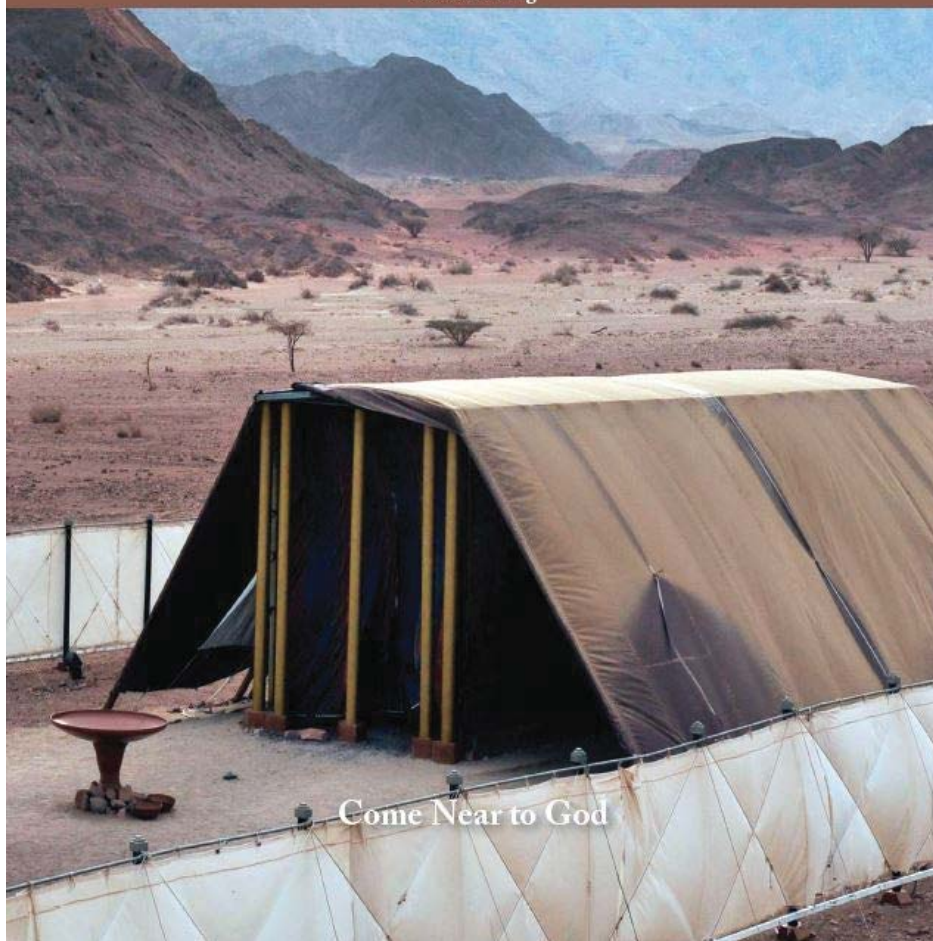


Leviticus Explained & Applied 03

Ger de Koning



Come Near to God

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Dutch version:

Leviticus – Toegelicht en toegepast 03

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ISBN: 978-90-79718-62-7 (Paperback)

www.uitgeverijdaniel.nl

Available as pdf, EPUB and MOBI file on

<https://www.oudesporen.nl/artikelen.php?lang=EN>

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Abbreviations of the Names of the Books of the Bible

Old Testament

Gen Genesis
Exo Exodus
Lev Leviticus
Num Numbers
Deu Deuteronomy
2Ko 2 Korinthiërs
Jos Joshua
Jdg Judges
Rth Ruth
1Sam First Samuel
2Sam Second Samuel
1Kgs First Kings
2Kgs Second Kings
1Chr First Chronicles
2Chr Second Chronicles
Ezra Ezra
Neh Nehemiah
Est Esther
Job Job
Psa Psalms
Pro Proverbs
Ecc Ecclesiastes
Song Song of Songs
Isa Isaiah
Jer Jeremiah
Lam Lamentations
Eze Ezekiel
Dan Daniël
Hos Hosea
Joel Joel
Amos Amos
Oba Obadiah
Jona Jonah
Mic Micah
Nah Nahum
Hab Habakkuk
Zep Zephaniah
Hag Haggai
Zec Zechariah
Mal Malachi

New Testament

Mt Gospel of Matthew
Mk Gospel of Mark
Lk Gospel of Luke
Jn Gospel of John
Acts Acts of the Apostles
Rom Letter to the Romans
1Cor First Letter to the Corinthians
2Cor Second Letter to the Corinthians
Gal Letter to the Galatians
Eph Letter to the Ephesians
Phil Letter to the Philippians
Col Letter to the Colossians
1Thes First Letter to the Thessalonians
2Thes Second Letter to the Thessalonians
1Tim First Letter to Timothy
2Tim Second Letter to Timothy
Tit Letter tot Titus
Phlm Letter to Philemon
Heb Letter of the Hebrews
Jam Letter of James
1Pet First Letter of Peter
2Pet Second Letter of Peter
1Jn First Letter of John
2Jn Second Letter of John
3Jn Third Letter of John
Jude Letter of Jude
Rev Revelation

Explanation of General Format

PERSONAL PRONOUNS are capitalized when pertaining to Deity.

BRACKETS [] are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words which are not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek but implied by it.

SHARP BRACKETS < > are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words possibly not in the original writings.

When **ASTERISKS** * are used in New Testament quotations, it is to mark verbs that are historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage. The translators recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence. However, the translators felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents to English past tenses.

ALL CAPS in the New Testament quotations are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotations or obvious references to Old Testament texts.

Leviticus

Introduction

The word *Leviticus* is used in the Septuagint – that is the Greek translation of the Old Testament by the ‘seventy’ – as a summary of the subject of this book. It is meant to express that this book is about the rituals and ceremonies for which the tribe of Levi is set apart. Yet this book is not so much about the service of the Levites as about the service of the priests, although of course they are also of the tribe of Levi.

The book of Leviticus, like the last part of Exodus, brings us into the sanctuary, into the heart of God. In what the sanctuary represents, we see what is in God’s heart. There God wants to have fellowship with us. Leviticus is the book of fellowship. Fellowship is ‘partnership’, having the same part. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son (1Jn 1:3). With the Father we share what we have seen of the Son. With the Son we share what we may know of the Father.

In Exodus God speaks to the people from Mount Sinai, shrouded in thunder and lightning. In Leviticus God speaks from the tent of meeting. There in the glory of God has descended at the end of Exodus 40 (Exo 40:34-35). There He now dwells, among His people, to invite His people to come to Him to have fellowship with Him.

Fellowship is not a matter of obligation. God therefore starts this book with speaking about three voluntary offerings. There are also obligatory offerings, but the starting point is that God seeks desiring hearts that voluntarily want to have fellowship with Him. He does not ask if the people want to come to listen to Moses, however important that may be. The first thing God speaks of immediately after the tabernacle is erected in the previous chapter (Exo 40:17-38) is whether His people will come to Him to offer Him an offering. This offering can only relate to the Lord Jesus, for He alone satisfies the heart of God completely.

If there is fellowship with God, there are conditions attached to it. Thus God can only have fellowship with a holy people, a people who have been set apart for Him. Uncleaness, sin, may have no place therein. We do

not find a book in the Bible that contains so many words formed with the words 'holy' and 'clean' (or 'unclean'): 'holy' occurs about one hundred and forty-five times, 'clean' seventy-six times, and 'unclean' about one hundred and forty-two times..

The book begins with the five main offerings, in which the sin offering and the guilt offering are so closely connected that we can also speak of four groups of offerings. They all speak of the Lord Jesus. In each of these offerings we see a certain aspect of His Person and His work. His Person is too versatile to be represented by one offering. We see this also in the Gospels, four of which we have for the same reason.

The four major groups of offerings are:

1. the burnt offerings;
2. the grain offerings;
3. the peace offerings;
4. the sin offerings.

We find them in Hebrews 10, where it also becomes clear that these offerings have their true meaning In Christ (Heb 10:5-9). There we also see that there are two main types of offerings: on the one hand the sin offerings and on the other hand the other offerings.

Division of the book

As a result of 'fellowship' as the main theme of this book, we can make the following division:

1. The content of fellowship: the Lord Jesus, presented in the offerings (Leviticus 1-7).
2. The mediators of fellowship: the sons of Aaron, the priests (Leviticus 8-9).
3. The condition for fellowship: cleansing (Leviticus 10-15).
4. The foundation of fellowship: the day of atonement (Leviticus 16).
5. Miscellaneous fellowship regulations (Leviticus 17-22).
6. Special days of fellowship (Leviticus 23).
7. Maintaining and breaking up of fellowship (Leviticus 24).
8. Area and atmosphere of fellowship (Leviticus 25-27).

Leviticus 1

Introduction

When God begins to speak of the offerings, He begins with the burnt offering. For the sinner, the sin offering comes first, because it speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus that is necessary to deliver him from his sins. The burnt offering represents the Lord Jesus in His work on the cross to glorify God. That is why God begins with it, for this aspect of the work of His Son is most precious to His heart.

Together with the next two offerings – grain offering and peace offering – the burnt offering is “a soothing aroma to the LORD”. This is not written of the sin offerings. The burnt offering represents the work of the Lord Jesus in which everything He does is entirely for God. It shows the glory of God. God is glorified when all His glorious qualities become visible. They are made perfectly visible on the cross by His Son.

In the Gospel according to John we see the Lord Jesus as the burnt offering. In that Gospel there is no talk of being made sin, no talk of three hours of darkness and being forsaken of God, no talk of Gethsemane. Everything there comes from the Lord Jesus: “He went out, bearing His own cross” to Calvary (Jn 19:17). He also said: “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life” (Jn 10:17), which He Himself did on the cross: “And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit” (Jn 19:30). He can say to His Father, seeing the work as already done: “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do” (Jn 17:4). Also other texts speak of His perfect dedication to and glorification of God (Psa 40:8-9; Jn 10:18; 14:30-31; Heb 9:14).

Verse 1 | The LORD Begins to Speak

1 Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying,

There can and may always be fellowship with God in our *personal* life. But here God speaks of this voluntary fellowship from “the tent of meeting”, that is the tabernacle. That is a great difference with God’s speaking

from Sinai. From Sinai, God gives His demands and conditions. There He speaks “from heaven” (Exo 20:22).

Now He speaks from his dwelling place among the people (Exo 25:8), whereon His glory has descended in a cloud (Exo 40:34). From that cloud the Father later bears witness of His beloved Son (2Pet 1:17). From the tent of meeting, the place where the LORD will meet with his people, He speaks of offerings. All offerings speak of the Lord Jesus. Here God focuses the heart of the people on Him.

‘Tabernacle’ literally means ‘dwelling place’. God dwells there. If that dwelling place is called “the tent of meeting”, it indicates that God desires that His people come to have fellowship with Him, that is, to speak to Him about the Lord Jesus.

Moses is called here for the third time. The first time the LORD calls him to take him into His service as the deliverer of His people (Exo 3:4). The second time the LORD calls him to be with Him to make him aware of His holiness (Exo 19:20). The third time, here, the LORD calls him to speak with him about worship and drawing near to God.

Verse 2 | When Any Man of You ...

2 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock.

God does not assume that the wish to have fellowship with Him lives with all people. He speaks of “any man of you” (cf. Num 6:2). But when someone wants, He gives the conditions. It also states that the Father seeks true worshipers; but it adds that God is spirit and that those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (Jn 4:23-24).

