EDIFIED EDITION

Leviticus

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

27	859	Old	3
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

> *Leviticus 1 begins the LORD's instructions from the tent of meeting with the burnt offering, the offering burnt whole on the altar. A worshipper may bring an unblemished male from the herd or the flock, lay his hand on its head so that it is accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him, and slaughter it before the LORD; the priests throw its blood against the altar and burn all of it as a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD. A poor worshipper may bring a dove or a young pigeon, which the priest offers in the same way.*

[1] From the tent of meeting the LORD called Moses and spoke to him:

[2] "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When any of you brings an offering[1] to the LORD, you are to bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

3 If his offering is a burnt offering[2] from the herd,
he is to offer a male without defect.
He is to bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting,
so that he may be accepted before the LORD.
4 He is to press his hand on the animal's head,
and it will be accepted in his place to make atonement for him.
5 Then he is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD,
and Aaron's sons the priests are to present the blood
and throw it against all sides of the altar
that stands at the entrance of the tent of meeting.
6 He is to skin the burnt offering
and cut it into its pieces,
7 and the sons of Aaron the priest are to kindle a fire on the altar
and stack wood on it.
8 Then Aaron's sons the priests are to arrange the pieces,
with the head and the fat,
on the burning wood on the altar.
9 Its entrails and its legs he is to wash with water,
and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar as a burnt offering,
a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.
10 If his offering for a burnt offering is from the flock,
from the sheep or the goats,
he is to offer a male without defect.
11 He is to slaughter it on the north side of the altar before the LORD,
and Aaron's sons the priests are to throw its blood against all sides of the altar.
12 He is to cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat,
and the priest is to arrange them on the burning wood on the altar.
13 The entrails and the legs he is to wash with water,
and the priest is to offer all of it and burn it on the altar.
It is a burnt offering, a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.
14 If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds,
he is to bring turtledoves or young pigeons as his offering.
15 The priest is to take it to the altar,
wring its head off and burn it there,
after its blood has been drained out against the altar's side.
16 He is to remove its crop with its contents[3] and throw it beside the altar on the east side,
in the place for the ashes.
17 He is to tear it open by the wings, but not right through,
and the priest is to burn it on the altar over the burning wood.
It is a burnt offering, a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

1 Hebrew: קָרְבָּן (qorban), 'something brought near'. Compare Mark 7:11.

2 Hebrew: עֹלָה (olah), 'what goes up': the whole animal goes up in smoke to the LORD.

3 Or 'with its feathers'.

Chapter 2

Leviticus 2 gives the rules for the grain offering. It may be brought as fine flour with oil and frankincense, or baked in an oven, cooked on a griddle or in a pan, always without yeast or honey and always seasoned with salt, "the salt of the covenant of your God". The priest burns a handful of it on the altar as a memorial portion, a fire offering and a soothing aroma to the LORD, and the rest is most holy and belongs to Aaron and his sons. An offering of first fruits may be brought as roasted heads of new grain.

1 When anyone brings a grain offering[1] as an offering to the LORD,
his offering is to be of fine flour.
He is to pour oil on it and put frankincense on it,
2 and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests.
The priest is to take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil,
with all its frankincense, and burn this on the altar as its memorial portion,[2]
a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.
3 What is left of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons;
it is a most holy part of the LORD's fire offerings.
4 When you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in an oven,
it is to be of fine flour:
unleavened cakes mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil.
5 If your offering is a grain offering made on a griddle,
it is to be of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened.
6 Break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.
7 If your offering is a grain offering made in a pan,
it is to be made of fine flour with oil.

8 You are to bring to the LORD the grain offering made in any of these ways. It is to be presented to the priest, and he is to bring it to the altar.

9 The priest is to lift out of the grain offering its memorial portion and burn it on the altar, a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

10 What is left of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's fire offerings.

11 No grain offering that you bring to the LORD is to be made with yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or any honey as a fire offering to the LORD.

12 You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of first fruits, but they are not to go up on the altar as a soothing aroma.

13 Every grain offering of yours you are to season with salt. You are not to leave out the salt of the covenant of your God from your grain offering; with all your offerings you are to offer salt.[3]

14 If you bring a grain offering of first fruits to the LORD, you are to bring as the grain offering of your first fruits fresh ears, roasted in the fire, crushed new grain.

15 You are to put oil on it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering.

16 And the priest is to burn its memorial portion, some of its crushed grain and its oil, with all its frankincense, as a fire offering to the LORD.

1 Hebrew: מִנְחָה (minchah), 'gift' or 'tribute'.

2 Hebrew: אַזְכָּרָה (azkarah), from זָכַר (zachar), 'remember': the part that calls the worshipper to the LORD's remembrance.

3 Salt, which preserves, was eaten when a covenant was made, a sign that it would last (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5). Compare Mark 9:49–50.

Chapter 3

Leviticus 3 gives the rules for the peace offering, the sacrifice shared between the LORD, the priests and the worshipper. It may be a male or female animal without defect from the herd, or a lamb or a goat from the flock; the worshipper lays his hand on its head and slaughters it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and the priests throw its blood against the altar. The fat covering the entrails, the kidneys, the lobe of the liver and, for a sheep, the fat tail are burnt on the altar as the LORD's food, a soothing aroma. All the fat belongs to the LORD, and Israel is never to eat fat or blood.

1 If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering,[1] and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to offer one without defect before the LORD.

2 He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests are to throw the blood against all sides of the altar.

3 From the sacrifice of peace offering he is to present as a fire offering to the LORD the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails,

4 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which he is to remove with the kidneys.

5 Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that lies on the burning wood, a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

6 If his offering as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD is from the flock, male or female, he is to offer one without defect.

7 If he offers a lamb for his offering, he is to present it before the LORD,

8 lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons are to throw its blood against all sides of the altar.

9 From the sacrifice of peace offering he is to present as a fire offering to the LORD its fat: the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails,

10 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which he is to remove with the kidneys.

11 And the priest is to burn it on the altar as food, a fire offering to the LORD.[2]

12 If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before the LORD,

13 lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons are to

throw its blood against all sides of the altar.

14 From it he is to present his offering as a fire
offering to the LORD: the fat that covers the
entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails,

15 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the
loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which he is to
remove with the kidneys.

16 And the priest is to burn them on the altar as
food, a fire offering for a soothing aroma. All the
fat is the LORD's.

17 It is a statute for ever throughout your
generations, wherever you live: you are not to eat
any fat or any blood."

1 Hebrew: שְׁלָמִים (shelamim), from שָׁלוֹם (shalom), peace and well-being. Part was burnt, part given to the priest, and the rest eaten by the worshipper and his household (7:11–21).

2 Hebrew 'bread', the ordinary word for food. The offering is a meal given to God, not because He needs it (Psalm 50:12–13).

Chapter 4

Leviticus 4 gives the rules for the sin offering, made when someone sins by mistake against one of the LORD's commands. If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, or if the whole community sins without realising it, a young bull is offered; its blood is sprinkled seven times before the veil and put on the horns of the altar of incense, its fat is burnt on the altar, and the rest of it is burnt outside the camp. If a leader sins, he brings a male goat, and if one of the ordinary people sins, a female goat or lamb; its blood is put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. In each case the priest makes atonement, and the sin is forgiven.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say: When anyone
sins by mistake[1] against any of the LORD's
commands about things not to be done, and does
one of them:

3 If it is the anointed priest who sins, so bringing
guilt on the people, he is to offer for the sin he has
committed a young bull without defect to the
LORD as a sin offering.[2]

4 He is to bring the bull to the entrance of the tent
of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the
bull's head and slaughter the bull before the
LORD.

5 Then the anointed priest is to take some of the
bull's blood and bring it into the tent of meeting.

6 Dipping his finger in the blood, the priest is to
sprinkle it seven times before the LORD towards
the veil of the sanctuary.

7 The priest is to put some of the blood on the
horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the
LORD in the tent of meeting, and all the rest of
the bull's blood he is to pour out at the base of the
altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tent
of meeting.

8 All the fat of the bull of the sin offering he is to
take from it: the fat that covers the entrails and all
the fat that is on the entrails,

9 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins,
and the long lobe of the liver, which he is to
remove with the kidneys,

10 just as these are taken from the ox of the
sacrifice of peace offering, and the priest is to
burn them on the altar of burnt offering.

11 But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head,
its legs, its entrails and its dung,

12 the whole of what remains, he is to take out of
the camp to a ritually clean place, the ash heap,
and burn it there in a wood fire. It is to be burnt
on the ash heap.[3]

13 If the whole community of Israel goes astray,
and the matter is hidden from the eyes of the
assembly, and they do one of the things the LORD
has commanded not to be done, and so become
guilty,

14 when the sin they have committed becomes
known, the assembly is to offer a young bull as a
sin offering and bring it before the tent of
meeting.

15 The elders of the community are to lay their
hands on the bull's head before the LORD, and the
bull is to be slaughtered before the LORD.

16 Then the anointed priest is to bring some of the
bull's blood into the tent of meeting,

17 dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven
times before the LORD, in front of the veil.

18 He is to put some of the blood on the horns of
the altar that is before the LORD in the tent of
meeting, and all the rest of the blood he is to pour

out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

19 He is to remove every part of its fat and burn it on the altar.

20 He is to do with this bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; so he is to do with it. And the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.

21 Then the bull is to be taken outside the camp and burnt in the same way as the first one. This is the assembly's sin offering.

22 When a leader sins, and by mistake does one of the things the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, and so becomes guilty,

23 or when the sin he has committed is made known to him, he is to bring as his offering a male goat without defect.

24 He is to lay his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering.

25 With his finger the priest is to dab some of the sin offering's blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; the remainder he is to pour out at that altar's base.

26 All its fat he is to burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offering. So the priest will make atonement for him for his sin, and he will be forgiven.

27 If any one of the ordinary people[4] sins by mistake, doing one of the things the LORD has commanded not to be done, and so becomes guilty,

28 or when the sin he has committed is made known to him, he is to bring as his offering for the sin he has committed a female goat without defect.

29 Laying his hand on its head, he is to slaughter the sin offering where the burnt offerings are slaughtered.

30 The priest is to dab some of its blood with his finger on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest at the foot of the altar.

31 All its fat he is to remove, as the fat is removed from the sacrifice of peace offering, and the priest is to burn it on the altar as a soothing aroma to the LORD. So the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

32 If a lamb is what he brings for his sin offering, it must be a female with no defect.

33 He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it as a sin offering in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered.

34 Again the priest is to dab some of the blood with his finger on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all that is left at its foot.

35 All its fat he is to remove, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offering, and the priest is to burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD's fire offerings. So the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

1 Hebrew: בִּשְׁגָגָה (bishgagah), 'in error', by mistake or without knowing. Sin done 'with a high hand', in defiance, had no sacrifice (Numbers 15:27–31).

2 Hebrew: חַטָּאת (chatta't), the same word as 'sin'. The offering removes the defilement that sin brings on the sanctuary and on the sinner.

3 Compare Hebrews 13:11–12.

4 Hebrew 'of the people of the land'.

Chapter 5

Leviticus 5 completes the laws of the sin offering and begins those of the guilt offering. Anyone who keeps silent when called to testify, touches something unclean without realising it, or makes a rash oath is to confess his sin and bring a female lamb or goat; one who cannot afford it may bring two doves or two young pigeons, and one who cannot afford those, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, so that even the poorest can be forgiven. Then the LORD gives the guilt offering, a ram without defect, for anyone who unintentionally wrongs the LORD's holy things, or does what is forbidden without knowing it; he is also to make good what he has taken and add a fifth to it.

1 If anyone sins in that he hears a public call to testify[1] and, though he is a witness, having seen or come to know the matter, he does not speak up, he will bear his guilt.

2 Or if anyone touches something unclean, whether
the carcass of an unclean wild animal, of unclean
livestock or of an unclean creature that swarms,
and he is unaware of it, he has become unclean
and is guilty.

3 Or if he touches human uncleanness, any kind of
uncleanness by which one becomes unclean, and
he is unaware of it, when he comes to know of it
he is guilty.

4 Or if anyone rashly swears an oath with his lips
to do harm or to do good, in any matter in which
people swear rashly, and he is unaware of it, when
he comes to know of it he is guilty in any of these.

5 When he becomes guilty in any of these, he is to
confess the sin he has committed,

6 and he is to bring to the LORD as his penalty[2] for
the sin he has committed a female from the flock,
a lamb or a goat, as a sin offering, and the priest
will make atonement for him for his sin.

7 But if he cannot afford a lamb, he is to bring to
the LORD as his penalty for his sin two
turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin
offering and the other for a burnt offering.[3]

8 He is to bring them to the priest, who is to offer
first the one for the sin offering. He is to wring its
head at the back of its neck without severing it,

9 Some of its blood he is to sprinkle against the
side of the altar, and what remains is to be
drained out at the altar's foot. This is a sin
offering.

10 The second he is to offer as a burnt offering
according to the rule, and the priest will make
atonement for him for the sin he has committed,
and he will be forgiven.

