

Chapter Four

The Way to Wholeness: Leviticus

The book of Leviticus is probably most famous for being the place where many people stop in their reading through the Bible. It seems to be a book of strange ceremonies and sacrifices with many odd restrictions, problems of diet, and other difficulties which seem meaningless. But properly understood, Leviticus is one of the most beautiful books of the Bible. If you wish to understand Leviticus, one verse near the center of the book will help greatly, "You are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine" (Lev. 20:26). That is the purpose of the book of Leviticus. It details the way by which man is made holy enough to live in the Divine Presence and to enjoy a relationship so close that God will delight to say, "You are mine."

Don't be turned off by the word "holy" in this passage. Most people associate holiness with some kind of grimness. They react as did the little girl who happened to see a mule looking over the fence at her. She had never seen a mule before and she said to it, "I don't know what you are but you must be a Christian--you look just like grandpa." To many of us, "holy" people are those who look as if they had been steeped in vinegar or soaked in embalming fluid. But the Scriptures speak of "the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2, KJV). True holiness is therefore something splendidly attractive.

The original root from which the word holy is derived is the same root from which a very attractive English word also comes. That word is "wholeness." Holiness, therefore, means wholeness, being complete. If you read "wholeness" in place of "holiness" everywhere you find it in the Bible, you will be much closer to what the writers originally meant. We all know what wholeness is. It is to have together all the parts which were intended to be there and to have them function as they were intended to function. Our modern expression "getting it all together" is very close to the root meaning of holiness.

The word "wholeness" has power to awaken desire within us. We long to be whole people. Who does not want to be what God made him to be, with all the ingredients of his personality expressed in perfect balance? That is what the book of Leviticus is all about. We are much aware of our own brokenness, of our lack of wholeness. We know how much we hurt ourselves and each other. We are aware of our inability to cope with life. We sometimes put up a facade and try to bluff our way through as though we are able to handle everything, but inside, most of the time, we are running scared. That is a mark of our lack of wholeness. We also know our diabolical power to irritate, to enrage and to inflame others--and even ourselves. But this great statement in Leviticus 20:26 declares that God knows all about human brokenness and that He knows that we are that way. He sees it in sharp contrast to His own wholeness, and His love reaches out and says, "You shall be whole, for I am whole."

Leviticus, then, is the story of how God has determined to heal man's brokenness and make him whole again; and He knows how to do it, for He says, "I have separated you from the peoples;" The reason we are so broken is because we are involved in a broken race. Our basic attitudes are wrong. Our vision of life is twisted and distorted. We believe in illusions and follow them as facts. We pursue phantoms and fantasies and delusions.

Therefore, God must separate us from such thinking. He must break us loose from conformity to the thought patterns and attitudes and reactions of those around us. When He has straightened out our thinking and set our minds and hearts aright and corrected our tangled, fouled relationships, then we shall be whole as He intended.

This is a process which takes infinite patience and love, because we are so slow to recant. That is why God

gave us this book of pictures. He starts in kindergarten with us. He begins with shadows and pictures as a kind of visual aid in order to show us what is the meaning of what He eventually does in history. Therefore, all the ceremonies and offerings of the Old Testament are foreviews and pictures of Jesus Christ. Leviticus is full of Christ. As He Himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). Thus, these Old Testament sacrifices and rituals are the means by which believers before the cross laid hold of the full value of the work of Jesus Christ on their behalf. These men and women before the cross were as hurt and broken and fragmented as we are. They, too, needed Christ, and through these shadowy anticipations He was available to them. They may not always have seen the fulfillment of these things in Christ, but God did! Any Israelite who obediently and sincerely offered these sacrifices found that the reaction of the Spirit was to bring him to the same joy and peace that we have today. Read the Psalms and see how much David understood of the presence and the grace of God in his life. Some of these men and women of old were so taught of the Spirit that they actually foresaw the person and work of Christ as the great anti-type of the shadows with which they were involved. Thus, Jesus could say in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad."

But there's even more to see in a book like Leviticus.

Since in Jesus Christ God took upon Himself the form of a man, and Jesus dwelt among us as a man--man as God intends man to be--therefore, everything that pictures Him also pictures us. Here in this book, therefore, we can understand our own humanity better than we can know it anywhere else. This book, then, becomes a penetrating study into human psychology, made all the more valuable because it is divinely guaranteed to be the truth about humanity.

