Leviticus begins with the people of Israel, with Moses their leader, standing around the newly completed tabernacle, overwhelmed with the glory of the Angel of the LORD. Then the Angel of the LORD called to Moses from within the tent. The first word of Leviticus in Hebrew is Wayyiqra – "and He called" and it shows how this book follows right on from the last chapter of the preceding book, Exodus.

Leviticus means 'concerning the Levites' and as the work of the ancient Levites is explained so the prophesied work of the Great and Divine High Priest is being explained.

The Bible will take you through the history of the universe from beginning to end but it can also speak clearly to you about your life: Why are you here? How should you live? These Study Guides are intended to help you read and understand the Bible. They are written with enough depth to satisfy the mature Christian but accessible for someone who is new to the Bible.

In the Book by Book Study Guides and accompanying DVD, we want to help you experience the joy of meeting Jesus in all the Scriptures. The first books in the Bible come from over 1500 years before the birth of Jesus, yet you will discover His birth, life, death and resurrection prophesied there. Jesus himself said that the whole Bible was about him (John 5:39).
Leviticus

Holistic Holiness
Leviticus

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I. Introductory thoughts from Paul Blackham

The longest chapter in the Bible is all about... the Bible! Psalm 119 is all about the wonder of the Word of God. Verse 103 shows us the heart of someone who really loved the Bible. He cries out to the LORD God:

Psalm 119:103 – “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Whether you are reading the Bible alone or in some kind of group with others, expect to be thrilled by the words of the Living God. This is not like reading any other book. When we read and study the Bible the ultimate Author can be present with you, showing you His words and applying them to you.

Thousands of small groups are starting up all over the world – but what is it that is going to sustain them? It has to be the Bible.

So often, people don’t quite know what to do with these small groups. Meeting together, sharing testimonies and experiences or sharing the odd verse is ultimately too sparse a diet to sustain people’s spiritual needs in the long run, and really help them to grow.

What is needed is confidence in the Bible, and the ability to go to a book of the Bible rather than just an isolated verse. Each book of the Bible was written with a purpose, and it is only as we digest it as a book that we understand the real message, purpose, direction, storyline and characters.

It’s a lot easier than people often think. You might think, “Oh, I can’t manage a whole book of the Bible”, but what we’re trying to do in Book by Book is to break it down and show that it’s easy.

The Bible was written not for specialists, not for academics – it was written for the regular believers, down the ages.

The world is in desperate need for answers. How can the world live at peace? How can we live together with justice and truth and compassion? There are so many religions and so much division and bloodshed: what is the real and living way that takes us to the Living God who can give us all a new beginning?

The Bible is the answer of the Living God to all our questions.
Our desire is that many Christians would experience the joy and confidence in the Scriptures that is found throughout Psalm 119 – “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”
II. All about Book by Book

A. WHAT IS BOOK BY BOOK?
Book by Book is a Bible Study resource with accompanying DVD. It has been designed principally for use in small groups and can also be used for personal study or larger group situations.

B. THE STRUCTURE OF BOOK BY BOOK

The Study Guide
The Study Guide provides the following features for each section of study:
- A Key Truth to focus on the most important truth in that section of the Bible Book.
- A Mind-Map diagram giving an overview of the study.
- An explanation of the Bible text, divided under suitable headings.
- Further Questions, to stimulate deeper thought and discussion.
- A week of suggested daily Bible readings to fill out and explore the themes from the study.
- A Bible Study, with detailed questions, designed to lead the individual or group deeper into the text.
- A Bible Study answers section at the back of the study guide, for extra help if need be.

The DVD
Key features provided on each DVD are as follows:
- There is a 15 minute discussion on the DVD linked to each section of the Study Guide Bible passage
- The on-screen host is Richard Bewes, with co-host Paul Blackham. A specially invited guest joins them in the Bible discussions.

C. SOME TIPS ON HOW TO USE BOOK BY BOOK
The beauty of Book by Book is that it offers not only great Biblical depth, but also flexibility of approach to study. Whether you are preparing to lead a small group, or study alone you will find many options open to you.
And it doesn’t matter if you are a new Christian or more experienced at leading Bible studies, Book by Book can be adapted to your situation. You don’t need to be a specially trained leader.

**Group study: preparing**
- Select your study (preferably in the order of the book!)
- Watch the DVD programmes
- Read the commentary
- Use the suggested Bible questions...
- ...or formulate your own questions (the mind maps and key truths are a great guide for question structure)

**Group study: suggested session structure**
We recommend you set aside about an hour for each study
- 5 minutes – read the relevant section of the Bible
- 15 minutes – Watch the DVD programme
- 30 minutes – work through the Bible study questions (either your own or the ones in the guide), allowing time for discussion
- 10 minutes – If the study got the group thinking about wider issues of life today, Then consider the Further Questions to stimulate a broader discussion
- Taking it further – Suggest that group members look at some of the Daily Readings to follow up on the theme of the study

Given the volume of material you may even choose to take two weeks per study – using the DVD to generate discussion for one week and the Bible Study questions for the next.

**Individual study**
There is no set way to conduct personal study – here are some ideas:
- Select your study (preferably in the order of the book!)
- Read the Bible passage and related commentary.
- Try looking at the Mind-Map diagrams and seeing how the book has a structure.
Take a look at the Key Truths and decide if they are the same conclusions you had reached when you read the book.

Perhaps focus on the week of daily Bible reading to help you to explore the rest of the Bible’s teaching on the themes of each section of study.

Work through the Bible Questions. Don’t worry if you get stuck, there is an ‘answers’ section at the back of the guide!
Dove sacrifice
III. An introduction to Leviticus

The book of Exodus ended in great glory and wonder. The LORD God had given very detailed instructions for the building of a tent-like structure called the tabernacle... and it had been built just as He had instructed Moses. When all had been completed the Angel of the LORD took up residence in the tabernacle and filled the whole tabernacle area with such divine glory that nobody... not even Moses... had been able to approach the tabernacle. A mighty pillar of cloud by day and fire by night settled over the tabernacle to indicate that the Angel of the LORD was present in the tabernacle at the centre of the camp of three million people.

That is where the book of Leviticus begins.

The people of Israel with Moses their leader are standing around the newly completed tabernacle, overwhelmed with the glory of the Angel of the LORD. Then the Angel of the LORD called to Moses from within the tent.

The ancient Hebrew title of this book was Wayyiqra – “and He called”. That is the first word in Hebrew and it shows how this book follows right on from the last chapter of Exodus. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible the new title was given, which in the later Latin version became the title we use today – “Leviticus” (“concerning the Levites”). This new title indicates that this book of the Bible addresses the work of the Levites, and it is a fair title.

If the book of Genesis set the stage for the Bible’s story and Exodus established the theological framework, then the book of Leviticus takes us into that theological framework to explain the inner workings. The book of Leviticus takes us down into the theological engine of the Scriptures to show us how and why the work of the Messiah is what it is.

As the work of the ancient Levites is explained so the prophesied work of the Great and Divine High Priest is being explained. When we look at the theological reasoning of the saints who lived before the birth of Jesus, we see their desire to see the Promised Messiah through the ‘window’ of the book of Leviticus. We hope to pursue the same goal as we too plunge into this exhilarating book of the Bible.
Remember that the book of Leviticus is set in and around the tent-like structure known as the tabernacle. In the Book by Book studies on Exodus we looked at the tabernacle in detail. A preparatory study of the tabernacle from Exodus will greatly assist your study of the book of Leviticus.
Cut off from the life of God – that is perhaps the simplest way of describing the problem with the world.

In so many ways and at so many levels the life of this world is alienated from the life of God. Exiled by our sin, dying from its curse, diseased and disobedient, we live in a world that also bears the curse of death and decay. Not only our moral life, but even our bodies and the physical world around us all need redemption. The book of Leviticus will perform a spiritual biopsy on the world... and show us the deep and glorious remedy that we find in our Great High Priest, the Divine Messiah.

In the first part of the book of Leviticus we are introduced to all the sacrifices and offerings that the Living and Holy God requires from sinful and alienated people. Although it might seem very complicated at first glance, there is deep spiritual treasure in these chapters.

You will notice that it seems almost as if all the laws are given twice: 1:1-6:7 and then again from 6:8-7:27. In fact, from 1:1-6:7 the sacrifices and offerings are being explained for the benefit of all the people and then from 6:8-7:27 specific instructions are given to the priests so that they know what to do when a person requests one of the sacrifices.

Remember that when the animals were brought to be sacrificed, the person who brought them had to kill them. People often imagine that the priests did all the killing in a dispassionate and professional way. In reality, each person had to kill the animal (Leviticus 1:5). The terrible, bloody and deadly cost of sin was graphically and personally shown.
**Offering** | **Purpose** | **Jesus** | **Animals** | **Division**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
**Burnt Offering:** Propitiation | Bears the anger of God for us | Bull, sheep, goat, doves or pigeons. | All meat for the Lord. Skin for priest
**Grain Offering:** Dedication | Perfectly dedicated to His Father | Grain or flour, oil and incense. | Portion burned. Priest ate the rest.
**Sin Offering:** Cleansing | His blood cleanses us | Bull, goat, doves, pigeons or flour | Fat for the Lord.
**Guilt Offering:** Repayment | He pays our debt to God | Ram | Fat for the Lord. Other parts for the priest.
**Fellowship Offering:** Fellowship | In Him we have the fellowship of the Spirit | Bull, sheep or goat | Fat for the Lord. Portion for the priest. Portions for worshipper

### a. Burnt Offering (1:3-17; 6:8-13)

**Purpose:** The burnt offering made atonement for sin. It propitiated the anger of the Living God.

The word 'propitiate' has fallen out of common use but propitiation is a very important idea in the Bible. It means to 'make peace'. A 'propitiation' is something that causes a person to become peaceful. It takes away their anger.

In the old King James version of the Bible we find this word in verses like Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:2. In Romans 3 the apostle Paul is describing the redemption that we have in Jesus...

> “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (King James version of the Bible)
Romans 3:23 tells us that everybody in the world has sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. That is much more serious than simply ‘failing to live up to an ideal’. The glory of God is not a idealistic perfection that we are to merely dream about.

The glory of God is the basic requirement for humanity set by the Most Holy God.

If we fall short of this glory in any way we provoke the consuming and terrible anger of the One who lives in Eternity. Think of the Living God for a moment. Imagine that you are flying through the sky and out into space. You see the planet earth far below as you fly out across this solar system. The moon and all the planets are there with the sun at the centre. But we will go further... out into the vast darkness between the stars. We travel across the Milky Way – the galaxy that we are a tiny part of. The Milky Way is made up of countless stars sprawling across the inconceivable expanse of space. Yet, the Milky Way itself is only one of countless galaxies... each galaxy filled with millions of stars. Now, if you can allow your mind to do this, imagine that there is yet another level of reality way beyond even the breathtaking immensity of the galaxies. Imagine another realm as far above the galaxies as they were above the little world we know on this one little planet. Imagine a realm of such depth and power and wonder and grandeur that no human language can properly describe any part of it. Imagine a world populated by millions of creatures more powerful and complex than we can ever imagine. In the centre of this dimension that dwarves the universe, is a throne surrounded by some kind of emerald rainbow. On this throne sits... someone (Revelation 4:2)... and by His side is someone like Him and surrounding them is a many-faceted Spirit who is their eternal companion. This is the Living God of the Bible – and from that realm of infinite existence and purity and power and majesty, He looks down at the human race. The Father made everything – the earth, the galaxies and even that marvellous realm of heaven. He can make whatever He wants and do whatever pleases Him. There is nothing that can even cause Him to hesitate let alone actually stop Him.

We live before the fiery eyes of this Infinite and Majestic God... and if any of us fall short of His glory in any way, what anger and revulsion that
provokes in Him! Why should He bother with us for even one second! When we do and think and say things that are vile to Him, things that are an attack on all that He is, why should He tolerate us?

One old preacher describes our situation as dangling by a single thread over the bottomless abyss of the divine anger and justice. We are criminals and outlaws against the Creator of the all things... and when He brings us to justice we will all be sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell.

Even before the final Day of Judgement, we see the divine anger all around us and within us. The whole world lies under the curse of death and decay. Although we were made to live for ever, yet we are dying from the moment we are conceived. We experience the decay of our bodies and the angst of our souls. Our sinful corruption spews from our hearts and destroys the societies in which we live. We have become slaves to desires that drive us further from the Glorious God... evil desires and selfish ambitions that constantly provoke His anger against us.

Scripture simply calls us natural enemies of the Living God.

This is the background we need in our hearts and minds if we are to appreciate the need for all these offerings and sacrifices in the book of Leviticus. How can we find peace with this Just and Righteous God? Is it ever possible for us to become friends with Him? Can the demands of justice ever be satisfied? Is there a way for us to be cleansed and renewed, a way for us to get a new beginning... a new human life that pleases the One who made us?

When we think of this first offering, the burnt offering, we are dealing with these fundamental questions right away.

Back in Genesis 3:24 the LORD God set a barrier of fire between Himself and us. This fire, guarded by the cherubim, says that we cannot come into the presence of the One who is too holy even to look at sin. The fire shows that the payment for our sin is death.

Is there a way back through the fire? Is there a way to propitiate the Living God?

The book of Leviticus begins with the wonderful news that there is a way through the fire into the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is a way for sinful humanity to enter the throne room of the Most Holy God.
In the burnt offering the animal was entirely consumed by fire “to make atonement” (1:4).

It is as if the animal goes into the fire and pays the price of the sin. The animal is consumed by the barrier between heaven and earth... so that the sinner can pass safely through. The animal dies as a substitute, taking the place of the sinner in the fire of the divine anger.

Of course, these animals did not solve the ultimate problem of sin. The problems of the universe need a deeper solution than the blood of animals. These burnt offerings were each a kind of prophecy saying that one day the Lamb of God Himself would come to be the final and ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb who would take away the sins of the whole world.

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. (Hebrews 10:1-6)

Perhaps we could say that the burnt offering is the fundamental offering. We find it right back at the beginning of the book of Genesis, long before these laws were given through Moses.

In Genesis 8:19-21 Noah sacrificed burnt offerings after the flood receded:

All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds – everything that moves on the earth – came out of the ark, one kind after another. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma...
The need for atonement... the need to pacify the Immortal God who made us is so fundamental that it lies at the very beginning of the Bible's story. The promise of the Messiah, the Seed of the Woman, the Lamb of God is the underlying truth that gives all these burnt offerings of the Bible substance and genuine hope.

A final thing to note about the burnt offering is the fact that the whole animal is consumed by the fire. Some suggest that this indicates the total commitment to the Lord required by the worshipper who brought the sacrifice. One thing is for sure: this act of atonement required everything from the sacrificial animal. It cost Jesus everything... obedience to the ultimate and most terrible extent... in order to propitiate the divine anger against our sin.

b. Grain Offering (2:1-16; 6:14-18)

Purpose: Gratitude, faithfulness and commitment.

The grain offering was offered along with the burnt offering. The burnt offering and the grain offering were offered in the morning and the evening at the tabernacle (later the temple).

Very little information is given to us about the purpose of the grain offering, however when we see what was said at the feast of firstfruits in Deuteronomy 29:8-11, we perhaps get some insight into this:

the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have given me." Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before him. And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

The burnt offering brought peace with the Lord God and the grain offering was a sign of thankfulness and dedication to the Lord.

The grain offering always had salt in it. There is much divided opinion about the meaning of salt in the Bible. Some argue that salt is a positive
sign, a sign of faithfulness or maintaining goodness in a bad world. Others connect salt to the making of a covenant or agreement.

Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. (Leviticus 2:13)

There is certainly much to be said for these views, but in many Biblical references there seems to be a more negative aspect in addition to the idea of covenant faithfulness.

Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she fell under the Lord’s judgement (Genesis 19:26). When the LORD’s burning anger is threatened against the land we are told “the whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulphur – nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger” (Deuteronomy 29:23). When Abimelech attacked Shechem “all that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it” (Judges 9:45). See also Psalm 137:34, Jeremiah 17:5-6 & Zephaniah 2:9 for more of that theme.

Put salt on Moab, for she will be laid waste; her towns will become desolate, with no-one to live in them. (Jeremiah 48:9)

In Ezekiel 47, the vision of the new creation predicts that all the salt water will be turned into fresh water.

Perhaps, then, salt is not only about covenant faithfulness but also judgement. Being faithful to the LORD’s covenant means rejecting those that reject Him. When the world turns away from the Living God, the LORD will certainly fulfil the warnings and curses of His covenant. Judgement is certain if the covenant is broken.

The grain offering is always mixed with salt to show that dedication and gratitude to the LORD God is essential. The animal sacrifices show a seriousness about sin with the presence of blood, but the grain offerings make the same point with the presence of salt. The grain offering is not only about renewed commitment but also deep gratitude for escape from the LORD’s judgement.
If salt is essential, honey and yeast are forbidden. This confirms that the grain offering is connected with redemption. Yeast is forbidden because of its association in the Exodus.

The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. (Exodus 12:39)

On the night of the Exodus, anyone who preferred to wait for their bread to rise rather than join in with the redemption of the Angel of the LORD showed that their heart was still in Egypt. To choose risen bread over redemption would have been a deep sign of worldliness and spiritual compromise.

Therefore, throughout the Bible yeast-free bread is associated with the need for redemption.

Honey is associated with life in the promised land – “a land flowing with milk and honey”. When honey and yeast are used in feasts and offerings then the idea of life in the new creation is being celebrated. When we are fully redeemed on the Day of the LORD, then we have all the time in the world to bake bread with yeast and we will eat the honey of that wonderful future!

The final component of the grain offering is the oil. In the Scriptures, oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. When David was anointed with oil the Holy Spirit empowered him (1 Samuel 16:13).1

So, when we think of the grain offering we are thinking of an offering deeply tied to the theme of redemption and dependence on the Living God.

The worshipper would offer the burnt offering to atone for sin and then they would offer the grain offering to reaffirm their need for redemption, faithfulness and the presence of the Spirit if they were going to live out that life of faithfulness and commitment.

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1 See Book by Book Exodus for more on this in connection with the oil lampstand in the tabernacle.
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Leviticus

Study 1  Bible Questions

Leviticus 1:1-9

Verse 1  What is the background to verse 1? What is this Tent of Meeting? Has the LORD ever spoken in this way before?

Verse 2  Why couldn’t a person bring just any offering? Why did each offering have to be according to the LORD’s instructions?

Verse 3  The animal had to be “a male without defect”. Why?

