. ¹⁹ I will break your haughty attitude and I will make your sky like iron and your earth will be like bronze. ²⁶⁰ ²⁰ Your strength will fail ²⁶¹ and you will not receive any produce, and the trees of the land will not yield any fruit.

²¹ “If you still defy me and refuse to listen, I will increase your calamities seven times, as your sins deserve. ²² I will let loose wild animals against you and they will bring about death for your children, and destroy your livestock; they will diminish your population and your roads will be deserted.

²³ “If, in spite of these punishments you will not have turned back to me, but continue to be hostile toward me, ²⁴ I will also be hostile toward you. I, myself, will strike you seven-fold for your sins. ²⁵ I will bring the sword against you and will execute covenant vengeance against you: if you gather within your cities I will bring disease among you and you will be delivered into the hand of your enemies. ²⁶ When I break off your bread supply ten women will be able to use one oven and the bread will be doled out in rations, and you will never have enough to eat.

²⁷ “If, in spite of this you will not listen to me, ²⁸ I will look at you with wrathful hostility, and I, myself, will chastise you seven-fold for your sins. ²⁹ You will be turned to cannibalism, eating the flesh of your sons, and daughters. ³⁰ I will destroy your places of idol worship (*or, your high places*), smash your incense altars, and hurl your dead carcasses on top of the carcasses of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. ³¹ I will demolish your cities, and make your sanctuaries desolate, I will not smell your pleasing odor. ³² I will devastate the land so your enemies who intend to settle there will be appalled by its appearance. ³³ I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword against you, and your land will be desolate and your cities waste land.

³⁴ “Then the land will enjoy (*or, make up for*) the Sabbaths, as long as it is desolate ²⁶² while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and make up for its Sabbath years. ³⁵ As long as it is desolate, it will have the rest it did not have on

²⁵⁸ The Hebrew word “sahepel” is a general term for contagious and infectious diseases: dysentery, cholera, typhoid fever, malaria, etc.

²⁵⁹ While the word is usually translated as fever it apparently describes a condition of the eyes, possibly a form of gonorrheal blindness or acute conjunctivitis, etc.

²⁶⁰ Literally: “I will give you sky like iron, and your earth like bronze.”

²⁶¹ Literally: “will be spent in vain.”

²⁶² The period of neglect because of exile would give the land time to recover from neglect .

your Sabbaths, when you were living on it. ³⁶ As for those who survive, ²⁶³ I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a fluttering leaf will put them to flight, and they will flee from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing. ³⁷ They will stumble over each other, as if they were escaping from warriors armed with swords, though no one is pursuing them, and you will have no power to stand against your enemies. ³⁸ You will still perish among the nations and the land of your enemies will devour you. ³⁹ Those of you who will survive will languish in the land of your enemies because of your iniquities and they will also languish because of their ancestor's iniquities.

⁴⁰ "But: if they confess their iniquities, the iniquity of their ancestors, and the treachery they have committed against me, and moreover, if they continued to be hostile to me -- ⁴¹ and in spite of continuing hostility toward them, I brought them out of the land of their enemies. So also if, in your hardheartedness, ²⁶⁴ you are humbled and make amends, God will remember you and bring you out of the land of your enemies. ⁴² Then God declares, I will remember my covenant with Jacob, I will also remember my covenant with Isaac, and I will remember my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ [For the land will be deserted by them, and enjoying (*or, making up for*) its Sabbath years by lying desolate without them while they make amends for their evil, because they spurned my ordinances, and abhorred my statutes. ⁴⁴ Yet, for all that when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them nor abhor them to the point that I will utterly destroy them and break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord, their God,] ²⁶⁵ ⁴⁵ but I will remember in their favor the covenant that had been made with their ancestors whom I brought out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the nations, to be their God. I am the Lord."

⁴⁶ These are the statutes, ordinances, and laws that the Lord established between himself and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses.

CHAPTER 27

Vi. Appendix 27:1 – 34 ²⁶⁶

¹ The Lord said to Moses: ² "Say to the people of Israel as follows: When a man or woman makes an unusual (*or, explicit*) personal vow to the Lord concerning the equivalent for a human being, ³ the equivalent for a male between the ages of twenty and sixty years of age will be fifty shekels (*1 1/4 pounds*) of silver (by the sanctuary shekel). ²⁶⁷ ⁴ If the person is female, the equivalent is thirty shekels. (*12 ounces*) ⁵ If the age is between five and twenty years the equivalent is twenty shekels (*8 ounces*) for a male and ten shekels (*4 ounces*) for a female. ⁶ If the age is between one month and five years it will be five shekels (*2 ounces*) for a male and three shekels (*1 1/4 ounces*) for a female. All

²⁶³ Moses warns that fear will remain if the people are disobedient. There will, however, be a faithful remnant. This concept of the faithful remnant appears from time to time in the Hebrew scriptures.