The book itself falls into two basic divisions. The first part, chapters I through 16, reveals the fundamental needs of our humanity and God's provision. The last section, chapter 17 through 27, unfolds what performance God expects from us in response.

First comes God's provision and then the performance which results from that provision. Within the first division there are four elements traced which reveal the basic need of sinful humanity.

Need for Offerings

The first is the series of five offerings with which the book begins. These are the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. In these is found a basic insight into the fundamental nature of humanity. They describe in symbolic terms the two essentials for human existence: love and responsibility--that is, the need to be loved and to love in turn. Love is the absolutely essential ingredient in life. Nothing harms or disfigures or blasts a person more than to deny him love. Another essential for wholeness, self-respect and a feeling of worth, is that we must have a sense of our responsibility to love others.

The Burnt offering

Each of the five offerings follows a five-step pattern.

First a selection of the sacrifice must be made. In the case of the burnt offering, it must be a male without blemish. It could be a bull from a herd, or a sheep or goat from the flock, or if the offerer was very poor, it could be turtledoves or young pigeons. In any case, it must be male, for in the burnt offering God is dealing with man to remind him of his role as a king over all the earth.

The second step was the laying on of hands upon the offering. What does that mean? That is God's way of teaching the great truth of substitution, the fact that we human beings are tied together with each other, belong to one another, and share life together, and thus others can do things for us which we cannot do ourselves. This is the basis of fellowship among believers. But in the case of dealing with sin, the substitute must be a spotless, sinless person. Thus, Jesus Christ is the only adequate substitute and this is symbolized by the burnt offering.

The third step was to kill the animal involved. God never allowed any compromise on this. He did not say, "This is a nice little lamb and is innocent of any wrongdoing himself, so if you'll just drain a half pint of blood from him I'll be satisfied." God would never say such a thing because He desires to impress upon us the fact that the problem He is dealing with is so intense and so deeply rooted in our human lives that nothing but death itself can solve it. It cannot be palliated by some temporary expedient. It requires the pouring out of life itself.

The fourth step was either the sprinkling of blood or the burning of the sacrifice as an act of consecration and commitment to God. The instant one of these animals died it became fully acceptable to God. Death solved the problem of alienation and so the sacrifice could then be offered acceptably to God. In the case of the burnt offering, the animal was to be totally consumed. No one was ever to eat the meat of the burnt offering.

This burnt offering is the first of three sacrifices that are said to be "a pleasing odor to God." It symbolized the great truth that in order to fulfill the dominion given to man he must himself be given wholly to God. Man was born to rule, but he was also made to be possessed. He was born to be king over all, but he was to be under the authority of God. The testimony of all history is that man is very unhappy until he is possessed by God. The most basic question of every life is to belong to someone, to have an identity, to be loved, and accepted and owned by someone else. No sight is more pitiable or pathetic than someone who feels that no one loves him--that he belongs nowhere, and no one cares for his soul.

Thus, the purpose of the burnt offering is to remind us that in the death of Jesus Christ we can find the full satisfaction of that basic human longing. You can find a certain amount of satisfaction in being part of a family, you can find satisfaction in having an ancestry, but you will never satisfy your restless longing in these ways. The cry of your heart, the clamant hunger to be possessed and to belong, can be satisfied only by God through Jesus Christ coming into your life.

The final distinction of the burnt offering is given in chapter 6. In verses 12 and 13 we are told that the fire on the altar must be kept burning constantly and must never be allowed to go out. Every morning and evening, the priests were to offer the burnt offering; the fire would consume the wood and the meat all through the day and all through the night and thus the fire of the burnt offering never went out. This symbolized the truth that our basic identity before God is the fact upon which all the rest of life must rest. It must never be forgotten. If you stand there, you have a basis upon which all the other relationships of life can be worked out. That is the burnt offering--the need to belong.