Verse 4  In order for the animal to “make atonement” for the person they had to lay their hand on its head. Why was this action done? (see Leviticus 16:21).

Verse 5  What happens to the animal’s blood? What does this tell us about the importance of blood?

Verses 6-9  What preparations are made for the burning of the animal’s body? What is the significance of the fire? (see Genesis 3:24 and Exodus 3:1-6).

Verse 9  The burnt offering was “an aroma pleasing to the LORD”. What does this tell us about the relationship between the LORD and humanity? Why does He need to be soothed by this burning death?
Study 1 Further Questions

1. How would you explain the idea of propitiation to someone? Does it sound barbaric? Does that matter?
2. Why do we find sacrificial rituals in all the ancient religions of the world?
3. Do the Levitical sacrifices raise issues for animal rights? Why did so many animals have to die? Was it fair? How should we think about this?

Study 1 Daily Readings

Day 1 – Leviticus 1:1-17
Day 2 – Leviticus 2:1-16
Day 3 – Leviticus 3:1-17
Day 4 – Hebrews 9:1-10
Day 5 – Hebrews 9:11-15
Day 6 – Hebrews 9:16-28
Day 7 – Hebrews 10:1-18

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
Study 2  The Sacrifices (part 2)

Leviticus 1:1-7:27

Key Truth:
Our alienation from the Living God needs to be answered on many levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offering</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnt Offering</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Perfectly dedicated to His Father</td>
<td>Grain or flour, oil and incense.</td>
<td>Portion burned. Priest ate the rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin Offering</td>
<td>Cleansing</td>
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<td>Bull, sheep or goat</td>
<td>Fat for the Lord. Portion for the priest, Portions for worshipper</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each day the worship of Israel began and ended with burnt offerings joined to grain offerings. The anger of the Living God was propitiated and a commitment was made to a new, redeemed life of obedience and faithfulness.

**Purpose:** Cleansing. Sin pollutes and corrupts the world and the tabernacle. The Living God cannot live with the moral and spiritual filth that is sin. The sin offering cleansed away the filth of sin.

This is the most complicated section of the offerings in Leviticus. Not only are there different kinds of sin, but the ‘social status’ of the sinner also had to be considered.

The need for spiritual or moral *cleansing* is of vital importance here. Many people are familiar with the idea that links sin with *guilt*, but not so many people realise that sin is also linked with uncleanness or filth or dirtiness. Sin is not only a breaking of a law but also a pollution. If we fall into a pile of manure then we will be dirty and smelly. In the same way, if we fall into sin we are spiritually dirty and filthy.

Furthermore, we cause moral and spiritual pollution in the world around us. In the book of Leviticus we see that the tabernacle itself, the altar and even the ark of the covenant (see Leviticus 16) became unclean due to the sinfulness of the Israelites.

In other words, our sin is not simply a private or personal affair. It is not a hidden problem. Our sin makes us spiritually dirty, so much so that we pollute what we come into contact with.

If you are used to hygiene regimes, you will understand this language. An unhygienic person makes other things unhygienic by contact. The sinner defiles the holy things of the Living God. It was vital that the uncleanness of the sinner be *cleansed*. The need for *cleansing* comes to the front in these *sin offerings*.

The first thing that strikes us as we read these laws is the fact that they provided cleansing only for *unintentional* sins. What are ‘unintentional’ sins? In Numbers 15:28-31 the contrast is with ‘defiant’ sin.

The priest is to make atonement before the **Lord** for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven. One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien. But anyone who sins *defiantly*, whether
native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. Because he has despised the LORD’s word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him.

A person may sin either defiantly or unintentionally. So, what is the difference between the two? What if we commit sin, knowing that we are sinning, but deeply repent of what we have done? What of the sins we commit in the Christian life... the sins that grieve our hearts?

The difference between defiant sin and unintentional sin seems to lie in the heart of the sinner. The defiant sin is done wilfully and without repentance. It is a settled rejection of the LORD God and His Law. The unintentional sin is ‘against the grain’. It causes a deep sorrow in the believer’s heart. It is followed by repentance.

It is the cry of the apostle Paul in Romans 7:19 – “What I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.”

Numbers 15 goes on to give an example of a defiant sin. It is a man caught gathering wood on the Sabbath. The man says nothing, giving no words of sorrow. Neither does the man desire to offer a burnt offering for his sin. The people simply don’t know what to do with him. How are they to treat a man who breaks the Law of God in this defiant and unrepentant way? The Lord tells them that they have to execute this man. There is no room in the people of God for someone who rejects the Lord and His law in this wilful and unrepentant way.

When the book of Hebrews addresses ‘deliberate’ sins this becomes clear:

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:26-29)
The renewed heart hates the sins it commits. The unregenerate heart hears the law of God yet prefers its own sin. The believer runs to the Lord Jesus when they fall into sin. However, the person who clings to their sin without repentance is condemned. The book of Hebrews examines the case of the person who has perhaps joined a church and heard the gospel of Jesus. Perhaps they have even experienced something of the power of the Spirit. However, they refuse to trust and honour Jesus. They hold to their sin and reject Jesus' sacrifice for sin. Can they find another sacrifice for sin if they reject Jesus? Is there some other option if they won't have Jesus? No! in rejecting Jesus there is no escape from the judgement of God. Unless a person flees to Jesus for forgiveness there is no salvation.

So, unintentional sins are the sins that we hate. But, they are also the sins that we do not even know we have done.

Leviticus 5:1-13 seems to cover examples of sins that a person does not even know about or has done by simply forgetting to do what they should. These sins of ignorance are no less sins than the sins we know about.

Ignorance of the law among those who dwell in the camp of Israel is essentially sinful. The Israelite had no business to be ignorant. The law was plain and within his reach. If he neglected to study the statute, his breach of the statute could not be excused by his neglect, seeing the neglect was in itself an act of omission of a censurable kind. Wilful ignorance of the Lord’s will is in itself sin, and the sin which cometh of it is grievous in the sight of the Lord our God.2

If the Living God takes such sin so seriously, then what about all the sins that we knowingly commit?

if a sin of ignorance renders us guilty, what must a wilful sin do? Do you not perceive at once how the law is again set on high by this? For if an inadvertent transgression covers the soul with guilt which cannot be put away without a sacrifice, then what shall we say of those who knowingly and advisedly, with malice aforethought, break the commands of God? What shall we say of

2 C. H. Spurgeon preaching on Leviticus 5
those who, again and again and again, being often reproved, harden their necks and go on in their iniquities? Surely their sin is exceeding sinful. If I may become a transgressor by breaking a law which I did not know, by what name shall I be called if, when I do know it, I presumptuously lift up my hand to defy the lawgiver and violate his statutes. (Spurgeon on Leviticus 5)

If we are to apply this sacrifice to ourselves today, then we must gain a deeper appreciation of our profound sinfulness. Our Christian ancestors were very sensitive to their 'hidden' sins: the things they forgot to do; the lack of love for the LORD; the lack of love for humanity; the evil desires that lurk in our hearts.

Nothing which is human can be thought certain after this. Think of the sins you may have committed; sins of thoughts which have too rapidly flitted through your mind for you to recollect them... Think of your evil thoughts, your pleasure in hearing of uncleanness, your desires, wishes, and excuses of evil – these are all iniquities. Then, too, our words, our hurried words of anger, of falsehood, of petulance, and pride: our idle words, our murmuring words, our unbelieving words, our irreverent words: words scarcely meant, which fell from us without thought: what a multitude of these may be laid to our door, and all these are full of sin!

Praise God that Jesus purifies us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). No matter what our sin, whether we know of it or not, He will completely cleanse us if we confess our sin before Him and beg Him for mercy.


Purpose: Repayment. Sin always incurs a debt against the LORD God and often incurs a debt against our fellow human beings. These offerings are concerned with restoring or repaying our sinful debts to God and humanity.

In 5:15-16 a person has to repay an offence against “the LORD’s holy things”. The importance of this may be missed by many modern readers. If we recall the story of David transporting the ark towards Jerusalem we see an example of this:

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3 Ibid.
Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:6-7)

To trespass onto the LORD’s property was extremely dangerous. In Leviticus chapter 10 we see what happened when Nadab and Abihu trespassed carelessly into the presence of the LORD God.

That necessary balance between love and fear is so important in all our worship of the Living God. On the one hand we know a wonderful intimacy and family privilege. On the other hand the fear of the LORD is the beginning of understanding. Our God is a consuming fire and it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands. The sign of spiritual maturity is not only intimacy but also deep reverence and respect in the presence of the Living God.

In human affairs we are used to the idea that a fine has to be paid if we trespass onto the property of another. This same principle is true in spiritual reality. The offences we commit against the LORD God incur a debt which must be paid.

In Leviticus 6:2-6 the human side of the repayment offering comes to the fore.

If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbour about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do – when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering. And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value.

Notice that sinning against our neighbour is sinning against and being unfaithful to the LORD. Sin is ultimately against the Living God, and only
in a very secondary and limited sense do we ever sin against a human being. Atonement had to be made to the Lord for offences against fellow human beings.

These laws concerning repayment are of profound importance. Verse 5 is slightly ambiguous. It might be that simply 120% of the value must be repaid, but if we compare this with Exodus 22:4, it may mean that 220% must be repaid (if ‘restitution in full’ is referring to Exodus 22:4). Whatever the case, there are two dimensions to putting sinful behaviour right.

First and foremost, there must be atonement to the Lord, against whose law the theft or guilt has really been committed.

Second, the loss must be more than repaid.

We see this in the case of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8 – “Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’”

The true sign of repentance is not simply a sorrow for what we have done, but a ‘turning around’, a change of heart and mind. We show true repentance when our lives take the opposite direction to our sin. Repaying the wrong we have done to others, or at the very least confessing our sin and asking for forgiveness, is often the first shoots of genuine spiritual life.

c. Fellowship Offering (3:1-17; 7:11-21, 28-34)

Purpose: Fellowship: an expression of thankfulness, to fulfil a vow or as a free expression of a person’s love for the Lord God.

The fellowship offering (sometimes referred to as the ‘peace offering’) was, in many ways, the most special of all the offerings.

The fellowship offering was very different for two reasons: first, it was optional and second the worshipper could eat some of the sacrifice. In fact, the worshipper was allowed to bring family and friends along to spend a couple of days enjoying the meat in the presence of the Lord God at the tabernacle. In that sense, it reminds us of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament. The meal was a time of communion – communion primarily between the Angel of the Lord at the tabernacle and the
worshipper, but also between the worshipper and their family and friends. The other offerings were all necessary and compulsory. They represented all that had to be done to make the possibility of fellowship between the LORD God and His people. If all those offerings had been made, then what? The fellowship offering is what the people *could* do instead of *had* to do when full atonement and cleansing had been made. Did the person really want to enjoy fellowship with their Lord and Saviour? Did they understand the point of all the other offerings?

In many ways, this fellowship offering was a sign pointing towards the marriage feast of the Lamb at the end of the world. On that Day, there will be such intimate table fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The fellowship offering was a small taste of that time.

The only time that the fellowship offering *had* to be offered was at the Feast of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:19). That Feast, as we will see, was an expression of hope in our New Creation future. In that Feast everybody had to look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

In the five offerings we have seen the different ways in which the alienation between the Living God and humanity is addressed. The problem is not simple, therefore there is a need for a complex solution. The work of Jesus the Divine Messiah is so deep and wide, with so many facets. The more we appreciate these prophetic offerings, the more we will appreciate all that Jesus has done for us.

The sacrificial system therefore presents different models or analogies to describe the effects of sin and the way of remedying them. The *burnt offering* uses a personal picture: of man the guilty sinner who deserves to die for his sin and of the animal dying in his place. God accepts the animal as a ransom for man. The *sin offering* uses a medical model: sin makes the world so dirty that God can no longer dwell there. The blood of the animal disinfects the sanctuary in order that God may continue to be present with His people. The reparation offering (*guilt offering*) presents a commercial picture of sin. Sin is a debt which man incurs against God. The debt is paid through the offered animal.4

Leviticus 7:11-21

Verse 11 Who are these regulations addressed to? (see 6:8, 14, 19, 24) How do these regulations differ from the regulations of 3:1-17?

Verses 12, 16 What were the three different kinds of fellowship offerings? What things might we do today that reflect these three fellowship offerings?

Verses 12-13 List all the things that were needed for this offering. Don’t forget the animal mentioned in chapter 3!

Verses 12-13 What is the symbolic meaning of yeast and oil? (see Exodus 12:39 and 1 Samuel 16:13).

Verses 14-15 Normally the sacrificial meat belonged only to the Lord or His priests. Why can the meat of the fellowship offering be eaten by the person who brought it? What does this tell us about the nature of the fellowship offering?

Verses 14-15 Together with the offerings of flour, oil and yeast, the animal’s blood was sprinkled and the barbecued meat could be eaten. If we put all these elements together, how would you explain the fellowship offering?

Verses 16-18 What is different about the freewill and vow offerings?

Verses 19-21 The sacrificed meat is holy, but it can be eaten by those who are clean. However holy meat that touches what is unclean must be destroyed. What does this tell us about the relationship between the holy, the clean and the unclean?
Study 2  Further Questions:

1. When a Christian sins or when a person begins the Christian life, to what extent should full (or extra) repayment be made to those we have sinned against? What about criminal activity in the past? Should the new Christian turn themselves into the police and make a full confession of their criminal past?

2. The fellowship offering must have been a very joyful time of spiritual intimacy and family connection (see Deut 12:7). How can we recapture that in modern Christianity? Some have tried to make more of the Lord’s Supper, but how could this be done? How could we experience the ‘love-feast’ of Jude verse 12?

3. How can we explain the idea of being spiritually ‘unclean’? There are many illustrations explaining the idea of ‘guilt’ and ‘forgiveness’, but what about spiritual ‘filth’ and ‘cleansing’?
The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
Strange fire
Study 3  The Priests

Since the beginning of the book of Genesis the Bible begins to make us aware of the great priestly work of God the Son. Whether in His work of creation or in the first promise of His birth in Genesis 3:15, in the appearance of Melchizedek or the LORd appearing to Abraham, in the sacrifice of Isaac and the promise of the Lamb of God in Genesis 22:8 & 14, in all these ways and many more, the work of the Divine High Priest has been outlined.

When we came to the book of Exodus the work of this Divine Angel of the LORd became even more clear. Standing between the Most High God and His people, the LORd redeemed His people out of Egypt and came to live among them in the tabernacle. Living as the Divine High Priest in the tabernacle’s Most Holy Place, the Angel of the LORd was now instructing His people in the qualifications and ministry of the priests.

The Law was a shadow of the heavenly reality... and so as we study all that the Angel of the LORd taught from the tabernacle about these Levitical priests, so we will be taught so many things about Himself, the Great High Priest. The laws concerning these mortal priests were designed to teach about and lead to the Immortal and Divine Priest, Jesus Christ.

a. **The ordination of the priests (8:1-36)**

The LORd said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and
the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.’ Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Moses said to the assembly, ‘This is what the LORD has commanded to be done.’ Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.

In all the descriptions of the sacrifices and the technical details concerning their performance, there is the constant assumption that Aaron and his sons would be serving as priests. The question remained how they were to be made ready for this work. How could they be sanctified (set apart, dedicated to the LORD) for this most sacred work?

We will look much more closely at these divisions of holy, clean, common and unclean in the next study, but for now we need only note that the ordinary members of the assembly of Israel were either clean or unclean. They were not holy. Only those things that were specially dedicated to the LORD were holy.

So, the ordination ritual described in Leviticus 8 explains how Aaron and his sons were set aside as holy, specially dedicated servants of the LORD allowed into the tabernacle itself.

The process has several stages:
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The assembly of Israel (the *ekklesia* in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) was to gather at the Tent of Meeting before the **LORD** (verses 1-4). The business of this chapter involves bringing the **LORD** and His people together, so all must gather for the ordination of the priests who would stand between them.

The first stage of the ritual was a washing with water. The connection here with Jesus’ own baptism at the beginning of His public ministry is compelling. As He began His public work as the Great High Priest, He ‘fulfilled all righteousness’ (Matthew 3:15) as the great prophet John the Baptist (like Moses) washed Him with water.

After Aaron and his sons were washed, they were clothed with the priestly garments. For a more complete discussion of these clothes see the Book by Book study guide on Exodus.
These priestly clothes identified the priest with the people and the LORD God. The names of the tribes of Israel were on each shoulder and on the breast-plate, to link him to the assembly of Israel. On the turban was a plate bearing the words “Holy to the LORD”, identifying the priest with the Holy God of the sanctuary.

Standing between the LORD and His people, identified with each, the priest was the mediator, the middle-man, whose ministry involved bringing these two parties together.

Twice Moses was to anoint the priests with oil during the ritual. On this first occasion, the anointing oil was also applied to the tabernacle and everything in it. Everything had to be holy. As we have seen, anointing with oil indicates the presence of the Spirit – see 1 Samuel 16:13. If everything had to be covered in oil, including the priests, then this priestly work was to be a mighty work of the Spirit. His charismatic gifts would be needed to accomplish this work.

When we remember that the main title of Jesus is “The Messiah”, “The Anointed One”, we appreciate the significance of all this anointing oil. The Divine High Priest is the One on whom the Spirit rests in an unlimited way. In His performance of His work of cosmic mediation, the Spirit infinitely equips Him and empowers Him (see Isaiah 42:1-4; 61:1-3; Luke 4:14-21).

The next part of the ritual is vital. The Angel of the LORD within the tabernacle was going to allow these sinful and impure priests into His presence. Remember how the book of Exodus ended with the glory of the LORD filling the tabernacle with such intensity that even Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting. Now, these priests were going to enter into that glory. The altar and the priests had to be purified from any sinful pollution.

In verse 14 we see Aaron and his sons laying their hands on the head of the bull so that their own impurities could be taken away. The blood of the bull purified the altar and then the bull was taken outside the camp, with all the sinful pollution, and burned. The image here is almost of a ‘sponge’ absorbing the spiritual impurity and then being carefully destroyed away from the camp where it could not endanger the purity of the camp or the Tent.
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With the altar purified, the preparation of the priests could be completed. Next there had to be a burnt offering to atone for their sins. This burnt offering produced a pleasing aroma (verse 21), showing that the anger of the LORD against them was soothed by the substitute death.