An “offering” means “gift”, “offer” to God. It is the act of the offeror. The priest is the one who actually offers this gift. The Lord Jesus is both Offeror and Priest. He offered Himself as a gift and offered Himself as an offering. But here God asks His people if any of them would come with an offering. The believer is both the offeror and the priest.

The New Testament teaches that every believer is a priest (1Pet 2:5). In the Old Testament, we see in the priests a picture of how the priesthood of the

believer in the New Testament is worked out in practice. The picture in the Old Testament represents the spiritual experience of the truth of the New Testament. Therefore, in the Old Testament there are distinctions in the priestly family, whereas in the New Testament there are not.

A priest, a son of Aaron, is in the picture here a believer who has reached spiritual maturity, knows his privileges as a priest and uses them. He also knows his responsibilities. He knows how to behave in God's presence when dealing with Him. A daughter of the priestly family may not enter the sanctuary. This represents the truth that there are believers who, as daughters, have no spiritual strength to enter the sanctuary. They prefer to leave that to other believers.

Verses 3-9 | A Burnt Offering From the Herd

3 If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. 4 He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. 5 He shall slay the young bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 6 He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. 7 The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. 8 Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 9 Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The Israelite can choose his burnt offering from three kinds of animals. All three kinds are clean, tame animals. They also have a certain benefit for mankind. These two characteristics – clean and tame – make them suitable to serve as offering, because they show – in picture – something of the Lord Jesus' offering. A deer, for example, is a pure animal, and can be eaten from. Yet it is unsuitable as offering, because it is not tame. It must be hunted. On the Lord Jesus there was no need to be hunted, so to speak. He has voluntarily come to the service of man.

The offerings are decreasing in size. God starts with the biggest animal. If it's a burnt offering from the herd, it must be a male without defect. The offeror must look for this in his herd. That requires effort. Bringing an offering takes effort, it does not happen by itself (cf. 1Chr 21:23-24). Then he has to bring his offering to the tent of meeting. There he becomes aware of his being a pleasure to God.

Spiritually applied this means that an offering to God – that is, to tell Him something about the Lord Jesus – cannot be made without having been busy with the Lord Jesus and seeing Who He is for God. We see this when we read the Gospels, especially the Gospel according to John. There we see how He does everything for God. Everything He does is perfect, unblemished, without any defect; He is “unblemished and spotless” (1Pet 1:19). He does everything in male power and with perseverance. The bull also suggests persevering service.

When the offeror and his offering animal stand before the tent of meeting, he must put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering. By this he identifies himself with the offering. All the value of the burnt offering is therefore as it were passed on to him, the offeror. God sees him in this offering. This suggests to us that God “has taken us into favor in the Beloved” (Eph 1:6, Darby Translation). He no longer sees our sins, they are atoned or covered by the work of the Lord Jesus. Our identification with the Lord Jesus is also beautifully described in Romans 6: “For if we have become united with [Him] in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be [in the likeness] of His resurrection” (Rom 6:5; Eph 2:5-6).

The aspect of atonement is also mentioned. Atonement means covering. The offeror is covered before God in view of his sins. Although the burnt offering is not brought for the sake of sin, the offeror is a sinner by nature. When we come to God in the pleasantness of Christ's offering, we know that atonement for our sins has been made. Therefore, immediately following the fact that we have been taken into favor in the Beloved, it is said: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Eph 1:7).

After the offeror has put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, he must slay the animal, literally ‘cut the throat’. This emphasizes that the animal is not only killed, but that blood flows. It means to us that we think

about the death of the Lord Jesus. We must realize in our hearts that He died because God asked Him to do so. We offer the Lord Jesus as a burnt offering to God, we bring Him before God, when we tell God how much He must have found a perfect pleasure in the death of the Lord Jesus.

The offeror may also skin the burnt offering and cut the offering into its pieces. We do this when we are busy with the inner life of the Lord Jesus. Especially in the book of Psalms we hear what is going on in Him during the accomplishment of His work on the cross. Everything is perfectly devoted to God, both externally and internally. Reading about it, thinking about it, and then talking to God about it is laying down the pieces of the offering before Him.

Through their dealings with God, priests know the value of the blood and of the pieces of the offering. They know how to deal with it, how to sacrifice everything in a way that is pleasing to God. The priests make fire. Fire represents God's examining and testing holiness. The offering comes into the fire. God's examining and testing holiness finds nothing in Him personally that is not in accordance with God's holiness.

In the "pieces" we can see the different phases of the Lord Jesus' life. Each phase shows perfection. As a Child and as a young Man He is perfectly obedient to His parents. When He is an Adult and goes His way through Israel, He is also perfect there. In everything He encounters on His way His perfection becomes visible. He always speaks and acts perfectly.

The "head" represents the thinking of the Lord Jesus. All His thoughts are always focused on God. The "suet" or "fat" represents the energy with which He accomplishes the work. In the peace offering the fat is spoken of extensively (Lev 3:3-5). The "entrails" represent His inner feelings. We read several times that the Lord Jesus "felt compassion", that is to say, was moved inwardly (Mt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Mk 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; Lk 7:13; 10:33; 15:20). The "legs" speak of His walk.

All pieces must be washed with water. Water is a picture of the Word of God (Eph 5:26). There is nothing in the Lord Jesus that should be washed away, as is so often the case with us. Everything in and of the Lord Jesus is in perfect accordance with God's Word. With Him the water is, so to speak, before as pure as after washing, because there is no dirt to remove.

Every aspect of His life and death has been tested by the Word of God. Everything turns out to be based on the Word and finds its fulfilment in Him. Everything is burned on the altar, so that it goes up to God as a soothing aroma for Him. The altar is a picture of the cross of the Lord Jesus where He gave the offering of His life. God wishes to receive from our heart what we have considered in it about what His Son did on the cross, especially when we are together as a church.

Verses 10-13 | A Burnt Offering From the Flock

10 'But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect. 11 He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 12 He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 13 The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The Israelite may also bring a smaller animal than a young bull as a burnt offering: a male without defect of the sheep or of the goats. It speaks of the same perfect work of the Lord Jesus and is also “a soothing aroma to the LORD”. What is not perfect, however, is our understanding, our awareness of what the burnt offering is. We see a distinction in this respect.

An older believer who has been busy with the Lord Jesus a lot and therefore has seen much of His glory can tell the Father more about Him – that is, bring a greater burnt offering – than someone who has not been converted for so long. But they both tell the Father about the Lord Jesus what is pleasing to Him.

In the young bull, the greatest burnt offering, we see the Lord Jesus Who is perfectly faithful and persevering in His service work to death. In the sheep we see wonderful qualities: gentleness and surrender, forbearing undergoing mistreatment. We also see this with the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. It is impressive and the Father would love to hear from us how impressed we are with it. Yet that is more passive, while in the young bull we see more the active willpower that is in the Lord Jesus to accomplish

the work completely to the glory of God. But both are a soothing aroma to God.

In the goat we see an even weaker picture. A goat is the characteristic animal for the sin offering. Here we do not think so much of a particular characteristic, as in the case of bull and sheep, but of something negative: the removal of sins. Many believers who worship the Lord Jesus and who would like to bring a burnt offering do not get any further than to thank Him for taking their sins away through His work on the cross.

Verses 14-17 | A Burnt Offering of Birds

14 'But if his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from the turtledoves or from young pigeons. 15 The priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head and offer it up in smoke on the altar; and its blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar. 16 He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward, to the place of the ashes. 17 Then he shall tear it by its wings, [but] shall not sever [it]. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the wood which is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The various offerings speak of what a believer has understood of the work of the Lord Jesus and of His Person. Believers who are spiritually rich bring a young bull in a spiritual sense. Believers who have not yet seen so much of the glory of the Lord Jesus, possibly also because they have not been that busy with it, bring a smaller offering.

A burnt offering of birds is the smallest burnt offering. This represents Him as the Man Who came from heaven. The believer who brings this offering understands the unique origin of the Lord Jesus, but is weak in his awareness that He, as Man on earth, has perfectly glorified God.

There are even elements in this offering that God cannot accept, which must be taken away. Thus we can speak about the Lord Jesus or His work and say things to God that He cannot accept because they are not right. But even though someone is young or weak in his faith and comes with an offering of birds in which something is wrong, if the wrong is taken away, the offering is still “of a soothing aroma to the LORD”.

Leviticus 2

Introduction

The “grain offering” is the only non-blood offering of the five offerings. That is why there is no question of atonement here. However, it is mentioned in one breath with the burnt offering (cf. Exo 40:29). The LORD continues to speak here without pause.

The grain offering speaks of the perfect life of the Lord Jesus. But the perfect life of the Lord Jesus can never take away sins. No human being can be saved by His holy life because it has no atoning effect. Atonement can only happen through the blood. Therefore, a grain offering is always connected to a blood burnt offering. However, the atoning death of Christ could not have taken place without a life perfectly devoted to God prior to it.

Historically, the grain offering – a picture of the life of the Lord Jesus – precedes the burnt offering – a picture of the death of the Lord Jesus. The fact that the burnt offering is spoken of first and only then of the grain offering shows that it is impossible to understand anything about the life of the Lord Jesus without first seeing what His death means.

Just like the burnt offering, the grain offering is also “a soothing aroma to the LORD”. For there is a part that is brought on the altar and burned. Nothing may be eaten of the burnt offering: everything is for the LORD. But what is left of the grain offering is for the priests. They may eat it as something “most holy” (verses 3,10).

The manna may also be eaten by priests and also the common people can eat from that. The manna speaks of the Lord Jesus (Jn 6:48-51). The manna serves as food for the people on their journey through the wilderness. Spiritually, the manna shows that we may feed ourselves with the Lord Jesus to gain strength to continue our journey through this life. When we read about Him in the Gospels, we see how He went through life on earth. To hear Him speak and to see Him act for the glory of God gives us strength to do the same.

But there is a difference between the manna and the grain offering. The grain offering does not represent the Lord Jesus in His way through this world, but speaks of what He is in Himself, speaks of the glory of His perfect Manhood. To see that distinction, you must be a priest, that is to say, be used to live in God's presence. Believers who are priests in practice enjoy the Lord Jesus, enjoy Him as He is, and offer this to God as a soothing aroma to Him.

Verses 1-3 | Ingredients of the Grain Offering

1 'Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. 2 He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer [it] up in smoke [as] its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. 3 The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the LORD by fire.

The grain offering has three components:

1. "Flour." This comes from the wheat. That reminds us of John 12 (Jn 12:24). Wheat grows out of the earth. The Lord Jesus is "the fruit of the earth" (Isa 4:2; 53:2), because He is born as Man. The flour, that is the finest flour, speaks of the perfect purity – any dirt in it would immediately stand out – and the perfect equality of the particles. The triple and unambiguous testimony of Scripture therefore reads: "In Him there is no sin" (1Jn 3:5), "Him who knew no sin" (2Cor 5:21) and "who committed no sin" (1Pet 2:22).

His whole revelation is perfect at any time. He is perfect in showing love and grace, but also in holiness and righteousness. Everything with Him is perfect in His time. With us there is often unevenness, we have our outliers, even in that in which we are strong. Moses "was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3), but yet once loses his patience and he sins (Num 20:8-11).

2. "Oil." Oil is used for example for the ointment of priests and kings. It is a picture of the Holy Spirit (2Cor 1:21; 1Jn 2:20,27). In connec-

tion with the grain offering it shows how much the whole life of the Lord Jesus is characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus is He begotten by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35). In His whole life as Man on earth He is guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38); everything He says and does, He says and does in the power of the Holy Spirit. The oil 'moistens' the fine flour (Eze 46:14). Therefore His Name is "[like] purified oil" (Song 1:3). He is perfect and truly Man, and that without ceasing to be the eternal God.