The Meal Offering

In chapter 2 it is the cereal offering which is brought before us. This is otherwise known as the meal offering, or in the King James Version, the "meat offering," from the Old English use of the word meat as meaning food. It is the one offering which has no meat in it, for it consists of grains, or loaves of bread, sometimes even simply flour, offered before the Lord. It is obvious that the essence of this offering was that it was bread; it was food, the staff of life. This is the key to the meal offering. Since it is bloodless it does not symbolize a death but rather a life, and the reason for all this becomes apparent when we remember that in the New Testament Jesus stood before the people and said to them, "I am the bread of life...I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he shall live forever" (John 6:48, 51).

All this should indicate to us that the gospel consists not only of the death of Jesus but also of His life, made available to us. The really good news is that Jesus Christ *died for you* in order that He might live *in you*. The fine flour beautifully symbolized the perfection of humanity in Jesus. He was without coarseness or granularity or any roughness at all. So, if we permit Him to live in us, all that we do will also be balanced and without coarseness.

As we move through chapter 2 we note there are three things which always had to be included in the meal offering, and two things which never could be included. It is important to heed these. The three things always included were *oil*, *frankincense* and *salt*. The oil, which always typifies the Holy Spirit, was both mingled with the fine flour and poured on top of it. Thus it speaks of the indwelling Spirit who mingles with our humanity and also of the anointing of the Spirit which is to empower us. The second element to be always included was frankincense. This is said to be a delight to God and speaks of our praise and thanksgiving,

which pleases Him. The third element is salt, which is a preservative. It speaks of a life which reaches out to touch others with good effect. It is our righteous influence. "Every grain offering," God said, "you shall season with salt."

There are two things, found in verse 11, which were to be excluded from the offering. There was to be no *leaven* nor any *honey*. First, leaven is yeast and is always a type of sin, because it has the power to puff up. By this God is saying, "When you come to offer your humanity to me there must be no ego in it: do not do this for your own glory." As He says elsewhere, "No man should boast before God" (I Cor. 1:29).

Second, there must be no honey. Honey is natural sweetness; there are people, even non-Christian people, who have a natural, even temper and disposition about them. They are naturally sweet. But God refuses to accept this, for the only sweetness He will accept is the imparted sweetness of Jesus Christ in you.

It is significant, too, that the meal offering is listed next to the burnt offering. The practice among the Israelites was usually to offer the two together. This is very instructive since the burnt offering indicates God reaching out to man and saying, "You are mine." Therefore, this requires a response from man. God has reached out to us and we need to reach back to Him. That is what the meal offering signifies; we must come to Him and say, "Lord, here I am, here is my redeemed humanity with its oil and its frankincense and its salt, but with no leaven and with no honey. I want to be yours; I give myself to you." When that happens, you have offered the meal offering unto the Father just as the Son of God in the beauty of His life constantly offered His humanity, through the Holy Spirit and without spot or blemish, unto God.

The Peace Offering

After the burnt offering--representing our need to be loved--and the meal offering--representing our need to respond to God's love--*then comes the peace offering*, found in chapters 3 and 7. This does not refer to the peace of forgiveness. That will come in the sin and trespass offerings. It is not peace *with* God which is in view, it is the peace *of* God which this sacrifice depicts--the sense of calmness, of serenity, of the untroubled heart which was so continually manifest in Jesus. It is of this He speaks when He says, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). Man is not made to function out of tension, pressure, restlessness, or continual anxiety. He is made to live and act out of a sense of peace and it is how this peace can come to us that this sacrifice speaks.

There are four distinctives about the peace offering which mark it as different from the others.

The first distinctive is that the offering can be either a male or a female. It could be from the herd or the flock, and the sex was not important. This indicates that in the peace offering we are not dealing with man in his generic relationships, but in his present condition, his existential relationship, the way he actually is. There it does not make any difference whether you are a leader or a follower; whether you are in a position of authority or not-- what you need is peace in any case. That is the point.

The second distinctive mark is that all the fat of the peace offering was to be consumed upon the altar. This is repeated several times and in the seventh chapter it is developed even further. The striking sentence is, "all fat is the Lord's" (Lev. 3:16). In the Scriptures, fat is everywhere used as a symbol of the richness of life. Even today we think of fat meat as rich meat, and that is what this symbol portrays. Richness belongs to God, and as these Hebrews were told to take the fat and carefully remove it, especially the interior fat on the inner organs of the body, they were being taught that all the inner richness of life--everything that makes a person strong and delighted within--is from God, belongs to Him, and comes only from Him.