The fellowship offering, from verses 22-29, is also important. The fellowship offering is the pinnacle of all the offerings because it depends on the others: harmony and table fellowship with the LORD God. However, there is a difference in this ordination offering. The blood is applied to priest’s right earlobe, thumb and big toe. The right hand side is considered more important (see Exodus 15:6; 1 Kings 2:19; Psalm 16:8; Ephesians 1:20). Whatever the priests hears or does or wherever he goes, all is to be pure and dedicated to the LORD God.

Notice, also, that the blood is applied to the ear, thumb and toe of the leper who is being cleansed in Leviticus 14. Just as the leper is restored to full fellowship with the Living God, so the priest is cleansed and accepted into full fellowship with this special fellowship offering.

As the ordination ritual comes to its conclusion in verse 30, the priests and their clothing are once again covered in oil. The one message that comes across very loud and very clear is that the work of the priest concerns the Anointed One. Whenever we think of these priests engaged in their work we can’t help but think – “this is the work of the Anointed One”. Though prophets and kings are also anointed with oil (and the Spirit), yet the priest is drenched in oil!

When the ritual was concluded, Aaron and his sons were given the offerings of the ritual to eat at the entrance to the tabernacle. They stood between the LORD and His people, eating the LORD’s meat with the names of the tribes of Israel on their shoulders and over their hearts.

In Exodus 24:9-11 the leaders of Israel ate and drank as they saw the God of Israel. Here the priests recall that wonderful moment of table fellowship with their LORD... and in a sense looked forward to the great Day of God when that intimacy and table fellowship will be our eternal way of life. Both Nadab and Abihu had seen the LORD in Exodus 24, and now they were in His presence again, under the shadow of the great pillar of fire/cloud.
Having eaten this sacred meal they burned the remainder... and then waited at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days. Notice that if they failed to perform this holy vigil they would be killed (8:35). This is no idle threat as we will see in chapter 10.

The seven day vigil may indicate the cosmic dimension to the work of the priest. Just as the heavens and the earth were created in a week, so the priestly work of re-creation and redemption is set in the context of a week. The Promised Anointed Priest must be pure, sinless, holy and utterly dedicated. He is to be one with the Living God and one with the people. Jesus is truly the reality that these shadows prophesied.

b. The work of the priests (9:1-24)

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say. The ordination of the priests seems to have gone exceptionally well, but would they be able to perform this amazing work in the power of the Spirit? Would the Angel of the LORD accept Aaron and his sons to minister before Him?

"On the eighth day" Moses summoned them. Moses has done all the sacrificing so far and even now he is the one in overall charge, commanding Aaron and his sons (see 9:1, 2, 5, 6, 7). But now it is time for Aaron and his sons to begin their priestly work.

Verse 2 has a special resonance to Aaron. He must present a perfect “bull calf” as a cleansing sacrifice. The last time Aaron presented a “bull calf” it was far from perfect: it was the golden calf that brought uncleanness and the deaths of three thousand people.

Certain offerings are required from the priests and others are required from the people. The purpose of these offerings is clear: (verses 4 & 6) – "This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.”

Although the pillar of cloud and fire was positioned over the tabernacle (see Exodus 40:36-38), yet some special demonstration of the glory of the LORD God would happen if they offered the sacrifices as they were commanded.

5 The reference to the eighth day here supports the idea that the number of days has a symbolic character. Throughout the Bible the number eight is associated with the new creation.

6 See Exodus 7:1
The conclusion to this chapter is wonderful. All is done as the LORD had commanded and then...

Aaron lifted his hands towards the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell face down. (verses 22-24)

It is a glorious demonstration of the presence and power of the Angel of the LORD among His people! The offerings and the priests are accepted... and the glory of the LORD is seen by everyone. It inspires us with hope of that day when the whole world will see that glory.

We end this chapter of Leviticus thinking that everything was perfect, that nothing could go wrong.

c. Nadab and Abihu (10:1-20)

Fire had just come from the presence of the LORD and consumed the sacrifices... and now, so abruptly and shockingly, the same fire emerges and destroys Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu.

It is one of the incidents that everybody remembers from the Bible because it is so frightening and terrible. We have been warned that a
person might die if they do not follow the Lord’s instructions carefully in
His presence... and yet do we really believe these warnings? Then,
suddenly, the warnings are proved true. The presence of the Lord God of
the universe really is as dangerous and fearful as the Scriptures say. He is
not domesticated around our sins and disobedience. He is gracious and
patient and slow to anger... but beyond that He is a consuming fire, fatal
to the sinner.

The laws given are so detailed and so precise. Perhaps many times as we
have been reading through Leviticus we have wondered or become weary
with all the detail and complexity. Does it all matter? Leviticus chapter
10 reminds us that it really does matter.

When an electrical technician was conducting a tour around a facility, he
carefully, almost reverently, brought the tour party near to a massive
emergency generator. Nobody was allowed even to go into the same
room as the generator. The technician produced a detailed manual
containing elaborate instructions about the operation of this machine.
When it was used it required more than 25 specific steps before it
became operational. Two men had been killed some years before when
they failed to follow the steps. The technician had a deep respect for this
generator and an almost sacred care about the complex instructions. He
had seen what happened when the instructions were not followed.

This is the effect of Leviticus chapter 10. We are perhaps over-familiar
with the Living God. We assume that whatever we say or do in His
presence will be forgiven and over-looked... yet, here is a story that
reminds us of the terrible and consuming fire that is our God.

This fire came out from the Lord and consumed Nadab and Abihu. Why?
“they offered unauthorised fire” (verse 1).

It is hard to know precisely what this meant, but it seems that they took
it upon themselves to add their own additional offering to the ones given
by the Lord.

The instructions that the Lord gave to Aaron in verses 8-9 have led some
to think that Nadab and Abihu had become drunk. It is just possible, but
if the events of chapter 10 follow on immediately from the end of
chapter 9 (and verses 12-16 make it seem so), then it is a little hard to see how they suddenly acquired and consumed some alcohol.

Moses gives the key explanation (verse 3):

This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: ‘Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.’

Only what is holy is allowed in the LORD’s presence. Whatever Nadab and Abihu did, they did not follow the careful instructions with a heart full of fear, reverence and respect.

Aaron was silent (verse 3) and Moses ordered that he was not allowed to mourn the loss of his sons or else he too would die (verse 6). Aaron had to choose between his love for his sons and his love for the LORD God. If he mourned these sons who had disrespected the Living God, then Aaron would be siding with them against the LORD.

Verse 7 explains that the anointing oil marks the priests as the LORD’s men and they are not at liberty to console their families or mourn. This intense devotion to the Living God is no less than Jesus demanded.

Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – even his own life – he cannot be my disciple.’ (Luke 14:25-26)

Verses 8-10 are crucial for understanding the work of the priests. Up to this point it seemed as if their main work was simply managing the sacrificial offerings. However, they needed to be teetotal to keep a clear head for their central work. The Angel of the LORD personally spoke to Aaron from the tabernacle:

You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses. (10:10-11)

The difference between the holy, common, clean and unclean is of fundamental importance throughout the book of Leviticus, as we will see in detail in the next chapter.
Notice that the priests were Bible teachers. Their job was to teach and explain the laws of the Lord. It was not enough for them to simply go through the motions with the people. They had to ensure that the people understood the meaning of all these laws and sacrifices.

In verses 12-18 Moses makes a careful investigation into what had happened to all the remains of the sacrifice. He re-emphasises the need for absolute holiness and reverence in all that the priests do. The closer they are to the Holy One of Israel, the more holy they must be.8

In verse 19 Aaron is shaken. He seemed to admit that he too has made mistakes in serving before the Lord God. Yet, Aaron has not been destroyed. Moses is satisfied with Aaron's answer (verse 20).

This suggests, perhaps, that God is more gracious to those who make mistakes because they fear Him than to those who carelessly and impudently enter His presence, as Nadab and Abihu.9
Leviticus Study Guide

Leviticus

Study 3  Bible Questions

Leviticus 8:1-13

Verse 1 & 5  Why must the LORD determine the appointment of His priests? Why didn’t Aaron and his sons take the initiative for themselves?

Verses 2-4  Why did the whole assembly of Israel need to gather for the appointment of the priests? Why couldn’t Moses do this privately?

Verse 6  Why did the ceremony begin with the washing of the candidates? Why did Jesus answer John the Baptist with the words of Matthew 3:15?

Verse 7-9  List all the pieces of clothing used in this ceremony.

Verse 7  Exodus 28 tells us about these pieces of clothing. What were the cloth items made from? Why couldn’t Aaron dress himself?

Verse 8  What did the breastpiece look like? Why were twelve precious stones mounted on it? What does this tell us about the job of the priest?

Verse 8  What do we know about the Urim and Thummin? (See Exodus 28:30)

Verse 9  What was on the gold plate fixed to the priest’s turban? What does this tell us about the job?

Verses 10-12  Why was so much oil needed in the consecration of the high priest? What does the word “Messiah” mean?

Verses 1-13  What does this passage teach us about the Messiah?
Study 3  Further Questions:

1. When people are ‘ordained’ today to become ministers in the church, does it have anything to do with the ordination ritual of Leviticus chapter 8? Does a person become ‘holy’ today if they are ordained in this way? Is a minister in a different spiritual state than other Christians?

2. What does it mean to ‘see the glory of the LORD’? Does this have any meaning today? What do people mean when they ask the LORD God to reveal His glory?

3. What is the relevance of the story of Nadab and Abihu today? What might be a comparable unauthorised or disrespectful action today? Would the LORD ever deal with anyone in this way today? Why did He do it in those ancient times?

Study 3  Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 7:28-38
Day 2 – Leviticus 8:1-21
Day 3 – Leviticus 8:22-36
Day 4 – Leviticus 9:1-24
Day 5 – Leviticus 10:1-20
Day 6 – Hebrews 7:1-28
Day 7 – Hebrews 8:1-13

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
Throughout the entire book of Leviticus there is a constant theological framework dealing with the difference between the holy, common, clean and unclean. It is a framework that may not be familiar to all modern readers, but it is of fundamental importance to the world of Moses.

Sometimes people have dismissed all this as “ancient and irrelevant”. However, profound theological truth is given to us in all this teaching. Just as the priests were to distinguish between these things (10:10) and thereby instruct the people, so we too will gain deep instruction in the mind and ways of the Living God if we can understand this basic framework in Leviticus.

We begin by summarising the basic issues in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holy</th>
<th>Clean/Common</th>
<th>Unclean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The LORD God</td>
<td>The assembly of Israel</td>
<td>Outside the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tabernacle</td>
<td>Ordinary tents and houses</td>
<td>Defiled and decaying buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tabernacle equipment</td>
<td>Ordinary equipment</td>
<td>Defiled equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrificed animals</td>
<td>Clean animals</td>
<td>Unclean animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priests</td>
<td>The clean Israelites</td>
<td>Unclean Israelites and the Gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Garden of Eden; heaven; new creation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Death, disease, hell and the devil</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When we first read Leviticus 11 it might seem a very random collection of animals! However, there is a simple logic that explains why these animals are clean or unclean.

Some have speculated that these laws were a primitive form of cooking tips and hygiene advice. So they have looked for reasons to do with the quality of food or dangers of parasites in the various animals in each category. Whatever value there is in all these studies about the unhealthiness of pork and shellfish, there is no hint of these explanations in the book of Leviticus.

It seems important to explain the distinction between clean and unclean animals according to the reasons and logic given in the teaching of Moses. If we are to benefit from these theological lessons, then we must ‘climb inside’ the theological world of Moses rather than trying to judge or assess it by our own cultural values or scientific models.

One of the first things to note is that the animals are divided up in the same categories that we find in the creation account of Genesis 1:20-30 – land animals; flying animals and water creatures.

Furthermore, these three categories of animals are further divided into the unclean, the clean and those clean animals that can be sacrificed. In other words, just as within the laws governing the assembly of Israel there was a three-fold division into holy, clean/common and unclean, so the same division is found in the natural world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holy</th>
<th>Clean/Common</th>
<th>Unclean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>Clean Israelites</td>
<td>Unclean Israelites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrificial clean animals</td>
<td>Clean animals</td>
<td>Unclean animals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Bible we find that the animal world is taken much more seriously than in the modern world. We find that laws are given to govern the animals as well as the assembly of Israel – for example, see Exodus 13:2,13. The laws of the Living God are not arbitrary inventions but the mind of the Creator of all things reflecting structures and truths in the natural world itself.
Once it is admitted that the animals symbolize the human world, the uncleanness of the birds of prey becomes intelligible: they are detestable because they eat carrion and flesh from which the blood has not been drained properly, acts that make men unclean (Lev. 11:13-19; cf 11:40 and 17:10ff).\(^\text{10}\)

**The unclean animals are the animals that do not keep the law of the L ORD God.** To make sense of this consider the way that this chapter speaks of the treatment of the carcass of a dead animal.

...whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening. (Leviticus 11:24-25)\(^\text{11}\)

The unclean animals were those that came into contact with carcasses and were therefore unclean according to the law.

The clean land animals were those that chew the cud – the vegetarian animals. Notice also that the clean land animals had split hooves – as opposed to having claws or talons. The clean water creatures are those that have fins and scales, perhaps indicating those that do not feed on rotting carcasses on the bottom. Only certain vegetarian insects are clean.

It has been suggested that the clean animals (especially the sacrificial clean animals) are the ones that most resemble life as it was in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 1:27 tells us that the L ORD gave only green plants as food for the animals: “to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.”

*In that original, un Fallen creation there was no death or predation, no pain or suffering, no bloodshed or disease, no sorrow in childbirth and no decay.*

It was a glimpse of the creation as the Living God intends it to be. It is no accident that the beginning of Genesis and the end of Revelation sound so alike. The end is the perfection of the beginning, and in that renewed

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\(^{10}\) Wenham, page 170. See Wenham page 174 for a view of the distinctions that focuses only on their mode of locomotion rather than the question of predation.

\(^{11}\) Numbers 5:2 tells us that contact with a dead body renders a man or woman unclean such that they need to be put outside the camp until they become clean.
and restored and redeemed creation the lion will once again lie down with the lamb. 

These distinctions between clean and unclean reflect the holiness of the LORD God:

“I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:44-45)

Acts 10 must be mentioned before we move on. These laws divided the world into clean and unclean. Although in Leviticus chapter 11 this is focussed especially on the animals, yet all the other nations (The Gentiles) were also classified as unclean, outside the assembly of Israel. When the LORD God tells Peter that the time of the law of Moses had come to an end, using the vision of the clean and unclean animals, Peter understood the significance of this. If they did not have to practise clean/unclean dietary laws, then the Gentiles were no longer out of bounds either. If the boundary of Israel had become the entire world, then the Gentiles could stand shoulder to shoulder with the Jews in God’s assembly, the Church.

b. Childbirth (12:1-8)

Remember the curse that the sin of Adam and Eve brought into the world in Genesis 3:15-19. The LORD stood before the serpent, Adam and Eve and as He cursed the serpent He said:

‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’ To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’ To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles
Leviticus

for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’

Having promised His own birth as the Seed of the Woman, the LORD explained the consequences of sin in the creation. Notice the pain in childbirth, the cursing of the ground and the introduction of death.

These curses did not affect the human race alone. Romans 8:19-22 reminds us that the whole creation fell under that original curse of decay and frustration. The same pain in childbirth afflicts the animals and they too decay away in death.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:18-25).

As we study all these laws dealing with uncleanness we need to see them against this huge background. These may at first sound like little and local ancient customs, but in fact they are dealing with the character of the whole created order. When our bodies lose blood or produce discharges, when our bodies die, when the world around us decays with mildew, when the animals around us kill each other, when disease afflicts us… we are reminded that a day is coming when all these symptoms of the curse and the fall will be evicted from the LORD’s glorious creation. At the renewal of all things our bodies and the world we live in will all be regenerated to conform to the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

In this context, we are not surprised that Leviticus 12 addresses the pain and blood-loss of childbirth. The loss of blood made a woman unclean (verse 4), just as the monthly menstrual cycle made her unclean for a week. The Scriptures take this much more seriously than many modern people.
We might be so used to losing blood that we no longer take it seriously. I remember the first time one of our children cut a finger and saw their own blood. It was a very dramatic moment of horror and anguish. We had to provide plenty of comfort that death was not imminent! Yet, at another level, the fact that we bleed means that although death might not be imminent it is certainly on its way.

Today childbirth has become a much safer experience for many people in the world, although for many others it is still an extremely dangerous time. It is a time when death can make its presence felt... even as the 9 month old life emerges.

After one or two weeks of being unclean, there was a further longer period of impurity, after which the woman would make a sin offering for purification and a burnt offering for atonement. The fact that the mother is unclean/impure for this length of time had the gracious benefit of making sure that she didn’t have to do any work in the house or duties in the assembly.12

c. Diseases and Decay (13:1-14:57)

The Lord God wanted to address the problem of disease and decay in His law. They are major features of living in a fallen and cursed creation!

When we first read these laws we might think they are too detailed or complex, but again think of how limited and gentle they really are. In His amazing patience our Lord selected just certain skin disease and specific examples of mildew as representative samples of all disease and decay.

By labelling these small examples of disease and decay as ‘unclean’ we are taught that all disease and all decay is unacceptable to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who made all things. The Living God sees all these intruders into His wonderful creation and reassures us, through these laws, that one day He will certainly drive these squatters out.

Now, what diseases have been singled out for attention in these laws? English translations have traditionally referred to them as ‘leprosy’. However, the same Hebrew word is used to refer to the skin conditions and mildew in a house, so the word ‘leprosy’ does not seem quite right.

12 If she was fortunate enough to have a girl she would have more than two months of this time when, presumably, her husband and other family and friends would have to prepare all the meals etc.
Leviticus

As we saw when considering the dietary laws, some people focus on very modern issues of hygiene and health care. From this perspective these disease laws are seen as a simple form of disease management, isolating ‘infectious diseases’ from the community. However, the most common infectious skin diseases would not have been classified as unclean under these laws (see especially 13:12-13). It is surprisingly difficult to identify precisely the diseases that are being described in Leviticus.

13:1-59 Skin disease – humans and clothing
14:1-32 Cleansing
14:33-57 Disease in buildings.