11 If he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young
pigeons, he is to bring as his offering for the sin
he has committed a tenth of an ephah[4] of fine flour
as a sin offering. He is to put no oil on it and no
frankincense, for it is a sin offering.

12 He is to bring it to the priest, and the priest is to
take a handful of it as its memorial portion and
burn it on the altar on top of the LORD's fire
offerings. It is a sin offering.

13 So the priest will make atonement for him for
the sin he has committed in any of these things,
and he will be forgiven. The rest is to belong to
the priest, like the grain offering."

14 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

15 "If anyone acts unfaithfully and sins by mistake
in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he is to
bring to the LORD as his guilt offering a ram
without defect from the flock, valued in silver
shekels by the sanctuary shekel, as a guilt
offering.

16 He is to make restitution for the wrong he has
done in regard to the holy thing, and add a fifth to
it and give it to the priest. The priest will make
atonement for him with the ram of the guilt
offering, and he will be forgiven.

17 If anyone sins and does any of the things the
LORD has commanded not to be done, though he
did not know it, he is guilty and will bear his guilt.

18 He is to bring to the priest a ram without defect
from the flock, at its value, as a guilt offering, and
the priest will make atonement for him for the
error he committed unknowingly, and he will be
forgiven.

19 It is a guilt offering; he was certainly guilty
before the LORD."

1 Hebrew 'hears the voice of a curse': a solemn charge, with a curse on any witness who keeps silent (Judges 17:2; Proverbs 29:24).

2 Hebrew: אָשָׁם (asham), here 'the penalty for guilt'; in verses 15–19 it is the guilt offering.

3 This was the offering of Joseph and Mary for Jesus (Luke 2:24; Leviticus 12:8).

4 About 2 litres, the daily ration of manna (Exodus 16:16, 36).

Chapter 6

Leviticus 6 first deals with wrongs done to a neighbour: anyone who cheats another over a deposit or a pledge, robs or defrauds him, or lies about something lost and swears falsely, is to restore it in full with a fifth added and bring a ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven. Then come instructions for the priests. The fire on the altar is to be kept burning and never go out, and the priest is to clear its ashes in linen garments. The rest of the grain offering is to be eaten by the priests in the courtyard without yeast, but the grain offering made at a priest's anointing is to be burnt whole. The flesh of the sin offering is most holy and is to be eaten by the priests in a holy place, unless its blood was brought into the tent to make atonement.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,[1]

2 “If anyone sins and acts unfaithfully against the
LORD by deceiving his neighbour about
something entrusted to him or left as a pledge, or
by robbery, or if he has extorted from his
neighbour,

3 or has found something lost and lied about it,
swearing falsely about any of the things people do
that are sinful,

4 then when he has sinned and is guilty, he must
give back what he took by robbery or what he
obtained by extortion, or the deposit that was
entrusted to him, or the lost thing he found,

5 or anything about which he swore falsely. He is to
repay it in full and add a fifth to it, and give it to
the one it belongs to on the day he is found guilty.[2]

6 And he is to bring to the priest as his guilt
offering to the LORD a ram without defect from
the flock, at its value, as a guilt offering.

7 So the priest will make atonement for him before
the LORD, and he will be forgiven for whatever he
did that made him guilty.”

8 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

9 “Give Aaron and his sons this instruction for the
burnt offering: it is to remain on the hearth of the
altar through the night until morning, with the
altar fire kept alight.

10 The priest is to put on his linen robe, with linen
undergarments next to his body, and he is to take
up the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has
consumed on the altar and put them beside the
altar.

11 Then he is to change out of those garments into
others and take the ashes out of the camp to a
ritually clean place.

12 The fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it;
it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to
burn wood on it, lay out the burnt offering on it
and burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.

13 Fire is to be kept burning on the altar
continually; it must not go out.

14 This is the law of the grain offering. Aaron’s
sons are to offer it before the LORD in front of the
altar.

15 One of them is to take a handful of the fine flour
of the grain offering and its oil, with all the
frankincense that is on the grain offering, and
burn this memorial portion on the altar as a
soothing aroma to the LORD.

16 Aaron and his sons are to eat what is left of it. It
is to be eaten unleavened in a holy place; they are
to eat it in the courtyard of the tent of meeting.

17 It is not to be baked with yeast. I have given it
as their share of My fire offerings; it is most holy,
like the sin offering and the guilt offering.

18 Every male among the descendants of Aaron
may eat it, as a lasting due throughout your
generations from the LORD’s fire offerings.
Whatever touches them will become holy.”

19 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

20 “This is the offering that Aaron and his sons are
to present to the LORD on the day he is anointed:
a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain
offering, half of it in the morning and half in the
evening.

21 It is to be made with oil on a griddle; bring it
well mixed, and offer it in baked pieces[3] as a grain
offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

22 The priest from among his sons who is anointed
to succeed him is to prepare it. By a statute for
ever, it is to be burnt whole for the LORD.

23 Every grain offering of a priest is to be burnt
whole; it is not to be eaten.”

24 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

25 “Tell Aaron and his sons the instruction for the
sin offering. It is most holy, and it is to be
slaughtered before the LORD on the spot where
the burnt offering is slaughtered.

26 The priest who offers it is to eat it, in a holy
place: the courtyard of the tent of meeting.

27 Whatever touches its flesh will become holy, and
if any of its blood is spattered on a garment, you
are to wash what was spattered in a holy place.

28 The clay pot in which it is boiled must be
broken, but if it is boiled in a bronze pot, that is to
be scoured and rinsed with water.

29 Any male of a priestly family may eat of it, for it
is most holy.

30 But if any of a sin offering’s blood has been
taken into the tent of meeting to make atonement
in the Holy Place, it must not be eaten; it is to be
burnt up.

1 In Hebrew, 6:1–7 are 5:20–26, and 6:8–30 are 6:1–23.

2 Compare Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8.

3 The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

Chapter 7

Leviticus 7 completes the instructions for the priests about the offerings. The guilt offering, like the sin offering, is most holy and belongs to the priest who makes atonement with it, and the priest also keeps the hide of a burnt offering and the grain offerings he presents. A peace offering may be brought as a thanksgiving, with cakes of bread, or for a vow or as a freewill offering; its meat must be eaten within one or two days, and no one who is unclean may eat it. Israel is not to eat the fat of cattle, sheep or goats, or any blood. From every peace offering the breast is waved before the LORD for the priests and the right thigh is given to the priest who offers it, their lasting share. The chapter closes by summing up the laws given at Sinai.

1 Here is the instruction for the guilt offering,
which is most holy.
2 The guilt offering is to be slaughtered in the
place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and
its blood is to be thrown against all sides of the
altar.
3 All its fat is to be offered: the fat tail, the fat that
covers the entrails,
4 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins,
and the long lobe of the liver, which is to be
removed with the kidneys.
5 The priest is to burn them on the altar as a fire
offering to the LORD; it is a guilt offering.
6 Any male of a priestly family may eat it, in a holy
place, for it is most holy.
7 The guilt offering is like the sin offering: there is
one law for them both. It belongs to the priest who
makes atonement with it.
8 The priest who offers anyone's burnt offering
may keep for himself the hide of the burnt offering
he has offered.
9 Every grain offering baked in an oven, and all
that is prepared in a pan or on a griddle, belongs
to the priest who offers it,
10 and every grain offering, whether mixed with oil
or dry, belongs to all the sons of Aaron, to each as
much as to another.
11 This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offering
that anyone may offer to the LORD.
12 If he offers it as a thanksgiving, then with the
sacrifice of thanksgiving he is to offer unleavened
cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread
with oil, and cakes of fine flour well mixed with
oil.
13 With his sacrifice of peace offering for
thanksgiving he is to bring his offering with cakes
of leavened bread.
14 From each offering he is to present one as a
contribution to the LORD; it is to belong to the
priest who throws the blood of the peace offering.
15 The meat of his sacrifice of peace offering for
thanksgiving is to be eaten on the day it is offered;
none of it is to be left until morning.
16 But if the sacrifice he offers is for a vow or is a
freewill offering, it is to be eaten on the day he
offers his sacrifice, and what is left of it may be
eaten the next day.
17 Whatever is still left of the meat of the sacrifice
on the third day is to be burnt in the fire.
18 If any of the meat of his sacrifice of peace
offering is eaten on the third day, the one who
offered it will not be accepted, and it will not be
credited to him. It is a foul thing,[1] and whoever
eats of it will bear his guilt.
19 Meat that touches anything unclean is not to be
eaten; it is to be burnt in the fire. As for other
meat, anyone who is clean may eat it.
20 But anyone who eats the meat of a sacrifice of
peace offering belonging to the LORD while he is
unclean, that person will be cut off from his
people.[2]
21 And if anyone touches anything unclean,
whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal
or any unclean detestable thing, and then eats
some of the meat of a sacrifice of peace offering
belonging to the LORD, that person will be cut off
from his people."
22 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
23 "Speak to the Israelites and say: You are not to
eat any fat of an ox, a sheep or a goat.
24 The fat of an animal that has died, or of one torn
by wild animals, may be used for any other

purpose, but you must certainly not eat it.

25 For whoever eats the fat of an animal from which a fire offering may be presented to the LORD, the person who eats it will be cut off from his people.

26 And you are not to eat any blood, whether of bird or of animal, wherever you live.

27 Whoever eats any blood, that person will be cut off from his people."

28 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

29 "Speak to the Israelites and say: Whoever offers his sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD is to bring his offering to the LORD from his sacrifice of peace offering.

30 With his own hands he is to bring the LORD's fire offerings; he is to bring the fat with the breast, and the breast is to be waved as a wave offering before the LORD.

31 The priest is to burn the fat on the altar, but the breast is to belong to Aaron and his sons.

32 The right thigh you are to give to the priest as a contribution from your sacrifices of peace offering.

33 Whichever of Aaron's sons offers the blood and the fat of the peace offering is to have the right thigh as his portion.

34 For I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed from the Israelites, out of their sacrifices of peace offering, and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as a lasting due from the Israelites."

35 This is the portion of Aaron and the portion of his sons from the LORD's fire offerings, from the day they were presented to serve the LORD as priests,

36 which the LORD commanded to be given them by the Israelites on the day He anointed them, a lasting due throughout their generations.

37 This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offering,

38 which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai on the day He commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.

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1 Hebrew: פִּגּוּל (piggul), meat gone bad and so unfit for God.

2 'Cut off' may mean put to death, sent out of the community, or left for God Himself to punish (20:3–6).

Chapter 8

Leviticus 8 tells how Aaron and his sons are ordained, just as the LORD had commanded in Exodus 29. Before the whole community at the entrance of the tent of meeting, Moses washes them, clothes Aaron in the tunic, robe, ephod, breastpiece with the Urim and Thummim, and turban with the gold plate, and anoints the tabernacle, the altar and Aaron himself. He offers a bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, and then the ram of ordination, putting its blood on the right ear, thumb and big toe of Aaron and his sons and sprinkling them with blood and oil. Aaron and his sons eat the meat and bread at the entrance of the tent and stay there for seven days, as the LORD commanded, and they do everything He said through Moses.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Bring Aaron and his sons, together with the garments and the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket of bread made without yeast,

3 and gather the whole community at the entrance of the tent of meeting."

4 Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the community gathered at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

5 Moses said to the community, "This is what the LORD has commanded to be done."

6 Moses had Aaron and his sons come forward, and he washed them.

7 He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash round him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him; he tied the woven band of the ephod round him and fastened it on him with it.

8 He put the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim.

9 He set the turban on his head, and on the front of the turban he set the gold plate, the holy crown, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10 Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so

consecrated them.

11 He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times,
and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the
basin with its stand, to consecrate them.

12 Then he poured anointing oil over Aaron's head,
anointing him and so making him holy.[1]

13 Then Moses brought Aaron's sons forward,
clothed them in tunics, tied sashes round them
and bound caps on them, as the LORD had
commanded Moses.

14 Next the bull for the sin offering was led
forward, and Aaron and his sons pressed their
hands on its head.

15 It was slaughtered, and Moses took the blood
and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar
all round, and so purified the altar. He poured out
the rest of the blood at the base of the altar and
consecrated it, to make atonement for it.

16 He took all the fat that was on the entrails, the
long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with
their fat, and Moses burned them on the altar.

17 But the bull, its hide, its flesh and its dung, he
burned in the fire outside the camp, as the LORD
had commanded Moses.

18 The ram for the burnt offering was brought next,
and Aaron and his sons pressed their hands on its
head.

19 It was slaughtered, and Moses threw the blood
against all sides of the altar.

20 When the ram had been cut into its pieces,
Moses burned the head, the pieces and the fat.

21 After washing the entrails and legs, Moses
burned the entire ram on the altar. It was a burnt
offering for a soothing aroma, a fire offering to the
LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 Then the second ram, the ram of ordination, was
brought, and Aaron and his sons pressed their
hands on its head.

23 When it had been slaughtered, Moses dabbed
some of its blood on Aaron's right ear lobe, his
right thumb and the big toe of his right foot.[2]

24 Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, and
Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their
right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and
on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses
threw the rest of the blood against all sides of the
altar.