There is a third characteristic of the peace offering (7:28-34) which is extremely important. Only two portions of the peace offering animal were to be eaten; the breast and the right thigh. But before they were eaten, they were offered to the Lord. They were not burned upon the altar, for that would have ruined them as food for the priests. They were merely waved up and down before the Lord. The thigh, perhaps heavier than the breast, was heaved up and down before the Lord, rather than waved. This was a symbolic gesture that these portions were related to God. And then the priests were to feed on them.

Hidden in these symbols is the secret of how to have peace in the midst of trouble. The breast is always a symbol of affection and love; the thigh is the symbol of power and strength. Dependence upon the affection and the strength of Jesus Christ is the way to solve our problems and live in peace. His love is to steady us and remind us of His concern about us. His strength is to encourage us that He not only knows what to do but is able to do it. As Paul will say in Ephesians 2:14, "He Himself is our peace."

There is one final characteristic of the peace offering (7: 15-18). We are told that an offerer could eat the flesh of the offering on the day he offered it if it was an offering of thanksgiving for some particular thing. Or if it was just a general expression of gratitude toward God, some of it could be saved for the second day. But under no circumstances were they ever to eat of the flesh of the peace offering on the third day--it must be burned with fire. What does this mean? It is a very beautiful way of saying that we must not rely upon the feeling of peace, but only upon the One who is its source. We cannot live continually on the feeling of peace that comes to us when we trust God. It must be renewed day by day.

The Sin Offering

In the sin offering we come to the way God deals with the problem of guilt. Having offered to mankind both love and peace, He now begins to deal with the problem of the alienation which prevents man from receiving God's grace.

The first distinctive of the sin offering is that it provided for both public and private sin. When the sin was that of a group or a public individual representing a group, then the offering always had to be a male. When it was an individual sin, the animal was a female. Thus for a sinning priest a young bull without blemish was the offering. For the sin of the whole congregation it was likewise a young bull (Lev. 8:14). But in the case of a ruler or king, it was a male goat and for the common people, a female animal without blemish. Thus distinction is made between those in authority and the individual acting on his own.

There were further provisions for those who could not afford an animal, for they were permitted to bring either two turtledoves, or, if they could not afford those, a handful of fine flour. In the latter case they were to put no oil or frankincense on it. For oil was the symbol of the Spirit-filled life and frankincense the symbol of the heart dedicated fully to God, which anyone guilty of sin was not able to claim until the sin offering had effected his restoration.

The second distinction of the sin offering is that it was frequently offered when the individual had sinned unknowingly. Thus this offering deals not so much with the act of evil but with the nature which prompts such acts. Another element of distinction in the sin offering concerns what was done with the blood of the animal. In the case of the sinning priest, blood was sprinkled seven times before the Lord, and put on the horns of the altar of incense which stood in front of the veil before the holy of holies, that is, right in the very presence of God. The same thing was required if the whole congregation sinned, but in the cases of the offerings for a ruler or for an individual the blood was put on the horn of the brazen altar which was in the outer court (Lev. 8:15). Clearly a special emphasis is being placed upon the blood as displayed before the presence of God. Only when the offering individual sees that God looks not at his sin, but at the blood shed for it, is there a release from the sense of guilt.

A final distinction is made in the handling of the fat and meat of the offering. The inward organs and their fat were to be offered to God, as in the peace offerings, but the entire rest of the animal is to be taken outside the camp and there it was to be burned (Lev. 8:14-17). Here is a remarkable symbol which says that all the inward life of the believer, redeemed by blood, is now acceptable to God but the outer life--the body--is still unredeemed. In the book of Hebrews we are told that Jesus fulfilled this Himself when He went "outside the camp" (Heb. 13:11) of the city of Jerusalem to be crucified, and believers are likewise exhorted to "go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). Thus, though our inner nature is now changed and acceptable to God, nevertheless we are still living in the world. We must bear its reproach and suffer its rejection, just as Jesus did.

The Trespass Offering

The sin offering dealt with the nature which causes us to sin, but in *the trespass* offering we are dealing with the actual acts of evil we commit toward one another, including not only acts of commission but those of omission as well. The unique characteristic of the trespass offering was that it required restitution. It was necessary to right the wrong which had been done as far as it could be corrected.