When it comes to the identification of these conditions, several features are worth noting: 13

| Symptoms are displayed on the surface... | 13:3, 49; 14:37 |
| ...but more than ‘skin deep’            | 13:3; 14:37   |
| In a specific area...                  | 13:9-13; 14:37, 42, 55 |
| ...but spreading further              | 13:7, 51; 14:44 |

These symptoms are clearly abnormal, and by disfiguring the appearance of man and his works, destroy the wholeness that ought to characterise the creation. For this reason these conditions are pronounced unclean. 14

The priests are to administer these laws. After examining a possible case of uncleanness in a person, a piece of clothing or a building, various tests are prescribed for uncertain cases. When a correct assessment was made, the uncleanness had to be ‘treated’ – whether by putting the person outside the camp, or removing the affected part of the object/building. If the ‘cure’ was successful, then there had to be sacrifices for purification and restoration.

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13 Note the introductory and concluding phrases for each of these sections
14 Wenham, page 192
To live within this system of law would have given a deep theological vision to the whole of life. Where we live, what we eat, what we wear, the state of our bodies, the animals around us, the world as a whole... everything is viewed, understood and dealt with in a clear theological framework. The fragmented and compartmentalised worldviews of much of the modern world seems so inadequate compared to this holistic holiness of Leviticus.

Holiness in Leviticus is symbolized by wholeness. Animals must be perfect to be used in sacrifice. Priests must be without physical deformity. Mixtures are an abomination. Men must behave in a way that expresses wholeness and integrity in their actions. When a man shows visible signs of a lack of wholeness in a persistent patchy skin condition, he has to be excluded from the covenant community... it was considered so important to preserve the purity of the tabernacle and the holiness of the nation that the individuals and families might be forced to suffer a good deal. Individual discomfort was not allowed to jeopardize the spiritual welfare of the nation, for God’s abiding presence with his people depended on uncleanness being excluded from their midst (cf Isa 6:3-5).¹⁵

d. Bodily discharges (15:1-33)
The purpose of all the laws regarding bodily discharges is given at the end of Leviticus 15, as the LORD concludes His analysis of the subject:

You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling-place, which is among them. These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, for a woman in her monthly period, for a man or a woman with a discharge, and for a man who lies with a woman who is ceremonially unclean. (15:31-33).

The reason for a 'clean' environment is specifically not human health care but the presence of the Angel of the LORD living among them in the

¹⁵ Wenham, page 203
tabernacle. Again, we are reminded that if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are to take up permanent residence on earth with us (as in Revelation 21), then the whole natural order needs to be renewed and delivered from its bondage to death and decay.

The structure of the chapter is also given in those concluding verses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male bodily discharges 15:2-18</th>
<th>Female bodily discharges 15:19-30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term discharge 15:2-12</td>
<td>Menstrual cycle 15:19-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing by sacrifice 15:13-15</td>
<td>Sexual intercourse 15:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary discharge 15:16-17</td>
<td>Long term 15:25-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse 15:18</td>
<td>Cleansing by sacrifice 15:29-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, it is not easy to identify specific medical conditions. What is clear is that the uncleanness is transferred to other people, beds or chairs. This uncleanness is not just a private and personal matter. It affects others and is of concern to the whole community.\(^\text{16}\)

No sacrifice was necessary to cleanse from sexual intercourse or other emissions of semen or menstrual blood loss. These ‘natural’ bodily discharges make a person unclean, but the passage of time will remove the uncleanness. Our ‘leaky’ bodies bear the marks of fallenness and mortality. As ‘natural’ as our mortality may seem right now, our bodies are destined for immortality and incorruption (see 1 Corinthians 15).

It might seem surprising to the modern reader that even sexual intercourse between a husband and wife brought a few hours of uncleanness. If no sin has been committed, then why is there any uncleanness? There are two things to be borne in mind here.

\(^\text{16}\) In verses 25-30 we are taken directly into the world of the woman in Mark 5:25-29 and Luke 8:43-48. The fact that Jairus’ daughter is twelve and the woman right in the middle of that story has suffered this flow of blood for the same twelve years makes it at least possible that she is the mother of the girl and problems in the birth left her with this chronic flow of blood. If that is the case we can see why Jairus, as the synagogue ruler, would have had to live so separately from his wife for so long. From this perspective the story is not only the raising of the daughter from death and the purification of the mother, but also the restoration of the whole family.
First, as we saw from Genesis 3:16, the curse of sin reaches into the relationship between a husband and wife. All our sexuality is fallen. All of us have ‘disordered’ sexual desires. We feel temptations towards sexual intimacy with those to whom we are not married. We do not always express our desire to our spouse with the sacrificial loving tenderness that we were created to do. Though the period of uncleanness was short, yet sexual intercourse is marked out as bearing the imprint of the curse upon it.

Second, sexual intercourse involves the loss of bodily fluids. There is life in our blood (Leviticus 17:11) and the semen also has potential life within it. As ‘life’ is lost from the body so we are reminded of our mortality and fallenness. As long as the person washes, there is no sin: just a short period of impurity.

**Conclusion**

The whole of created life has been subject to a bondage to decay. It is a fallen world and although the modern mind tends to internalise, privatise and individualise, yet our spiritual condition is expressed in the physical world and in the human community.

The Living God does not want us to forget the original innocence and freedom of the world... but more importantly, He wants us to long for His coming day of Resurrection, when everything will be renewed and our own bodies will become incorruptible. Now our life ebbs away as soon as we begin to live... but then life will be springing up within us into eternity.

It seems likely that (in Old Testament) times ‘skin diseases’ and their treatment were regarded as symbolic of sin and its consequences. When a man was afflicted with a disfiguring skin disease he did visibly ‘fall short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23), the glory that he had been given in his creation (Psalm 8:5). His banishment from human society and God’s sanctuary was a re-enactment of the fall, when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden (Genesis 3). The infection of garments and houses with ‘skin disease’ served as a reminder of the interaction of man and his
environment. Throughout Scripture, human sin has implications not just for mankind but for the rest of creation (Genesis 3:17-18; 6:13-14; Deut 28:25ff; Amos 4:7ff; Romans 8:20ff). If a connection between sin and skin disease was recognised in OT times, it is natural that healing from such disease should be coupled with offerings prescribed for sinners.\footnote{Wenham, page 213}
Leviticus 14:1-20

Verses 1-3  Why was this examination done by a priest rather than a doctor? What does this tell us about the deeper meaning of the skin disease?

Verses 4-7  Describe what happens to the two birds. Which one represents the healed person? Do both represent him in different ways?

Verses 8-9  Why does this healed person need to get rid of his old hair as well as washing his body and clothes?

Verse 10  Why does his new life begin on the eighth day? (In other words, why is it the first day of a new week?)

Verses 10-11  List the offerings that had to be brought before the LORD.

Verses 12-13, 19-20 – Why does a guilt offering need to be made because of this physical disease? Why does disease need atonement? What has disease got to do with sin? Do we only become ill when we do things wrong?

Verse 14-18  Why are both blood and oil required to cleanse the person? Why do you think the blood and oil are applied to those body parts?

Verses 1-20  If the whole world is to be cleansed from all disease, then what does this chapter teach us about how this cleansing must be done? What is needed to cleanse the world from disease?
Study 4  Further Questions:

1. After giving birth to a boy a woman was impure for 33 days, but after giving birth to a girl she was impure for 66 days. Why do you think there was this difference? Could it have anything to do with Genesis 3:15?

2. Many cultures in the world retain a sense of impurity and uncleanness. Romani culture has a very keen sense of the impurity of the menstrual cycle. What are the strengths of retaining this sense? What is the cost of losing the spirituality of our physical bodies?

3. Imagine that you had a chronic skin condition or a flow of blood. You had to spend your life outside the assembly of Israel in the category of the Gentile and the dead. What about your relationship with the Lord God? Where you cut off from Him too? What does the Bible tell us about life ‘outside the camp/city’? (See Hebrews 13:12)

Study 4  Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 11:1-28
Day 2 – Leviticus 11:29-47
Day 4 – Leviticus 13:18-46
Day 5 – Leviticus 13:47-14:18
Day 6 – Leviticus 14:19-54
Day 7 – Leviticus 15:1-33

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
The Escape Goat
The day of atonement was a very special day in the yearly calendar of the tabernacle. Every day offerings were made and at the various festivals other special rituals were followed. However, on this one day of the year the high priest would go into the Most Holy Place. Let’s refresh our understanding of the tabernacle layout.

The tabernacle was a rectangular room divided into two partitions by a curtain. The smaller, inner room was called the Most Holy Place and the larger, outer room was called the Holy Place. In the smaller inner room was the Ark of the Covenant, where the Angel of the LORD sat enthroned between the cherubim.

Nobody was allowed into that inner room… except on this one day, the day of atonement. Even then, only one of the priests, the high priest, was allowed to go in… and he had to be very careful. If he did the wrong thing or failed to do what he was supposed to do, he would die, just as Nadab and Abihu had died.

But… what was the point of this day?

If all other offerings covered all the different aspects of life, then why have this special day? What atonement was made on this day?
First, the day of atonement was almost like a 'spiritual spring clean', when all the uncleanness and impurity of the Israelites was cleansed away. Verse 16 expresses this best: “(the high priest) will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.”

Chs 11-15 have disclosed that all men are liable to contract uncleanness, through food, through death, through sex or through disease. As we have seen, uncleanness... does not always require a sacrifice to eliminate its effects... Yet the uncleanness rules are so wide-ranging that inevitably someone is going to infringe them unwittingly and thereby pollute the sanctuary and make it unfit for the presence of God... The aim of these rituals is to make possible God’s continued presence among his people.¹⁸

So, if we consider this tabernacle system as a way for the Angel of the LORD to dwell at the centre of the life of Israel, the day of atonement was a special day to ensure that the general uncleanness of the assembly of Israel did not overwhelm His dwelling-place among them.

However, there is a much deeper significance to the day.

If the first reason for the day was a 'spiritual spring clean', then the second reason was that atonement was made not just for the sins of the people but for the tabernacle itself. It wasn’t just the people who were being cleansed, but the very tabernacle structure itself.

The inner room, the Most Holy Place, represented heaven – the throneroom of the Father. When the high priest went into that room, he symbolically went into heaven with the atoning blood. While he was in that inner room, all the people, including the other priests, had to wait simply for him until he came out again.

If the tabernacle and its courtyard was a symbolic representation of the whole creation, what was the meaning of this day of atonement when the structure itself received a cleansing?

¹⁸ Wenham, page 228
b. The Day of Atonement (16:3-34)

The details of the day can be understood in three sections:

- Animals and clothes (16:3-5)
- The offerings (16:6-28)
- The people (16:29-34)

Aaron, the high priest, had to wear a simpler set of priestly garments for this day (verse 4). For the priest there was a bull for purification and a ram for a burnt offering. For the people there were two goats and another ram.

First, the high priest had to make atonement and purification for himself. Then he had to cast lots for the goats.

The two goats are a special feature of the day. One goat was chosen to be a purification offering for the people, but the other goat was the scapegoat.

When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites – all their sins – and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert. (Chapter 16:20-22)

The sins of the community are placed onto the head of the goat and then the goat carries them away, outside the camp into the wilderness. It is a symbolic way of showing the uncleanness being carried away. In many ways it reminds us of the final day of judgement when all sin and evil is driven out into the outer darkness of Hell.

In the Scriptures the wilderness is the place of evil spirits (Matthew 12:43). In verses 8 and 10 the goat is described as being ‘for Azazel’, which may refer to a demon (see Leviticus 17:7). It is not that atonement is made to a ‘goat idol’ in the wilderness, but that the sins are ‘sent back to their author, Azazel’.

There are many possible explanations for the Hebrew word Azazel but the meaning of Leviticus 16 does not depend on any of them: the sin of
Israel is cleansed from the camp and sent away to destruction in the rejected wilderness.

The chapter concludes by summarising what the day of atonement actually achieved. Aaron and his successor high priests would make “atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community” (verse 33). The people were to celebrate this day with a sabbath (v29). This is also important. In the Scriptures the Sabbath always looks back to the original creation but also forward to the redemption of the creation. In the final part of our study we will see why this day of atonement was a wonderful prophecy of the ultimate redeeming work of the Divine Messiah.

c. The Messiah is the Great High Priest (Hebrews 9)

It was obvious that Aaron and the succeeding high priests were only shadows of some other reality. They were acting out something in the earthly copy of the heavenly reality. They were sinful men who had to make atonement for their own sins on the day when they were atoning for everything else! The ceremony had to be repeated year after year, proving that the sin and uncleanness in the universe was not really being finally cleansed away.

The book of Hebrews focuses our attention on this:

The priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance...

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption...

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
It was necessary, then, for *the copies of the heavenly things* to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For *Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.*

Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own... Christ was sacrificed *once* to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. *(Hebrews 9:6-28)*

The high priest was ministering in that special model of the heavens and the earth: the tabernacle.

On that one day of the year he would symbolically go into heaven and make atonement for everything: the Most Holy Place (heaven); the Tent of Meeting and the altar (the whole earth); and all the priests and people.

In other words, the work of cleansing and atonement of the day of atonement was something that was looking towards the renewal of the whole of creation. It was a day when the ancient church looked forward to a final redemption of all things.

We have seen how the last section of Leviticus, dealing with unclean and clean distinctions, focussed our attention on the fundamental problem with the whole creation. Our thinking was directed back to the different ways in which the curse of sin has effected life: mortality and disease; the way the animals live; childbirth and sexuality; decay and deformity.

The day of atonement revealed the answer to all these problems. What was needed was a perfect, sinless, divine high priest who could offer a burnt offering to atone for all our sin and a sin (purification) offering to cleanse away all uncleanness. A high priest was needed who could take that perfect, cleansing and atoning blood into heaven itself and apply it at the centre of the universe to set everything right, to cleanse the universe at the source of its life.
Jesus is that Great High Priest.

Our High Priest has gone through the curtain into heaven itself, carrying His own blood to the majestic throne. We live at verse 17 of Leviticus 16. We are waiting for the Great High Priest to come back out from behind the curtain. We are waiting for Him to complete the work, applying His cleansing atonement to the whole creation.

While He is there, as verse 17 says, no other priestly work can be done. There is nothing left to be done. “He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:28)
Leviticus

Study 5  Bible Questions

Leviticus 16:1-10, 15-17

Verse 1  Why had Aaron’s sons died when they approached the LORD? Why is it so dangerous to approach the Living God?

Verse 2  Describe the layout of the tabernacle. What was the Holy Place? What was the Most Holy Place? What was the Ark of the Covenant?

Verse 2  What was the cloud hovering over the tabernacle? (See Exodus 13:20-22; 14:19-20; 40:34-38).

Verses 3-4  Why do you think the high priest needed to refresh his ordination ceremony on this special day of atonement?

Verse 5  Why were the two goats taken “from the Israelite community”?

Verse 6  How was this high priest so different to Jesus, the Divine High Priest?

Verse 7-8  One goat is “for the LORD” and the other is “for Azazel”. It is hard to understand the meaning of the word “Azazel”. It might mean “a high cliff”, meaning a place in the wilderness, or it might simply mean “the strength of God”. However, it could be one of the names of the devil. It is hard to imagine that any offerings were given to the devil, but could one goat represent the LORD and the other represent the devil? (Note Zechariah 3:1-10)

Verses 9-10  Is it possible that the goat representing the LORD is sacrificed as a sin offering? Is it possible to understand verses 20-22 as a symbol of sin and the devil being driven far away?

Verse 15  After making atonement for his own sin (verses 11-14), the high priest took the blood of this goat into the Most Holy Place. Why was the blood placed on the lid of the ark? What was above and below this lid or cover?

Verse 16  What places were atoned for by the blood of this goat? What did these places symbolise?

Verse 17  If the high priest represented Jesus the Perfect High Priest, then what does this tell us about Jesus going into heaven with His blood?
Study 5  Further Questions:

1. Why is Jesus spending so long behind the curtain of the Most Holy Place? Why didn’t He come straight back out and finish the work 2000 years ago?

2. How does Jesus take His own blood into the Most Holy Place? Where is the blood?

3. The sins of the people were confessed onto the head of the scapegoat. What is the place of confession in the church today? Does it have to be a private matter only? Do we need to give a complete confession of all our sins... to the Father... to others? What sins should be confessed publicly?

Study 5  Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 16:1-5
Day 2 – Leviticus 16:6-14
Day 3 – Leviticus 16:15-19
Day 4 – Leviticus 16:20-25
Day 5 – Leviticus 16:26-34
Day 6 – Matthew 27:45-54
Day 7 – Hebrews 9:23-28

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
Study 6  Holistic Holiness

Leviticus 17:1-20:27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. The importance of Blood (17:1-16)</th>
<th>b. You must not do as they do (18:1-30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Key Truth:
Holiness is not a private business for just one compartment of life. Every aspect of life is claimed by the Living God.

After all the ritual and sacrifice, we arrive at the day-to-day lifestyle that these offerings were aiming at. Some of these laws might strike the modern reader as slightly strange or even bizarre and incomprehensible. However, we must approach them with great reverence and care.

These laws teach us many deep theological truths and reveal profound wisdom. It is easy for people to mock or joke about laws concerning mixed fabrics or cross-breeding animals, yet to do that is to miss the point of these laws. If these laws were shadows of heavenly realities, or signs pointing to profound truths, then it is our job to treasure them and ponder them until we understand them as Moses and the Holy Spirit intended them to be understood.

a  The importance of Blood (17:1-16)

So much of what we have read in Leviticus so far has depended on atonement and cleansing through blood. Now we come to the chapter that explains more of this deep truth.

The chapter begins by enforcing sacrificial worship to the Lord God alone and at the tabernacle alone. The people had been making sacrifices on their own, even offering to 'goat idols' (verse 7). The centralisation of true worship to the Living God was part of their discipleship training. When we read of sacrificing to goat idols we might well marvel how believers could ever do something like that. Probably, those ancient people believed that...
the Lord God was the Living God, yet did not see any harm in having good relations with the wilderness spirits. In the same way many Christians today believe that the Lord Jesus is returning, yet do not see any harm in storing up some treasure on earth.

Such pagan compromise was not tolerated (verse 8-9). The problem was the lack of respect for the blood. The life of a creature is in the blood (verse 14). Whenever we eat any meat we need to remember that an animal has given up its life for us. In one sense, all meat-eating depends on substitution – the animal dies so that we can live. When blood is poured out it stands for a life poured out in death. Blood is all the way through the Scriptures – and it is a sign of life poured out: a sign of death.

Eating blood is taken very, very seriously in the Bible. This is not only a matter of the Law of Moses. Right back at the time of Noah, the Lord God warned humanity not to commit murder and not to eat blood (Genesis 9:4-6). That same prohibition on blood eating is reinforced within the Law of Moses in Leviticus 17:10-14 and then it is reemphasised yet again in the New Testament at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:28-29.