25 He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat that was
on the entrails, the long lobe of the liver, the two
kidneys with their fat, and the right thigh;

26 From the basket of unleavened bread standing
before the LORD he took a cake made without
yeast, a cake of bread made with oil, and a wafer,
and laid them on top of the fat and the right thigh.

27 He put all of these in the hands of Aaron and in
the hands of his sons and waved them as a wave
offering before the LORD.

28 Then Moses took them from their hands and
burned them on the altar on top of the burnt
offering. They were an ordination offering for a
soothing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

29 Moses took the breast and waved it as a wave
offering before the LORD; it was Moses' portion of
the ram of ordination, as the LORD had
commanded Moses.

30 Moses then took some of the anointing oil and
some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled
them over Aaron and his clothes, and over his
sons and their clothes. So he consecrated Aaron
and his garments, and his sons and his sons'
garments with him.

31 And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the
meat at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and
eat it there with the bread that is in the basket of
ordination, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and
his sons are to eat it.'

32 What is left of the meat and the bread you are to
burn in the fire.

33 You are not to go out from the entrance of the
tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of
your ordination are completed, for it will take
seven days to ordain you.[3]

34 What has been done today, the LORD has
commanded to be done, to make atonement for
you.

35 You are to stay at the entrance of the tent of
meeting day and night for seven days, keeping the
LORD's charge, so that you do not die; for this is
what I have been commanded."

36 So Aaron and his sons did everything that the
LORD had commanded through Moses.

1 Compare Psalm 133:2.

2 The ear to hear God, the hand to serve Him, the foot to walk in His ways: the whole person is set apart.

3 Hebrew 'He will fill your hand', the idiom for ordaining (Exodus 28:41).

Chapter 9

Leviticus 9 tells of the eighth day, when Aaron begins his work as priest. Moses tells him to offer a calf as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering for himself, and the people's offerings for them, for today the LORD will appear to them. Aaron offers each sacrifice as the law requires, then lifts his hands towards the people and blesses them. When Moses and Aaron come out of the tent of meeting and bless the people again, the glory of the LORD appears to them all, and fire comes out from before the LORD and consumes the offering on the altar. The people see it, shout for joy and fall on their faces.

1 When the eighth day came, Moses summoned
Aaron, his sons and Israel's elders,
2 and told Aaron, "Choose a bull calf for your sin
offering and a ram for your burnt offering, both
free of defects, and present them before the
LORD.
3 Then tell the Israelites, 'Bring a male goat as a
sin offering, and for a burnt offering a calf and a
lamb, each a year old and without defect,
4 and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to
sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering
mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to
you.'"
5 They brought what Moses had commanded to the
front of the tent of meeting, and the whole
community came near and stood before the LORD.
6 Moses said, "This is what the LORD has
commanded you to do, so that the glory of the
LORD may appear to you."
7 Moses said to Aaron, "Approach the altar and
present your own sin offering and burnt offering,
so making atonement for yourself and for the
people. Then present the people's offering and
make atonement for them, as the LORD has
commanded."[1]
8 Aaron went up to the altar and slaughtered the
calf that was his own sin offering.
9 His sons brought him the blood; he dipped his
finger in it and dabbed it on the altar's horns, and
the remainder he poured out at the foot of the
altar.
10 The fat, the kidneys and the long lobe of the
liver from the sin offering he burned on the altar,
as the LORD had commanded Moses,
11 but the flesh and the hide he burned in the fire
outside the camp.
12 Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. Aaron's
sons handed him the blood, and he threw it
against all sides of the altar.
13 They handed him the burnt offering piece by
piece, with the head, and he burned them on the
altar.
14 After washing the entrails and legs, he burned
them on the altar on top of the burnt offering.
15 Then he presented the people's offering. He
took the goat of the sin offering that was for the
people, slaughtered it and offered it for sin, as he
had the first.
16 Next he brought forward the burnt offering and
offered it in the prescribed way.
17 He presented the grain offering, took a handful
of it and burned it on the altar, in addition to the
morning burnt offering.
18 He slaughtered the ox and the ram as the
sacrifice of peace offering for the people. Aaron's
sons handed him the blood, and he threw it
against all sides of the altar.
19 The fat portions from the ox and the ram, the fat
tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the kidneys
and the long lobe of the liver,
20 they laid on the breasts, and he burned the fat
portions on the altar.
21 The breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved as
a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses had
commanded.
22 Aaron raised his hands over the people and
blessed them,[2] and then, having made the sin
offering, the burnt offering and the peace
offerings, he stepped down.
23 Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting,
and when they came out they blessed the people,
and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the
people.
24 Fire came out from the LORD's presence and
devoured the burnt offering and the fat on the
altar. At the sight, the whole people cried out with
joy and threw themselves face down.

1 Compare Hebrews 5:3 and 7:27: unlike Christ, the high priest first had to offer for his own sins.

2 Perhaps with the blessing of Numbers 6:24–26. Compare Luke 24:50.

Chapter 10

Leviticus 10 tells how Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, offer strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded, and fire comes out from before the LORD and consumes them. Moses tells Aaron that the LORD will show Himself holy among those who come near Him, and Aaron is silent. Their bodies are carried out of the camp, and Aaron and his other sons are told not to mourn but to stay at the tent of meeting. The LORD tells Aaron that the priests must not drink wine or strong drink when they enter the tent, so that they can distinguish between holy and common, unclean and clean, and teach Israel His statutes. When Moses finds that the goat of the sin offering has been burnt instead of eaten, he is angry, but Aaron's answer satisfies him.

1 Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their
fire pans, put fire in them and added incense, and
offered before the LORD strange fire,[1] which He
had not commanded them.

2 And fire came out from before the LORD and
consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the
LORD meant when He said, 'Among those who are
near Me I will show Myself holy, and before all the
people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron was silent.

4 Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of
Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come
here; carry your relatives away from the front of
the sanctuary, out of the camp."

5 They came and carried the two of them out of the
camp in their tunics, as Moses had told them.

6 Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and
Ithamar, "Do not let the hair of your heads hang
loose or tear your garments, so that you do not die
and He is not angry with the whole community.
But your relatives, the whole house of Israel, may
mourn for the burning that the LORD has kindled.

7 You are not to go out from the entrance of the
tent of meeting, or you will die, for the LORD's
anointing oil is on you." And they did as Moses
said.

8 The LORD spoke to Aaron and said,

9 "You and your sons with you are not to drink
wine or strong drink when you go into the tent of
meeting, so that you do not die. It is a statute for
ever throughout your generations,

10 so that you may distinguish between the holy
and the common, and between the unclean and
the clean,[2]

11 and so that you may teach the Israelites all the
statutes that the LORD has spoken to them
through Moses."

12 Moses said to Aaron and to his remaining sons,
Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering that
is left over from the LORD's fire offerings and eat
it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy.

13 You are to eat it in a holy place, because it is
your due and your sons' due from the LORD's fire
offerings, for so I have been commanded.

14 But the breast that is waved and the thigh that
is contributed you may eat in any clean place, you
and your sons and daughters with you, for they
have been given as your due and your sons' due
from the Israelites' sacrifices of peace offering.

15 The thigh that is contributed and the breast that
is waved they are to bring with the fire offerings
of the fat portions, to wave as a wave offering
before the LORD. It is to be yours and your sons'
with you as a lasting due, as the LORD has
commanded."

16 Then Moses searched carefully for the goat of
the sin offering, and found that it had been burnt.
He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's
remaining sons, and said,

17 "Why did you not eat the sin offering in the holy
place? It is most holy, and it was given to you to
bear the guilt of the community, to make
atonement for them before the LORD.

18 Since its blood was not brought into the
sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in
the holy place, as I commanded."

19 Aaron answered Moses, "Today they presented
their sin offering and burnt offering before the
LORD, and yet this is what has befallen me. Would
the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin
offering today?"

20 When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

1 Hebrew: אֵשׁ זָרָה (esh zarah), 'foreign' or 'unauthorised' fire, perhaps fire not taken from the altar (16:12).

2 'Unclean' and 'clean' (טָמֵא, tame', and טָהוֹר, tahor) describe whether a person or thing may come near God's holy presence, not whether it is dirty or sinful. The laws of chapters 11–15 explain them.

Chapter 11

Leviticus 11 tells Israel which creatures are clean to eat and which are unclean. Land animals may be eaten if they have split hooves and chew the cud, so not the camel, the rock badger, the hare or the pig; water creatures if they have fins and scales; and of the birds, all except the birds of prey, scavengers and others listed. Winged insects are unclean, except locusts and grasshoppers. Touching the carcass of an unclean animal makes a person unclean until evening, and a pot or food it falls on becomes unclean. The chapter ends with the reason for it all: "I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy."

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say: These are the creatures you may eat, out of all the animals that are on the earth.

3 Any animal that has a divided hoof, split in two, and chews the cud, you may eat.

4 But of those that chew the cud or have a divided hoof, you are not to eat these: the camel, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.

5 The rock badger,[1] for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.

6 The hare, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.

7 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, split in two, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you.

8 You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

9 Of all that live in the water you may eat these: anything in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, that has fins and scales, you may eat.

10 But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of all the swarming creatures in the water and all the living creatures that are in the water, is detestable to you.

11 They are to be detestable to you; you are not to eat their meat, and you are to treat their carcasses as detestable.

12 Anything in the water that has no fins and scales is detestable to you.

13 Of the birds, these you are to treat as detestable; they are not to be eaten, for they are detestable: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture,

14 the kite, and any kind of falcon,

15 every kind of raven,

16 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the gull, any kind of hawk,

17 the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl,

18 the barn owl, the pelican, the carrion vulture,

19 the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

20 All winged insects that go on all fours are detestable to you.

21 But among the winged insects that go on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to leap on the ground.

22 Of them you may eat these: every kind of locust, every kind of bald locust, every kind of cricket and every kind of grasshopper.[2]

23 But all other winged insects that have four legs are detestable to you.

24 By these you will become unclean. Whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening,

25 and whoever carries any part of their carcasses is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening.

26 Every animal that has a divided hoof but is not split in two, or does not chew the cud, is unclean for you; whoever touches them will be unclean.

27 And all the animals that go on all fours and walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening,

28 and whoever carries their carcasses is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. They are unclean for you.

29 Among the creatures that swarm on the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the mouse, every kind of great lizard,

30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, the lizard, the skink and the chameleon.

31 These are unclean for you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening.

32 Anything on which one of them falls when it is dead will become unclean, whether it is an article

of wood or cloth, a skin or a sack, any article that is used for any purpose. It is to be put in water, and it will be unclean until evening; then it will be clean.

33 If any of them falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot.

34 Any food that could be eaten, on which water from such a pot comes, will be unclean, and any drink that could be drunk from any such vessel will be unclean.

35 Anything on which any part of their carcasses falls will become unclean; an oven or a stove is to be broken down. They are unclean, and they are to be unclean for you.

36 But a spring or a cistern holding water will be clean, though whoever touches their carcasses in it will be unclean.

37 If any part of their carcasses falls on any seed for sowing that is to be sown, it is clean;

38 but if water has been put on the seed and any part of their carcasses falls on it, it is unclean for you.

39 If one of the animals that you may eat dies, whoever touches its carcass will be unclean until evening,

40 and whoever eats any of its carcass is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening; whoever carries its carcass is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening.

41 Every creature that swarms on the ground is detestable; it is not to be eaten.

42 Whatever moves on its belly, whatever goes on all fours, and whatever has many legs, all the creatures that swarm on the ground, you are not to eat, for they are detestable.

43 You are not to make yourselves detestable through any creature that swarms; you are not to make yourselves unclean with them and so become defiled by them.

44 For I am the LORD your God. Make yourselves holy, then, and be holy, for I am holy.[3] You are not to make yourselves unclean with any creature that crawls on the ground.

45 I am the LORD, who led you up out of Egypt so that I might be your God; so you shall be holy, for I am holy.

46 This is the law about animals and birds and every living creature that moves in the water and every creature that swarms on the ground,

47 so that you can tell unclean from clean, and the creatures that are fit to eat from those that are not."

1 The hyrax, a small animal of rocky places. It and the hare move their jaws as if chewing the cud. Many of the animals and birds in this chapter cannot be identified with certainty.

2 John the Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6).

3 Quoted in 1 Peter 1:16: 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' Again in 19:2 and 20:7, 26.

Chapter 12

> *Leviticus 12 gives the law for a woman who has given birth. After a son she is unclean for seven days, as in her monthly period, and the boy is circumcised on the eighth day; she then waits thirty-three days more for her purification, touching nothing holy and not entering the sanctuary. After a daughter the times are doubled, fourteen days and sixty-six. When the days are complete, she is to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or dove for a sin offering, and the priest will make atonement for her; if she cannot afford a lamb, she may bring two doves or two pigeons.*

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a son, she will be unclean for seven days; as in the days of her monthly impurity she will be unclean.

3 On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin is to be circumcised.[1]

4 Then for thirty-three days she is to remain in the blood of her purification. She is not to touch anything holy or come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.

5 If she gives birth to a daughter, she will be unclean for two weeks, as in her impurity, and she is to remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days.