There were five different categories of sin covered by this offering. Three of these categories are grouped together by virtue of their type of sacrifice. The first was what we might call acts of guilty silence--to see a crime committed and to keep silent about it was a trespass (Lev. 5:1); the second category involved defilement from contact with unclean things--these touch upon matters which we now would regard as ecological violations, threatening a whole society (Lev. 5:2, 3); a third category dealt with rash oaths or vows (Lev. 5:4). This was evil because in attempting the impossible the individual was pretending to be God and not man. Nothing has done more to wreak havoc among mankind than man's arrogant pretension to control the forces of nature.

For all three of these categories the sacrifice to be offered was the same. It was to be a female lamb or goat, thus indicating that we are dealing with man in his weakness and submission to the laws of nature. As with the sin offering, provision was made for the poor to bring substitutes if they could not afford an animal (5:7). But the one inflexible requirement was that the individual must admit the offense (5:5). There could be no forgiveness without that.

Two other classes of trespass sins are brought before us. The first category was that of religious offense, something done with "the Lord's holy things" (5:15). Though the sin was an "unintentional" sin (vv. 15,17), nevertheless the individual is required to offer a trespass offering and to make restitution up to the value of the offering plus a fifth added to it (v. 16). Thus even something done with utter conviction at the time that it was the right thing, when discovered to be wrong, was to require sacrifice and restitution.

The last category of sin involved cheating, robbing or defrauding a neighbor, or any form of dishonesty such as removing someone else's property or reputation (6:1-3). Such a broken relationship must be restored and restitution made. This is surely what Jesus refers to when He says: "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (Matt. 5:23, 24). Clearly the trespass offering is given for the healing of all broken relationships and to give the offender a clear conscience before God and man.

How clearly these five offerings have shown the provision made in Christ for our human need of love, of the joy of response, of peace, of forgiveness before God and of right relationships with our fellowman.

Need for Priesthood

From chapters 8-10 we will see that the second element required for an adequate walk and worship before God is that of a priesthood. The priests were in a sense the psychiatrists of the Old Testament. They were the ones to whom people came when they had emotional problems. Priests were skilled in handling problems of guilt and fear, anxiety and hostility, and all the traumas and neuroses and psychoses which arose out of these. In the Old Testament the priesthood consisted of Aaron and his descendants; all the sons of Levi. That is where Leviticus got its name.

We have in these chapters the historical account of the actual consecration of the priests and the Tabernacle, and the beginning of worship within the sacred building. The entire congregation of Israel, some two million strong, were assembled in solemn convocation to witness the stirring ceremonies. Aaron's first act as high priest was to bring a sin offering and burnt offering for himself, and then the acts of the priests on behalf of the people are recorded. They began with the sin offering, then the burnt offering, then the meal offering, and finally the peace offering, indicating the proper procedure in approaching the living God. Then Moses (the prophet) and Aaron (the priest) came out of the Tabernacle and blessed the people and the glory of the Lord appeared to them all. The waiting throngs were stunned by the sudden appearance of fire from the Lord which consumed the offerings, and when the people saw it they shouted and fell on their faces (Lev. 9:24).

Following this impressive moment we have the account of the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu who offered strange fire before the Lord (10:1). It was evidently a form of incense other than the prescribed frankincense. For this they were destroyed by a supernatural fire. But the charge that followed, to abstain from strong drink, suggests the possibility that Nadab and Abihu had acted wrongly because of excessive use of wine. The whole account helps us see that priesthood is a serious matter involving both privilege and responsibility. We must always bear in mind, in reading these accounts, that there is no special priesthood today. All believers in the Body of Christ are made priests one to another (see I Pet. 2:5). Thus in the church, the Body of Christ, we *are all* to minister to one another, bearing each other's burdens, rebuking and reproving one another, and doing all in the recognition that One is our Master and we all are brothers.

Need for Standard

The third element of human need revealed in this first section of Leviticus is the revelation of a standard by which men may tell the difference between true and false, the phony and real, the helpful and the hurtful.

In this chapter appears *various dietary laws and sanitary practices* which were necessary to preserve Israel from diseases and epidemics rife in the nations around them. An excellent book available today, called *None of These Diseases* by Dr. S. I. McMillen, shows in a very charming way how many of the illnesses and ailments of our present life could be avoided if we simply follow some of these common sense regulations which God taught His people in the Old Testament.