Why is there a universal prohibition on eating blood in both the Old Testament and the New Testament?

Perhaps it is because of the fundamental importance of the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God. In John 6:53-57 Jesus insists that we must eat His blood. No blood can be consumed other than His blood. It is as if eating any blood is allowing the life of another substitute into our life. If we eat the blood of any animal that has died for us, we are taking its life into ourselves. Doing this is confusing our true source of life: Jesus, the Lamb of God.

The blood of Jesus cannot be taken too seriously. When people say that they don’t bother about the Scripture’s prohibition on eating blood, we must ask how seriously they take the blood of Jesus?

"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "But, sir, can’t I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? If I weep, and plead, and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, sir, if I never sin again, and if I serve God more zealously than other
men, will he not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?” “No remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.” “But, sir, may I not trust that God is merciful, and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?” “No,” says the text, “without shedding of blood there is no remission;” none whatever. It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here, and if they are not based in blood, and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air, and dreams of the night. “There is no remission,” says the text, in positive and plain words; and yet men will be trying to get remission in fifty other ways…19

b. You must not do as they do (18:1-30)

Leviticus has set a pattern of life before us in which there are definite lines and boundaries – even extending out to the animal and natural world around us. If even the animals are judged and categorised by the law of God, then every aspect of human life too is also judged and categorised.

The ancient world did not recognise these boundaries. Like today they pursued the sexual practices that they desired or enjoyed. The only boundaries they were concerned with were limits of their own choice or imagination.

Sexuality has a great deal to do with spirituality. It is no accident that the recurring phrase throughout this chapter is “I am the LORD”. To follow His laws regarding our sexual practice is to acknowledge that He is the LORD. When we go back to the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2, we see how fundamental sexuality is to human being. The dominant feature of the story of our creation is our sexuality. Adam is almost split in half to form Eve and then the two halves are joined back together in marriage. The two halves of human being become one flesh in marriage. These issues strike at the heart of our self-identity. Do we place our identity and sexuality in the hands of the Living God who made us... or do we create our own good and evil?

When the LORD God wants to show His people how not to “do as they do in Egypt” (verse 2-4) He selects sexual practice as the first topic. It is not that

19 C. H. Spurgeon, Park Street Pulpit, volume 3, no. 118, The Blood Shedding
the LORD God or the Bible are obsessed only with sexual sin, but that we sinful people so often are. People will destroy their marriages and families over their sexual desires as they put a brief affair over everything else.

The ancient Roman empire that faced the apostolic church was a sex-worshipping culture. When the apostolic church claimed to have life-long virgins in the congregation it seemed an impossible and bizarre claim to that society. How could anybody be a normal human being and live a chaste and celibate life? Sexual purity was one of the most powerful witnesses in the church of that time.

Today we face a similar cultural challenge. One of the sad features of our current situation is the extent to which effort is put on trying to compel non-Christians to behave like Christians... but how often the Christians behave as bad, if not worse, than the non-Christians. It was Anne Graham-Lotz who said that the greatest protest against pornography and immorality the Church can make is to not do any of those things ourselves.

This seems to be the view of the LORD God Himself. In Leviticus 18 He sets down a comprehensive view of sexual practice and calls His people to this holistic holiness.

Notice that the Bible does not address whether we ever feel tempted to do any of these things. It takes it for granted that we have evil desires and feel tempted to do all kinds of sinful things. The feelings might feel so right... yet the practice really is not. In the Bible desiring to do sinful things is the constant assumption concerning the natural human heart. In some modern cultures it is considered important to indulge our desires, as unfulfilled desires are considered to be bad. What a direct clash of culture and worldview! Are the people who humbly follow the LORD’s way damaged by it? Are the people who pursue their sinful desires damaged by that way? When we abandon ourselves to the way of our LORD and Saviour we find freedom in His service.

The Church was redeemed from slavery in pagan Egypt and was going into pagan Canaan. With pagan lifestyles behind and in front of them, it was vital that the Church completely embraced the freedom of the Law of God. Verse 5 is the wonderful promise that in trusting the LORD and following His ways, the Church will know true life.
Leviticus

The first section is introduced by verse 6: “No-one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD.” The section seems to be concluded at the end of verse 17: “they are close relatives. That is wickedness.”

The next section addresses wider issues, especially in relation to the practices of the pagan nations. Note that these practices caused the nations not only to be rejected by the LORD God but also by the land itself (v25, 28). Again we are reminded of the holistic character of sin and holiness. Sin is not private, nor can it be locked away in a personal compartment. Humanity pollutes the natural world with more than carbon dioxide, landfill sites and fossil fuels. Our sinful lifestyles pollute the land in ways we know so little about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual intercourse during menstrual cycle</th>
<th>18:19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adultery</td>
<td>18:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child sacrifice</td>
<td>18:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual intercourse</td>
<td>18:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bestiality</td>
<td>18:23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that child sacrifice is found in this list of forbidden sexual practices. In the modern world we are very used to this equation. Each year thousands of children are sacrificed in abortion clinics because these children interfere with our chosen lifestyles. It is very sobering that child sacrifice is not only a modern problem but can be found even in these ancient times. Whether Molech worship happened then on the vast scale that it does today is unlikely, but the LORD wanted to warn His people about it in advance.

There is forgiveness for all that we have done in the LORD Jesus. As we read through these laws we might feel condemned. If that happens (and it often happens when I read these chapters), we must run straight to Jesus. He is the Judge, but He is also the Saviour. No matter what we have

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20 Many wonder how these laws relate to the book of Genesis. Sarah was Abraham’s sister, and going back to Adam & Eve it is obvious that their children had to marry one another. One of the most common explanations is that the genetic problems of incest would not have existed with the genetic purity of those first generations of humanity.
done there is forgiveness and a new beginning with Him. He knew all about us before we were born and knew all the sins that we were ever going to do. As we fall before Him and ask for His atoning and cleansing blood to be applied to us, we can know the joy and peace of divine forgiveness and friendship.

Each moment applied,
My weakness to hide,
Thy blood be upon me and always abide.
My Advocate prove
With the Father above
And speak me at last to the throne of Thy Love. (Charles Wesley)

Verse 22 forbids a man lying with another “man as one lies with a woman”. There is no reference here to abusive relationships or temple prostitution. It is a very simple description of a behaviour that must not be done. Today this has become a subject of deep controversy.

On the one hand, it does seem true that some parts of the Church have treated the sin of homosexual practice with much greater hysteria and severity than other sexual sins. Some people have been far harsher on this sin than heterosexual immorality. The young man living with his girlfriend may have received far greater understanding than the young man living with his boyfriend. Hypocrisy and self-righteousness tend to judge the sins of others much more harshly than our own sins and temptations. To lust after anyone outside of heterosexual marriage is sinful, and there must never be a witch-hunt after only one category of sinful behaviour.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that whenever the Bible mentions homosexual practice it always rejects it. The Bible does not obsess about this behaviour, but it consistently rejects it.

Some aspects of modern culture (even within the Church) try to obscure and manipulate the Bible to pretend that homosexual behaviour is not sinful. We should not overreact to this, but stand firm on the teaching of the Bible. It is not our job to judge those outside the church (1 Corinthians 5:12-13), but to work at making sure that those of us who seek to be disciples of Jesus put His teaching into practice. Those that
reject Jesus are 'free' from His laws but experience a different kind of 'slavery' (see Romans 7:16-22).

c. A Holy Community (19:1-37)

Chapter 19 begins with an address to ‘the entire assembly’ – ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy’ (verse 2).

These laws train the church in living out the kingdom of God. The 10 commandments are sprinkled throughout the chapter, yet given specific settings and explanations. For example, consider verses 9-11:

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. Do not steal.

The application of this teaching about leaving provision for the poor is “do not steal”. To pursue economic practices that are so efficient that there is no room for kindness and social care is stealing. There is deep truth here.

The next section is introduced by “do not lie” and concerns the care we show to our neighbours.

Lying to our neighbour or taking oaths because our neighbour cannot trust our word shows that we do not have integrity with our neighbours. We must not rob our neighbour (verse 13) or fail to pay him proper wages (verse 14).
These are wonderful expressions of the heart of our God. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all lived in this way? What a social revolution it would be if we trusted in Jesus and kept His decrees!

Leviticus 19:19 seems very strange to many modern readers:

- Keep my decrees. Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

Throughout Leviticus there has been a constant pattern of purity and integrity. The church had to reject the life of Egypt behind them and the life of Canaan in front of them. They had to maintain the purity and uniformity of the life of the LORD God. They were not to mix the lifestyles of the surrounding nations with the life of the Living God.

The same holistic purity was extended even to cross-breeding animals, planting fields with mixed crops or wearing mixed materials. It is as if the LORD wanted them to have a mind-set that did not allow “mixing” in any area of life. Israel was to be a gathering point for all the nations of the world (see Exodus 12:38) and it had to be free from the pagan lifestyles...
of all those nations if it was to offer the genuine alternative of the Promised Messiah.

Even though these laws of Moses were concluded and fulfilled by Jesus, yet the same determination to be uncompromised must stay with us. We must not be partly of the world and partly of Christ: it is all or nothing!

Friendship with the world is hatred towards God. Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God...

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:4, 7-8)

Leviticus 19 concludes with a variety of laws that further reflect the wonderful and gracious life of the Promised Messiah.

Do not abuse slaves 19:20-22
Dedicate your produce to the Lord 19:23-25
Do not eat blood 19:26
Do not use occult practices 19:26
Do not follow pagan fashions 19:27-28
Do not worship or revere the dead 19:28
Do not force women into prostitution 19:29
Follow the Sabbath 19:30
Revere the Lord’s sanctuary 19:30
Do not contact the dead 19:31
Respect the elderly 19:32
Welcome foreigners 19:33-34
Pursue honest business practices 19:35-36

There is so much for us to meditate on in these verses. Whether the need to welcome foreigners or the importance of business integrity, whether care for prostitutes or rejecting the occult, we need to capture the heart of these laws and live the way of the Lord.
d. Punishments (20:1-27)

This section of Leviticus concludes with the punishments for all the sins of the last two chapters.

The law of Moses was an earthly picture of heavenly reality. Therefore, we find that the eternal consequences of sin are depicted in the earthly punishment of sin. The ultimate price of sin is eternal death in Hell, so the law of Moses pointed to this with the earthly price of the death penalty or exile from the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sin</th>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sacrifice</td>
<td>20:2-5</td>
<td>Death by stoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting the dead</td>
<td>20:6</td>
<td>Exile from the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursing parents</td>
<td>20:9</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adultery</td>
<td>20:10</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse with step-mother or daughter-in-law</td>
<td>20:11-12</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual intercourse</td>
<td>20:13</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrying a mother and daughter</td>
<td>20:14</td>
<td>Death by burning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bestiality</td>
<td>20:15</td>
<td>Death for human and animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incest</td>
<td>20:17</td>
<td>Shame and exile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse during menstrual flow</td>
<td>20:18</td>
<td>Exile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse with aunt/uncle</td>
<td>20:19-20</td>
<td>Infertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage to brother's wife</td>
<td>20:21</td>
<td>Infertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a medium or spiritist</td>
<td>20:27</td>
<td>Death by stoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these practices were committed by the pagan nations and because of these sins the Lord God “abhorred them”. This is more than being ‘culturally distinct’: it is rejecting the practices that offend against the Living God.

The re-affirmation of the distinctions between clean and unclean in verse 25 sets the tone for the climatic summary of verse 26:

You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.
All these laws are ultimately an expression of the life of the LORD God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yes, it was a temporary expression of His life set in the specific context of Israel in the ancient world, but in all these laws we find the never-changing heart of the Living God. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. His life shone as a bright beacon 3,500 years ago in these laws, just as it does today.
Leviticus 19:26-37

Verse 26: In the light of Leviticus chapter 17, why is eating blood regarded so seriously? (see also Genesis 9:4; Acts 15:20, 29).

Verse 26: Why does the LORD forbid divination and sorcery? What attitudes lie behind such practices? (see Acts 8:9-25)

Verse 27-28: ‘the dead’? Is there anything wrong with having tattoos today?

Verse 29: Why does the LORD put the blame for prostitution on the men? What are the consequences of prostitution for the woman and for the land?

Verse 30: What is the connection between Sabbath observance and reverence for the LORD’s sanctuary?

Verse 31: Why are people defiled by those who speak to the dead or to spirits? (see Leviticus 21:11-12)

Verse 32: Why is reverence for God tied to reverence for the elderly?

Verses 33-34: How should we treat foreigners in our societies today? How can we show the love of Jesus to asylum seekers or foreign neighbours who follow other religions? “Love him as yourself” – How would you like to be treated if you were in a foreign country?

Verses 35-3: How do honest business practices show that the LORD’s people have been redeemed?

Verse 37: All the laws must be followed, whether they are convenient to us or not. Why do so many of these laws end with a statement like “I am the LORD”? 

Verse 26: Why does the LORD forbid divination and sorcery? What attitudes lie behind such practices? (see Acts 8:9-25)
Leviticus

Study 6  Further Questions:

1. Should we expect the government to make laws that encourage or force non-Christians to behave like Christians? To what extent should the laws of Leviticus 18 and 19 be put into national law? How would such a vision fit with 1 Corinthians 5:12-13?

2. If we should not eat blood, what effect should this have on our buying and cooking? Is the blood of animals drained out before being sold? Should we only eat kosher or halal meat? Can a Christian ever eat a black pudding\(^2\) or a bloody steak?

3. What should we say when a person rejects the Bible’s teaching on sexual morality on the basis that the Bible also condemns wearing clothing woven of two kinds of material? Can you think of a quick and simple way of explaining this?

4. How can we make sure that our churches are both welcoming to the sinner and faithful to the LORD’s rejection of sinful lifestyles? How can we be practically more like Jesus in John 8:1-11? Have we ever treated one kind of sin more harshly than others? Why have we done this? Do we treat pride and disobedience to parents with the same seriousness as the Bible does?

\(^2\) A kind of blood-filled sausage that is a speciality in Lancashire.
Day 1 – Leviticus 17:1-16
Day 2 – Leviticus 18:1-18
Day 3 – Leviticus 18:19-30
Day 4 – Leviticus 19:1-18
Day 5 – Leviticus 19:19-37
Day 6 – Leviticus 20:1-10
Day 7 – Leviticus 21:11-27

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Study 7 Holy Priests

Leviticus 21:1-22:33

Key Truth:
The priests in Leviticus teach us about Jesus, the Great High Priest.

- a. The dedication of the priest (21:1-15)
- b. The perfection of the priests (21:16-24)
- c. Respect for the offerings (22:1-16)
- d. Unacceptable sacrifices (22:17-33)

The book of Leviticus has taught us a great deal about the Promised Messiah, Jesus, the Great High Priest and the Lamb of God.

In the preceding sections we learnt about the breadth and depth of the salvation He accomplished for us, but in this section the spotlight falls more on the priestly work of Jesus. Here we will learn about his dedication, holiness and perfection, both as the Divine High Priest and the Divine Sacrificial Lamb.

We desperately need this Divine Priest and Lamb.

To begin, I would remind you, dear friends, that the idea of a sacrifice for sin is, in some sense or other, found in almost all human religions. I believe that some of the most ignorant tribes... and also Unitarians, have been found without the doctrine of an atoning sacrifice in their religion; but I do not think there are any other persons so benighted as these to be found anywhere. Go where you may, you will discover that, as soon as ever people begin to say “God,” the next thing they say is “sacrifice”; and though their idea of God is often distorted, and their idea of sacrifice is distorted also, yet both ideas are there. Man, however degraded, cannot altogether forget that there is a God; and then, shrinking back from the awful majesty of the divine holiness, he at least hopes that there is a sacrifice by which
his sins may be put away. He feels that there must be one if he is ever to be brought into connection with God; and so, in some form or other, the notion of sacrifice crops up wherever there is any religion at all. It may be in the ghastly form of human sacrifice, which is a hideous misinterpretation which has crept in under the darkness and gloom of heathenism or false teaching; or it may appear in the continued sacrifice of bullocks, or lambs, or other victims; but, somehow or other, the idea is there. Man seems to know, in his inmost nature, that he must bring a sacrifice if he would appear before God; and this is, by no means, an error on his part. However erroneous may be the form it takes, in its essence there is truth in it.  

a. The dedication of the priest (21:1-15)

In verses 1-4 we see the dedication required from the priest. Only the death of an immediate family member could call him away from his duties. Verse 5 reminds us that the priest can have no ‘private life’. He cannot follow fashions or popular practices that would in any way compromise his dedication to the Living God. It makes no difference whether he is ‘off duty’ or not: his whole life and body belong to the Angel of the LORD whom he served.

Verse 6 has caused some people a little difficulty because it speaks of the sacrifices as ‘the food of God’ (see also verses 8, 21-22). Some have wondered if this meant that the Angel of the LORD actually ate the sacrificial meat and others have connected this with ancient, pagan conceptions of ‘god’ that have lingered on in the language and thought of Israel. Neither of these thoughts are necessary. Verse 22 seems to indicate that the food belongs to the LORD God, yet it is (normally) actually eaten by the priests. The fact that the food belonged to the LORD meant that the priests needed to handle the meat with special care and dedication.

The priest could not marry an ex-prostitute or a divorced woman. The regular priests were allowed to marry a widow, but the high priest could not. The high priest had to marry a virgin who was a fellow member of

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22 Spurgeon on Hebrews 7:27
Israel. The ancient priests were acting out the role of the Promised Messiah, the Divine Bridegroom of the Church. It is as if the LORD wanted his priests and their wives to be as close to that picture as possible.

Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:23-27; see also Revelation 19:7-8; 21:1-9)

That beautiful image of Christ and His radiant bride, without any blemish, was to be held before the ancient Church through the priests. In the case of the high priest (verses 13-15), this parallel must be the strictest possible.

As the mediators between the Lord and His people, the priests performed their tasks within the sphere of the holy, and they were therefore in a position seriously to endanger the preservation of the sacred character of the Lord’s worship by that they did and by what they left undone. For this reason, their life was subjected to certain requirements that did not apply to lay persons as such... The sons of Aaron had to be more on their guard against profaning what was holy than the other Israelites, since the consequences of this would be so much more serious in their case. It is therefore not surprising that... their personal freedom was restricted in more than one respect.23

b. The perfection of the priests (21:16-24)

If we thought the previous restrictions on the priests and the high priest were strict, then we might struggle even more with the next section. A person has the power to control whom they marry and what they do with their time, but how can the descendent of Aaron control physical disabilities?