6 Once her days of purification are over, whether for a son or a daughter, she is to bring the priest, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, a year-old

lamb as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering.

7 He is to offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she will be clean from her flow of blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a boy or a girl.

8 If a lamb is beyond her means, she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one as a burnt offering, the other as a sin offering. So the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”[2]

1 As Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21).

2 The offering of the poor, which Mary brought after the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:22–24).

Chapter 13

Leviticus 13 tells the priests how to judge a skin disease. When someone has a swelling, a scab or a bright spot on the skin, the priest is to examine it: if the hair in it has turned white and it lies deeper than the skin, it is a defiling disease and the person is unclean; if not, he is to be isolated for seven days and examined again. The same tests apply to raw flesh in a swelling, to a boil or a burn that has healed, and to a scaly patch on the head or beard, while harmless white spots and baldness are clean. Anyone declared unclean must tear his clothes, let his hair hang loose, cover his upper lip and cry “Unclean, unclean!”, and live alone outside the camp. Last come the same tests for a mark of mould in cloth or leather, which is washed, cut out or burnt.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

2 “When anyone has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes a mark of skin disease[1] on the skin of his body, he is to be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.

3 The priest is to examine the mark on the skin of the body. If the hair in the mark has turned white and the mark looks deeper than the skin of his body, it is a mark of skin disease. When the priest has examined him, he is to pronounce him unclean.

4 But if the bright spot on the skin of his body is white and does not look deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, the priest is to isolate the one with the mark for seven days.

5 On the seventh day the priest is to examine him, and if in his eyes the mark has stayed as it was and has not spread in the skin, the priest is to isolate him for another seven days.

6 On the seventh day the priest is to examine him again, and if the mark has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest is to pronounce him clean; it is only a scab. He is to wash his clothes, and he will be clean.

7 If, however, the scab goes on spreading after he has been seen by the priest and declared clean, he must come back to the priest,

8 and the priest is to examine him. If the scab has spread in the skin, the priest is to pronounce him unclean; it is skin disease.

9 When a person has a mark of skin disease, he is to be brought to the priest.

10 The priest is to examine him, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white, and there is raw flesh in the swelling,

11 it is a chronic skin disease in the skin of his body, and the priest is to pronounce him unclean. He is not to isolate him, for he is unclean.

12 But if the disease breaks out all over the skin, so that the disease covers all the skin of the one with the mark from head to foot, wherever the priest looks,

13 then the priest is to examine him, and if the disease has covered his whole body, he is to pronounce clean the one with the mark. It has all turned white; he is clean.

14 But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he will be unclean.

15 When the priest sees the raw flesh he is to declare him unclean, since raw flesh is unclean: this is skin disease.

16 But if the raw flesh changes again and turns white, he is to come to the priest,

17 and the priest is to examine him. If the mark has turned white, the priest is to pronounce clean the one with the mark; he is clean.

18 When someone has a boil on the skin of his body and it has healed,

19 and in the place of the boil there appears a white swelling or a reddish-white bright spot, it is to be shown to the priest.

20 The priest is to examine it, and if it looks lower
than the skin and its hair has turned white, the
priest is to pronounce him unclean. It is a mark of
skin disease that has broken out in the boil.

21 But if the priest examines it and there is no
white hair in it, and it is not lower than the skin
but has faded, the priest is to isolate him for seven
days.

22 If it spreads in the skin, the priest is to
pronounce him unclean; it is a mark of disease.

23 But if the bright spot stays where it is and does
not spread, it is the scar of the boil, and the priest
is to pronounce him clean.

24 Or when someone has a burn on his skin, and
the raw flesh of the burn becomes a reddish-white
or white bright spot,

25 the priest is to examine it. If the hair in the
bright spot has turned white and it looks deeper
than the skin, it is skin disease that has broken
out in the burn, and the priest is to pronounce him
unclean; it is a mark of skin disease.

26 But if the priest examines it and there is no
white hair in the bright spot, and it is not lower
than the skin but has faded, the priest is to isolate
him for seven days.

27 On the seventh day the priest is to examine him.
If it has spread in the skin, the priest is to
pronounce him unclean; it is a mark of skin
disease.

28 But if the bright spot stays where it is and has
not spread in the skin but has faded, it is the
swelling from the burn, and the priest is to
pronounce him clean, for it is the scar of the burn.

29 When a man or a woman has a mark on the head
or the chin,

30 the priest is to examine the mark. If it looks
deeper than the skin, and there is thin yellow hair
in it, the priest is to pronounce him unclean. It is a
scaly patch,[2] a skin disease of the head or the
chin.

31 But if the priest examines the mark of the scaly
patch and it does not look deeper than the skin
and there is no black hair in it, the priest is to
isolate the one with the scaly patch for seven
days.

32 On the seventh day the priest is to examine the
mark, and if the scaly patch has not spread, and
there is no yellow hair in it, and it does not look
deeper than the skin,

33 he is to shave himself, but not shave the scaly
patch, and the priest is to isolate the one with the
scaly patch for another seven days.

34 On the seventh day the priest is to examine the
scaly patch, and if it has not spread in the skin
and does not look deeper than the skin, the priest
is to pronounce him clean. He is to wash his
clothes, and he will be clean.

35 If, after he has been declared clean, the scaly
patch goes on spreading,

36 the priest is to examine him, and if the scaly
patch has spread in the skin, the priest need not
look for yellow hair; he is unclean.

37 But if in his eyes the scaly patch has stayed as it
was, and black hair has grown in it, the scaly
patch has healed; he is clean, and the priest is to
pronounce him clean.

38 If a man or woman has white patches showing
on the skin,

39 the priest is to look at them, and if the patches
are a dull white, it is only a harmless rash on the
skin, and the person is clean.

40 A man who loses the hair of his head is simply
bald; he is clean.

41 If his hair has fallen from the front of his head,
he is bald at the forehead, but he is clean.

42 But if there is a reddish-white mark on the bald
head or the bald forehead, it is skin disease
breaking out on his bald head or his bald
forehead.

43 The priest is to examine him, and if the swelling
of the mark on his bald head or bald forehead is
reddish-white, like skin disease on the skin of the
body,

44 he is a man with skin disease; he is unclean. The
priest must pronounce him unclean; his mark is on
his head.

45 The one who has the disease, with the mark on
him, is to wear torn clothes and let the hair of his
head hang loose; he is to cover his upper lip and
cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!'[3]

46 As long as he has the mark he will be unclean.
He is unclean; he is to live alone. His dwelling is
to be outside the camp.

47 When there is a mark of disease in a garment,
whether a garment of wool or of linen,

48 in the warp or the weft[4] of linen or wool, or in
leather or anything made of leather,

49 and the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, in the warp or the weft or in any article of leather, it is a mark of disease, and it is to be shown to the priest.

50 The priest is to examine the mark and isolate the article that has the mark for seven days.

51 On the seventh day he is to examine the mark. If the mark has spread in the garment, in the warp or the weft, or in the leather, whatever the leather is used for, the mark is a destructive mould; it is unclean.

52 He is to burn the garment, or the warp or the weft, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather that has the mark, for it is a destructive mould; it is to be burnt in the fire.

53 But if the priest examines it and the mark has not spread in the garment, in the warp or the weft, or in any article of leather,

54 the priest is to command that the thing with the mark be washed, and he is to isolate it for another seven days.

55 After the mark has been washed, the priest is to examine it, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean. You are to burn it in the fire; it is a rot, whether on the back or on the front.

56 But if the priest examines it and the mark has faded after it was washed, he is to tear it out of the garment or the leather, or out of the warp or the weft.

57 If it appears again in the garment, in the warp or the weft, or in any article of leather, it is breaking out; you are to burn in the fire whatever has the mark.

58 But the garment, the warp or the weft, or any article of leather that you wash and from which the mark disappears, is to be washed a second time, and it will be clean.

59 This is the law for a mark of disease in a garment of wool or linen, in the warp or the weft, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean."

1 Hebrew: צָרַעַת (tsara'at), traditionally 'leprosy', but used of several skin conditions, and of mould in cloth (verses 47–59) and in houses (14:33–53). It is not the disease now called leprosy. Compare the healings in Mark 1:40–44.

2 Hebrew: נֶתֶק (neteq), perhaps ringworm or another scalp disease.

3 The signs of mourning: he must warn others not to come near (Luke 17:12–13).

4 The threads running lengthwise and crosswise in a woven cloth; perhaps yarn prepared for weaving.

Chapter 14

Leviticus 14 gives the rite for cleansing someone healed of skin disease. The priest goes out of the camp to examine him; two clean birds are brought, one is killed over fresh water, and the other, dipped in its blood with cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop, is set free over the open field. The person washes, shaves and waits seven days, and on the eighth he brings a guilt offering, a sin offering, a burnt offering and a grain offering; blood and oil are put on his right ear, thumb and big toe, and he is clean. A poor person may bring smaller offerings. The chapter then deals with mould in a house in Canaan: the house is emptied and examined, the infected stones are replaced, and if the mould returns the house is torn down; if not, it is cleansed with the same rite of two birds.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "This is to be the law for the one with skin disease on the day of his cleansing. He is to be brought to the priest,[1]

3 and the priest is to go out of the camp and examine him. If the mark of skin disease has been healed in the one who had it,

4 the priest is to order that two live clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed.

5 The priest is to order one of the birds to be killed over fresh water[2] in a clay pot.

6 He is to take the live bird with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them, and the live bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water.

7 He is to sprinkle it seven times on the one to be cleansed of the skin disease and pronounce him clean, and he is to let the live bird go free over the open field.[3]

8 The one to be cleansed is to wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe in water, and he

will be clean. After that he may come into the camp, but he must stay outside his tent for seven days.

9 On the seventh day he is to shave off all his hair: his head, his beard and his eyebrows; he is to shave off all his hair, wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he will be clean.

10 On the eighth day he is to bring two unblemished male lambs, a year-old ewe lamb with no defect, three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log[4] of oil.

11 The priest who performs the cleansing is to set the man to be cleansed, with these offerings, before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

12 The priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, with the log of oil, and wave them as a wave offering before the LORD.

13 He is to slaughter the lamb in the place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered, in the holy place; for the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest. It is most holy.

14 The priest is to dab some of the guilt offering's blood on the right ear lobe, the right thumb and the right big toe of the one being cleansed.

15 Next the priest is to pour some of the oil from the log into his own cupped left hand,

16 dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left palm and sprinkle some oil with his finger seven times before the LORD.

17 With some of the oil left in his hand he is to touch the same places, the right ear lobe, right thumb and right big toe of the one being cleansed, over the blood of the guilt offering.

18 The rest of the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed. So the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD.

19 Then the priest is to offer the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. After that he is to slaughter the burnt offering,

20 and the priest is to offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be clean.

21 But if he is poor and cannot afford so much, he is to take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, and a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and a log of oil,

22 and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, whatever he can afford, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

23 On the eighth day he is to bring them for his cleansing to the priest, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, before the LORD.

24 The priest is to take the lamb of the guilt offering and the log of oil, and wave them as a wave offering before the LORD.

25 When the lamb of the guilt offering has been slaughtered, the priest is to dab some of its blood on the right ear lobe, the right thumb and the right big toe of the one being cleansed.

26 He is to pour some of the oil into his own cupped left hand,

27 and with his right finger sprinkle some of the oil in his left palm seven times before the LORD.

28 Then with some of the oil in his hand he is to touch the right ear lobe, right thumb and right big toe of the one being cleansed, where the blood of the guilt offering was put.

29 The rest of the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD.

30 Then he is to offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, whichever he can afford,

31 one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest will make atonement before the LORD for the one to be cleansed.

32 This is the law for anyone with a mark of skin disease who cannot afford the offerings for his cleansing."

33 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

34 "When you come into the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as a possession, and I put a mark of mould in a house in the land you possess,

35 the owner of the house is to come and tell the priest, 'Something like a mark has appeared in my house.'

36 The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mark, so that nothing in the house becomes unclean. After that the priest is to go in and examine the house.

37 He is to examine the mark, and if the mark on the walls of the house consists of greenish or

reddish hollows that look lower than the surface of the wall,

38 the priest is to go out of the house to its doorway and shut up the house for seven days.

39 On the seventh day the priest is to come back and examine it. If the mark has spread on the walls of the house,

40 the priest is to order that the stones with the mark in them be pulled out and thrown into an unclean place outside the city.

41 He is to have the inside of the house scraped all round, and the plaster they scrape off is to be dumped in an unclean place outside the city.

42 Then they are to take other stones and put them in place of those stones, and take fresh plaster and replaster the house.

43 If the mark breaks out again in the house after the stones have been pulled out and the house has been scraped and replastered,

44 the priest is to come and examine it, and if the mark has spread in the house, it is a destructive mould in the house; it is unclean.

45 The house is to be torn down, its stones, its timbers and all the plaster of the house, and carried out of the city to an unclean place.

46 Anyone who goes into the house while it is shut up will be unclean until evening,

47 and anyone who lies down in the house is to wash his clothes, and anyone who eats in the house is to wash his clothes.

48 But if the priest comes and examines it, and the mark has not spread in the house after the house was replastered, the priest is to pronounce the house clean, for the mark is healed.