3. "Frankincense." This is the pleasant fragrance that goes up from the offering to God. God has perfectly enjoyed the Man Christ Jesus in His life on earth until His death on the cross. Everything He does and says, until death on the cross, is a perfect pleasure for God.

Although the smell of the incense is for God, the priest who brings this offering smells the smell of it. We can understand that, when we consider that a priest is someone who is somewhat aware of how great the satisfaction is God has found in His Son.

To the grain offering a "memorial portion" is connected (verses 2,9,16). There are also two psalms that David has specially written "for a memorial" (Psa 38:1; 70:1). The expression "memorial" determines that when we bring a grain offering, we remember the life of the Lord Jesus on earth and remind God of that as it were. God loves to look back at the life of His Son on earth and wants to hear about it from us.

Verse 4 | The Grain Offering in the Oven

4 'Now when you bring an offering of a grain offering baked in an oven, [it shall be] unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil.

Just like the burnt offering, the grain offering also has some forms in which it can be brought. And just as with the burnt offering, God begins here with the greatest grain offering and then lets follow the smaller forms:

1. the grain offering in the oven;
2. the grain offering on the griddle;
3. the grain offering in a pan.

These different forms indicate the degree of insight that someone has who brings a grain offering. This can be seen from the description, which is becoming less and less detailed. All kinds are exposed to the fire. Fire represents the testing holiness of God. Through the fire, the life of the Lord Jesus only produces a soothing aroma to God.

The forms of suffering to which the Lord Jesus is exposed in His life are different. There are forms of suffering that even an unbeliever can recognize. Just think of the scourging by Pilate. This is represented in the grain offering in the pan, the third form of the grain offering. There are also forms that only they notice who live close to God and know His feelings about sin. We can think of the feelings of the Lord Jesus when seeing the iniquity and sin around Him.

The first grain offering to be described is the one “baked in an oven”. It consists of unleavened cakes mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil. Unleavened means without sin. This is the Lord Jesus. “Mixed with oil”, means that He was conceived by God the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35) and through this He is the Son of God. His Godhead is completely interwoven with His Mankind. This mystery can only be fathomed by God (Mt 11:27a).

Everything in His life He does guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus He lives among people who only do their own will, without asking for God’s will. This also applies to the thirty years of His life of which we know almost nothing from the Gospels. There are just a few believers who think about what suffering that must have meant to Him.

The “unleavened wafers spread with oil” represent the Lord Jesus when He is anointed with the Holy Spirit at the age of thirty. He Who is born of the Holy Spirit is anointed with the Spirit. That emphasizes His perfect Manhood. He does not want to do His service work on earth in His capacity as God, but as a perfect Man. Immediately after He is anointed, He is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, a temptation that lasts for forty days (Mk 1:9-13).

Who can realize what that must have been for Him? There is much of that suffering in the Gospels that many read without noticing it and of which we only discover something if we, as priests, can penetrate deeper into the

heart of God and the heart of the Lord Jesus. Such priests see the fire there and smell the soothing aroma it has produced to God.

Verses 5-6 | The Grain Offering on the Griddle

5 If your offering is a grain offering [made] on the griddle, [it shall be] of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil; 6 you shall break it into bits and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.

The grain offering “on the griddle” must be broken into bits. It is reminiscent of what the Lord Jesus experienced at the end of His life, when all friendship and love is broken into bits.

1. His disciples sleep while He has asked them to watch with Him (Mt 26:36-43).
2. Judas, whom He calls friend, betrays him (Mt 26:14-16,47-49).
3. Peter denies him (Mt 26:69-75).
4. The people who first hailed Him, reject Him and cry out: “Away with this man” (Lk 23:18).

When we think of the Lord Jesus in this way and tell God how He is perfect in these circumstances, we bring a grain offering from the griddle. Everything that has been done to the Lord Jesus in this respect has touched Him deeply. At the same time, in all those bits, all those events, it appears how much the Holy Spirit (the oil) has led Him to go His way to the end – to the glory of God.

Verse 7 | The Grain Offering in a Pan

7 Now if your offering is a grain offering [made] in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.

The grain offering “in a pan” is the smallest offering. To bring that, it does not take much insight into the life of the Lord Jesus. Even the word “unleavened” is missing here, which indicates in the application that the awareness of the complete sinlessness of the Lord Jesus is lacking. The absence of awareness does not mean that there may be ‘leaven’ in it and that God tolerates it. Verse 11 states that ‘no’ grain offering may be made with leaven.

In this grain offering a general feeling is expressed that every believer has when he thinks about how much the Lord Jesus must have suffered from the mockery and scourging. To tell God about that means to bring a grain offering to Him. This form of the grain offering is also “a soothing aroma to the LORD” (verse 9).

Verses 8-10 | The Priest and the Grain Offering

8 When you bring in the grain offering which is made of these things to the LORD, it shall be presented to the priest and he shall bring it to the altar. 9 The priest then shall take up from the grain offering its memorial portion, and shall offer [it] up in smoke on the altar [as] an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. 10 The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy of the offerings to the LORD by fire.

He who comes with a grain offering gives it to the priest. The offeror and the priest are both a picture of the believer. The believer may have seen something of the glory of the Lord Jesus. That is what he wants to tell God, to offer Him. In the moment that he tells it to God, he is busy as a priest. Until that moment he is an offeror, then he is busy with the offering itself, with the ‘ingredients’ of it. Being busy with the offering is the preparation for the priestly service.

No one but the priest may bring the offering. He is called by God. “And no one takes the honor to himself, but [receives it] when he is called by God, even as Aaron was” (Heb 5:4). It is the arrogance of the roman-catholic church that it does call priests. Every change that people make in matters regulated and determined by God brings with it a curse (cf. Dan 7:25-26).

Verses 11-12 | No Leaven, no Honey

11 ‘No grain offering, which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD. 12 As an offering of first fruits you shall bring them to the LORD, but they shall not ascend for a soothing aroma on the altar.

The grain offering shall not contain leaven or honey, while the salt shall not be lacking (verse 13). When we express our thoughts about the Lord Jesus to God, we can unfortunately make false statements about Him. If we

assume that the Lord Jesus could have sinned, even though He did not do it, it is leaven. Scripture unambiguously shows that the Lord Jesus could not sin.

We also nowhere find in Scripture, the idea that the Father left the Lord Jesus on the cross. We read the opposite in John 16 (Jn 16:32). The *Man* Jesus Christ is forsaken by *God* in the hours of darkness. It is also leaven to suppose that the Lord Jesus is under the wrath of God during His life on earth. On the contrary, He always does what the Father pleases, also on earth.

Honey is used in every pastry, as we now use sugar. But it may not be used in the grain offering. Honey in itself is good, it gives new energy (1Sam 14:27; Pro 24:13). It speaks of the pleasant sweetness of the natural things of life. We can think of the family relationship, the relationship between husband and wife and between parents and children. The natural feelings we have are not wrong. It is even wrong if they are lacking (2Tim 3:1-4).

The Lord Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to leaven, "which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened" (Mt 13:33). We see the three measures of flour in the grain offering, a picture of the perfect Manhood of Christ. The woman represents the false church. This shows in picture that the truth about Christ is corrupted by the false church.

The grain offering speaks of the perfectly devoted life of the Lord Jesus to God. In this dedication, 'honey' does not play a role. The Lord Jesus loves His mother Mary. At the cross we see how great His love and care for her are. But as soon as she interferes in His obedient fulfilment of the will of His Father, He must say: "Woman, what does that have to do with us? (Jn 2:4; Lk 2:49; Mk 3:33-35).

The Lord does not despise natural feelings. He has given them Himself to man. But they cannot have a place in the work He does. They are not allowed to do the same with us if we want to do a work for the Lord. They may hinder a real choice for the Lord Jesus, or the decision to do a work for Him (Mt 10:37; Lk 14:26). When we think about His suffering, it is not right that we do so with our natural feelings. We see such feelings in the women of Jerusalem, about whom the Lord gives a warning (Lk 23:27-28).

If there is any of these ingredients in the grain offering, the offering should be treated as an offering of first fruits. This offering may not come on the

altar. That is because there is leaven in it. This is discussed in more detail in Leviticus 23 (Lev 23:17). There we see that this offering speaks of the church. In the members of the church sin is still present (1Jn 1:8), although it is stripped of its power.

We see that with the offering of the first fruits also a sin offering is brought. This is not the case with the sheave of the first fruits (Lev 23:10), which speaks of the Lord Jesus. But isn't it a wonderful thought that we too can offer ourselves to God? And even though we are not like the Lord Jesus completely a pleasant fragrance for God, it is an offering that is pleasant to Him (Rom 12:1).

Verse 13 | Salt Must Be Added to the Grain Offering

13 Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

In this verse the salt is mentioned three times. Salt speaks of sustainability, because it repels corruption. We read elsewhere about a covenant of salt (2Chr 13:5). This is a covenant that does not dilute, but that withstands time and loses none of its efficacy. This certainly applies to Christ and His sacrifice. The Lord Jesus calls His followers for having "salt in themselves" (Mk 9:50). They should be the preserving element in the world (Mt 5:13a).

The salt as an addition to every grain offering ("all your offerings") means that the offering of the Lord Jesus keeps its value forever. The pleasure and the pleasant smell of the offering are not short-lived, transient, but permanent, everlasting in nature. It is "the salt of the covenant of your God", that is to say, that all promises of God are kept and that He will fulfil the obligations He has voluntarily taken upon Himself. Christ is the guarantee for this.

Verses 14-16 | The Grain Offering of the First Fruits

14 'Also if you bring a grain offering of early ripened things to the LORD, you shall bring fresh heads of grain roasted in the fire, grits of new growth, for the grain offering of your early ripened things. 15 You shall then put oil on it and lay incense on it; it is a grain offering. 16 The priest shall offer up in smoke its

memorial portion, part of its grits and its oil with all its incense as an offering by fire to the LORD.

In these verses we have another special form of the grain offering. Here it is not flour, finely ground, but an offering of early ripened things: these are first fruits. Unlike the first fruits of verse 12, they do come on the altar.

The difference between the two forms of first fruits can be seen in Leviticus 23 (Lev 23:10,15-17). The first mentioned first fruits (Lev 23:15-17) are a picture of the Lord Jesus. He is the sheaf of the first fruits (1Cor 15:20). In the other first fruits leaven is present. It is in the two breads for a wave offering – in which the effect of the leaven, because it is baked, has been brought to a standstill – which represent the church. The first mentioned offering (Lev 23:10) is a mandatory offering in the annual cycle of sacrifices. The offering in the verses here before us is a voluntary offering that may always be brought.

When we speak of ‘first fruits’ we also think of others. A first fruit is a first fruit of a large harvest. The life of the Lord Jesus on earth is also “a first fruit” in the sense that God sees a Man Who is the first Man ever perfectly dedicated to Him. Through His work on the cross He has opened the way for a large mass of people who, like Him, can walk dedicated to God. He is our Model, our Example (Phil 2:5). To bring such sacrifice to God means that we realize that we shall walk in the same manner as He walked (cf. 1Jn 2:6).

The fresh heads of grain represent the Lord Jesus in the power of His life. The roasted fresh heads of grain represent that He is exposed to the fire of God’s testing and examining holiness. This is not about His work on the cross, but about His walk. When He bears His cross and is on His way to Golgotha, He says: “For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Lk 23:31). With “the tree is green” He means Himself in His youthful power.

We listen to something like this when, in Psalms, with a view to His death, He says to God: “O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days” (Psa 102:24a). As Man, He is in the power of His life when it is asked of Him to surrender His life to death. He gave Himself completely, but as Man He could not desire to be taken away in the midst of His life.