23 A. Noordtzij, Bible Student’s Commentary, Leviticus (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1982), page 214
First, note the specific restriction. The priest with a physical 'defect' may eat the sacred food, but may not offer any of the sacrifices (verses 21-23). Some of the defects would have been present from birth whereas others might occur at any time in life.24

Throughout these chapters there is a recurring phrase: “I am the LORD, who makes them holy”. As we have seen, in Leviticus holiness is holistic. There is a deep and intense longing for a world restored to perfect holiness. The whole creation needs to return to Eden, but to go beyond that to the incorruptible holistic perfection of the new creation. When verse 23 says “because of his defect he must not go near the curtain”, the idea seems to be that in the presence of the LORD there are no physical injuries or genetic errors. In His presence all such things are cleansed away.

We must not view this as a sign that only perfect physical specimens can be saved! No, rather it is the wonderful hope that when we are resurrected into the unlimited presence of the LORD, all our physical problems will have gone away. These laws make us long to be in His presence forever when all disease, decay, pain and sorrow will be abolished. The more weak and frail and damaged our bodies become, the more we appreciate these promises.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:1-5)

24 Laws regarding testicles (21:20 and also 22:24) seem to be connected with the promise of the seed from Genesis 3:15; 12:7 etc. The ability to produce seed had a much greater significance in that context than it might have today.
c. **Respect for the offerings (22:1-16)**

Physical defects would prevent the priest from offering a sacrifice, but so would all examples of uncleanness. For the regular Israelite, uncleanness excluded them from the assembly, but for the priest uncleanness could result in death:

> The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.

Verses 10-16 deal with a special question of ‘uncleanness’. The priest could share the holy food with his immediate family, but no common person was allowed to eat it. To share the meat with ‘unauthorised’ people would desecrate the sacred offerings (verse 15). The unauthorised person who ate such food had to make restitution (verse 14).

These laws underline the intense dedication and concentration required by the Aaronic priests. The work of the priest was of supreme importance. Praise God that Jesus gave Himself in perfect obedience and total dedication.

d. **Unacceptable sacrifices (22:17-33)**

If the priests had to be without defect or uncleanness, the very same applied to the sacrificial animals. They too had to be clean animals and free from all defects, if they were going to be presented as a burnt offering. Remember that the burnt offering was the offering for propitiation: the offering whereby the animal bore the punishment of death on behalf of the worshipper. The imagery is important here. If the animal had ‘offences’ of its own, then how could it bear the offences of someone else?

> Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the LORD to fulfil a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as an offering made to the LORD by fire.
Not only does this remind us of the sinless perfection of Jesus, the Lamb of God without spot or blemish, but it also challenges us about the kind of time and service that we offer to the Living God.

This law made all the legal sacrifices the fitter to be types of Christ, the great sacrifice from which all these derived their virtue. In allusion to this law, he is said to be a Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1Peter 1:19. As such a priest, so such a sacrifice, became us, who was harmless and undefiled. When Pilate declared, I find no fault in this man, he did thereby in effect pronounce the sacrifice without blemish. The Jews say it was the work of the... high priest, to view the sacrifices, and see whether they were without blemish or no; when Christ suffered, Annas was in that office; but little did those who brought Christ to Annas first, by whom he was sent bound to Caiaphas, as a sacrifice fit to be offered (John 18:13, John 18:24), think that they were answering the type of this law.

It is an instruction to us to offer to God the best we have in our spiritual sacrifices. If our devotions are ignorant, and cold, and trifling, and full of distractions, we offer the blind, and the lame, and the sick, for sacrifice; but cursed be the deceiver that does so, for, while he thinks to put a cheat upon God, he puts a damning cheat upon his own soul. (Matthew Henry commenting on Leviticus 22:27).
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**Leviticus**

**Study 7 Bible Questions**

**Leviticus 21:1-15**

**Verse 1** This section of Leviticus highlights the complete dedication of the priests. Aspects of their personal life had to be given up in their service of the LORD God. Why was such dedication required of the priests of the Living God?

**Verses 1-4** Even the death of close dependants of the priests made him unclean. He couldn't attend the funerals of more distant relations. Why wasn't the priest allowed to have anything to do with death?

**Verse 5 & 10** This verse describes different ways of mourning for the dead (see Ezek. 27:31; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16). Why couldn't the priests show these signs of mourning?

**Verse 6** How might the priests 'profane' the name of their God? Why are we reminded here about that the offerings are made by fire? (NB - remember Genesis 3:24).

**Verse 7, 13-14** Ordinary Israelites could marry each other regardless of whether they had previously been married or whether they had previously been sexually immoral. Why did the wives of the priests have to be virgins? (see 2 Corinthians 11:2).

**Verse 8** The book of Leviticus warned the people not eat food that could defile them (see for example 12:41-43). Why does this verse speak as if the LORD God would 'eat' the sacrifices? How does this metaphor explain the need for purity in the priests?

**Verse 9** We have often seen the importance of fire as the barrier between the Living God and sinful humanity. Nadab and Abihu were burned in this fire when they defiled the LORD's sanctuary. Why should a priest's daughter suffer this same fate if she became a prostitute? (see 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

**Verses 1-15** What do all these verses tell us about Jesus our Great High Priest? List His qualities that are revealed by these ancient laws.
Study 7  Further Questions:

1. Many cultures, ancient and modern, reject anybody with disabilities. Some even kill such human beings before they are born. The Church has always stood firmly against such evil. What makes the Church so different in this area? Why does the Church view people in such a different way?

2. Jesus was sinless, but what does that mean? Did He have a sinful heart like us but simply never committed any actual sins? Did He have a sinless heart as well as no actual sins? When He was tempted to sin, did He really feel any temptation as we do?

3. Did Jesus ever break the law of Moses? Did it actually matter whether He did or didn’t? As the Lord of the law could He touch the unclean or work on the Sabbath? Did the Fulfilment of the law have to be exactly the same as the law?

Study 7  Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 21:1-15
Day 2 – Leviticus 21:16-24
Day 3 – Leviticus 22:1-16
Day 4 – Leviticus 22:17-33
Day 5 – John 2:12-17
Day 6 – John 17:1-12
Day 7 – John 17:13-26

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
The Jewish year was broken up with these wonderful festivals. It was all part of the holistic spirituality that Leviticus has shown to us. Many today see Christianity as an entirely inward, solemn and private business. However, such a view is very far from the Bible.

In the Bible the worship of the Living God involves the whole of life all the time. These special festivals were ways of claiming the year, diet, houses, music etc for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

However, there was a deeper truth in all these festivals. They each present deep aspects of the Person and Work of the Promised Messiah.

### a. Sabbath (23:3)

**Purpose:** There is a promised Sabbath rest for the whole creation, when the glory of the LORD will fill the whole creation.

After every six days of regular work, the church takes a day of Sabbath. In the Scriptures Sabbath looks both backward to the original week of creation and forwards to the day of redemption. In Exodus 20:11, the reason for the Sabbath is “for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh...
day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” However, in Deuteronomy 5:15 an additional reason is given: “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”

Each week we need a day when we acknowledge that the LORD has worked to create and redeem us... and we need to spend that day in His presence giving thanks and praise with the gathered church.

b. Passover (23:4-5)

**Purpose:** Just as the blood of a lamb caused the LORD’s judgement to pass over the houses in Egypt, so the blood of the Divine Lamb, Jesus Christ, will cause the judgement of Judgement Day to pass safely over us.

The Passover meal was the time that Jesus went to the Cross. Of all the festivals He could have chosen to indicate the meaning of His death, He chose the Passover.

For a more thorough exploration of the Passover, see the Book by Book study guide on Exodus.

c. Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:6-8)

**Purpose:** The church needs to redeemed from the world.

As we said at the end of study 1,

> The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. (Exodus 12:39)

On the night of the Exodus, anyone who preferred to wait for their bread to rise rather than join in with the redemption of the Angel of the LORD showed that their heart was still in Egypt. To choose risen bread over redemption would have been a deep sign of worldliness and spiritual compromise.

The ancient assembly of Israel had to spend a whole week thinking about this essential truth. The day of redemption is coming and hearts must be set on that coming kingdom rather than this present darkness.
d. Firstfruits (23:9-14)

**Purpose:** The Messiah’s resurrection is the guarantee that a full resurrection harvest is coming.

The very first of the harvest is to be offered to the **Lord** in anticipation of the full harvest that would be gathered in later in the year.

Our Christian ancestors used to have a special name for a graveyard or a cemetery: “the Lord’s field”. The idea was that all the bodies were like seeds being planted in the Lord’s field... and one day all these seeds will spring up from the ground as new, immortal human bodies.

It is a wonderful image, borrowed from Jesus Himself:

> Jesus replied, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.’ (John 12:23-24)

When we think about the death of Jesus we should remind ourselves how a seed only produces many more seeds after it has died and risen up from the ground. Jesus walked out of the tomb on the third day (the day of seeds – see Genesis 1:11-13), we must realise that He is The Firstfruits. The later crop is guaranteed by that firstfruits.

> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. (1 Corinthians 15:19-23)


e. Feast of Pentecost (23:15-22)

**Purpose:** 50 days after the offering of the Firstfruits, loaves *baked with* *yeast* had to be brought as offerings, together with seven lambs, a bull and two rams. It is a bountiful sacrifice! It is offered with yeast because it represents not so much the need for redemption as the arrival in the Promised Land. If the church did not have time to use yeast in the bread as they were being redeemed, they had plenty of time to use yeast *after* they arrived in the Promised Land.
Bread with yeast is associated with redeemed life and life in the new creation throughout the Bible.

If Firstfruits marked the beginning of the harvest, then Pentecost marks the end of the harvest. In one sense we would expect this to be a festival focussed only on our resurrection future or the certainty of the new creation. However, the fullness of redemption is known in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rather than any of the effects of redemption.

In other words, better than immortality in a new creation is knowing the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Eternal life is not essentially about living forever or being cured of our physical problems. No, we have eternal life right now even when we are sick, disabled and dying. Knowing the Living God in intimate fellowship is the fullness of redemption. If we have that then all the effects and blessings of that will eventually follow.

This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

The feast of Pentecost was the only time that a fellowship offering had to be offered. Whether a person understood it or wanted it, they had to go and offer the sign of warm fellowship between the LORD God and His people.

The peace (fellowship) offering was thus an open declaration of the communion which had been established between God and man, so that they ate together, rejoicing in the same offering. Beloved brethren, when you have felt the sweets of seeing the Lord as a sin-offering, and then have tasted the high joys of acceptance as you have gazed upon him as the burnt-offering, satisfying Jehovah’s heart, it is surpassingly delightful to behold the Lamb of God as our peace-offering, making glad the heart of God and man, and bringing both in bonds of friendship to a common meeting-place. The eternal Father says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and we cry, “This is our beloved Lord, in which our inmost soul rejoices.”

25 Spurgeon, no 1203 on November 15th 1874, on Exodus 29:1
A final feature of the Feast of Pentecost is found in verse 22. It was a time for sharing the harvest with the poor. This is exactly what we see on the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament in Acts 2:42-47.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. (Acts 2:44-45)

f. Day of Trumpets (23:23-25)

Purpose: The coming of Jesus is announced by the loud trumpet blast. Throughout the Bible, the trumpet blast is associated with the Coming of the LORD God and the Victory of the LORD God.

In Exodus 19 the sound of the ram’s horn showed that the Unseen Lord had descended onto the mountain and His people were to come up the mountain. In Joshua 6 the sounding of the trumpets signalled the destruction of Jericho. When Jesus returns the sound of God’s trumpet will awake the whole creation to the future:

The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.’ (Revelation 11:15)

g. Day of Atonement (23:26-32)

Purpose: The whole creation will be renewed when the Great High Priest returns from the Most Holy Place.

We have examined this day back in study 5, but the instructions here in Leviticus 23 have a specific emphasis.

The LORD said to Moses, ‘The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire.’
Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God.

Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people.

I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day.

You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves.

From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.’ (Leviticus 23:26-32)

The emphasis here is very obvious! The ancient saints were not allowed to do any regular work on the Day of Atonement. Having studied the day in detail we fully understand this emphasis.

On the day when they celebrated the certain hope of the new creation there could be no regular work. On the day when they celebrated the hope of sabbath rest for the whole creation, there could be no regular work!

We long for the day when our Great High Priest returns to purify the creation from all impurity and sin. When we celebrate our sabbath rest today we should try to hold the theology of the Day of Atonement in our hearts and minds.

h. Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-44)

Purpose: The ancient church lived in tents to remind themselves that we have no lasting home in this present darkness. We look forward to our lasting home in the future.

We find more emphasis on 'no regular work' in this festival, given that it too is looking forward to our new creation future. Whereas the Day of Atonement focuses on the work of the Great High Priest, the Feast of Tabernacles focuses on the way the church lives right now as we await that glorious future day.
Leviticus

To spend a week living in a tent would have been very useful, after the people of Israel had settled in the Promised Land. To leave the comfort and ease and apparent permanence of a solid building would have been an important reminder that we came into the world with nothing and we leave with nothing.

Living in tents was the lifestyle of the patriarchs of Genesis, so the children of Abraham needed to maintain the same theology as the great father of the faith:

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

i. Oil and Bread (24:1-9)

Purpose: The ancient church needed to hold fast to the work of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The final regular practice is not one of the festivals but a vitally important heartbeat within the covenant community. When we studied the furniture and layout of the tabernacle back in the book of Exodus we noted that the three pieces of furniture were to be made before the tabernacle building itself. The ark of the covenant, the table of the Presence and the oil Lampstand were all described first.

Given that the tabernacle building with its courtyard were symbolising the heavens and earth, what three ‘things’ could be older than the heavens and the earth?

The ark of the covenant, located in the Most Holy Place, stood for the throneroom of God the Father in heaven. The table of the Presence represented the Angel of the LORD, God the Son, and the oil Lampstand represented God the Holy Spirit.26

26 For a more detailed explanation of all this please see the Book by Book study guide and DVD for Exodus.
So, here in Leviticus 24:1-9 the LORD commanded His people to provide the twelve loaves of bread for the Table of the Presence and the oil for the seven-branched Lampstand.

The twelve loaves of bread representing all the people had to be refreshed every week and the oil to keep the Lampstand burning had to be provided each sabbath. Each week the community needed to refresh its appreciation of the fact that they were represented in the presence of the Most Holy God and they depended on the illumination and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We can summarise what we have learned about the festivals in the following table. Notice that the festivals go through the work of Jesus, from His death, through His resurrection, to His Return and life in His new creation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passover</td>
<td>The blood/death of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unleavened Bread</td>
<td>Our need for redemption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firstfruits</td>
<td>The resurrection of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>The gift of the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpets</td>
<td>Jesus will return</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day of Atonement</td>
<td>The renewal of the whole creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabernacles</td>
<td>Waiting for the new creation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leviticus 23:9-22

Verses 9-10 How did the Israelites end up living on the seaboard of the eastern Mediterranean? Why was it so important that they gave the very first of their crops to the LORD?

Verse 11 Why do you think the first grain was to be held up before the LORD on day 8, on the day after the Sabbath? Why was it done on the first day of a new week?

Verses 12-13 It is so easy to forget that we deserve nothing from the Living God other than judgement and rejection. Why did they have to offer a lamb without blemish as a burnt offering with the first fruits? (Remember the purpose of the burnt offering).

Verse 14 Why was nobody allowed to eat any of the harvest until it had been offered to the LORD?

Verses 9-14 Should we practice something like the feast of first-fruits today? What could you do to show the same gospel truths?

Verse 15-16 The first harvest was done on the day after the Sabbath. The feast of Pentecost was held on the day after seven Sabbaths – after a week of Sabbaths! What might this tell us about the Feast of Weeks?

Verse 17 Why were the loaves baked with yeast?

Verse 18 List everything needed for the offering. Why was so much required? How could people find so much to offer?

Verses 19-21 The heart of the Feast of Pentecost is a fellowship offering. Why was it so important that the priest would eat with the people in this celebration Sabbath?

Verse 22 How is this verse the true measure of the Feast? Why does practical social care show a true understanding of the harvest?
Study 8 Further Questions:

1. Some Christians have no feasts or celebrations in the church year, because they say that they can and should celebrate all the gospel truths all the time. What do we think about this? If there were so many occasions for specific celebrations in the ancient church, why not today?

2. In Esther 9:27 the church ‘took it upon themselves’ to begin a new festival. The church did that again with the festivals of Easter and Christmas. Could we do that today? What festivals are needed? Is it worth returning to any of the Levitical ones?

3. Do you keep the Sabbath? Should it be on a Saturday or a Sunday? How do you make the day special to the Lord? What do you do and what do you not do?

Study 8 Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 23:1-8
Day 2 – Leviticus 23:9-22
Day 3 – Leviticus 23:23-32
Day 4 – Leviticus 23:33-44
Day 5 – Leviticus 24:1-9
Day 6 – Acts 2:1-21
Day 7 – 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
From the beginning of chapter 25 the Lord sent a message through Moses concerning the way that the people should live when they got into the Promised Land. The instructions that the Angel of the Lord gave concerned the kind of justice and compassion that would characterise them as the covenant community.

In modern times different groups have been inspired by the Lord’s vision of the Jubilee Year. Some have seen it as a way of calling for the debts of poorer countries to be written off by the world bank. Others have used it as a rallying point for other issues of justice and compassion.

It is probably best for us to understand the original setting of these laws before we think of applying them to the modern world. We may well end up supporting the same causes but the more we learn about the Lord’s vision for His ancient people the more likely we are to live out faithfully His wonderful gospel.

a. Blasphemy (24:10-23)

We begin with a social problem that very rarely catches the newspaper headlines and almost never as a positive story about the True and Living God: blasphemy.

We are right to care for the honour and dignity of our fellow human beings. We are right to ensure that they are given the respect and care...
that is due to them. However, if we fail to respect and honour the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we have missed the 'engine' in our social compassion. We know that the Jewish community had become a community made up many different nationalities (see Exodus 12:38) and the story begins when the son of an Israelite and an Egyptian ‘blasphemed’ the Name during a fight in the camp.