49 To cleanse the house he is to take two birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop.

50 He is to kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot,

51 take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the killed bird and in the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times.

52 So he will cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn.

53 Then he is to let the live bird go free outside the city over the open field. So he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean.

54 This is the law for any mark of skin disease and for a scaly patch,

55 for mould in a garment or in a house,

56 and for a swelling, a scab or a bright spot,

57 to teach when a thing is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law of skin disease."

1 Compare Mark 1:44: 'show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded'.

2 Hebrew 'living water', water from a spring or stream.

3 The freed bird carries the uncleanness away, as the goat does on the Day of Atonement (16:21–22).

4 A log was about a third of a litre.

Chapter 15

Leviticus 15 deals with discharges from the body that make a person unclean. A man with an unusual discharge is unclean, and so is anything he lies or sits on and anyone who touches him or it, until evening; when the discharge stops, he waits seven days, washes in fresh water and brings two doves or pigeons. An emission of semen makes a man, and a woman who lies with him, unclean until evening. A woman is unclean for seven days in her monthly period, and anything she lies or sits on; a woman with a flow of blood beyond her period is unclean as long as it lasts, and afterwards she too waits seven days and brings two birds. These laws keep Israel from defiling the LORD's dwelling among them.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When any man has a discharge from his body,[1] his discharge is unclean.

3 This is the law of his uncleanness from his discharge: whether his body runs with the discharge or is blocked by it, it is his uncleanness.

4 Every bed on which the man with the discharge lies will be unclean, and everything on which he sits will be unclean.

5 Anyone who touches his bed is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

6 Whoever sits on anything on which the man with the discharge has sat is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

7 Whoever touches the body of the man with the discharge is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

8 If the man with the discharge spits on someone who is clean, that person is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

9 Every saddle the man with the discharge rides on will be unclean.

10 Whoever touches anything that was under him will be unclean until evening, and whoever carries such things is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

11 Anyone whom the man with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

12 A clay pot that the man with the discharge touches is to be broken, and every wooden article is to be rinsed in water.

13 When the man with the discharge is cleansed of his discharge, he is to count seven days for his cleansing. Then he is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in fresh water, and he will be clean.

14 On the eighth day he is to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, come before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest.

15 The priest is to offer them, one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and so the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD for his discharge.

16 When a man has an emission of semen, he is to bathe his whole body in water, and he will be unclean until evening.

17 Any garment or any leather on which there is semen is to be washed with water, and will be unclean until evening.

18 When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, they are both to bathe in water, and they will be unclean until evening.

19 When a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she is to remain in her impurity for seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening.

20 Anything she lies on during her impurity will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean.

21 Anyone who touches her bed is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

22 Anyone who touches anything she sits on is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

23 Whether it is the bed or anything on which she is sitting, when he touches it he will be unclean until evening.

24 And if a man lies with her and her impurity comes on him, he will be unclean for seven days, and every bed on which he lies will be unclean.

25 When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her period, or a discharge that goes on beyond her period, for all the days of her unclean discharge she will be as in the days of her period; she is unclean.[2]

26 Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, is to be to her like the bed of her period, and everything on which she sits will be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her period.

27 Whoever touches these things will be unclean; he is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and will be unclean until evening.

28 When she is cleansed of her discharge, she is to count seven days, and after that she will be clean.

29 On the eighth day she is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting.

30 The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and so the priest will make atonement for her before the LORD for her unclean discharge.

31 So you are to keep the Israelites separate from their uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling My tabernacle that is among them.

32 This is the law for the man with a discharge and for the man who has an emission of semen, which makes him unclean,

33 for the woman in her monthly impurity, for anyone with a discharge, male or female, and for the man who lies with a woman who is unclean.”

1 Hebrew ‘from his flesh’, a polite way of speaking of the private parts.

2 Compare the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and touched Jesus’ garment (Mark 5:25–34).

Chapter 16

Leviticus 16 gives the rite of the Day of Atonement. After the death of Nadab and Abihu, the LORD warns that Aaron may not come behind the veil whenever he likes, but only once a year, in plain linen garments, with a bull as a sin offering for himself and his household and two goats from the people. Lots are cast over the goats, one for the LORD and one for Azazel. Aaron burns incense before the place of atonement so that its cloud covers it, sprinkles the blood of the bull and of the LORD’s goat on and before it, and purifies the tent and the altar. Then he lays both hands on the live goat, confesses over it all the sins of Israel, and sends it away into the wilderness. Every year on the tenth day of the seventh month Israel is to deny themselves and rest, for on that day atonement is made for them and they are made clean.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons, when they drew near before the LORD and died.

2 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother that he is not to come at any time he chooses into the Holy Place[1] behind the veil, before the place of atonement that is on the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud over the place of atonement.

3 This is how Aaron is to come into the Holy Place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

4 He is to put on the holy linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body, and tie the linen sash round him and wear the linen turban; these are holy garments. He is to bathe his body in water and then put them on.

5 From the community of the Israelites he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 Aaron is to present the bull of the sin offering that is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his household.

7 Then he is to take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

8 Aaron is to cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel.[2]

9 Aaron is to present the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot for Azazel fell is to be set alive before the LORD, to make atonement over it, so that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

11 Aaron is to present the bull of the sin offering that is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household; he is to slaughter the bull of the sin offering that is for himself.

12 He is to take a fire pan full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense, and bring them behind the veil.

13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, so that the cloud of the incense covers the place of atonement that is over the testimony, or he will die.

14 He is to take some of the bull’s blood and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the place of atonement, on the east side, and in front of the place of atonement he is to sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 Then he is to slaughter the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, bring its blood behind the veil and do with its blood as he did with the bull’s blood, sprinkling it on the place of atonement and in front of it.

16 So he will make atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleannesses of the Israelites and their rebellions, all their sins; and he is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

17 Nobody else may be inside the tent of meeting from the moment he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out, when he has made atonement for himself, his household and the whole assembly of Israel.

18 Next he is to come out to the altar that stands before the LORD and make atonement for it, dabbing some of the blood of the bull and of the goat on each of the altar’s horns,

19 and sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and so cleanse it and make it holy from the uncleannesses of the Israelites.

20 Once atonement has been completed for the Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he is to bring forward the goat that is still alive.

21 Aaron is to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wrongdoings of the Israelites and all their rebellions, all their sins, and put them on the head of the goat, and send it away into the wilderness in the care of a man appointed for the task.

22 The goat will carry on itself all their wrongdoings to a land cut off,[3] and he is to let the goat go free in the wilderness.

23 Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting, take off the linen garments he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and leave them there.

24 After bathing in a holy place, he is to dress in his usual garments and come out to offer the burnt offerings, his own and the people's, so making atonement for himself and for them.

25 He is also to burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

26 The man who sent the goat away to Azazel is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and after that he may come into the camp.

27 The bull and the goat offered for sin, whose blood was taken into the Holy Place for atonement, are to be taken out of the camp, and their hides, meat and dung burnt up.[4]

28 The one who burns them is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and after that he may come into the camp.

29 This is to be a statute for ever for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you are to deny yourselves[5] and do no work, both the one born in the land and the foreigner who lives among you,

30 because on this day atonement is made for you to make you clean; before the LORD you will be cleansed of all your sins.

31 It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves; it is a statute for ever.

32 The priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place is to make the atonement. He is to put on the linen garments, the holy garments,

33 and make atonement for the most holy sanctuary, for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and also for the priests and the whole assembled people.

34 This is to be a statute for ever for you, to make atonement for the Israelites once a year for all their sins." And it was done as the LORD had commanded Moses.

1 In this chapter 'the Holy Place' is the inner room, the Most Holy Place behind the veil (Hebrews 9:7).

2 Hebrew: עֲזָאזֵל (azazel). The meaning is uncertain: perhaps 'the goat that goes away' (traditionally 'the scapegoat'), 'complete removal', a desolate place, or the name of a desert spirit. Whatever it means, the goat carries Israel's sins away from the LORD's presence (verses 21–22).

3 Compare Isaiah 53:6, 12 and John 1:29: 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'.

4 Compare Hebrews 13:11–12.

5 Hebrew 'afflict your souls', understood as fasting (Isaiah 58:3; Acts 27:9, 'the Fast').

Chapter 17

Leviticus 17 concerns sacrifice and blood. Any Israelite who slaughters an ox, a lamb or a goat must bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting as an offering to the LORD, instead of sacrificing in the open field to the goat-demons; otherwise he is guilty of bloodshed and is to be cut off. No one, Israelite or foreigner, may eat blood, because the life of a creature is in its blood, and God has given it on the altar to make atonement for their lives. The blood of game must be poured out and covered with earth, and anyone who eats an animal that has died or been torn is unclean until evening.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and tell them: This is what the LORD has commanded:

3 Any man of the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp,

4 and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD before the LORD's tabernacle, bloodguilt will be counted against that man. He has shed

blood, and that man will be cut off from among his people.

5 This is so that the Israelites may bring their sacrifices, which they are now sacrificing in the open field, to the LORD, bringing them to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting and sacrificing them as peace offerings to the LORD.

6 The priest is to throw the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting and burn the fat as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

7 They are no longer to offer their sacrifices to the goat-demons,[1] after whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a statute for ever for them throughout their generations.

8 Say to them also: Any man of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners who live among them, who offers a burnt offering or a sacrifice

9 and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man will be cut off from his people.

10 Any man of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners who live among them, who eats any blood, I will turn My face against the one who eats blood and cut him off from his people.

11 For the life of a body is in the blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to atone for your lives, since it is the blood, the life within it, that makes atonement.[2]

12 That is why I have said to the Israelites, 'None of you is to eat blood, nor is any foreigner who lives among you to eat blood.'

13 Any man of the Israelites, or of the foreigners who live among them, who hunts and catches an animal or bird that may be eaten, is to pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

14 For the life of every creature is its blood; its blood is its life. That is why I have said to the Israelites, 'You are not to eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it will be cut off.'

15 Any person, whether born in the land or a foreigner, who eats what has died or been torn by wild animals is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he will be unclean until evening; then he will be clean.

16 But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, he will bear his guilt."

1 Hebrew: שְׂעִירִם (se'irim), 'goats', here spirits of the wilderness thought to have the form of goats (2 Chronicles 11:15; Isaiah 13:21).

2 Hebrew: נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh), 'life', here and in verse 14. Compare Hebrews 9:22: 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness'.

Chapter 18

Leviticus 18 sets out the laws of sexual conduct. Israel is not to live like the people of Egypt, where they came from, or of Canaan, where they are going, but to keep the LORD's statutes, for whoever does them will live by them. No one is to have sexual relations with a close relative: a parent or step-parent, a sister or half-sister, a grandchild, an aunt, a daughter-in-law, a sister-in-law, a woman and her daughter, or a wife's sister while the wife lives. Also forbidden are relations with a woman during her period, with a neighbour's wife, with another man, and with an animal, and the sacrifice of children to Molech. The nations of Canaan defiled the land by these things, and the land is vomiting them out; if Israel does the same, it will vomit them out too.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: I am the LORD your God.

3 Do not copy the practices of Egypt, where you once lived, or of Canaan, where I am taking you; you are not to follow their ways.

4 My rules you are to do, and My statutes you are to keep, walking in them. I am the LORD your God.

5 So you are to keep My statutes and My rules; the person who does them will live by them.[1] I am the LORD.

6 None of you is to come near any close relative to uncover nakedness.[2] I am the LORD.

7 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness.

8 Your father's wife you must not uncover; that is your father's nakedness.[3]

9 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born in the same home or elsewhere.

10 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, for their nakedness is your own.

11 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father; she is your sister.

12 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's close relative.

13 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's close relative.

14 Do not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother by approaching his wife; she is your aunt.

15 Your daughter-in-law you must not uncover: she is your son's wife; do not uncover her nakedness.

16 Your brother's wife you must not uncover; that is your brother's nakedness.[4]

17 You are not to uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor are you to take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter to uncover her nakedness. They are close relatives; it is depravity.

18 You are not to take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.

19 You are not to approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during the impurity of her monthly period.

20 You are not to lie sexually with your neighbour's wife and so make yourself unclean with her.

21 You are not to give any of your children to be offered[5] to Molech,[6] and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

22 You are not to lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is detestable.

23 You are not to lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, nor is a woman to give herself to an animal to mate with it; it is perversion.

24 Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have made themselves unclean.

25 The land became unclean, so I punished its guilt, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

26 But you are to keep My statutes and My rules and not do any of these detestable things, neither the one born in the land nor the foreigner who lives among you,

27 for the people of the land who were before you did all these detestable things, and the land became unclean,

28 so that the land will not vomit you out for making it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.

29 For whoever does any of these detestable things, those persons who do them will be cut off from among their people.

30 So keep My charge and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practised before you, and do not make yourselves unclean by them. I am the LORD your God."