But not all the regulations were for health reasons. There was nothing wrong with many of the animals that were prohibited to these Israelites as food. They were prohibited only to teach a symbolic lesson. There were four spheres in which food could be taken.

There were the animals which walked about on the earth, the natural food of man. Among these they were to eat only those which both chewed the cud and split the hoof. Surely this pictures for us the spiritual food upon which believers are to feed, the Word of God.

The first requirement is that we must meditate, which is pictured by the chewing of the cud.

The dividing of the hoof pictures the principle of discrimination, the need to distinguish between that which is from above and that which is from below. It means to take note of the fact that the Bible reports the lies of Satan and the confused thinking of man, as well as the revelation of the mind of God.

The Israelites were also to take food from the sea, which is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of the world, of society. From this area the proper food was to be distinguished by the possession of both fins and scales. Since fins are for progress and scales are for protection, this symbolizes our need to have both the capacity to penetrate a subject and yet to protect ourselves from any wrongful effect. We need both to understand and to discriminate, when feeding upon the knowledge of the world and its ways.

The third sphere from which food could come was the heavens. There all birds who fed upon flesh, all carrion eaters, and those that are omnivorous (that is, eat anything and everything), were forbidden. Also the winged insects were largely forbidden except those which leap upon the earth, as the locust, the grasshopper, and the cricket. Since the heavens are clearly the realm of the spirit we are dealing here with spiritual knowledge, especially in the realm of religion. We are clearly warned to reject all that is related to the flesh, that which is carnal in nature arising out of the principle of self-sufficiency. Then we are to reject spiritual knowledge which is eclectic, that is, gathering ideas from all sources with an attempt to blend everything together. Next, those insects which crawl and fly, but are not able to leap upon the earth, were to be rejected. Thus ideas which accurately tie man's earthly life to his relationship with God may be acceptable, but we are to be careful in this area.

Finally, there was a sphere from which all food was to be rejected. Those creatures which were in constant contact with the earth, whatever swarms upon the earth, goes upon its belly or has many feet, are all to be rejected. This immediately suggests the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden and the curse which came upon the serpent in that he was to crawl on his belly for the rest of his life. This is clearly then, knowledge based on

satanic philosophy. It is wholly of the earth, relating only to this present life--its standards, its values, its pride and its glory. We are not to feed upon these or accept them as principles on which to live.

Chapter 12 deals with congenital depravity, reminding us that the race is sinful and that every child is therefore born in sin. Women who gave birth could be resumed to their privilege of worship only by the presentation of sin and burnt offerings. These kept fresh in mind a sense of sin, but also the promise of restoration through expiation and cleansing.

Chapters 13 and 14 deal wholly with the subject of leprosy. The term not only includes a number of skin diseases, but even types of mold and fungi appearing on garments and in houses. Leprosy in garments was symbolic of relationships with others, and the possibility of these relationships becoming infected through destructive practices or habits. The cleansing of a leper involved the death of a bird and the release of a living bird, picturing both the death and the resurrection of Christ. This step was followed by the personal cleansing of the applicant and then, on the eighth day, he was to bring first a trespass offering, then a sin offering, then a burnt offering, and finally, a meal offering.

Finally, the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus relates to sexual pollutions associated with various secretions and issues. Some of these were normal and others were unnatural. It all is to remind us of the pollution of our nature at its very fountainhead, and the perpetual necessity for cleansing.

Need for Atonement

The great Day of Atonement, described in chapter 16 closes the first half of the book of Leviticus and details the provision God has made for dealing with all sin in His people, whether known or unknown. It was the one day of the year when the high priest would actually enter the holy of holies, dressed not in his garments of beauty and glory but in simple white linen undergarments, which spoke of humility and weakness. There he offered incense for himself, the blood of a bull for his priestly household and finally, the blood of a goat as a sin offering for the people.

Upon the head of a second living goat all the sins of the people were confessed and symbolically placed, and the goat was led away into the wilderness. It is specifically stated that he was sent to "Azazel" which is one of the names for Satan. This pictures the act of faith of a believer in resuming sin to its author, and recognizing the fact that he has no ground upon which to bring further accusation against those whom the Lord has justified.