²⁶⁴ Literally: "uncircumcised heart"

²⁶⁵ Some scholars feel verses 43 – 44 are a later interpolation.

²⁶⁶ This chapter deals with the tariff whereby vows and tithes might be commuted for a money payment. To make such vows places the person or the property in a special position which is outside the formal demands of the law.

²⁶⁷ Scholars are not certain, but generally think a shekel amounted to a half ounce of silver. In later times it was equal to 220 grams of silver. An attempt to give some understanding to the amounts is found in parentheses for each designated amount.

shekels are to be in silver. 7 If the person is sixty years of age or older, the equivalent for the male would be fifteen shekels (*6 ounces*) and for a female ten shekels (*4 ounces*) 8 In the event that the individual is unable to afford the equivalent, those persons are to be brought to the priest, and the priest will assess them, the assessment by the priest will be determined by what each one making a vow can afford.

9 “If it concerns livestock that might be brought as an offering to the Lord, all such livestock that is given to the Lord will be holy. ²⁶⁸ 10 He dare not exchange or substitute any other animal, either good for bad, or bad for good, and if any animal is to be substituted for another, both of the animals will be holy. ²⁶⁹ 11 If the concern is for an unclean animal, these could not be brought to be used in an offering to the Lord, the animal should be presented to the priest. ²⁷⁰ 12 The priest must assess the animal to determine whether it is good or bad, and based on the assessment of the priest, that is how it will be. 13 If it is intended to be redeemed, twenty percent must be added, and then it can revert to its original owner.

14 “If a person dedicates a house to the Lord, the priest must assess it, whether it is good or bad, and what ever the appraisal of the priest is, is final. 15 If the one who has dedicated the house to the Lord wishes to redeem it, an additional twenty percent, must be added to the appraisal of the priest, and it will revert to the original owner.

16 “If a person dedicates any inherited land to the Lord, its appraisal is to be based on its seed requirements: fifty shekels (*1 ¼ pounds*) of silver to an homer ²⁷¹ of barley seed. 17 If the person dedicates the field on the year of jubilee, the assessment will stand; 18 but if the field is dedicated after the year of jubilee, the priest will make an assessment concerning its value, based on the years that remain until the year of jubilee, and the assessment will be reduced. 19 If the person who dedicated the field wants to redeem it, twenty percent is to be added to the assessed value and it will revert to the original owner. 20 If he does not wish to redeem the field, or it has been sold to someone else, it will not be able to be redeemed. 21 If the field is released in the year of jubilee, it is to be holy to the Lord, as a consecrated field and becomes the possession of the priests. 22 If someone dedicates a field to the Lord, that has been purchased, and is not a part of the inherited land, 23 the priest must appraise the value based on the proportioned assessment up to the year of jubilee, and it must be paid as of that day, a sacred dedication to the Lord. 24 In the year of jubilee the land will be returned to the original owner. 25 All assessments are to be paid with the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs equal a shekel.

26 ”The firstborn of animals, however, which is a first-born to the Lord, cannot be consecrated by anyone, whether an ox, ²⁷² or sheep, it is the Lord’s. 27 If it is an unclean animal, it will be ransomed at its assessment, with twenty percent added: If it has not been redeemed it is to be sold for the assessed price..

²⁶⁸ Once the animal was given to God in a vow, it could not be replaced by an animal of inferior quality or a different species.

²⁶⁹ This declares that if an attempt is made to substitute one animal for another, both would then be holy and would automatically belong to God.

²⁷⁰ Unclean animals were to be given to the priest who might use them, or if there was no need, they could be sold for profit.

²⁷¹ Scholars do not agree on the size of an “homer.” Generally it is thought to be the equivalent of 6 bushels of dry measure, though other scholars think of it in liquid measure as 29 – 53 gallons.

²⁷² The Hebrew word can be either male or female.

28 “Nothing a person owns that has been devoted ²⁷³ to destruction for the Lord, whether persons or animals, or inherited land, may be sold or redeemed. Every devoted thing is holy to the Lord. 29 No human beings who are sentenced to death can be ransomed. They will be put to death.

30 ”All tithes from the land, whether it is seed from crops or fruit from trees, are the Lord’s. They are holy to the Lord. 31 If people want to redeem any of their tithes, twenty percent must be added. 32 All tithes of herds and flocks, every tenth one that is counted when going under the shepherd’s staff (*as they leave the fold*), will be holy to the Lord. 33 No one is to ask whether it is good or bad, or make exchanges, for then both the original and the substitute will be holy and unable to be redeemed.”

34 These are the commandments of the Lord who gave these commandments to Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Zion.

²⁷³ I.e. an irrevocable donation of things.