Leviticus 3

Introduction

The “peace offering” is the middle of the five offerings. The burnt offering and the grain offering are voluntary offerings and for God. The sin offering and the guilt offering that follow are obligatory offerings and are necessary for the sins of the people or of a member of the people. The peace offering is rightly central. It expresses the fellowship that exists between God and His people on the basis of the powerful efficacy of the offering. It represents a fellowship meal.

From this offering God receives His share. The fat is called “food ... to the LORD” (verses 11,16). From this offering the priest and the priestly family receive their share (Lev 7:31). And from this offering, as the only offering in the Old Testament, all of the people may eat who are clean (Lev 7:19). It is a feast with an offering through which atonement has been made and in which the ‘parties’ that have been atoned, God and man, each have their share and also the priest – as a picture the Lord Jesus through Whom the atonement has been made (1Jn 1:3-4).

What the peace offering means to us is explained in 1 Corinthians 10 (1Cor 10:16-21). For us it means the Table of the Lord where the fellowship between God and the Lord Jesus and all His own is celebrated in the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Table is used in the Old Testament as an expression for the altar (Eze 44:16; Mal 1:7).

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial meal. Each time the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, we remember what the Lord Jesus did on the cross. The Lord has also asked this: “Do this in remembrance of Me” (1Cor 11:23-26). Remembering Him means telling God how great He is of Whom we too enjoy now, together with the Father. Then we will also have fellowship with each other. We symbolically express this in the breaking of the bread.

To express fellowship in eating together there must be something to eat. There must be spiritual awareness of what fellowship is. Paul therefore says: “I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say” (1Cor 10:15). Children

at the Lord's Supper is therefore also impossible, for they do not belong to the 'wise men'.

As with the previous offerings, here too we find first the larger and then the smaller offerings. We find no birds here like in Leviticus 1 (Lev 1:14-17).

Verse 1 | The Peace Offering of the Herd

1 'Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD.

A peace offering is, like the burnt offering and the grain offering, a voluntary offering. Similarly, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is not a matter of obligation. Anyone who realizes the privilege of this, and especially the desire of God and the Lord Jesus to have fellowship with His people in it, will not lightly stay away from the Lord's Supper.

The peace offering may be a male or a female animal. In the case of a burnt offering, it may only be a male animal. Male or female does not have to do with larger or smaller. Whether an offering is larger or smaller is expressed in the difference in the kind of animal. The difference in male or female has to do with a certain aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus.

In general, it can be said that in the pictures of Scripture, the female brings out more a person's position, and the male brings out more of the behavior that belongs to that position. The male represents more active, powerful obedience, the female more passive, patient and submissive obedience. In connection with the offering one brings, one who brings a male offering is looking more at the way the Lord Jesus did the work, while one who brings a female offering looks more at the attitude while doing that work.

Why does an Israelite voluntarily bring a peace offering and not, for example, a voluntary burnt offering? Because he wants to share his gratitude to the LORD, for what He does and Who He is, with others. When someone brings a burnt offering, he remembers what the Lord Jesus is in Himself before God. The peace offering is about bringing his joy about the Lord Jesus before God together with others who recognize and agree to this joy. Just as the joy of parents increases when they enjoy their children together, just because they enjoy together, so it is with the worshipers.

Verse 2 | Slay and Sprinkling the Blood

2 He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar.

The laying on of hands is the sign of identification. The offeror identifies himself with the value of the animal. It is the consciousness of the believer that he can have fellowship with God because God sees him in the value of the offering. Our peace with God and the resulting gratitude are based on the fact that we are one with Christ. If we thank God for the Lord Jesus, we may know that Christ has accomplished everything to make this possible.

The slaying of the animal speaks of the death of Christ on the basis of which we can now have fellowship with God, with the Lord Jesus and with each other. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we do not proclaim 'the Lord's life', but we proclaim "the Lord's death" (1Cor 11:26). It is a proclamation without words. The act of breaking of the bread and drinking of the wine is that proclamation. By this we say that we owe everything to His death.

Blood speaks of atonement, forgiveness and extermination of sins (Heb 9:22). Any obstacle to being accepted by God is thereby taken away. It is the foundation upon which we stand before God, through which we can have fellowship with Him. Therefore, "a sharing in the blood of Christ" is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10 before "a sharing in the body of Christ" (1Cor 10:16).

Verses 3-5 | The Fat

3 From the sacrifice of the peace offerings he shall present an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, 4 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. 5 Then Aaron's sons shall offer [it] up in smoke on the altar on the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The fat is mentioned here in more detail than in any other offering. It is called "food ... to the LORD" (verses 11,16; Num 28:2). All the fat is for the

LORD. The large abundance of fat indicates that it is a healthy animal. Fat represents the energy with which the Lord Jesus accomplished the work. Only God is able to fully appreciate that. We offer fat when we tell God how everything in the Lord Jesus is aimed at glorifying God on earth, that He has completely surrendered His whole life to it.

“The entrails” speak of the feelings of the Lord Jesus (see comments on Leviticus 1:9). The fat that covers those entrails and all the fat that is attached to them are seen in the complete devotion of the heart with which He has done His work. In His surrender to death He is internally driven by perfect love. It has been His desire to do God’s will, as He already says “when He comes into the world” (Heb 10:5): “Behold, I have come to do Your will” (Heb 10:9). His whole heart is focused on this when He enters the world.

The “kidneys” are a picture of wisdom. It is wisdom to be able to distinguish between good and evil. Kidneys secrete the harmful substances in our body. The fat on the kidneys speaks of the perfect feelings of the Lord Jesus in distinguishing between good and evil. God has tried His heart and mind, literally kidneys (Psa 7:9; 16:7; 26:2; Jer 20:12). This distinction between good and evil has given Him the strength for His walk, of which “the loins” speak.

The “liver” is mentioned three times in Scripture outside the sacrifices (Pro 7:23; Lam 2:11; Eze 21:21). In these texts we see a certain lack of orientation. That is totally different with the Lord. His orientation is the eye of His Father. He has been guided by this. It is the inner power in His devotion.

The peace offering is offered on the burnt offering. This shows the close connection that exists between this form of the peace offering and the burnt offering. We don’t find that in the peace offering from the flock.

Verse 6 | The Peace Offering From the Flock

6 But if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD is from the flock, he shall offer it, male or female, without defect.

As with the previous offerings, there is also the possibility to bring a smaller offering in the case of a peace offering. God always begins with the greatest, but He gives His people the opportunity to bring a smaller offering if a greater offering cannot (yet) be brought.

The peace offering from the flock may be a male or female, as long as it is perfect. Whatever we offer God of our awareness of the Lord Jesus and His work, God cannot accept anything that is not perfect. However little we know about the Lord Jesus, it has to be clear to us that there is no defect in Him. All His qualities are perfect and are always expressed in a perfect way.

Verses 7-11 | A Lamb as a Peace Offering

7 If he is going to offer a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, 8 and he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it before the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 9 From the sacrifice of peace offerings he shall bring as an offering by fire to the LORD, its fat, the entire fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, 10 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. 11 Then the priest shall offer [it] up in smoke on the altar [as] food, an offering by fire to the LORD.

When we think of a lamb as a peace offering, we think of qualities like gentleness and surrender, willingly bearing suffering of maltreatment. We see these features with the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. We can rejoice together with the Father and the church about it. It is impressive and the Father would love to hear from us how impressed we are with it.

This is more passive, while in the young bull we see more the active willpower that is in the Lord Jesus to accomplish the work completely to the glory of God. The latter is therefore connected to the burnt offering in verse 5, which is not mentioned with the lamb. But it is “food, ... to the LORD”. ‘Food’ is literally ‘bread’.

The actions involved in bringing a lamb are exactly the same as with a bull. However, the fat tail and the backbone are also mentioned. The fat tail is a special delicacy. It points to the special aspects of the work of the Lord Jesus, which the believer has particularly enjoyed and about which He tells God. The backbone points to the Lord's inflexibility in His way on earth in relation to all iniquity that is inflicted upon Him or offered. He is, in the truest sense of the word, a Man ‘with backbone’.

Verses 12-16 | A Goat as a Peace Offering

12 *Moreover, if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD, 13 and he shall lay his hand on its head and slay it before the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 14 From it he shall present his offering as an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, 15 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. 16 The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar [as] food, an offering by fire for a soothing aroma; all fat is the LORD's.*

A goat is actually the animal for the sin offering. Here we don't think so much of a certain feature, like with the bull and the sheep, but of something negative: removal of the sins.

Many believers who worship the Lord Jesus and would like to bring a peace offering do not get any further than to thank Him for taking away their sins through His work on the cross. The fellowship with the other members of the church and the joy they have together are especially enjoyed in the gratitude that is there because the sins are forgiven. Yet this is also an offering "for a soothing aroma" to God.

Verse 17 | Prohibition of Eating Fat and Blood

17 *It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood."*

God reserves the right to fat and blood. The inner energy with which the Lord Jesus did the work can only be fully understood by Him. Because God is the Giver of life, He is also the Only One entitled to it. Since life is in the blood, the blood is for Him alone. The prohibition to eat fat and blood is further elaborated in Leviticus 7 (Lev 7:22-27), there also in connection with the peace offering.

Leviticus 4

Introduction

The first three chapters form a whole. They are spoken as an ongoing speech of the LORD to Moses. In these chapters it is about voluntary offerings, which are a soothing aroma to God.

The offerings that now come in Leviticus 4-5 are not voluntary. God commands these offerings. It is about sin, and in that case, God prescribes how and what is to be offered. There is also no freedom of choice as with the previous offerings. Nor are they offerings to a soothing aroma. Here he who offers the animal does not approach as a worshiper, as in the first three chapters, but as a sinner. Here it is not someone who is clean to have fellowship with the LORD, but someone who is guilty.

The sin offering is not for a sinner who lives without God, but for someone who is already a member of God's people, but has sinned. A child of God can sin (1Jn 2:1). This disrupts fellowship with the Father. In the sin offering God prescribes how fellowship can be restored. In the sin offering we see a picture of the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross through which sins can be forgiven (1Jn 2:2).

In the sin offering seven different cases are distinguished, four in Leviticus 4 and three in Leviticus 5:1-13. The three cases in Leviticus 5 concern concrete, named sins. These sin offerings therefore bear more of the character of the guilt offering that is discussed in the remainder of Leviticus 5. Guilt arises when a commandment is transgressed.

In Leviticus 4 sin is not presented as transgression, but sin is everything that does not happen out of obedience to God: "Sin is lawlessness" (1Jn 3:4). Lawlessness does not mean 'without law', but means 'without acknowledging God's authority over us'. Sin is not only murder and stealing, something that also people without God see as wrong, but everything that does not happen by faith (Rom 14:23; Jam 4:17). Sin is not only about what we do, it can also be something we fail to do. Sin is all that deviates from the Lord's will.

Verses 1-2 | Sin Without Intention

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them,

Here a new beginning is made, which can be seen from the words "then the LORD spoke to Moses". These words are also at the beginning of the previous three offerings. Just as the previous offerings form a separate category, so too the following offerings, the sin offerings and guilt offerings, form a separate category.

From the first words the LORD speaks, it appears that He presupposes that a member of His people does not sin intentionally, but unintentionally. There is no offering for anyone who intentionally sins, who sins "defiantly" or "willfully", that is to say, who rebels openly against God. Such a person shall be cut off from among his people (Num 15:30; Heb 10:26).

A believer can also sin consciously, but at the same time he hates the sin he commits. His new nature resists this. To succumb to a temptation in the consciousness that a sin is committed, is not yet sinning in conscious rebellion against God, to defy Him. It is about falling into sin, not living in sin. There is talk of being "caught in any trespass" (Gal 6:1).