Actually, the word *blaspheme* does not accurately represent the meaning of the Hebrew text. (Moses) here uses two verbs, the first *naqab* which the NIV translates as ‘blaspheme’ literally meaning ‘to pierce’ with the intent of debilitating a person. The second term, rendered as ‘curse’, actually means to declare someone to be ‘contentless’ or without significance (empty), and thus to deny that he has any power... The guilty person here therefore did not pronounce a curse in our sense of the word, but rather attacked the Lord’s holy nature and declared this to be without content or significance.27

**What is ‘The Name’?**

The Name of the **Lord** is what we find first in Genesis 4:26 when people began to call on the Name. The Name is very tied to the gospel nature, the covenant faithfulness, of the Living God. His Name in Exodus 33 & 34 is a description of His merciful and forgiving character.

    The **Lord** came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed *His Name*, the **Lord**. And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The **Lord**, the **Lord**, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’

Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshipped. ‘O Lord, if I have found favour in your eyes,’ he said, ‘then let the Lord go with us.’ (Exodus 34:5-9)

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27 Noordtzij, The Book of Leviticus, page 245
The Name of the LORD is intricately tied up with the Second person of the Trinity, the Angel of the LORD, Jesus Christ. This comes out strongly when we hear of The Name in Acts chapter 5 when the Sanhedrin had arrested the apostles.

They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. (Acts 5:40-42)

So, when this man in Leviticus 24 rejected the Name of the LORD as something worthless, even though he was a member of the covenant community, it was a very serious matter.

The Name of the LORD is the manifesto of the Church.

It is in His Name that we love and serve, preach and pray, praise and worship. To abuse this Name is to wage war not only on the Living God but the whole human race as well.

When we initially see that the man had to be stoned, we might marvel at such a severe punishment. However, the law was always teaching that the punishment for sin is death. Furthermore, when we see how the LORD connects the rejection of His Name with murder and abuse of neighbours, we can understand how deadly serious it is to dishonour so deeply our Lord and Saviour.

In verses 17-22 the LORD explains that crimes against each other must be punished in proper measure. The punishment must fit the crime... but should not be more than the crime. If an animal is killed, then the animal must be paid for. Yet, if an animal is killed, that should not lead to the execution of a human being! To damage someone’s eye might lead to getting a black eye in return... but it should not lead to execution either. “As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured” (verse 20).

Now, if the LORD is careful to limit the punishment for all sins to the measure of the crime, what crime has this ‘blasphemer’ committed that
merits death by stoning? In Leviticus 20:2-5 death by stoning is reserved for those who sacrifice children to Molech.

The very first petition in the Lord’s prayer is “Our Father is heaven, hallowed be Your Name...”. His Name must be so sacred and respected, so weighty and holy among us that if anybody speaks against it we are as horrified as if we heard that someone had committed child sacrifice.

So, we begin the study on justice and compassion in the ancient church with a shocking study in the holiness of the Name of the LORD. If we want to be a community of love and justice then we must begin with a radical appreciation of the Living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is as we bow in deep worship and trembling before the One who dwells in Eternity that our hearts beat in time with His heart. If we want to care and work as He cares and works then the centre of our lives must always be the glory and majesty of the Living God.

b. The Sabbath year (25:1-7)

After caring for the holiness of The Name of the LORD, the ancient covenant community was directed to care for the land itself. It is only when we get to the Year of Jubilee in verse 8 that human beings come into the foreground.

The land could be worked for 6 years, but then in the seventh year the people had to leave the land to rest. Whatever food it naturally produced could be eaten, but it could not be ‘farmed’ in any way. More information about how there would be enough food in the sabbath years is given later in 25:21-22.

The land that vomited out the previous nations who practised such terrible sin (Leviticus 18:25-30), would need to be treated with respect by these new inhabitants. We have seen that sabbath is a sign of creation and redemption, so the land too had to enjoy that sabbath sign. The LORD’s gospel covenant is not only for humanity, but also for the earth itself (see Romans 8:18-25).

The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)
c. The year of Jubilee (25:8-55)

When we studied chapter 23 we saw that the Feast of Pentecost was the feast of 50 days (23:15-22). It was the feast when the gift and freedom of the Spirit were celebrated, when the full harvest of redemption was enjoyed. We also learned that the Feast of Pentecost was a time for social compassion, for sharing the harvest (23:22).

A Feast of Fifty Years was also to be celebrated in the Promised Land. This Feast of 50 years was also a time when the freedom of the Spirit was celebrated, a time of social compassion and generosity — “Proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (verse 10).

It was a sabbath year (25:1-7 & 25:11-12). The land was to be given rest. The whole year was holy to the LORD (verse 12). In verses 21-22 the LORD promises to give a bumper harvest the year before to make sure that no work is necessary for that whole year.

The key feature of the Jubilee year was the return of land to its original owners. This was because the land belonged to the LORD Himself, and His tenants should never view the land as their permanent possession.

The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. (25:23)

When the Jubilee year came, then all the land went back to the family that owned it. Therefore, if land was ‘sold’ it was only being ‘sold’ for between 1 and 49 years. The ‘purchase’ price had to vary according to the amount of years till the next Jubilee year (verse 16). However, this law must never be used to defraud anyone (verse 14).

Only buildings within a walled city could permanently change hands (verses 29-31). House belonging to the Levites could always be redeemed (verses 32-34).

To show that they truly loved their neighbour (Leviticus 19:18), they had to support financially anybody who had become poor (verses 35-43). Any money lent must be interest free and all food must be sold at cost – never for any profit. The reason is that (verse 38), the LORD God redeemed them from Egypt and gave them this whole land... for free!
Falling into debt was as big a problem then as it is today. In the modern world we tend to destroy a man and his family by throwing him into prison when he gets into very serious debt. In ancient Israel they realised that such barbarity does no-one any good. It doesn’t help the person who is owed money, because they don’t get any money back while a person is locked away in prison. It doesn’t do the prisoner any good because he has lost his family and can’t actually make any money to begin the rebuilding process. Therefore, in ancient Israel a man in such serious debt could become the ‘slave’ of the person he owed money to. That way he could remain with his family and actually work hard to pay off the debt.

However, such a system of debt management had to be protected from abuse. Just because the man was in such poverty did not mean that he could be treated badly or disrespected. In verses 39-43 the LORD makes it clear that the man and his family are to be given full liberty in the Year of Jubilee. Again, Israel is reminded that they were redeemed from Egyptian slavery by the LORD God and they are all now His slaves. Because they are the redeemed slaves of the LORD God, they must not treat each other as slaves in a ruthless way (verses 42-43).

Any member of the covenant community who falls into slavery to pagan people must be redeemed by his relatives (verses 47-55). Payment must be made according to the number of years until the next Jubilee year. Even if such a fee could not be afforded, the man and his family were set free in the Jubilee year.

But what of pagan slaves? What of those who were slaves from pagan nations? Did they receive the same rights and privileges as the Israelite slaves?

The surrounding nations practised harsher forms of slavery (verses 44-46) and the LORD did not forbid His people from purchasing such workers. Nevertheless, even the foreign slaves had to be treated properly (see Exodus 21:20-26).

The difference between the Israelite slave and the pagan slave raises a vital question. What if the pagan slave forsakes his pagan ways and seeks...
to become a member of Israel? What if he wishes to be circumcised and follow the ways of the Lord? Shouldn’t he then receive the freedom in the Jubilee that the Israelite slaves would receive?

Deuteronomy 23:15-16 possibly throws light on this:

If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master. Let him live among you wherever he likes and in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress him.

If a (foreign) slave wants to find refuge in Israel, he is to be given refuge and protected from his ‘master’. Furthermore, such a man is to be given the full liberty of Israel, choosing which tribe he would like to join. Above all such a man must not be oppressed.

The iniquities of the racial slave trade of recent centuries make it hard for us to engage with aspects of this teaching. We are acutely aware of how people were sold as permanent property for generations without any possibility of freedom and with no rights or respect. The legacy of that sin is still felt as the sins of the ancestors are visited on great, great grandchildren. There was a desperate need for either this Jubilee Year or the seven year cycle of Exodus 21:1-4.

What are we going to do with the Jubilee year today?

How can we set people free from debt? Are there people in our local church who are enslaved by debt? What can be done to set them free? What about the local communities we live in? What other forms of slavery are around us? Are there victims of the sex slave trade in our area? Are there economic slaves producing our clothes in other countries?

How can we give expression to these laws in our own situations today?
Leviticus 25:8-24

Verse 8 The Feast of First-fruits was on the day after a Sabbath. The Feast of Pentecost was on the first day after seven Sabbaths of weeks. Now, the Jubilee was held in the year after seven “Sabbaths of years”. What can we learn about this pattern? What does the pattern teach us about the meaning of the Jubilee?

Verse 9 What does the sound of the trumpet mean in the world of the Bible? Why was it sounded at this Feast? (see Exodus 19:16; Revelation 10:7; Matthew 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16) Are we looking forward to the sound of the trumpet?

Verse 10 How was liberty proclaimed to everybody in the land? Was it a matter of words or actions or both?

Verses 11-12 In the original Garden of Eden, Adam & Eve did not have to sweat in order to harvest their food. How was the Jubilee year an experience of Eden? Was it a matter of looking back or looking forward?

Verse 13 Why was the ‘reset’ button pressed on all property deals in the Jubilee year?

Verses 14-17 If all property deals were reset after 50 years, how could the people of God do any property deals at all? If all our property deals today are only for this passing age, then how should this affect how we manage our property?

Verses 18-19 How did the LORD make a connection between the spiritual and ecological life of the Promised Land? Is there anything for us to learn from this for modern living?

Verses 20-22 What would the LORD’s people think in the 49th year of the Jubilee cycle? What attitudes and practices did they need in that year?

Verses 23-24 What understanding of the land did the ancient church have? Should we work to ensure that everyone gets a fair share of the world’s resources?
Study 9 Further Questions:

1. Should a nation have ‘blasphemy laws’ today? Should they be worded in such a way that only the Living, Trinitarian God is honoured... or should all gods be protected from blasphemy? What could the punishments be?

2. What would be the impact of taking a ‘sabbath year’ in today’s world? Would it harm or help the economic life of a nation?

3. How can we apply the year of Jubilee today? What should we as individuals do? What about our local church? Is this relevant to a secular government?

Study 9 Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 24:10-23  
Day 2 – Leviticus 25:1-7  
Day 3 – Leviticus 25:8-17  
Day 4 – Leviticus 25:18-31  
Day 5 – Leviticus 25:32-46  
Day 6 – Leviticus 25:47-55  
Day 7 – Leviticus 26:1-13

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
Cleansed from dead flesh
The book of Leviticus ends on such a high note. We are given a vision of the two ways to live: the way of life and blessing, where all aspects of life move towards the unfallen life of Eden; or the way of death and cursing, where every aspect of life moves towards the chaos and futility that the curse of sin brought.

Leviticus 26 is one of the most moving chapters, not only in the Book of Leviticus and the Pentateuch as a whole, but in the entire Old Testament revelation. In looking toward the future, the Lord laments the fact that He soon might be compelled to chastise His people. If they, in utter ungratefulness, should sinfully reject the love that He had shown to them, He would have no choice but to cause them to feel the destructive weight of His divine indignation, even as this love continued to reach out to them. As a single, poignant lament of divine love, the chapter also contains a warning and a prayer that the Israelites would not have to undergo such punishment.  

The whole book ends with a vision of many aspects of Israelite life being dedicated to the Lord God as holy.

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29 Noordtzij, page 262
a. Introduction (26:1-2)

The chapter begins with the key issue: the true worship and love of the Lord God of Israel. Life in the Promised Land depends on this. The whole creation was put under the bondage of death and decay because Adam and Eve turned away from the Lord God. The church of the Living God is to behave as humanity always should have done.

Verse 1 is a very comprehensive rejection of any other object of worship. Idolatry is a wide-ranging term. It covers the worship of statues and false gods as well as greed (Colossians 3:5). Anything that commands our love and allegiance in the place of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be denied.

Verse 2 gives some specific content to the worship of the Lord God. Anyone could say that they honour Him, but what is the evidence? Leviticus 26:2 isolates observation of the sabbath and reverence for the Lord’s sanctuary. We have seen that sabbath observation embraces the Bible’s teaching about both creation and redemption. In that way it is a fair test of the church’s understanding of the broad pattern of Biblical truth.

Reverence for the sanctuary took a very specific form for the original ancient church: the tabernacle. Leviticus has constantly underlined the importance of intense care and reverence for the tabernacle and all its rituals, furniture and sacrifices. People died when mistakes were made. The presence of the Angel of the Lord among His people depended on proper reverence and ‘spiritual hygiene’ around His tabernacle. In later centuries the tabernacle became the temple in Jerusalem... but above and beyond these earthly copies, was the heavenly reality. Just as Jesus teaches us in the first petition of the Lord’s prayer, we must hallow the name of our Father in heaven. Heaven is the place where the Father manifests His presence.

Loving the Lord God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; setting aside the weekly sabbath as a day of special refreshment in Him with our Christian family; and reverence for the Name of the Father in heaven – these three crucial components define the health of the church in every age.
b. The blessings (26:3-13)

The LORD God had promised His ancient people a land – the land of Canaan. That land was to be a picture of the true, eternal inheritance of the church. Abraham forsook everything for the land of Canaan even though he could see beyond that and had his vision fixed firmly on the ‘city with foundations’, ‘another country’ – our new creation future (see Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16).

The land of Canaan then was supposed to be an earthly and limited copy of the wonderful new creation future. It was to be a visual aid, sustaining the hope of the ancient church.

So, if the ancient church obeyed the commands of the LORD God, they would experience His blessings in such a way that it would be a taste of the renewed creation.

The blessings are in three sections:
- the blessing of plentiful harvests (26:3-5)
- the blessing of peace in the land (26:6-10)
- the blessing of the LORD walking among them (26:11-13)

Before the curse of sin in the world, the land produced plentiful food requiring no effort from humanity. The animals lived at peace with one another (cf Genesis 1:29-30 & Isaiah 11:6-9); humanity was at peace together and the LORD Himself walked with His people (Genesis 3:8).

The Israelites could sample those blessings again as they obeyed the LORD. The rains would fall as they should and the crops would provide enough for everybody. Harvesting would continue until the time of the next planting – “you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land” (verse 5). This safety will cover not only the removal of wild animals from the land (verse 6), but enemies will also be unable to conquer the LORD’s people. If they were outnumbered 20 to 1 or even 100 to 1 (verse 8), yet the LORD will enable them to defeat easily any enemies. Furthermore, His people would have plenty of children (verse 9).

However, the most wonderful and amazing blessing of all comes last:

I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. (Leviticus 26:11-12)
After all that Leviticus has taught us about the extreme difficulty of the LORD God living among His people – the danger of even the holy priests ministering in His presence – how could the LORD God walk among all His people?! It seems an impossible and unbelievable vision. Yet this promise is the underlying promise of the whole Bible.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ (Revelation 21:1-5)

c. The curses (26:14-46)
The curses of disobedience are elaborated at greater length than the blessings. Human life generally enjoys something of the blessings of God (Matthew 5:45) whether we follow Him or not. We tend to take all His blessings for granted, so when He reveals the true consequences of rejecting Him, He needs to describe things in more detail.

The consequences of disobedience are divided into five sections, each beginning with “if you will not listen to me...” (verses 14, 18, 21, 23, 27).

- overview of the punishments (26:14-17)
- bad harvests (26:18-20)
- wild animals (26:21-22)
- war resulting in famine (26:23-26)
- war resulting in anarchy and exile (26:27-39)

d. Secular holiness (27:1-34)
The final chapter of the book of Leviticus has to be one of the best last chapters in the whole of the Bible!
Throughout the book we have had our vision of holiness and redemption expanded. This glorious book of the Bible has shown us how hard it is for the unclean to become holy. All the different sacrifices, at such a cost in blood, showed us the depth and breadth of the challenge. Furthermore, the laws defining uncleanness revealed that the problem of sin and its consequences is not just a private and personal and ‘spiritual’ problem. The curse of sin has affected the whole of the creation: the land, the animals and our bodies. As we saw the kind of holistic holiness that the Most Holy Lord God demands, we also saw how utterly dangerous it is for any unclean or unauthorised person to stray into the presence of this Most Holy God. Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire when they made that mistake.

Leviticus has shown us a small, highly protected pool of holiness at the tabernacle in the middle of the camp of Israel. In that restricted and highly guarded courtyard, a Tent of Meeting, with its priests and sacrifices, was maintained in such a state of purity and holiness that the Angel of the Lord, in His divine glory and purity, lived among His people.

Nevertheless, the book of Leviticus is a book full of majestic hope. The promise of the new creation is on nearly every page. Many times we have seen how a sacrifice or a law or a festival was lifting our vision to the Day when the glory of the Lord will fill the whole creation and drive out all uncleanness and the curse of sin.

On the annual feast of Pentecost we saw how there was an expectation that the edges of the fields would be given over to the poor. In the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:44-45 everything that the apostolic church owned was dedicated to the service of the Lord God. All possessions were available for His use, to anyone as they had need.

When we first read Leviticus 27 we might think it is instructions about buying people and property back from the Lord after it has been dedicated to Him. However, that is to miss the point. The chapter is dealing with a situation where people are devoting themselves and their property to the Lord. They are offering themselves, their families, their animals, their land and their buildings to the dedicated service of the Lord their God.
The holy tabernacle at the centre of the camp was finding answering echoes in holy people, objects and places throughout the assembly of Israel.

In making a vow, a person demonstrated his love for the Lord’s worship or his thankfulness for an answer to prayer by earnestly resolving to dedicate something or someone as a gift to the Lord (e.g. Hannah and her child, 1 Samuel 1:11), to deny himself certain pleasures (e.g. the Nazirite, Numbers 6:2-8), or to present a certain offering (Leviticus 6:6).\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{30}\) Noordtzij, page 273.
Study 10 Bible Questions

Leviticus 27:1-15

Introduction Think about all we have learned about the people and things that were holy in the book of Leviticus. Make a list of these things.

Introduction If holiness was focussed on the activities of the tabernacle, then could any ordinary person ever be holy? How could they ever enter be near to the Holy LORD God?

Verses 1-2 How could a person become dedicated or ‘holy’ to the LORD? Why would a person want to become ‘holy’ in this way?

Verses 2-7 Why was a monetary value assigned to each person who was dedicated to the LORD? Why would anybody want to buy themselves out of being ‘holy’? (note verse 13)

Verse 8 Why was this special provision made for poor people?

Verses 9-13 Why would an animal be dedicated to the LORD God? Why did it cost an extra 20% to redeem the animal from the LORD?

Verses 14-15 What might it mean for a house to be dedicated to the LORD? What kind of family life would be expected in such a home?