MAN'S PERFORMANCE

Chapters 17-27 form the second section of this book and describe the performance which is possible on the basis of the provision God has made. Notice carefully the order: God never mentions performance until He has fully revealed His provision. He does not speak about behavior until He has made clear the power by which we are to act.

In this section there are also four elements set forth.

Basis for Wholeness

First, there is a need to understand the basis for wholeness; that basis is blood. Many are offended by the amount of blood involved in the Old Testament sacrifices, but by this means God is impressing us with a fundamental fact. He is telling us that the basis for wholeness (holiness) is a life given up, that we can never be whole on the basis of our natural life. We must have a new kind of life and to have it we must give up the old. Often the problem of the Christian life is that we keep trying to hang on to the old way of life and refuse to accept the new. For this reason the Israelites were forbidden to eat blood but must remember that it is the symbol of life and the constant reminder of the need for atonement.

Standards for Purity

The second element of this section is a series of practical guidelines for acting in love amid all the relationships of life. The book proceeds to give standards for purity, first in the family, and especially with regard to sexual morals: incest, marriage of close relatives, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality, along with the terrible practice of the Canaanites, that of child sacrifice.

There follows a section of general ethical prescriptions which God, as it were, signs His own name 14 times. This is intended not only to indicate authority but also to suggest resource. Here the various regulations are summed up in the admonition of 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

To enforce the standards for purity, Leviticus gives certain prescribed punishment. The death penalty is required for child sacrifice, consulting with spirits, cursing parents, for adultery and homosexuality, and for intercourse with animals. We must understand that in Christ, though these penalties are mitigated, and opportunity is given for repentance and forgiveness, nevertheless the deeds are as wrong today as they were in Old Testament times.

The final category of standards concerns those for the priesthood. The priest must avoid all personal defilement, especially keeping himself from all contact with the dead. In his marriage he must not impair his ministry, nor could he serve if he had physical defects in his own body. These matters, of course, have symbolic application to the universal priesthood of today.

Enjoyment of God

The third element in this last section is the enjoyment of the presence and power of God Himself. Here we learn the meaning of the worship of Israel, and deadly peril of blasphemy, and, in chapter 25, the provision for the compassionate distribution of wealth through the institution of the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee.

The feasts of Israel were not mere holidays, to be observed on the nearest Monday in order to provide for a long weekend. Each was a symbolic occasion designed to teach a truth which God wants to impart to His people that is fundamental to human happiness. In their arrangement they constitute an outline of history.

First, the Sabbath is reiterated as indicating that rest is at the heart of everything God requires. The indispensable secret of our humanity is to learn how to operate out of rest. It is activity, growing out of dependence upon the work of Another, with the realization that the responsibility to achieve lies with Him.

The first of the set feasts was the Passover, occurring in the spring of the year, on the fourteenth day of the first month. It was God's graphic way of teaching that His work of redemption must rest upon the death of another on our behalf. The New Testament calls it justification.

Linked with the Passover was the feast of unleavened bread, which followed immediately. Two Sabbaths were always involved in this, including the weekly Sabbath. Its central feature was the exclusion of all leaven. This pictures the cleansing of life which must follow the act of justification.

Associated also with the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread was the feast of first fruits, which came on the morrow after the Sabbath. This would place it on a Sunday and therefore it was a fitting anticipation of the resurrection of Christ, the "first fruits from the dead."

Counting 50 days from the feast of first fruits there came what was called the feast of weeks. In the New Testament this is called Pentecost. It was characterized by two loaves of bread, baked with leaven, which were waved before the Lord. Thus it typifies the church, made of two bodies, Jew and Gentile. Both are sinners needing redemption but joined together into one body, the church.

On the first day of the seventh month came the feast of trumpets. This followed the long summer in which no feast was held. Its central feature was the loud blast of trumpets. Prophetically, this anticipates the prediction of Jesus that He will return "coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matt. 24:30,31).

This was followed by the great Day of Atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was characterized as a time of affliction of spirit and of mourning over the wasted opportunities of life. It will find fulfillment when, after long centuries of unbelief, Israel "will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son" (Zech. 12:10).