It is a misconception to think that God does not charge someone an unconscious sin. That He does indeed see unconscious sin as sin is shown by the offering He has given for it.

Verse 3 | The Anointed Priest

3 if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed.

The anointed priest must be the high priest. He too can sin (Heb 5:3; Lev 9:7; 16:6). If he sins, it does not only affect himself, but the whole people are guilty through his sin. The fellowship between God and His people has been broken. He is, after all, the representative of the people to God. Therefore, this case is on the same line as the second case, if the whole congregation of Israel sins (verses 13-21).

The anointed priest must know best about the holiness of God. He must know better than anyone what sin means to God. Therefore, in this case a great offering must be brought, which speaks of a great insight into the work of the Lord Jesus. When the anointed priest sins, the blood of the offering is brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled in front of the veil (verses 5-6). The blood is also put on the horns of the altar of incense. This also happens when the whole people have sinned (verses 17-18), but not when a leader or anyone of the common people has sinned. Another difference between the first two sin offerings and the last two is that only in the first two cases the offering animal is taken outside the camp and burned there.

The anointed priest has to offer a bull for his sin. It is not mentioned, as in the other cases, that his sin first became known to him. In his relationship with God, he will immediately notice if this relationship is disturbed and that there must therefore be a sin which he has committed, albeit unintentionally.

In the spiritual application, every believer is an anointed priest. If a believer discovers that he has sinned, it is due to the work of the Lord Jesus as the Advocate with the Father (1Jn 2:1). As soon as he perceives his sin, he will confess it and not wait until the evening to confess it. He will also consciously think about the fact that for that sin the Lord Jesus had to die. That will bring about deep humiliation.

Verse 4 | The Sin Offering Has to Be Slain

4 He shall bring the bull to the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull and slay the bull before the LORD.

The anointed priest has no choice when it comes to the offering he has to bring for his sin. The offering must be a bull. A bull is a great offering. In the picture, it assumes that the anointed priest has a great insight into what this bull represents. It represents how the Lord Jesus accomplished the great work with determined power and that He had to accomplish that work for this sin as well. The priest must be aware of this.

He must bring his offering animal “to the doorway of the tent of meeting”. The sin of the anointed priest has consequences for the service in the tent

where God meets His people. He must bring it “before the LORD”. If we have sinned, we must confess it before God. We must once again realize that the Lord Jesus had to come under God’s judgment for that sin, and had to die. We must, as it were, go back to the cross to see what the Lord Jesus had to suffer in order to work atonement for this sin.

The placing of the hand on the head of the sin offering expresses identification with the offering. For the worshiper in the previous chapters, the laying on of hands means that he is made one with the acceptability of the offering animal. In the sin offering it means that the animal is identified with the unacceptability of the one who offers the animal. The sinfulness of the sinner is transmitted in picture to the offering.

After this identification the bull has to be slain. The anointed priest does that himself. After all, he has sinned. It suggests that we become aware again: what happened to the Lord Jesus happened in my place. The picture of slaying shows that every sin results in death: “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). As long as there are excuses for the sin committed, the confession is incomplete.

Verses 5-7 | The Blood of the Sin Offering

5 Then the anointed priest is to take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting, 6 and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 7 The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the LORD in the tent of meeting; and all the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

By the sin of the anointed priest, the way to the sanctuary is blocked. By sprinkling the blood, the way to and in the sanctuary is sanctified again. Also, because of his sin it is not possible to offer fragrant incense. The blood at the horns of the altar of fragrant incense clears the way to bring again fragrant incense. Fragrant incense speaks of prayers (Psa 141:2). This relates to the mediating work of the anointed priest, to his approach to God for the benefit of the people. That way will also be cleansed again. There can again be strength – of which the horns speak – from prayer, from intercession.

The rest of the blood is poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The people may come to the altar of burnt offering. That way is also free. The poured-out blood speaks of the Lord Jesus that “He poured out Himself to death” (Isa 53:12), for life is in the blood. “But when Christ appeared [as] a high priest ... not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb 9:11-12).

Everything is connected to “the tent of meeting”, the name that indicates that God wants to come together with His people here. This has been made impossible by sin and is made possible again by the death and the blood of the sin offering.

Verses 8-10 | The Fat of the Sin Offering

8 He shall remove from it all the fat of the bull of the sin offering: the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat which is on the entrails, 9 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys 10 (just as it is removed from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings), and the priest is to offer them up in smoke on the altar of burnt offering.

The burnt offering altar can be used again. The fat of the sin offering can be put on it. This is the only thing of the sin offering that comes on the altar of burnt offering. It speaks of the power, the energy with which the Lord Jesus did the work as the sin offering, and that is pleasant for God, “for a soothing aroma” to Him (verse 31).

Verses 11-12 | Outside the Camp

11 But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, 12 that is, all [the rest of] the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

The bull must not only be slain, it must also be burned, outside the camp, so outside the place where God lives, on a clean place. The Lord Jesus did not die an ‘ordinary’ death. He was taken out of Jerusalem by the people

and died there under the judgment of God on the sins. He has been forsaken of God.

None of God's children who died has ever been forsaken by God. Martyrs could die at the stake singing because God was with them. But the Lord Jesus died, while He Himself has borne the sins of all who believe in Him "in His body on the cross" (1Pet 2:24) and was "made sin" for them by God (2Cor 5:21). That is what He prayed in Gethsemane on His face that the cup should pass from Him. But He is also perfect then and says to His Father: "Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Mt 26:39). His perfect obedience brings him to Golgotha. That is why this place is a clean place at the same time.

The Lord Jesus is made sin. God has "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and [as an offering] for sin, ... condemned sin in the flesh", His flesh, on the cross (Rom 8:3), that is to be the sin offering. The sin offering must be burned outside the camp, far from the place where God dwells. It means that God is not *with* Him, but *against* Him, in the three hours of darkness when He bears the sins and is made sin.

Every part of the animal is burned to ashes. 'Burn' means a different thought than "to offer ... up in smoke" in the previous chapters and also here in verse 10. 'To offer up in smoke' is in connection with the pleasure of God; "to burn" is in connection with God's wrath.

'Burning' happened in my place. I have to realize that well when I have sinned again. Again and again I have to realize that

1. by nature all my thoughts are sinful: the head is burned,
2. my walk is sinful: the legs are burned,
3. my feelings are spoiled by sin: the entrails are burned,
4. everything that emanates from me is only filth: the refuse is burned.

I have deserved judgment, but the Lord Jesus, as the innocent Offering, has undergone it for me.

"Outside the camp" also has an application for us. This is clear from Hebrews 13. There is talk of sin offerings whose "bodies ... are burned outside the camp" (Heb 13:11). The camp in that verse is a reference to Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God; therefore sin offerings should be burned out-

side and not inside. Parallel to this, the Lord Jesus suffered as a sin offering not inside Jerusalem but outside, outside the gate, outside the camp (Heb 13:12). Immediately thereafter it says: “So, let us go out to Him outside the camp” (Heb 13:13). Jerusalem has become an unholy place and that has become visible because the Jewish system threw the Holy One out of the city. Therefore, from that moment until today the believers are called upon to leave – that means: to break with – everything that is so unholy, that there is no place in it for the Holy and Just One. To remain in the picture, we can say: in such an unholy camp the believer no longer feels at home, so he is called to leave it and go out to the Lord Jesus.

It can still be said of ‘the camp’ that it is a picture of Christianity in its outer form. It is the picture of the religion where great emphasis is placed on outward things, where a mediating priesthood is maintained, but where there is no place for the Christ of the Scriptures. From Hebrews 13 we can learn that the position of the New Testament believer is threefold: he is at the altar (Heb 13:10), in the sanctuary, and outside the camp (Heb 13:11-13).

For all Christian churches where the characteristics of the camp are seen, the command today is also for the individual to go out to Him. To be connected to a glorified Lord in heaven goes hand in hand with being connected to a Christ reproached on earth. Moses also chose “the reproach of Christ” because he considered it “greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (Heb 11:26).

Verses 13-21 | If the Whole Congregation of Israel Has Sinned

13 'Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty; 14 when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a bull of the herd for a sin offering and bring it before the tent of meeting. 15 Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be slain before the LORD. 16 Then the anointed priest is to bring some of the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting; 17 and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle [it] seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. 18 He shall put some of the blood on the

horns of the altar which is before the LORD in the tent of meeting; and all the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 19 He shall remove all its fat from it and offer it up in smoke on the altar. 20 He shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. 21 Then he is to bring out the bull to [a place] outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

We get a second case of sin for which a sin offering must be offered, and that is the case when the whole congregation of Israel has sinned. There is something here that is not mentioned in the case of the sin of the anointed priest, and that is that “the matter escapes the notice of the assembly”. In the Christian church sin is often not noticed because God’s Word is not read. But our ignorance of the Word of God doesn’t make us less guilty. If the opening of God’s Word opens the eyes to a sin, a sin offering must be offered.

The sin offering for the sin of the whole congregation corresponds in many ways to the sin offering for the anointed priest. In both cases the fellowship of the whole people with God is broken. The way to God in the sanctuary must be cleansed by blood, as must the service at the altar of incense. The animal also needs to be burned outside the camp.

The sin of the whole congregation can be applied to the situation in Corinth. There is sin there, which has defiled the entire church. God came there with His discipline (1Cor 11:30). They have a case of immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles (1Cor 5:1). Perhaps it is hidden first, as is written here in verse 13. But God makes it known (verse 14).

We must be open to God telling us that we, as a local church, do things that in His eyes are sin. We can wrongly exclude someone from or accept someone into fellowship, that is, we wrongly maintain someone in the midst of the believers or refuse to accept someone who does belong there.

In Joshua 7 we see a case where the sin of one man, Achan, is charged to the whole congregation (Jos 7:1). God takes care that sin is made known and is removed from among them.

On behalf of the whole people, the elders put their hands on the head of the bull (verse 15). Because of this, the sin of the whole people passes, as it were, to the animal and atonement can take place. Not only does the offering correspond to the offering for the anointed priest, but also the acts performed correspond to the acts performed when the anointed priest has sinned.

Verses 22-26 | When a Leader Has Sinned

22 'When a leader sins and unintentionally does any one of all the things which the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, and he becomes guilty, 23 if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect. 24 He shall lay his hand on the head of the male goat and slay it in the place where they slay the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a sin offering. 25 Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and [the rest of] its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. 26 All its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as [in the case of] the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he will be forgiven.

The third category of which the LORD speaks to Moses is a leader of the people who sins. The sin of a leader does not endanger the fellowship of the whole people with God. Therefore a smaller offering can be offered. Yet his sin is serious. The sin of a leader can be applied to the sinning by one who holds a responsible position in the midst of God's people (cf. 1Tim 5:19-20). Such a person leads others. His example is of great importance. If he sins, it is a serious matter.

It is about a sin he committed unintentionally. This is evident from the words "if his sin which he has committed is made known to him" (verse 23; verse 28). It may be that someone has made him aware of this. We could say that the service of foot washing was done to him (Jn 13:1-10).

It is not pleasant to point out sin to anyone. Yet it is a service. If we let sin exist in a person's life without pointing it out, we actually hate him (Lev 19:17). Sin makes one unhappy, for it makes it impossible for him to have fellowship with God and his fellow believers.

The leader must confess his sin, openly. He does this by going to the priest at the altar with a sin offering. He must see how the animal is slain in his place. The blood is put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, but not brought into the sanctuary as in the case of a sin of the anointed priest or of the whole congregation.