1 Quoted in Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12; compare Nehemiah 9:29 and Ezekiel 20:11.

2 The Hebrew expression for sexual relations, used throughout this chapter and chapter 20.

3 Compare 1 Corinthians 5:1.

4 Except to raise up a family for a brother who has died childless (Deuteronomy 25:5–10). Compare Mark 6:17–18.

5 Hebrew 'to make pass through', that is, through fire, in sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35).

6 A god of the Ammonites and others, worshipped with the sacrifice of children (20:2–5; 1 Kings 11:7).

Chapter 19

Leviticus 19 shows what it means for Israel to be holy as the LORD their God is holy. It touches every part of life: honouring mother and father and keeping the Sabbaths, turning from idols, eating peace offerings in time, and leaving the edges of the harvest and the fallen grapes for the poor and the foreigner. Israel is not to steal, lie, swear falsely, oppress a neighbour, hold back a worker's wages, curse the deaf or trip the blind, pervert justice, slander, or stand by when a neighbour's life is at risk; they are not to hate a brother in their heart or take revenge, but to love their neighbour as themselves. Further laws forbid mixing kinds, eating fruit in a tree's first years, divination, cutting the body for the dead and making a daughter a prostitute; they command respect for the old, love for the foreigner as for oneself, and honest weights and measures.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Speak to the whole community of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.

3 Each of you is to revere his mother and his father, and you are to keep My Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.

4 Do not turn to worthless idols[1] or make yourselves gods of cast metal. I am the LORD your God.

5 When you offer a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, offer it so that you may be accepted.

6 It is to be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or the next day, and whatever is left until the third day is to be burnt in the fire.

7 If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is a foul thing; it will not be accepted,

8 and whoever eats it will bear his guilt, for he has profaned what is holy to the LORD; that person will be cut off from his people.

9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap right to the edge of your field, or gather what is left after your harvest.

10 You are not to strip your vineyard bare or gather the grapes that have fallen in your vineyard. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.[2] I am the LORD your God.

11 You are not to steal, or deal falsely, or lie to one another.

12 You are not to swear falsely by My name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

13 You are not to oppress your neighbour or rob him. The wages of a hired worker are not to stay with you overnight until morning.

14 You are not to curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but you are to fear your God. I am the LORD.

15 You are not to do wrong in judgement. You are not to favour the poor or defer to the great; you are to judge your neighbour justly.

16 You are not to go about spreading slander among your people, and you are not to stand aside when your neighbour’s life is in danger.[3] I am the LORD.

17 You are not to hate your brother in your heart. Reprove your neighbour frankly, so that you do not share in his guilt.

18 You are not to take revenge or bear a grudge against the children of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself.[4] I am the LORD.

19 You are to keep My statutes. You are not to let two kinds of your livestock mate, or sow your field with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment woven of two kinds of material.

20 If a man lies with a woman who is a slave, promised to another man but neither redeemed nor given her freedom, there is to be an inquiry.[5] They are not to be put to death, because she was not free.

21 He is to bring his guilt offering to the LORD to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram as a guilt offering,

22 and with the ram of the guilt offering the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and the sin he has committed will be forgiven him.

23 When you come into the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, you are to regard its fruit as forbidden.[6] For three years it will be forbidden to you; it is not to be eaten.

24 In the fourth year all its fruit is to be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD.

25 In the fifth year you may eat its fruit, so that its yield may increase for you. I am the LORD your God.

26 You are not to eat anything with the blood in it. You are not to practise divination or tell fortunes.

27 You are not to cut the hair at the sides of your head round, or clip the edges of your beard.

28 You are not to make cuts in your body for the dead, or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

29 Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with depravity.

30 You are to keep My Sabbaths and revere My sanctuary. I am the LORD.

31 Do not turn to mediums or consult spiritists, to be made unclean by them. I am the LORD your God.

32 You are to rise in the presence of the grey-haired and honour the old, and you are to fear your God. I am the LORD.

33 When a foreigner lives with you in your land, you are not to wrong him.

34 The foreigner who lives with you is to be to you
like one born among you, and you shall love him
as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of
Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

35 You are not to do wrong in judgement, in
measures of length, weight or quantity.

36 You are to have honest scales, honest weights,
an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the
LORD your God, who brought you out of the land
of Egypt.

37 So you are to keep all My statutes and all My
rules, and do them. I am the LORD.”

1 Hebrew: אֱלִילִים (elilim), ‘nothings’, a play on אֱלֹהִים (elohim), ‘gods’.

2 So Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz (Ruth 2).

3 Hebrew ‘stand against the blood of your neighbour’; perhaps ‘seek your neighbour’s life’, as a false witness.

4 Called by Jesus the second great commandment (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27); quoted also in Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14 and James 2:8.

5 The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain; perhaps ‘compensation must be paid’.

6 Hebrew ‘you shall treat its foreskin as its foreskin’: its fruit is ‘uncircumcised’, not yet given to God.

Chapter 20

> *Leviticus 20 sets out the penalties for the sins named in chapter 18. Whoever gives a child to Molech is to be stoned, and the LORD Himself will set His face against him and against any who shut their eyes to it; so too against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists. Death is the penalty for cursing father or mother, for adultery, for incest with a father’s wife or a daughter-in-law, for a man lying with a man, for taking a woman and her mother, and for lying with an animal; other forbidden unions bring childlessness or being cut off. Israel is to keep God’s statutes so that the land does not vomit them out, to distinguish between clean and unclean, and to be holy, for the LORD has set them apart from the peoples to be His own.*

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Say to the Israelites: Any man of the Israelites,
or of the foreigners who live in Israel, who gives
any of his children to Molech is to be put to death.
The people of the land are to stone him with
stones.

3 I Myself will set My face against that man and
cut him off from among his people, because he has
given one of his children to Molech, defiling My
sanctuary and profaning My holy name.

4 And if the people of the land ever close their eyes
to that man when he gives one of his children to
Molech, and do not put him to death,

5 then I Myself will set My face against that man
and against his family, and I will cut off from
among their people both him and all who follow
him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

6 If anyone turns to mediums and spiritists,
prostituting himself by following them, I will set
My face against that person and cut him off from
among his people.

7 Make yourselves holy, then, and be holy, for I am
the LORD your God.

8 Keep My statutes and do them. I am the LORD
who makes you holy.

9 Anyone who curses his father or his mother is to
be put to death. He has cursed his father or his
mother; his blood is on his own head.

10 If a man commits adultery with another man’s
wife, committing adultery with his neighbour’s
wife, both the adulterer and the adulteress are to
be put to death.[1]

11 If a man lies with his father’s wife, he has
uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them
are to be put to death. Their blood is on their own
heads.

12 If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of
them are to be put to death. They have committed
perversion; their blood is on their own heads.

13 If a man lies with a male as one lies with a
woman, both of them have done what is
detestable. They are to be put to death; their
blood is on their own heads.

14 If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it
is depravity. He and they are to be burnt with fire,
so that there may be no depravity among you.

15 If a man lies with an animal, he is to be put to
death, and you are to kill the animal.

16 If a woman approaches any animal to mate with
it, you are to kill the woman and the animal. They

are to be put to death; their blood is on their own heads.

17 A man who marries his sister, whether his father's or his mother's daughter, so that they see each other naked, has done a shameful thing.[2] They are to be cut off in the sight of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he will bear his guilt.

18 If a man lies with a woman during her period and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them are to be cut off from among their people.

19 You are not to uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or your father's sister, for that lays bare one's close relative; they will bear their guilt.

20 A man who lies with his uncle's wife has dishonoured his uncle; both will bear the consequences of their sin and die without children.

21 For a man to marry his brother's wife is an impure thing; he has dishonoured his brother, and they will have no children.

22 You are to keep all My statutes and all My rules and do them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live does not vomit you out.

23 Do not follow the ways of the nation I am driving out ahead of you; they did all these things, and I loathed them for it.

24 But I have said to you, 'You will possess their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the peoples.

25 So you are to distinguish between clean and unclean animals, and between unclean and clean birds, and not make yourselves detestable by animal or bird or anything that crawls on the ground, which I have set apart for you as unclean.

26 You shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

27 A man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist among you is to be put to death. They are to be stoned with stones; their blood is on their own heads."

1 Compare John 8:3–11, where the woman's accusers bring her alone.

2 Hebrew: חֶסֶד (chesed), here a rare second meaning, 'shame', unrelated to 'loyal kindness'.

Chapter 21

Leviticus 21 sets the rules of holiness for the priests, who offer the food of their God. A priest is not to make himself unclean for the dead except for his closest relatives, nor shave his head or cut his body in mourning, nor marry a prostitute or a divorced woman; a priest's daughter who becomes a prostitute disgraces her father. The high priest, anointed with the holy oil, is held to a stricter rule: he may not mourn even for his father or mother, nor leave the sanctuary, and he is to marry a virgin of his own people. No descendant of Aaron who has a physical defect may come near to offer the food of God, though he may eat of the holy offerings.

1 The LORD told Moses, "Say this to Aaron's sons the priests: A priest is not to make himself unclean for any of his people who dies,

2 except for his close relatives: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother,

3 or his virgin sister who is near to him because she has no husband; for her he may make himself unclean.

4 He is not to make himself unclean as a husband among his people, and so profane himself.[1]

5 They are not to shave bald patches on their heads, or shave off the edges of their beards, or make cuts in their bodies.

6 They must be holy to their God and must not dishonour His name, since it is they who present the LORD's fire offerings, the food of their God; therefore they are to be holy.

7 They are not to marry a woman who is a prostitute or who has been defiled, nor are they to marry a woman divorced from her husband, for the priest is holy to his God.

8 You are to treat him as holy, for he offers the food of your God. He is to be holy to you, for I, the LORD who makes you holy, am holy.

9 If a priest's daughter defiles herself by prostitution, she defiles her father; she is to be burnt with fire.

10 The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been ordained to wear the garments, is not to let the hair of his head hang loose or tear his garments.[2]

11 He is not to go near any dead body; he is not to make himself unclean even for his father or his mother.

12 He is not to leave the sanctuary or profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him. I am the LORD.

13 He is to marry a woman who is a virgin.

14 A widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, these he is not to marry; he is to take as his wife a virgin from his own people,

15 so that he does not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the LORD who makes him holy."

16 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

17 "Speak to Aaron and say: None of your descendants throughout their generations who has a defect is to come near to offer the food of his God.

18 No one who has a defect is to come near: no one who is blind or lame, who has a disfigured face or a limb too long,

19 no one who has a broken foot or a broken hand,

20 or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or has a defect in his eye, or has an itching disease or scabs, or has crushed testicles.

21 No descendant of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to offer the LORD's fire offerings; since he has a defect, he is not to come near to offer the food of his God.

22 He may eat the food of his God, both the most holy and the holy things,

23 but he is not to go in to the veil or come near the altar, because he has a defect, so that he does not profane My sanctuaries; for I am the LORD who makes them holy."[3]

24 So Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

1 The Hebrew is difficult; perhaps 'for a relative by marriage', or 'as a leader among his people'.

2 Compare the high priest who tore his garments at the trial of Jesus (Matthew 26:65).

3 Compare Hebrews 7:26: Christ is a high priest 'holy, innocent, undefiled'.

Chapter 22

Leviticus 22 deals with the holy gifts that the priests may eat and the animals that may be offered. A priest who is unclean through skin disease, a discharge, contact with the dead or the like may not eat the holy things until he has bathed and the sun has set. No outsider, guest or hired worker may eat them, though a slave the priest has bought may, and a priest's daughter who returns home widowed or divorced and childless; anyone who eats them by mistake must repay them with a fifth added. Offerings must be without defect, whether for a vow, a freewill gift or a peace offering; a newborn animal must stay seven days with its mother, a cow or ewe is not to be slaughtered on the same day as its young, and a thanksgiving offering is to be eaten the same day. Israel is to keep God's commands and not profane His holy name.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the Israelites, which they consecrate to Me, so that they do not profane My holy name. I am the LORD.

3 Say to them: If any of your descendants throughout your generations comes near the holy gifts that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD while he is unclean, that person will be cut off from My presence. I am the LORD.

4 No descendant of Aaron who has a skin disease or a discharge is to eat of the holy gifts until he is clean. Whoever touches anything made unclean by a dead body, or a man who has had an emission of semen,

5 or whoever touches any swarming creature by which he is made unclean, or a person who makes him unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be,

6 the one who touches any such thing will be unclean until evening and is not to eat of the holy gifts unless he has bathed his body in water.

7 When the sun has set he will be clean, and afterwards he may eat of the holy gifts, for they are his food.

8 He is not to eat anything that has died or been torn by wild animals, and so make himself unclean by it. I am the LORD.

9 They are to keep My charge, so that they do not
bear sin for it and die for it by profaning it. I am
the LORD who makes them holy.

10 No outsider is to eat a holy gift; no foreign guest
of a priest or hired worker may eat a holy gift.

11 But if a priest buys a slave with his money, the
slave may eat of it, and those born in his
household may eat of his food.

12 If a priest's daughter marries an outsider, she is
not to eat of the contributions of holy gifts.

13 But if a priest's daughter is widowed or divorced
and has no child, and returns to her father's house
as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food.
No outsider, however, is to eat of it.