Finally, the last feast was the Feast of Tabernacles, also called the feast of ingathering, for it marked the end of the agricultural year. It pictures time when, after Israel's restoration to their Lord and God, they will experience a lifting of the curse from nature and the blessing of the earth so that the desert shall blossom like the rose. It is -the time of Messiah's kingdom, when all nations shall feast in joy before Him.

In the opening part of chapter 24 we have a marvelous description of the functions which went on in the holy place of the Tabernacle. It begins with the candelabra, fueled by oil brought by the people. As light is always the symbol of truth, this becomes a picture of truth made known to the mind of man by the Holy Spirit. The table of showbread was to be spread every Sabbath day with a freshly baked series of 12 loaves of bread, with frankincense spread beside them. The 12 loaves, made of unleavened fine flour, depicts the commonality of life within the family of God.

The frankincense, as we have seen, was to be burned on the altar of incense, the third piece of furniture in the holy place. This represents the obedient heart, responding to the beauty of God, and offering praise and thanksgiving unto Him.

The closing incident of chapter 24, concerning the young man of mixed parentage who blasphemed the name of God, is doubtless inserted to indicate that which threatens the intimate relationship of God's people with Himself. The subsequent death of the young man highlights the seriousness of such violation.

This brings us to the sabbatical year. Not only was one day out of seven a day of rest, but every seventh year Israel was to let the land rest for a year. They were not to sow crops or even to prune vineyards but to let the trees and vines grow without hindrance. This periodic rest of the land is an important principle of horticulture. Symbolically, it points to a recognition of dependence upon God's ability to bring fruitfulness (1) in social life, (2) interpersonal relationships, and (3) even in governmental matters.

With this is linked the Year of Jubilee, which came every fiftieth year, as an intensification of the sabbatical year. Characteristic of the Year of Jubilee was the proclamation of liberty to all the inhabitants of the land. The mark of liberty is to regain a lost inheritance and to have broken relationships restored. There is no record that Israel ever actually experienced the Year of Jubilee. In all their history they never trusted God enough to try it out to see what He would do and so they never saw God's full supply. This becomes the reason, ultimately, for the 70 years of captivity in Babylon, for in the 490 years of their history God had been counting up the years, and at the end of that time God sent the people off to Babylon that the land might have its rest.

Preserved in Righteousness

The final section of the chapter consists of the necessity to give the poor a chance to recover from their poverty and restates the fact that no Israelite was to be a slave. The final lesson is summarized in the great statement "the life of the land is preserved in righteousness."

As the book draws to a close, the divine Voice recalls the people to two of the Ten Commandments: the warning against idolatry and the call to keep the Sabbath (26:1, 2). In a passage of infinite beauty and light God promises six blessings upon the people if they would walk in faithfulness before Him, utilizing the provisions for cleansing which He had instituted. The first promise is for fruitfulness (v. 4); the second, for full supply (v. 5); the third, for security (vv. 6-8); the fourth, for increase (v. 9); the fifth, the fellowship of the living God (v. 12); and sixth, the promise to make the people "walk erect" as men and women ought to walk and live (v. 13).

But, in anticipation of Israel's actual future, God moves on to set forth the cursings which will follow failure to walk in the divine ways. These punishments would include: disease, conflict, drought, wild beasts

invasion, and break-up of family life, and finally, captivity. All of this now stands written in history, but the wonderful thing is that through it all God has a redemptive, constructive goal toward which He aims. If there is repentance and return, there is also the promise of recovery and restoration.

This is the story of the inflexibility of love and the ruthlessness of grace. It is an inevitable rule of life that if you reject light then you must endure darkness, if you will not receive the positive then you must experience the negative; if you will not go in then you must stay out--until the time comes when you are ready to go in. There are no other choices. Thus the last element dealt with in this book is the awareness of the issues at stake and the decision that is expected of us.

The final page of the book deals with the matter of vows. Vows are voluntary obligations which are promised to God, usually on the ground of some blessing from Him. They include here, vows concerning persons, animals, and objects. The point is that it is not necessary to make vows but if they are made they must be observed. If for any reason the one making a vow desires to be set free from it, he must pay its full value, plus something more, according to the appraisal of the priest. Doubtless God uses such vows to draw us out and to help us grow in the discipline of grace. It is significant that the book which calls us preeminently to worship closes with regulations on how to handle the voluntary commitments of our awakened hearts.

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