That the blood must be put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering is because there too the peace offering is brought, which speaks of fellowship with God and with the other members of the people of God. That is what we have in the Table of the Lord. If anyone has sinned, fellowship with God and with each other is only possible again after confession and looking to the offering of Christ.

On the basis of the offering can be said: "And he will be forgiven" (verses 26,31,35). Then the joy of forgiveness comes back (Rom 4:6-8). With the Israelite, repetition of the offering is always necessary. He only knows the certainty of forgiveness after having brought an offering. When he commits a new sin, he must come with a new offering.

The Christian may know the certainty of the forgiveness of all his sins on the basis of the once for all accomplished work of Christ (Heb 10:1-14). If he sins, Christ must not die again for him, but he must confess his sin. Then God is "faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1Jn 1:9), on the basis of the once for all accomplished work of Christ.

Verses 27-35 | Sin of Anyone of the Common People

27 'Now if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty, 28 if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin which he has committed. 29 He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30 The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all [the rest of] its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. 31 Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat was removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will

be forgiven. 32 'But if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring it, a female without defect. 33 He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they slay the burnt offering. 34 The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and all [the rest of] its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. 35 Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

The fourth category is sin committed by a common member of the people. In that case, such a person has the choice between a goat or a lamb. If such a person sins, he cannot hide behind ignorance or his own smallness. Sin, committed by whoever it may be, is an abomination to God. But the sinner, whoever he may be, is precious in God's sight. That is why He has the right means for everyone to become clean before Him again. Every means speaks of the Lord Jesus. The distinction in offering represents the difference in insight that exists among the members of the people of God. It presupposes that every member has a certain insight.

If it is a personal sin, the fellowship of the people with the LORD in general is not interrupted. There is no talk of putting blood on the altar of incense, as is the case in verse 7 and verse 18, because these are situations where the fellowship of the whole people with God through sin is broken. The sin of the individual does not make the altar of incense unclean; it is not made unsuitable for use by the people.

The individual who has sinned loses the enjoyment of the blessing that is embodied in being part of the congregation. Therefore, the blood of the sin offering is applied to the horns of the altar of burnt offering as the place of personal access to God.

The fellowship of the church as a body of worshipers is not interrupted by the sin of the individual, although it is defective and impeded. The LORD sometimes punishes the whole assembly when the sin of the individual remains hidden, as we see with Achan (Jos 7:1). A healthy state in which God is not saddened or offended is characterized by strength. When con-

science is active and the heart is interested in the blessing of God's people, this will lead to finding the cause if there is weakness and loss. When sin is discovered and judged, the blessing returns.

There is another peculiarity with this sin offering that we do not have with the previous sin offerings. This is the fat which is sacrificed and which is a soothing aroma to the LORD. While every sin is awful in God's eye, and the Lord Jesus, when made sin, is awful in God's eye, all God's pleasure rests upon Him at the same time.

When we remember that God has been so dishonored by sin and that the Lord Jesus, through His work on the cross, has paid the price for it, then God is glorified in that same work. Through sin man has robbed the honor of God. The Lord Jesus has done everything – which the fat speaks of – to restore what He has not stolen, that is the honor of God (Psa 69:4b). Therefore, His work is a pleasant or soothing aroma.

Leviticus 5

Introduction

Verses 1-13 of this chapter are a kind of intermediate form between sin offering and guilt offering. The sin offering in Leviticus 4 shows what the character of sin is, that kind of sin is contrary to the holy nature of God, and not so much what that sin consists of, what sin was committed. It also shows that the position of someone who is sinning is important. The guilt offering is more about the deed that is done and the satisfaction to the LORD against Whom the deed is done.

The word 'guilt' means to be guilty toward someone to whom we are accountable. It is guilt we impose on ourselves when we unlawfully appropriate another's property or withhold from someone something to which he is entitled. It can be about material things, but also about immaterial things, like someone's good name or something by which he suffers disadvantage.

Verse 1 | Guilty By Not Telling the Truth

1 'Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration [to testify] when he is a witness, whether he has seen or [otherwise] known, if he does not tell [it], then he will bear his guilt.'

A "public adjuration" that someone hears is a situation in which a judge implores an accused person under oath by pronouncing the oath formula (Num 5:20-21; Mt 26:63). This places an obligation on the defendant to speak the truth. If he does not do so, and there is someone present who knows the facts, but does not tell them, then he too is guilty. So it is about someone sinning and blaming himself when he is silent, while he has to speak.

An example of this can be found in Proverbs 29. It is about the henchman of a thief (Pro 29:24). If the thief and he are caught, he must testify against the thief and against himself. The judge hears him under oath, which he indicates by pronouncing a curse. The henchman can remain silent because he is afraid of the thief's revenge and is also afraid of a conviction by

the judge. This makes him guilty of two sins: his help to the thief and his refusal to testify.

It isn't enough to merely not tell lies. God also requires His people to make the truth known. Even if one merely knew about a lie, he is responsible to make the truth known. If he does not tell it, he bears guilt. Therefore, it was the duty of someone who was a witness to come forward and tell the truth about the matter. Not bearing witness to the truth is a sin.

We can say that the same principle applies to our testifying of Jesus Christ in Christianity. It isn't enough that we refrain from actively denying the Lord Jesus or lying about our relationship with Him. We must also, if it is asked from us, tell the truth about Him, about everything He has made known about Himself in His Word.

In a broader sense we can apply this to the responsibility we have to people who do not know the gospel. Then we are responsible for giving our testimony that we know the Lord Jesus. God can bring us into circumstances where we clearly see His hand to give a testimony of Who He is. If we then remain silent, we are guilty. We should always be ready "to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1Pet 3:15).

Verses 2-3 | Guilty Through Carelessness

2 Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. 3 Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever [sort] his uncleanness [may] be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know [it], he will be guilty.

Someone sins and charges guilt upon himself by touching something unclean. It is an unconscious, direct, personal contact with something unclean. It is a sin of carelessness. However, it will somehow become clear to him that he has become unclean. Only then he will be able to see it and bring the appropriate offering.

There are two forms in becoming uncleanness. The first is by touching the carcass of unclean animals. That represents death in the world around us.

Death stands for everything that is not connected with the living God. We cannot take death out of the world and therefore we run the risk of coming into contact with it in all sorts of ways.

‘Touching’ has a spiritual meaning for us. This is done, for example, by seeing impureness and violence and hearing falsehood. It is our responsibility that we do not (continue to) look at it and do not (continue to) listen to it. In cases where we cannot help it, we can learn spiritual lessons from the precepts of Numbers 19 (Num 19:11-22).

The second is to touch the uncleanness of a human being. We can apply this to, for example, taking over things from the people of the world, such as their behavior, talking and striving. This happens when we make friends with the world, have friends who do not know the Lord. Scripture calls this “hostility toward God” (Jam 4:4). Friendship with the world makes us come under its influence. Not we have influence on them, but they have influence on us. “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals” (1Cor 15:33).

The Christian cannot become unclean by literally touching certain things. The Lord Jesus has already pointed this out with an emphatic “hear and understand” followed by: “[It is] not what enters into the mouth [that] defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man” (Mt 15:10-11). Defilement happens in the heart, as the Lord says a few verses later: “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man” (Mt 15:18-20a).

Verse 4 | Guilty Through Thoughtless Speaking

4 Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know [it], he will be guilty in one of these.

Someone sins and charges guilt when he speaks hastily and overconfidently. This is failure in self-control, there is no control over the flesh. Peter first claims at high and low in gross self-esteem that, although all his fellow disciples fall away because of the Lord, he will never fall away (Mt 26:33).

But a while later he swears that he does not know the Lord (Mt 26:69-75). Both times he has lost control of himself and he is acting carnally.

We can apply this to well-meant promises, like saying to someone that we will come to visit, but we don't do it. We make such a promise more to encourage the other person at the moment of the promise that we will not forget him than that we really intend to visit him. Also if we wish someone something bad out loud because he has wronged us – which we fortunately, in general, don't bring into practice – these are words that have been “thoughtlessly” spoken. It is because of these words that we are guilty. If we are later reminded of our promise, we will have to confess that we have spoken those words thoughtlessly.

Verses 5-13 | Sin Offerings According to Capacities

5 So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. 6 He shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin. 7 'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. 8 He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first that which is for the sin offering and shall nip its head at the front of its neck, but he shall not sever [it]. 9 He shall also sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar: it is a sin offering. 10 The second he shall then prepare as a burnt offering according to the ordinance. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it will be forgiven him. 11 'But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then for his offering for that which he has sinned, he shall bring the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it or place incense on it, for it is a sin offering. 12 He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as its memorial portion and offer [it] up in smoke on the altar, with the offerings of the LORD by fire: it is a sin offering. 13 So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he has committed from one of these, and it will be forgiven him; then [the rest] shall become the priest's, like the grain offering.'"

If we have committed any of these sins, this sin should be confessed as soon as it is known. Confession means that sin is called by name – “he shall confess that in which he has sinned”. Also a guilt offering must be brought as a sin offering. This means for us – not that the Lord Jesus must die again, but – that we must realize that He had to die for the sin we just committed. It must also be clear to us that God has been dishonored by this sin.

The size of the offering determines the extent to which we are aware of how much God has been dishonored by this sin and how much the Lord Jesus has had to suffer. A larger offering indicates a greater awareness of this, a smaller offering indicates a smaller awareness. But apart from the extent of the awareness there is forgiveness on the basis of the offering. This shows that in the end it is God who deals according to the value that the offering has for Him. And it is also fortunate that we do not receive forgiveness because of our understanding of the work of the Lord Jesus, but because of what God sees in it. This does not mean, however, that it does not matter to what extent we penetrate into the meaning of the cross.

Someone who comes with two birds (verses 7-10), brings a small offering. The burnt offering, for which the second bird must be prepared, serves as a substitute for the fat of the larger sin offerings. The sin offering is a horrible thing for God, but the fat is not. But there is no fat on a bird. That is why the second bird is destined as a burnt offering. However horrible the sin offering may be, there is something in it that glorifies God. God would like to hear from us that He Who wanted to die for our sins is also the One Who glorified Him and in whose work He found full satisfaction.

Someone can be so poor that he brings only a handful of fine flour as a sin offering (verses 11-13). It is exceptional that a non-bloody offering serves for atonement. This speaks of someone who has very little awareness of the work of the Lord Jesus. It is someone who hardly realizes that blood had to flow to forgive sin. The only thing such a person sees is that the Lord Jesus is a perfect Man Who did not commit the sin he did. He realizes that there is salvation only through Him, without being aware that death is necessary as God’s judgment on his sin.

This offering of flour is reminiscent of the grain offering, but it is not. The oil and incense may not be added. It is a sin offering, and it is not pleasant to God.

This regulation for the poorest of the poor among God's people is also proof that God does not forgive according to our understanding of the work of the Lord Jesus, but according to His appreciation of it. For God it is important that He sees the sincerity of the confession, that someone really acknowledges his deed as sin toward Him.

Verses 14-16 | Sin Against the Holy Things

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 15 "If a person acts unfaithfully and sins unintentionally against the LORD's holy things, then he shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD: a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation in silver by shekels, in [terms of] the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. 16 He shall make restitution for that which he has sinned against the holy thing, and shall add to it a fifth part of it and give it to the priest. The priest shall then make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and it will be forgiven him.

The guilt offering provides for two forms of guilt, for guilt can arise in two ways: guilt toward God (Lev 5:14-19) and guilt toward the neighbor (Lev 6:1-7). Guilt toward God can also arise in two ways: by withholding from Him something that is due to Him (Lev 5:15-16) and by doing something that He has forbidden (Lev 5:17-19).