14 If anyone eats a holy gift by mistake, he is to add
a fifth to its value and give the holy gift to the
priest.

15 They are not to profane the holy gifts that the
Israelites contribute to the LORD,

16 and so cause them to bear guilt requiring a guilt
offering by eating their holy gifts; for I am the
LORD who makes them holy."

17 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

18 "Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the
Israelites and say to them: When anyone of the
house of Israel, or of the foreigners in Israel,
presents his offering for any of their vows or
freewill offerings that they present to the LORD as
a burnt offering,

19 for you to be accepted it must be a male without
defect from the cattle, the sheep or the goats.

20 You are not to offer anything that has a defect,
for it will not be accepted for you.

21 When anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offering
to the LORD, to fulfil a vow or as a freewill
offering, from the herd or the flock, it must be
without defect to be accepted; there must be no
defect in it at all.

22 Animals that are blind or injured or maimed, or
have a running sore, an itch or scabs, you are not
to offer to the LORD, or put any of them on the
altar as a fire offering to the LORD.

23 An ox or a lamb that has a limb too long or too
short you may offer as a freewill offering, but it
will not be accepted for a vow.

24 Any animal with its testicles bruised, crushed,
torn or cut you are not to offer to the LORD; you
are not to do this in your land.

25 Nor are you to accept any such animals from a
foreigner and offer them as the food of your God,
for they are spoilt and have a defect; they will not
be accepted for you."[1]

26 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

27 "When an ox, a sheep or a goat is born, it is to
stay with its mother for seven days, and from the
eighth day on it will be accepted as an offering, a
fire offering to the LORD.

28 Whether it is a cow or a ewe, you are not to
slaughter it and its young on the same day.

29 When you sacrifice a thanksgiving offering to
the LORD, sacrifice it so that you may be
accepted.

30 It is to be eaten on the same day; you are not to
leave any of it until morning. I am the LORD.

31 So you are to keep My commandments and do
them. I am the LORD.

32 You are not to profane My holy name, so that I
may be treated as holy among the Israelites. I am
the LORD who makes you holy,

33 who led you out of Egypt so that I might be your
God. I am the LORD."

1 Compare Malachi 1:6–14, where the priests offer blind and lame animals.

Chapter 23

Leviticus 23 lists the LORD's appointed festivals, the holy assemblies of Israel's year. First comes the weekly Sabbath. Then, in the first month, the Passover on the fourteenth day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days, and the first sheaf of the harvest waved before the LORD; fifty days later the offering of new grain, with two loaves of the first fruits. In the seventh month come a day of rest marked by trumpet blasts on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth, when the people deny themselves and do no work, and on the fifteenth the Feast of Booths, seven days of rejoicing, when Israel lives in shelters to remember that God made them live in booths when He brought them out of Egypt. The harvest's edges are to be left for the poor and the foreigner.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: These
are the appointed festivals of the LORD, which
you are to proclaim as holy assemblies; these are
My appointed festivals.

3 Six days work may be done, but the seventh day
is a Sabbath of complete rest, a holy assembly. You
are not to do any work; it is a Sabbath to the
LORD wherever you live.

4 These are the appointed festivals of the LORD,
the holy assemblies that you are to proclaim at
their appointed times.

5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the
month, at twilight, is the LORD’s Passover.

6 The next day, the fifteenth of that month, the
LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for
seven days you are to eat bread made without
yeast.

7 On the first day you are to hold a holy assembly;
you are not to do any ordinary work.

8 For seven days you are to present a fire offering
to the LORD. On the seventh day there is a holy
assembly; you are not to do any ordinary work.”

9 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

10 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When
you come into the land that I am giving you and
reap its harvest, you are to bring the priest a
sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest.

11 He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so that
you may be accepted; the priest is to wave it on
the day after the Sabbath.[1]

12 On the day you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a
male lamb a year old without defect as a burnt
offering to the LORD,

13 with its grain offering of two tenths of an ephah
of fine flour mixed with oil, a fire offering to the
LORD, a soothing aroma, and its drink offering of
a quarter of a hin of wine.

14 You are not to eat bread or roasted grain or
fresh ears until this very day, until you have
brought the offering of your God. It is a statute for
ever throughout your generations, wherever you
live.

15 From the day after the Sabbath, the day you
brought the sheaf of the wave offering, you are to
count seven full weeks.

16 Count fifty days,[2] to the day after the seventh
Sabbath, and then present a new grain offering to
the LORD.

17 From where you live you are to bring two loaves
of bread as a wave offering, made of two tenths of
an ephah of fine flour and baked with yeast, as
first fruits to the LORD.

18 With the bread you are to present seven male
lambs a year old without defect, one young bull
and two rams. They are to be a burnt offering to
the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink
offerings, a fire offering, a soothing aroma to the
LORD.

19 You are also to offer one male goat as a sin
offering, and two male lambs a year old as a
sacrifice of peace offering.

20 Together with the first-fruits bread and the two
lambs, the priest is to wave them before the LORD
as a wave offering. They are holy to the LORD and
belong to the priest.

21 On that same day you are to make a
proclamation; you are to hold a holy assembly and
do no ordinary work. It is a statute for ever
wherever you live, throughout your generations.

22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you are
not to reap right to the edge of your field, or
gather what is left after your harvest; leave them
for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD
your God.”

23 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

24 “Speak to the Israelites and say: In the seventh
month, on the first day of the month, you are to
have a day of rest, a reminder by trumpet blasts,[3]
a holy assembly.

25 You are not to do any ordinary work, and you are
to present a fire offering to the LORD.”

26 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

27 “But the tenth day of this seventh month is the
Day of Atonement.[4] You are to hold a holy
assembly and deny yourselves, and present a fire
offering to the LORD.

28 You are not to do any work on this same day, for
it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for
you before the LORD your God.

29 Anyone who does not deny himself on this same
day will be cut off from his people,

30 and anyone who does any work on this same
day, I will destroy that person from among his
people.

31 You are not to do any work. It is a statute for
ever throughout your generations, wherever you
live.

32 It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest for you,
and you are to deny yourselves. From the evening
of the ninth day of the month until the following
evening you are to keep your Sabbath."

33 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

34 "Speak to the Israelites and say: On the fifteenth
day of this seventh month begins the Feast of
Booths,[5] lasting seven days, to the LORD.

35 On the first day there is a holy assembly; you are
not to do any ordinary work.

36 For seven days you are to present a fire offering
to the LORD. On the eighth day you are to hold a
holy assembly and present a fire offering to the
LORD; it is a solemn gathering. You are not to do
any ordinary work.

37 These are the appointed festivals of the LORD,
which you are to proclaim as holy assemblies, for
presenting fire offerings to the LORD, burnt
offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink
offerings, each on its own day,

38 besides the LORD's Sabbaths and besides your
gifts, all your vows and all your freewill offerings
that you give to the LORD.

39 On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when
you have gathered in the produce of the land, you
are to keep the festival of the LORD for seven
days. The first day is to be a day of rest, and the
eighth day a day of rest.

40 On the first day you are to take the fruit of
splendid trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of
leafy trees and willows of the brook, and rejoice
before the LORD your God for seven days.

41 You are to keep it as a festival to the LORD for
seven days in the year; it is a statute for ever
throughout your generations. In the seventh
month you are to celebrate it.

42 For seven days you are to live in booths.
Everyone born in Israel is to live in booths,

43 so that your descendants will know that I had
the Israelites live in shelters when I led them out
of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

44 So Moses declared the appointed festivals of the
LORD to the Israelites.

1 Christ is 'the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep', raised on the day after the Sabbath (1 Corinthians 15:20).
2 Hence the Greek name 'Pentecost', 'fiftieth' (Acts 2:1); also called the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22).
3 Hebrew: תְּרוּעָה (teru'ah), a shout or a blast on the ram's horn. In Jewish tradition this is Rosh Hashanah, the New Year.
4 See chapter 16.
5 Hebrew: סֻכּוֹת (sukkot), shelters made of branches; traditionally the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2).

Chapter 24

Leviticus 24 begins with the regular service of the sanctuary: pure olive oil is to keep the lamps burning before the LORD continually, and every Sabbath twelve loaves are to be set out in two rows on the pure gold table, with frankincense, as a lasting covenant, and then eaten by the priests in a holy place. Then comes the case of the son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian father, who blasphemes the Name in a fight. He is held until the LORD's will is known, and the LORD commands that he be stoned outside the camp. The LORD gives the rule that anyone who blasphemes His name, Israelite or foreigner, is to be put to death, and that whoever takes a life or injures a neighbour is to pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, with one law for all.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Command the Israelites to bring you pure oil of
pressed olives for the light, so that a lamp may be
kept burning continually.

3 Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of
meeting, Aaron is to tend it from evening to
morning before the LORD continually; it is a
statute for ever throughout your generations.

4 He is to keep the lamps in order on the pure
lampstand before the LORD continually.

5 You are to take fine flour and bake twelve loaves
with it, two tenths of an ephah in each loaf.

6 Set them in two rows, six to a row, on the table of
pure gold before the LORD.

7 On each row put pure frankincense, to be a
memorial portion for the bread, a fire offering to
the LORD.

8 Every Sabbath day Aaron is to set it out before
the LORD continually, on behalf of the Israelites,
as a covenant for ever.

9 It is to belong to Aaron and his sons, and they are to eat it in a holy place, for it is a most holy part of the LORD's fire offerings for him, a lasting due."[1]

10 There was a man among the Israelites whose mother was an Israelite and whose father was an Egyptian. One day he got into a fight in the camp with a man of Israel,

11 and in the course of it this son of an Israelite mother reviled the Name with a curse.[2] He was brought to Moses (his mother was Shelomith daughter of Dibri, from the tribe of Dan).

12 They put him in custody until the will of the LORD should be made clear to them.

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and said,

14 "Take the one who cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let the whole community stone him.

15 And speak to the Israelites and say: Anyone who curses his God will bear his sin.

16 Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD is to be put to death; the whole community is to stone him. Foreigner or native, whoever blasphemes the Name is to be put to death.

17 Whoever takes the life of any human being is to be put to death.

18 Whoever takes the life of an animal is to make it good, life for life.

19 Whoever injures his neighbour, as he has done, so it is to be done to him:

20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.[3] The injury he has done to another is to be done to him.

21 Whoever kills an animal is to make it good, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death.

22 You are to have one law, for the foreigner as for the native, for I am the LORD your God."

23 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. The Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

1 Compare Mark 2:25–26, where David and his men eat this bread.

2 'The Name' is God's name, YHWH (verse 16); out of reverence it is not written here.

3 See the note on Exodus 21:24; quoted by Jesus in Matthew 5:38.

Chapter 25

Leviticus 25 gives the laws of the Sabbath year and the Jubilee. Every seventh year the land is to rest, with no sowing or pruning, and what grows of itself is food for all. After seven times seven years, on the Day of Atonement, the trumpet is to sound and the fiftieth year is to be made holy: liberty is proclaimed throughout the land, and everyone returns to his own property and family. Land is sold only for the harvests until the Jubilee, for the land belongs to the LORD and Israel are only foreigners and tenants with Him; a relative may redeem it, or the seller himself, and in the Jubilee it goes back to him. A poor brother is to be helped without interest, and an Israelite who sells himself is to be treated as a hired worker, not a slave, and set free at the Jubilee, for the Israelites are the LORD's servants, whom He brought out of Egypt.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you come into the land that I am giving you, the land is to keep a Sabbath to the LORD.

3 For six years you are to sow your field, and for six years you are to prune your vineyard and gather in its produce,

4 but in the seventh year there is to be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You are not to sow your field or prune your vineyard.

5 You are not to reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your untended vine; it is to be a year of complete rest for the land.

6 Whatever the land yields in its Sabbath will be food for you, for yourself, your male and female slaves, your hired worker and the foreign settler who lives with you,

7 and for your livestock and the wild animals in your land; all its produce may be eaten.

8 You are to count seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years, so that the seven Sabbaths of years amount to forty-nine years.

9 Then you are to sound the ram's horn loud and long on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the

Day of Atonement you are to sound the horn throughout your land.

10 The fiftieth year you are to set apart as holy, announcing freedom for everyone who lives in the land.[1] It is to be a Jubilee[2] for you, when each of you is to return to his property and each to his clan.

11 That fiftieth year is to be a Jubilee for you. You are not to sow, or reap what grows of itself, or gather the grapes of the untended vines.

12 For it is a Jubilee; it is to be holy to you. You may eat only what the fields yield of themselves.

13 In this Jubilee year every one of you is to go back to his own land.

14 If you sell anything to your neighbour or buy from your neighbour, you are not to take advantage of one another.

15 You are to buy from your neighbour according to the number of years since the Jubilee, and he is to sell to you according to the number of years of harvests.

16 If the years are many, you are to increase the price, and if the years are few, you are to reduce the price, for what he is selling you is a number of harvests.

17 You are not to take advantage of one another, but you are to fear your God, for I am the LORD your God.

18 So you are to do My statutes and keep My rules and do them, and you will live in the land in safety.

19 The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety.

20 And if you ask, ‘What are we to eat in the seventh year, if we are not to sow or gather in our produce?’

21 I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it yields enough produce for three years.

22 When you sow in the eighth year, you will still be eating from the old produce; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you will eat the old.