Verses 1-15 How is it possible for a person to become holy? What makes a person ‘holy’ before the Most Holy God?

Do modern day Christians need to be dedicated to the LORD in this way? What difference would it make if you deliberately dedicated your house or your car or your money to the service of Jesus?
Study 10 Further Questions:

1. What are the dangers of claiming all the blessings of 26:3-13 in a literal way in today’s world? Can any nation experience these blessings today? Is any nation ‘God’s nation’ today as Israel was under Moses?

2. If someone was concerned about the language of the curses in 26:14-39, how could we help them? What is the best and simplest way to explain these Biblical passages to enquirers? What if they are offended by it?

3. How can we dedicate all we have to the service of the L ORD today? To what extent can we have any ‘private’ property or time if we are members of the church? How do we show this day by day?

Study 10 Daily Readings:

Day 1 – Leviticus 26:14-39
Day 2 – Leviticus 26:40-46
Day 3 – Leviticus 27:1-13
Day 4 – Leviticus 27:14-34
Day 5 – Isaiah 65:17-66:2
Day 6 – Romans 8:18-25
Day 7 – Revelation 21:1-27

The daily Bible readings are an opportunity not only to read through all of the material in the book under study, but also to read parts of the Bible that relate to the themes and issues that we have been considering. We try to make sure that we receive light from the whole Bible as we think through the key issues each week.
V. Suggested Answers to the Bible Study Questions

Study 1: Bible Answers

Verse 1 The Book of Exodus describes how the ancient church came to this situation. They had been redeemed from Egypt by the Angel of the LORD who had given them detailed instructions about building this Tent of Meeting. The LORD had spoken to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus, but now speaks from the Tent. However, see Exodus 33:7-11.

Verse 2 Approaching the Living God is not in our power or wisdom. It can only be done by invitation and according to specific instructions. It is fatal for a sinner to meet the Living God.

Verse 3 Jesus the Promised Messiah is the sinless man. As they waited for His incarnation, these sacrifices help them to understand who He is and what He would do.

Verse 4 The person had to be identified with the animal. Their sins were “put onto” the animal so that it would die instead of the sinner.

Verse 5 The blood is taken and applied to the altar. The blood represents the death of the animal. The blood is life poured out in death. This is why the blood of Jesus, the immortal God, is so infinitely precious.

Verse 6-9 The body of the animal had to be carefully prepared for the fire. It was not enough to simply throw the whole carcass into the fire. It needed to be washed and cut according to the LORD’s specific instructions. He alone knows how peace and atonement can be made. The fire represents the boundary between heaven and earth, between the Holy God and sinful humanity.

Verse 9 There is hostility between the Living God and sinful humanity. As the animal is burned by the fire, so it was as if the grievance caused by sin is soothed. The fire of God’s anger is satisfied. We might think our sin is a
small problem, but anything that offends the Infinite God who made us is very, very serious. His love of goodness and truth means He wants to destroy the sinful world, yet His love of the world means that He finds another way to be soothed.
Study 2 Bible Answers

Verse 11  The laws are addressed to the priests telling them the practical details about making these offerings. The earlier regulations were addressed to the people who were bringing the offerings.

Verse 12, 16  The three fellowship offerings were thanksgiving, vow or freewill. In other words, one to thank the LORD God for what He has done or given, one to emphasise or conclude a special commitment made to our LORD and one simply to express our love for Him, our desire for fellowship with Him.

Verses 12-13  The offered animal, yeast-free bread with oil, yeast-free wafers with oil, cakes with oil and bread with yeast.

Verses 12-13  Yeast symbolises staying in Egypt, staying in the world. Yeast-free bread is all to do with leaving the world behind. The fellowship offering has some yeast in it because it also looks forward to the time when we arrive at our eternal home and never need to leave again. Oil symbolises the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 14-15  The fellowship offering is a time of ‘table fellowship’ with the Living God. It shows that after atonement is made the Living God can eat with His people in a shared meal.

Verses 14-15  For those whose sins are atoned for by the blood of the Lamb, the fellowship of the Spirit can be enjoyed right now as we are waiting for our eternal home.

Verses 16-18  The meat could be eaten on the day after the sacrifice. Thus the time of fellowship is extended for a two day period.

Verses 19-21  The clean/common is in the middle between the holy and the unclean. The holy and unclean are so far apart that they cannot live together. They have to be destroyed when they touch.
| Verse 1 & 5 | Approaching the Living God is not a human invention. We know nothing of the ways and standards of the Ineffable God. He alone can tell what kind of priest may serve Him. |
| Verses 2-4 | The priests represented the whole community. This was not a private job or hobby. The priests had to be identified with all the people. |
| Verse 6 | The priests had to leave behind their private identity to represent the whole community. They had to wash away their own private life to begin a new life as a priest. This is what Jesus Himself did when He officially began His priestly work. |
| Verses 7-9 | Tunic, sash, robe, ephod, breastpiece, turban and gold plate. |
| Verse 7 | Exodus 28:5 – “Make them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.” Imagine how these clothes would have looked. Aaron had to be dressed by Moses to show that the priest was chosen and appointed by the LORD God. |
| Verse 8 | The breastpiece was made of gold with 12 precious stones, each engraved with one of the tribes of Israel. This again shows that the priest represented the people, carrying them over His heart. |
| Verse 8 | These two stones were used to get guidance from the LORD. |
| Verse 9 | “Holy to the LORD”. The priest was utterly dedicated to the work of the Living God. |
| Verses 10-12 | More than any other job in Israel, the priest needed the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Later there would be kings and prophets who also were anointed with oil, but the priests were covered in oil. The ‘Messiah’ is ‘the Anointed One’, meaning the One who has the Spirit without limit. Jesus the Messiah is filled... |
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with the Spirit without limit to be the Great High Priest of all creation.

Verses 1-13 Jesus represents us and is utterly dedicated to that work. He carries our names into the presence of the Father in heaven. The Spirit enables Him to do all His work to perfection. He knows all the decisions of the LORD God.
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Verses 14-18  Blood shows the need for atonement and oil shows the need for the Spirit’s power. The work of the Son and the Spirit combine to redeem the world. The head stands for what we think, the ear lobe for what we hear, the thumb for what we do and the big toe for where we go. All these areas need atonement and new life.

Verses 1-20  The whole world can be healed only when the blood of Jesus is applied to it in the power of the Spirit.
| Verse 1 | Nadab and Abihu had offered something that the **LORD** had not authorised them to do. Perhaps they thought that they could take the initiative and come up with their own offering. However, we know nothing about the Living God other than what He tells us and we dare not invent ways to approach Him. If we get ‘religion’ wrong then we perish. |
| Verse 2 | Book by Book Exodus has a detailed description of all the different parts of the tabernacle. The Most Holy Place represented heaven. The Most Holy Place and the Courtyard represented the church and the earth. The Ark of the Covenant represented the throne of the Father in heaven, surrounded by angels. |
| Verse 2 | The pillar of cloud/fire was like a giant sign indicating the presence of the Angel of the **LORD** on earth. |
| Verse 3-4 | It was almost as if everything began again on the Day of Atonement – a spiritual ‘spring clean’. The high priest wore only simple priestly clothes and needed a new, clear vision of what he was doing. |
| Verse 5 | The two goats represented the whole community, so they had to be taken from within the community. They could not be imported from other nations or found wandering in the wild. |
| Verse 6 | The high priest has to make atonement for his own sin, whereas Jesus had no sin. |
| Verses 7-8 | Perhaps the goat that was driven away into the wilderness, covered in sin, represented the way that the devil and all evil will be driven out of the creation at the return of Jesus. |
| Verses 9-10 | It seems right that the goat that makes atonement for all the people is the goat that represents the **LORD** Himself. It was the **LORD** Himself who died on Calvary to make atonement for the world. Only the blood of God can make true and universal atonement. |
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Verse 15  Above the lid, the LORD sat enthroned between the cherubim. Under the lid was the summary of the Law, the Ten Commandments. The lid itself stood between the judgement of the Law and the Holiness of the Living God. At that place, the blood of atonement was placed and peace could be achieved.

Verse 16  The whole tabernacle was atoned for, including the Most Holy Place. Thus, in a symbolic way, the heavens and the earth were atoned for. Preparation was made for a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Verse 17  Jesus has gone into heaven and we are now waiting for Him to come out to apply His atonement to the whole heavens and earth.
Study 6 Bible Answers

Verse 26 The life of the creature is in the blood. When blood is poured out, it is a symbol of death. To eat/drink the blood of a creature is to take advantage of its death. We can only take advantage of the blood/death of Jesus and we must never try to take the blood of any other creature into our own life.

Verse 26 Our deepest problem is the dark desire to be god, to put ourselves completely at the centre. Sorcery and divination come from the desire to act like god.

Verses 27-28 It seems that these hairstyles reflected pagan lifestyles and values. The same seems to be true of the tattoos. In our modern cultures there may be hairstyles and body art that also reflect pagan values. The same is certainly true of clothing and possessions.

Verse 29 The assumption is that men coerce women into prostitution. It isn’t the prostitutes that need to be arrested but the men who use them and ‘manage’ them. If a society abuses women in this way, then the very land itself is cursed.

Verse 30 When people no longer think that it is worth spending one day a week enjoying the fellowship of the Lord and His people, then it is a clear sign that they no longer revere the Lord Himself or His dwelling.

Verse 31 Touching dead bodies caused a person to be unclean. The same is true of contacting dead spirits. This action defiles the spirit.

Verse 32 In the Bible there is great respect for older people. Proverbs 16:31 – “Grey hair is a crown of splendour; it is attained by a righteous life.” Proverbs 20:29 – “The glory of young men is their strength, grey hair the splendour of the old.” In Daniel’s vision of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9), the Father is also shown with white hair. The elderly are figures of wisdom, respect and authority. When they are disregarded, it is a clear sign that the Living God is also disregarded.
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Standing between the Infinite, Holy God and sinful humanity was a frightening and all-consuming duty. Mistakes brought death and possibly curses on the whole community. This could never be done as a part-time hobby. The priest had to abandon all other interests than the Living God and His gospel.

There is no death in the life of the Living God. Death exists only in a world alienated from Him. Those that represented Him had to also be kept clear from the touch of death.

Again, the priests needed to represent the deathless life of the Living God. When people met the priest they should not see a man marked by signs of death. The worshipper needed to know that death would be overcome by the Great High Priest, the Promised Messiah.

In the context, the priests had to be completely identified with the Lord God and show no signs of pagan religion. The priest who had divided loyalties would profane the name of the Lord. The fire shows the extreme seriousness of the priests’ work. Anything less than total dedication would not be tolerated. Nadab and Abihu were consumed by that fire when they profaned the Lord through their carelessness.

The priest was to be a presentation of Jesus, the Great High Priest. The Church is to be presented to Jesus as a pure virgin at the marriage feast of the Lamb. Therefore, the priest needed to enact that same pattern.

In the fellowship meal, the priests would eat the meat together with the worshippers. It was as if a meal was shared with the Lord God Himself. The meat was labelled as ‘the food of your God’ so that this sense of the fellowship meal could be deepened, but also to ensure that it was treated as deeply holy. If a person
could be defiled by eating unclean food, they how intensely important it would be not to defile the LORD’s food or fellowship meal!

Verse 9  Sexual immorality has a deeper impact than other sins because it unites us with another person. The priest and his family were to be a picture of the Messiah and His Bride, the Church. The priest’s daughter was a key part of that picture. Just as the priest could also be consumed by the fire if he profaned the LORD, so even his family were held to account.

Verses 1-15  Jesus, our Perfect, Divine High Priest is pure, dedicated, single-minded and sinless. He is everything that is needed to perform this supremely demanding work.
Study 8 Bible Answers

Verses 9-10 The Promised Land was a free gift from the LORD. They did not earn it or win it by their own military skill. Everything they ever received from that land needed to be acknowledged as a generous gift from their Provider. The same is, of course, true of the whole world.

Verse 11 In the Bible, eight is the number of the new creation. It represents the first day of a new week. To hold up the first fruits on that day is to be grateful for what the LORD has given but also to hope for the full harvest of the new creation.

Verses 12-13 Without atonement we would all be thrown out of the LORD God’s wonderful creation.

Verse 14 The first priority was to acknowledge that everything comes from the hand of the Living God. In the same way, we give thanks for our food before every meal we eat.

Verses 9-14 Some Christians wait until the beginning of their financial year and then give at least 10% of their income to the LORD God by giving the money to their local church or to aspects of world need.

Verses 15-16 The theme of eight is written deep into this feast. It was held on the crowning “eighth day” after a set of seven Sabbaths. It was a profound celebration of the New Creation, the full harvest. This is why the Holy Spirit was poured out on all flesh on this feast day. The centre of the New Creation is the LORD God living among His people in a renewed creation.

Verse 17 The feast was celebrating the fact that our hope is not to leave the creation but to remain in the creation forever and ever. The eating of yeast showed that on that Day we will have endless ages to wait for dough to rise – if that’s what we want to do!

Verse 18 Seven perfect male lambs, one young bull, two rams, grain offerings and wine. It was a sign of the generous
harvest. The LORD had provided plenty so the thankful offering was also to be plentiful.

Verse 19-21 The heart of our New Creation hope is to share the marriage feast of the Lamb in the full harvest of the renewed earth. Every day we yearn for table fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When the priests representing the LORD ate with the people it was a sample of that glorious Day.

Verse 22 If we store up our money and possessions for our own security and comfort then we show that we don’t really believe in a New Creation future. It indicates that we are trying to build Eden in this passing age.
### Study 9  Bible Answers

**Verse 8**  Once again we find the “eighth day”. The Jubilee Year was the year after seven sets of seven years. It was the “eighth” year in this symbolic way. The pattern of the New Creation is deep in the Jubilee Year. See Bible Study 8 for more on the importance of the “eighth day”.

**Verse 9**  The sound of the trumpet was associated with the victory and presence of the **Lord** God on the Final Day. To hear the trumpet blast would take the minds of the ancient saints to the Day when the Divine Messiah would come in triumph to judge the wicked and bring in the endless age of resurrection life.

**Verse 10**  The experience of setting people free and returning property would have been a great proclamation of liberty. However, these actions would surely have been assisted with words that reminded everybody of the great Christian hope of the New Creation.

**Verses 11-12**  The **Lord** of Creation caused the land to provide food without any sweat, allowing His people to experience the land as it would have been before the curse of Genesis 3:17-18. This is how we will live on the renewed earth when Jesus returns.

**Verse 13**  In this passing age all kinds of experiences, sins and mistakes can impoverish us. In the Year of Jubilee the people experienced a new start, a restoration of their inheritance.

**Verses 14-17**  All property deals were only temporary. Property could only be 'borrowed' until the next Jubilee year. We should remember that all property deals are only temporary. We cannot build a permanent home in this passing age.

**Verses 18-19**  The fruitfulness of the land depended on the faithfulness of the people. So many of the modern ecological problems arise because of our wasteful, careless and selfish lifestyles.
Verses 20-22 They needed to depend completely on the faithfulness of the LORD God. If He did not provide the extra provision then they would starve. It would have been a wonderful time of stepping out in simple trust. They had to put their lives into His hands.

Verses 23-24 The ancient church understood that the land belonged to the LORD God and we are only ever tenant farmers or lodgers. We are only briefly allowed to use His land. We will be buried in His land when we die. When we try to hoard up more than our fair share of His land and wealth, then we are betraying the character and values of the Divine Landowner. What will we say to Him when He asks us what we did with the resources He lent to us?
Study 10 Bible Answers

Introduction The things/people that were holy: the priests; the sacrificed animals; the Tent of Meeting; the altar; the ark of the covenant; the table and bread of the Presence; the golden lampstand; the LORD God enthroned between the cherubim.

The ordinary Israelite seemed to be completely cut off from the list of holy things. If it was so dangerous for even the holy people to come near to the Holy God, then how could a clean/common person ever do that? The Holy LORD lived near to them... and yet His Holiness could make them feel that He was far away and beyond reach.

Verses 1-2 A person could make a special vow to be utterly dedicated to the LORD God. We see the specific details of this in Numbers 6.

Verses 2-7 Such special vows needed to be taken very seriously. A person couldn’t just take the vow and then casually abandon it. When we read the rules of Numbers 6 we see the kind of lifestyle that the holy person needed to live. We can understand why this would be very hard to do for a long time.

Verse 8 Entering into the experience of being part of ‘the holy’ could not be reserved only for the wealthy. The poor had to be able to do this just as much.

Verses 9-13 Perhaps dedicating the animal to the LORD meant that it was reserved to be sacrificed on a particular day. Again, the financial cost was used as a way of ensuring that such vows of dedication were not done carelessly. If a £500 animal was dedicated to the LORD and it cost £600 to ‘redeem’ it from the vow, then nobody would make the vow without serious thought.

Verses 14-15 Perhaps the house would be dedicated for a special kind of social care or work. However, it might simply be that the family wanted to bring their whole life under
dedication to the Living God. Such a house would have to be full of goodness, truth, love, mercy and generosity.

Verses 1-15 Only the LORD God can make a person holy. When a person trusts in the LORD Messiah, then they are dedicating themselves to Him – to obey Him in everything, to give everything they have to His service. The Living God makes such a person ‘holy’, giving them the title of ‘saint’. A ‘saint’ is not a special category of Christian, but the basic description of everyone who trusts and loves Jesus.

It is good for us consciously and deliberately to dedicate our lives and possessions to Jesus.
Leviticus
Leviticus begins with the people of Israel, with Moses their leader, standing around the newly completed tabernacle, overwhelmed with the glory of the Angel of the LORD. Then the Angel of the LORD called to Moses from within the tent. The first word of Leviticus in Hebrew is Wayyiqra – “and He called” and it shows how this book follows right on from the last chapter of the preceding book, Exodus.

Leviticus means ‘concerning the Levites’ and as the work of the ancient Levites is explained so the prophesied work of the Great and Divine High Priest is being explained.

The Bible will take you through the history of the universe from beginning to end but it can also speak clearly to you about your life: Why are you here? How should you live? These Study Guides are intended to help you read and understand the Bible. They are written with enough depth to satisfy the mature Christian but accessible for someone who is new to the Bible.

In the Book by Book Study Guides and accompanying DVD, we want to help you experience the joy of meeting Jesus in all the Scriptures. The first books in the Bible come from over 1500 years before the birth of Jesus, yet you will discover His birth, life, death and resurrection prophesied there. Jesus himself said that the whole Bible was about him (John 5:39).