When we become unfaithful to "the LORD's holy things" we can think of taking away something that is set apart for Him – "holy" means "set apart for". It may be something that He has set apart for Himself, or it may be something that we have set apart for Him. We are "bought with a price" (1Cor 6:20) and we were "purchased for God" (Rev 5:9). We belong to God. He is entitled to our sacrifices of praise and thanks and to our material sacrifices (Heb 13:15-16), yes, our whole life (Rom 12:1).

If we deny Him our thanks, our gifts, our lives, we are guilty. For example, we can be in the meetings and sing along, without really thanking Him from our heart. We can only spend our money for our own pleasure. We can spend our time on worthless things. In all those aspects, which should all be sanctified to the LORD, we can become unfaithful.

It is assumed it happens "unintentionally". Yet we can become guilty if we do not keep an eye on the fact that everything belongs to the Lord. If we

become aware of this, we will have to offer a guilt offering and a further twenty percent. The prescribed animal as a guilt offering is a ram. There is no talk of any other kind of offering. This indicates that this offering is the same for everyone.

The ram is the animal that speaks of the dedication of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus has always sanctified everything to God perfectly. Everything in Him is for God. His dedication has been to death. This death was necessary, also for my lack of sanctification of everything God is entitled to. I have to realize that again. I need to dedicate myself to Him again and with even more dedication, twenty percent more.

The valuation of which is spoken is destined by Moses. The LORD speaks to him. Moses is the picture of the Lord Jesus as the great Teacher, Who speaks the Word of God with authority, the great Prophet, Who applies the Word of God to heart and conscience. The valuation in silver by shekels refers to the price the Lord Jesus paid on the cross. It is reminiscent of His blood. The valuation happens "in [terms of] the shekel of the sanctuary". This brings us into contact with the sanctuary, the place where God dwells. We do not determine the valuation of the guilt offering. The Lord Jesus does, in the sanctuary, before God.

The guilt must not only be confessed, but also paid back, with an additional amount of one fifth. If we confess our guilt before God and rededicate ourselves to Him, we will do so with greater zeal than before. This is because we have learned a little more about the grace of God and the work of the Lord Jesus. Peter is an example of this. He has denied the Lord three times. After his confession and restoration, he dedicates himself, in the knowledge of the grace that has been bestowed upon him, diligently to the work that the Lord has commissioned him to do (2Pet 1:12-15).

Verses 17-19 | Violation of a Commandment

17 "Now if a person sins and does any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment. 18 He is then to bring to the priest a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his error in which he sinned unintention-

ally and did not know [it], and it will be forgiven him. 19 It is a guilt offering; he was certainly guilty before the LORD."

For the violation of a commandment of the LORD may not be used as an excuse that we are unfamiliar with that commandment. It is like the saying: every citizen is supposed to know the law. Laws are always published. Violation of it is punishable by a penalty. What is self-evident in the jurisdiction of a people does not seem to apply to God. At least, that's how we sometimes behave.

But even if we have just been converted, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, through Whom we know all things (1Jn 2:20,27). So we cannot apologize if we do something the Lord has forbidden. What He wants of us always can be controlled by His Word. He will never ask anything of us that is contrary to His Word.

Leviticus 6

Verses 1-7 | Disadvantages of a neighbor

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted [to him], or through robbery, or [if] he has extorted from his companion, 3 or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; 4 then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, 5 or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day [he presents] his guilt offering. 6 Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, 7 and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt.”

Every sin against one’s neighbor is in the first place a sin against God. It is “unfaithfulness” against Him (cf. Jam 4:4). God has commanded how I should deal with my neighbor. If I wrong my neighbor, lie to him, or steal anything from him, or commit any form of injustice against him, I sin against God. I am unfaithful to the relationship in which I confess to stand before Him.

It is presented here in such a way that I wrong God when I wrong my brother or sister. My act against my neighbor is seen as an act against God. Therefore, a guilt offering must be brought to the LORD. Again the LORD says to Moses that he must determine the value of this guilt offering (verse 6; see Lev 5:15).

The new thing here is that it is not enough for me to condemn myself in God’s light when my sin is wronging someone. Judging sin in God’s light is certainly necessary. On top of that, I also have to make up for what I have failed in.

Sin against one's neighbor can consist of a broken trust. My neighbor can entrust me with something or give me something in custody, because he thinks it is safe with me. It may be a secret or a particular good. If I pass on that secret or resell that particular good, I sin against him.

The next sin which the LORD mentions is robbery – that a man has stolen something. Robbing is the stealthy or violent appropriation of something belonging to another. A person's good name can also be robbed. Robbing is also using the words of another person and pretending that they are your own words and that you get the honor that is due to the other person.

Another sin is to force his fellow man to extort something by force. We can put such pressure on someone that he gives us things that belong to him, but that we want to have. It may be that we force a brother or sister to give a good testimony about us, when in reality we live for ourselves.

It is also sin if someone has found a lost object and denies it. We can know spiritually what our brother has lost and have found it in that sense. When my brother has lost his peace and I see it, but I do nothing about it, I do not help him to find his peace again and deny in that way that I have found what he has lost, I am guilty.

Swearing a false oath in any matter is also sin. It is against better judgment to confirm the lie at the expense of the truth. This puts the other one in a bad light, although there is nothing to blame him. This is a bad thing. He is doing the other person extremely wrong.

In the case of a sin against one's neighbor, the injustice must be made good. This is done primarily by confession to God and also to the person whose trust I have violated or whose name I have slandered or who I have in any way wronged. I must return what I resold and compensate for any harm caused. With that, what has been wrong has been made good. That's only putting away the wrong thing. There is still twenty percent to be added.

I have to give back more than the harm I caused. For example, I will not only stop slandering, but will also honor the other by talking about him well. I not only compensate the harm, but give one fifth more back. My attitude toward him will be different from before my sin. There will be more respect for the other than before and a desire to give good things to him instead of harming him.

Verses 8-13 | The Law for the Burnt Offering

8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 9 "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the law for the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself [shall remain] on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. 10 The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes [to] which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. 11 Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. 12 The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not go out, but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay out the burnt offering on it, and offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it. 13 Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out.

Here begins a section that again speaks about the five offerings. In the previous chapters the offerings are described as the offeror brings them to the altar to offer them to God. This description is more objective, i.e. it is mainly about the Object of God's heart.

The following description contains laws for the *priest*. This description is more subjective, i.e. it is more about the way in which the priest should deal with the offering. It's about the effect it has to have on us when we are busy with it and how our hearts can get involved. In these regulations, the main issue is which parts of these offerings should be eaten and by whom, and under which conditions they should be brought. It is remarkable that these precepts are emphatically introduced, because the LORD tells Moses that he must *command* Aaron and his sons certain things with regard to the offerings.

In the spiritual application we see that it is a privilege to offer to God (Leviticus 1-6:7), but that God also prescribes how those offerings should be brought (Leviticus 6:8-7:21). About these two sides the Lord Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman. About the privilege He says to her: "An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." He also indicates immediately thereafter how God wishes to be worshiped: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23-24).

The order in the laws of the offerings is different from the order in the first five chapters. The laws first describe the burnt offering and grain offering, then the sin offering and guilt offering and finally the peace offering. Here too, first comes what for God is a soothing aroma. But then comes the side of man who must be clean of sins, and finally, in the peace offering, the fellowship that exists between God and His people and between the people among themselves is expressed. The peace offering directs out attention at the Lord's Table.

The emphasis of the law of the burnt offering is that the fire must not go out (verses 9,12,13). This precept indicates that from the altar of burnt offering there is constantly a soothing aroma going up to God. It means that God wants His people to be constantly surrounded by that fragrance, that is, He wants the people to be aware that they are pleasing to God, not in themselves, but that He has made them pleasing "in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6).

When we are in God's glory in eternity, we will be there on the same basis as on which we are now accepted. For God, the fragrance of His Son's work remains lovingly forever and the basis of all that has been brought into connection with Him. That fragrance will remain forever as fresh to God as it was when Christ accomplished the work.

God does not lose sight of the value of His Son's offering for a moment and He does not want us to lose sight of it either. He wants us, who are priests, to constantly tell Him this. In this which is a precept for Israel, a special blessing from God lies for us. God tells us herein as it were that we are constantly thinking about who we are for Him in the Lord Jesus. Surely, the result will be that we worship Him for it, isn't it?

We perform this priestly task at night (verse 9; cf. Psa 134:1). In the night of this world (Rom 13:12) we may see Who the Lord Jesus is for God and speak about Him with God. We may go through a dark world with worship in our hearts. It also applies to Israel now. God preserves the pleasant fragrance of Christ's offering with Himself, while His earthly people forget Him. One day He will fulfill all His promises to that people on the basis of the offering of His Son.

The priest is also deals with the ashes. This in picture shows that the believer living in God's presence is occupied with how perfectly the offering

has been consumed by fire, how perfectly the Lord Jesus has done His work at the expense of Himself. Nothing has been spared him. God did not spare Him (Rom 8:32). God has completely disposed of and consumed the old man, that which I am naturally in my flesh, by making Christ sin. The Lord Jesus became obedient “to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

We see the practical consequence of this in the linen robe. This represents the righteous deeds (Rev 19:8). They will be seen in the life of the believer who has been occupied with the ashes. The priest puts on other clothes when he takes the ashes out of the camp. That represents another aspect of our lives. “Outside the camp” (Heb 13:13) means to take a place of shame. It means that we openly admit that we have taken the side of a rejected Lord. Both in our position, that is outside the camp, and in our deeds, of which the linen robe speaks, we will be a testimony of Who the Lord Jesus is.

Verses 14-18 | The Law of the Grain Offering

14 'Now this is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall present it before the LORD in front of the altar. 15 Then one [of them] shall lift up from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and all the incense that is on the grain offering, and he shall offer [it] up in smoke on the altar, a soothing aroma, as its memorial offering to the LORD. 16 What is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; they are to eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. 17 It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their share from My offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. 18 Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations, from the offerings by fire to the LORD. Whoever touches them will become consecrated.'"

The grain offering is again directly connected to the burnt offering. In Leviticus 2 it is written about the grain offering how it should be offered and brought on the altar. Here the emphasis is on *eating* the grain offering. It is food for the priest when he thinks of the Lord Jesus as the true Man (flour), Who on earth has done everything by the Holy Spirit (oil) and thus has been a soothing aroma to God (incense).

In a metaphorical sense, ‘eating’ means taking in something spiritual so that our hearts are filled with it and our spiritual lives are shaped by it. By

this 'eating instruction' the LORD indicates that all priests will eat the same food. Thus they will all be formed in the same way and learn to judge all things in the same way. This also applies to us. If there are 'priests' who feed on the world, this will have a negative effect on the priestly service. However, if we as priests all feed ourselves with the Lord Jesus as a true grain offering, we will become like Him and lead our lives to the glory of God.

A son of Aaron represents a believer who is aware of the sonship of God and lives up to that (Eph 1:5). He has knowledge of God's thoughts about the Son, about Who He was on earth. He, and other sons, eat of what is left of the grain offering. This happens in "the holy place". A holy place is a place where natural thinking and action is not given room, because everything is directed toward God and His appreciation of His Son. This holy place is "in the court of the tent of meeting". There stands the bronze altar of burnt offering, a picture of the Lord's Table.

"All that is male among Aaron's sons" (verse 18) seems double. A son is by definition male, isn't it? This shows that someone can have a position, be a 'son', but still cannot be spiritually mature, not 'male', to engage with the Lord Jesus so much that he can feed himself with it. Aaron's sons receive a share in what God calls "My offerings by fire". The offering is for God, the Lord Jesus lived His life on earth for God. God has enjoyed it. But we, as priests, can enjoy it.