23 The land is not to be sold for ever, for the land is Mine; you are foreigners and settlers with Me.[3]

24 Throughout the land that you possess, you are to allow the land to be redeemed.

25 If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, his nearest redeemer is to come and redeem what his brother has sold.[4]

26 If a man has no one to redeem it, but he himself prospers and finds enough to redeem it,

27 he is to count the years since he sold it, refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and return to his property.

28 But if he does not have enough to repay him, what he sold is to remain in the hands of the buyer until the year of Jubilee; in the Jubilee it is to be released, and he may return to his property.

29 If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a year of its sale; for a full year he has the right of redemption.

30 If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city is to belong permanently to the buyer and his descendants; it is not to be released in the Jubilee.

31 But houses in villages without walls round them are to be treated as part of the open country. They may be redeemed, and they are to be released in the Jubilee.

32 As for the cities of the Levites, the houses in the cities they possess, the Levites are always to have the right to redeem them.

33 And if one of the Levites redeems a house, the house sold in a city they possess is to be released in the Jubilee, for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the Israelites.

34 But the pasture land belonging to their cities is not to be sold, for that is their possession for ever.

35 If your brother becomes poor and cannot support himself among you, you are to help him as you would a foreigner or settler, so that he may go on living among you.

36 Do not make him pay interest or any extra; fear your God, and let your brother go on living beside you.

37 You are not to lend him your money at interest, or give him your food for profit.

38 I am the LORD your God, who led you out of Egypt to give you Canaan and to be your God.

39 If your brother becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, you are not to make him work as a slave.

40 He is to be with you as a hired worker or a settler; he is to work for you until the year of Jubilee.

41 Then he is to go free from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the property of his fathers.

42 They belong to Me as My servants, for I brought
them out of Egypt, and they must not be sold off
like slaves.
43 You are not to rule over him harshly, but you are
to fear your God.
44 As for your male and female slaves whom you
may have, you may buy male and female slaves
from the nations round about you.
45 You may also buy them from the foreign settlers
who live among you and from their families who
are with you, who have been born in your land;
they may be your property.
46 You may leave them to your children after you to
inherit as property; you may keep them as slaves
for ever. But over your brothers the Israelites you
are not to rule harshly, one over another.
47 If a foreigner or settler among you becomes
rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor
and sells himself to the foreigner or settler among
you, or to a member of the foreigner's clan,
48 he still has the right to be redeemed after the
sale. A brother of his may buy him back,
49 or his uncle or his cousin may redeem him, or
any close relative from his clan may redeem him;
or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.
50 He and his buyer are to count from the year he
sold himself to him until the year of Jubilee, and
the price of his sale is to be set by the number of
years; his time with him is to be reckoned as that
of a hired worker.
51 If many years still remain, he is to pay for his
redemption in proportion to them, out of the price
he was bought for.
52 If only a few years remain until the year of
Jubilee, he is to reckon with him and pay for his
redemption according to his years.
53 He is to be with him as a worker hired year by
year; he is not to rule over him harshly in your
sight.
54 And if he is not redeemed in any of these ways,
he is to go free in the year of Jubilee, he and his
children with him.
55 For it is to Me that the Israelites are servants.
They are My servants, whom I brought out of the
land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

1 Compare Isaiah 61:1–2, read by Jesus in Luke 4:18–19: 'to proclaim liberty to the captives… the year of the LORD's favour'.

2 Hebrew: יוֹבֵל (yovel), 'ram's horn', from the horn that announces it.

3 Compare 1 Peter 2:11 and Hebrews 11:13: 'strangers and exiles on the earth'.

4 Hebrew: גֹּאֵל (go'el), the family redeemer, as Boaz is for Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 4:1–10).

Chapter 26

Leviticus 26 sets before Israel the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. If they walk in the LORD's statutes, He will send rain in its season, abundant harvests, peace in the land and victory over their enemies; He will set His dwelling among them and walk among them, the God who broke the bars of their yoke in Egypt. But if they reject His statutes and break His covenant, He will bring terror, disease, defeat and drought, wild animals, sword, plague and famine, punishing them seven times over for each refusal, until their cities lie in ruins and they are scattered among the nations, while the land enjoys the Sabbaths they never gave it. Yet if in exile they confess their sin and their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, He will remember His covenant with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham; He will not reject them utterly, for He is the LORD their God.

1 You are not to make idols for yourselves, or set
up a carved image or a sacred pillar, or place a
carved stone in your land to bow down to it, for I
am the LORD your God.
2 You are to keep My Sabbaths and revere My
sanctuary. I am the LORD.
3 If you live by My statutes and are careful to obey
My commandments,
4 I will give you rain in its season, the land will
yield its produce, and the trees of the field will
give their fruit.
5 Your threshing will last until the grape harvest,
and the grape harvest until the time for sowing.
You will eat your bread to the full and live securely
in your land.
6 I will grant peace in the land; you will lie down to
sleep with nothing to fear. I will remove
dangerous animals from the land, and the sword
will not pass through your land.

7 You will put your enemies to flight, and they will fall by the sword in front of you.

8 Five of you will rout a hundred, and a hundred of you ten thousand; your enemies will fall by the sword ahead of you.

9 I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will keep My covenant with you.

10 You will eat last year's harvest, old and stored, and you will have to clear out the old to make room for the new.

11 I will set My dwelling among you, and I will not reject you.[1]

12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people.[2]

13 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk upright.

14 But if you refuse to listen to Me and do not carry out all these commandments,

15 if you reject My statutes and abhor My rules, so that you do not do all My commandments but break My covenant,

16 then I in turn will do this to you: I will bring terror on you, wasting disease and fever that dim the eyes and drain away life. You will sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will eat it.

17 I will turn My face against you, and your enemies will defeat you; those who hate you will lord it over you, and you will run away even when nobody is chasing you.

18 And if after all this you will not listen to Me, I will discipline you seven times more for your sins.

19 I will break your proud strength and make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.

20 Your strength will be spent in vain, for your land will not yield its produce, and the trees of the land will not give their fruit.

21 If you walk in defiance of Me[3] and will not listen to Me, I will strike you seven times over for your sins.

22 I will let loose the wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your livestock and make you few, so that your roads are deserted.

23 And if by these things you are not turned back to Me but walk in defiance of Me,

24 then I too will walk in defiance of you, and I Myself will strike you seven times for your sins.

25 I will bring a sword on you that will avenge the covenant, and when you gather in your cities I will send plague among you, and you will be handed over to the enemy.

26 When I break your supply of bread, ten women will bake your bread in a single oven, and they will dole out your bread by weight; you will eat and not be satisfied.

27 And if in spite of this you will not listen to Me but walk in defiance of Me,

28 then I will walk in furious defiance of you, and I Myself will discipline you seven times for your sins.

29 You will eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.[4]

30 I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your corpses on the corpses of your idols, and I will abhor you.

31 I will lay your cities waste and make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas.

32 I Myself will make the land so desolate that your enemies who live in it will be appalled at it.

33 You I will scatter among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword to pursue you; your land will be laid waste and your cities left in ruins.

34 Then, all the time it lies empty while you are in your enemies' country, the land will make up for its Sabbaths; it will rest at last and enjoy them.

35 As long as it lies desolate it will have rest, the rest it did not have on your Sabbaths when you lived in it.[5]

36 Those of you who survive, in the lands of their enemies, I will fill with such fear that the rustle of a blown leaf will send them running. They will flee as one flees from the sword, and fall when no one is pursuing.

37 They will stumble over one another as if before the sword, though no one is pursuing. You will have no power to stand before your enemies.

38 Among the nations you will be lost, swallowed up by the land of your enemies.

39 Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of your enemies because of their guilt, and also because of the guilt of their fathers they will waste away with them.

40 But if they confess their guilt and the guilt of
their fathers, in their unfaithfulness that they
committed against Me, and also in walking in
defiance of Me,

41 so that I in turn opposed them and brought them
into their enemies' land; if then their
uncircumcised hearts are humbled[6] and they
make amends for their guilt,

42 then I will call to mind My covenant with Jacob,
My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with
Abraham, and I will call the land to mind.

43 For the land will be left empty of them and enjoy
its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them,
while they make amends for their guilt, because
they rejected My rules and abhorred My statutes.

44 Yet even so, when they are in the land of their
enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so
as to destroy them utterly and break My covenant
with them, for I am the LORD their God.

45 For their sake I will remember the covenant I
made with their forefathers, when I led them out
of Egypt before the eyes of the nations to be their
God. I am the LORD."

46 These are the statutes and rules and laws that
the LORD established between Himself and the
Israelites on Mount Sinai through Moses.

1 Hebrew 'My soul will not abhor you'.

2 Quoted in 2 Corinthians 6:16; compare Revelation 21:3.

3 Hebrew: קֶרִי (qeri), 'contrary', 'in hostility'; again in verses 23–28, 40–41.

4 As happened in the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem (2 Kings 6:28–29; Lamentations 4:10).

5 Compare 2 Chronicles 36:21, which sees the exile in Babylon as this rest.

6 Compare Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:29.

Chapter 27

Leviticus 27 closes the book with the rules for vows and gifts dedicated to the LORD. A person vowed to the LORD may be redeemed at a set value in silver, according to age and sex, or less if the one who made the vow is poor. An animal fit for sacrifice that is vowed becomes holy and may not be exchanged; an unclean animal, a house or a field may be redeemed by adding a fifth to its value, and a field's value is reckoned by the years left until the Jubilee. Firstborn animals already belong to the LORD and cannot be dedicated, and whatever is devoted to destruction can be neither sold nor redeemed. A tenth of the land's produce and of the herds and flocks is holy to the LORD. These are the commandments the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When
anyone makes a special vow to the LORD
involving the value of persons,

3 the value of a male from twenty to sixty years old
is to be fifty shekels of silver, by the sanctuary
shekel.

4 If it is a female, the value is to be thirty shekels.

5 From five years old to twenty, the value of a male
is to be twenty shekels, and of a female ten
shekels.

6 From a month old to five years old, the value of a
male is to be five shekels of silver, and of a female
three shekels of silver.

7 From sixty years old and over, the value of a male
is to be fifteen shekels, and of a female ten
shekels.

8 But if the one who made the vow is too poor to
pay the value, he is to be presented to the priest,
and the priest is to set a value for him; the priest
is to value him according to what the one who
made the vow can afford.

9 If the vow is an animal that may be presented as
an offering to the LORD, any such animal given to
the LORD will be holy.

10 He is not to exchange it or substitute another
for it, good for bad or bad for good. If he does
substitute one animal for another, both it and the
substitute will be holy.

11 If it is an unclean animal, which may not be
presented as an offering to the LORD, the animal
is to be presented to the priest,

12 and the priest is to value it as good or bad; as
the priest values it, so it is to be.

13 If he wishes to redeem it, he is to add a fifth to
its value.

14 When a man dedicates his house as holy to the
LORD, the priest is to value it as good or bad; as
the priest values it, so it is to stand.

15 If the one who dedicates it wishes to redeem his house, he is to add a fifth to its value in silver, and it will be his.

16 If a man dedicates to the LORD part of the field he has inherited, its value is to be set by the seed needed to sow it: fifty shekels of silver for a homer[1] of barley seed.

17 If he dedicates his field from the year of Jubilee, the full value stands.

18 But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, the priest is to reckon the price for him according to the years that remain until the year of Jubilee, and it is to be deducted from the value.

19 If the one who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, he is to add a fifth to its value in silver, and it will remain his.

20 If he fails to redeem it, or has sold it to someone else, he loses the right to redeem it.

21 When the field is released in the Jubilee, it is to be holy to the LORD, like a field devoted to Him; it is to become the priest's property.

22 If a man dedicates to the LORD a field he has bought, which is not part of the field he inherited,

23 the priest is to reckon for him the amount of the value up to the year of Jubilee, and he is to pay the value on that day as a holy gift to the LORD.

24 In the year of Jubilee the field is to return to the one from whom it was bought, the one whose inherited land it is.

25 Every value is to be set by the sanctuary shekel; twenty gerahs make a shekel.

26 But no one may dedicate the firstborn of an animal, for the firstborn already belongs to the LORD; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD's.

27 If it is an unclean animal, he may buy it back at its value, adding a fifth to it; if it is not redeemed, it is to be sold at its value.

28 But nothing that a man devotes to the LORD,[2] of all that he has, whether person, animal or inherited field, may be sold or redeemed; everything devoted is most holy to the LORD.

29 No person who has been devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death.

30 A tenth of all the land yields, both grain from the fields and fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and is holy to Him.[3]

31 If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he is to add a fifth to it.

32 Every tenth of the herd and the flock, every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod, is to be holy to the LORD.

33 He is not to sort out the good from the bad or make a substitute for it. If he does make a substitute, both it and the substitute will be holy; it cannot be redeemed."

34 These are the commandments that the LORD gave Moses for the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

1 A homer was about 220 litres, perhaps the load of a donkey.

2 Hebrew: חֵרֶם (cherem), something given over to the LORD completely, which may never return to ordinary use (Joshua 6:17–19).

3 Compare Genesis 14:20; 28:22; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23.