The grain offering offered as a fire offering has a sanctifying effect: "Whoever touches them will become consecrated." Everything that comes into connection with the Lord Jesus is separated for God. Where the Lord Jesus is present, what is in His immediate vicinity is marked by His presence. God determines everything according to His Son.

Here it is all about outward holiness (cf. 1Cor 7:14). It does not mean that where He is and His presence characterizes everything, it also means eternal life for all who come into contact with Him. We can clearly notice this, for example, when we read the Gospels.

Verses 19-23 | Offering for the Anointing of the High Priest

19 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 20 "This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to the LORD on the day when he is anointed; the

tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. 21 It shall be prepared with oil on a griddle. When it is [well] stirred, you shall bring it. You shall present the grain offering in baked pieces as a soothing aroma to the LORD. 22 The anointed priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to the LORD. 23 So every grain offering of the priest shall be burned entirely. It shall not be eaten."

Here we have a special kind of grain offering, introduced by a new speaking of the LORD. It is only brought when a new high priest is anointed. This takes place for the first time with Aaron in Leviticus 8 and 9. This is not a voluntary, but a mandatory grain offering, which may not be eaten. It is a grain offering that is only mixed with oil and not covered with it.

Aaron is a picture of the Lord Jesus as High Priest. The Lord Jesus is "designated by God as a High Priest" (Heb 5:10), God anointed Him to that end. He is that now. But He is the same Who was born on earth as Man from the Holy Spirit (flour mixed with oil). We cannot grasp the miracle of the conception of the Holy Spirit (not eat), but we can admire it and tell God our admiration for Him.

The Lord Jesus as High Priest in heaven is inseparable from His coming to earth and His life on earth for God. God wants us to think about this in the prescriptions of this special grain offering.

Verses 24-30 | The Law of the Sin Offering

24 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 25 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the LORD; it is most holy. 26 The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. 27 Anyone who touches its flesh will become consecrated; and when any of its blood splashes on a garment, in a holy place you shall wash what was splashed on. 28 Also the earthenware vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken; and if it was boiled in a bronze vessel, then it shall be scoured and rinsed in water. 29 Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. 30 But no sin offering of which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.

After the law of the grain offering, the law of the peace offering does not come, as in the earlier description of the offerings, but first follows the law of the sin offering. The emphasis here again is on the priest eating it.

The first thing that is said by the LORD in the law of the sin offering is that the sin offering must be brought in the place of the burnt offering. This immediately indicates that whoever has to bring a sin offering may also see that the Lord Jesus is also the burnt offering. We come in the awareness that we have deserved the judgment because of the sin we have committed and that the Lord Jesus has entered that judgment in order to deliver us from it. Added to this we also come to the awareness that the Lord Jesus has glorified God in that same work and that on that basis we are made pleasant. How versatile and great is the miracle of His work! It is indeed "most holy".

The sin offering is about sins. Someone has sinned and comes with a sin offering to the priest, who offers it and eats it. Bringing a sin offering speaks of acknowledgment in God's presence – "in the holy place" (verse 26) – that the Lord Jesus had to die for that sin. Eating the sin offering means identification with the sin that the other has committed.

To point out the sin that another has committed is one thing; to identify with it is another. It is the awareness that it could have happened to me too. I am in no way better (Job 33:6; Gal 6:1). Ezra and Daniel confess this, each in chapter 9 of the book named after them (Ezra 9:1-15; Dan 9:1-19). They have eaten the sin offering. They themselves are innocent of the condition of the people, but they identify themselves with it and confess the sins of the people as their own. That is eating the sin offering.

Eating is the most perfect identification of the priest and the sacrificed animal representing the sin of the offeror. Christ is always both the Priest and the Victim. The action of the priest as he eats the sin offering, shows how Christ made sin His. This eating of the offering shows us the heart of Christ Who, when we sin, makes our cause His.

The priest did not commit sin. On the contrary, he has made atonement for it by the blood he has sprinkled. Yet he fully identifies with it. In this way Christ has also prepared the most perfect comfort for us. He Himself,

Who is blameless and Who has worked atonement, has identified Himself with all our sins.

Now He is, because His one offering has been brought once and for all, active as Advocate with the Father in the case of sin. He works in connection with fellowship, not with atonement. There is nothing more to do in terms of offering or bloodshed. That work has been completely accomplished. On the basis of that work He now serves as Advocate.

The sin offering has a sanctifying effect. Everything it comes into contact with becomes holy. The work of the Lord Jesus for sin is perfect in its effect. Nothing in His whole work bears the character of decided holiness, of complete and perfect separation from God, so much as His bearing of sin. That God has judged Him, the Son of His love, when He is made sin is the clearest proof of how much God hates sin. Whoever sees this, will have a holy aversion to all things that have to do with sin and will want to live in complete holiness before God.

If blood from the sin offering comes on a garment, the garment must be washed with water (verse 27). This shows the powerful effect of the blood on my behavior, as can be observed by others. If I suddenly realize again the meaning of the blood of Christ, which has been made sin for me, it will have influence on my life. More humility will be seen in my life. The water of the Word will cleanse my life of things that conflict with humility.

The flesh of the sin offering must first be cooked in order to be able to eat it. This can be done in an earthenware or bronze vessel. An earthenware vessel represents our body (2Cor 4:7). This, as an instrument used by sin, must be broken. Nothing of natural man may be linked to the work of the Lord Jesus. The bronze vessel speaks of what we have become after we have come to faith. Bronze speaks of the righteousness of God. Sin has stained it. The vessel must be cleaned. Scouring and rinsing in water speaks of cleansing through the Word of God (Eph 5:26).

When the anointed priest or people have sinned (Lev 4:6,17), the blood of a sin offering is brought into the tent of meeting (verse 30). In that case there is no one who can eat the sin offering, for all are guilty and therefore unfit to eat it.

Leviticus 7

Verses 1-7 | The Law for the Guilt Offering

1 Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy. 2 In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 3 Then he shall offer from it all its fat: the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, 4 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver he shall remove with the kidneys. 5 The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a guilt offering. 6 Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. 7 The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it.

Here we find the actual description of the guilt offering. We would expect this in Leviticus 6. But there is the aspect of compensation in the foreground, while here it is about the priestly contribution.

The guilt offering, like the sin offering, is “most holy”. The guilt offering meets all the holy demands of God with regard to the guilt in which a man stands before Him. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering is closely connected to the burnt offering (Lev 6:25). The guilt offering and the sin offering are brought to the place of the burnt offering. It suggests that whoever has to bring a guilt offering may also see that the Lord Jesus is also the burnt offering. We have loaded guilt upon ourselves, but the Lord Jesus has taken that guilt upon Himself. He has received the punishment we deserved. That is a wonderful grace.

But grace goes much further. Not only has something been taken away from us – our guilt and the punishment for it – but we have also gotten something infinitely great through His work. Because of the work of the Lord Jesus we are now holy and blameless before God as His sons. God now sees us in Him (Eph 1:4-6).

A believer who, as a priest, brings the guilt offering, gets a special appreciation for the Lord Jesus and His work. He is occupied with Him and His

work. Although the reason for this is the need for atonement because guilt has arisen, its effect is an increasing admiration for Christ and His work. The special portion of the priest (verse 7) is specified in the following verse (verse 8).

The guilt offering has aspects that we did not come across in the sin offering. Thus the blood of the guilt offering is sprinkled all around on the altar. This will clear the way for worship. The fat, the entrails and the fat that covers them are also offered to the LORD as an offering by fire. It points to the idea that the Lord Jesus, with all His strength, has accomplished the work by which the guilty one has been freed from guilt and above that God has been glorified.

Thinking about this is food for the priest. This food can only be eaten in a holy place. Being busy in this way with the Lord Jesus as the guilt offering requires that we separate ourselves: the “most holy” must be eaten in “a holy place”.

Verses 8-10 | Additional Provisions

8 Also the priest who presents any man's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented. 9 Likewise, every grain offering that is baked in the oven and everything prepared in a pan or on a griddle shall belong to the priest who presents it. 10 Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.

In these verses we have some additions to the law on the guilt offering. Being busy with another person's guilt is not easy. Whoever, as a priest – that is someone who is accustomed to God's presence and knows His thoughts – is called upon to occupy himself with the guilt of someone, gets here, in the picture, a great encouragement. He is reminded of the burnt offering and what his portion in it is: the skin of the burnt offering. With this he may, as it were, clothe himself. This gives the picture that he may be aware that he stands before God in the value of the Son's sacrifice: he is “pleasant in the Beloved” (Eph 1:6). *Knowing* who you are in Christ is something else than *experiencing* that you are in Christ. The latter will manifest itself in worship of the Father and the Son.

For the priest who brings the guilt offering, there is also a part of the grain offering. He may feed himself with the Lord Jesus, Whom He was for God. A believer who has to deal with the guilt of someone else will receive a special appreciation for the perfect devotion that the life of the Lord Jesus shows. This is in contrast to the life of the guilty person, but also to his own life, which is no better than that of the guilty person. In all things only the life of the Lord Jesus shines. That is food for the heart of imperfect people who have surrendered themselves to Him for precisely that reason.

A believer who, from that consciousness, helps a failing believer to clear up his guilt, gains insight into the different aspects of the life of the Lord Jesus, as it is presented in the different forms of the grain offering. These forms and the parts of that offering were discussed in Leviticus 2.

Verses 11-21 | The Law of the Peace Offering

11 'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD. 12 If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes [of well] stirred fine flour mixed with oil. 13 With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. 14 Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. 15 'Now [as for] the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. 16 But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; 17 but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. 18 So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should [ever] be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, [and] it will not be reckoned to his [benefit]. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his [own] iniquity. 19 'Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for [other] flesh, anyone who is clean may eat [such] flesh. 20 But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21 When anyone touches

anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.”

The description of the peace offering in Leviticus 3 is mainly about the connection with the altar. Its application to us is found par excellence in the Lord's Supper at the Lord's Table. The peace offering is a fellowship offering, which is represented for us in the Table of the Lord (1Cor 10:15-21). However, there are also other occasions where believers have fellowship with each other. Every time they come together, for whatever reason, they have fellowship with each other. God wants to be there. Fellowship as believers among each other is only possible and good if God can and may be present.

The peace offering is a festival sacrifice (Psa 118:27). Someone who is happy can spontaneously bring a sacrifice of thanksgiving. He can slay an animal and celebrate. The eldest son in Lukas 15 wants the same. But he only wants to celebrate with his friends, without his father (Lk 15:29). That cannot be a feast. Our joy and happiness are always based on the work of the Lord Jesus, and that is also what God rejoices in.

This sacrifice of thanksgiving must be accompanied by a grain offering. If we thank God for the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, it is impossible to ignore His perfect life up to the cross. We would also like to tell God about this, to offer it to Him.

Also cakes of leavened bread are brought (verse 13). This cannot speak of the Lord Jesus. Leaven speaks of sin and in Him is no sin. But there is leaven in us. Sin is still in us. These cakes tell in picture that we come in the awareness that sin is still in us (1Jn 1:8), although sin no longer is allowed to rule us neither is that necessary. We have to consider ourselves dead to sin. This we do when we realize that He has deprived sin of its power (Rom 6:6-11).

Verse 14 shows that God must first receive His portion before we share with others. It is a portion that is offered to Him as a heave offering (so footnote NASB). A heave offering means that it is lifted above everything else, while at the same time everything else gets the value of this heave offering. We can apply this to the Lord Jesus Who offered Himself to God

above all else. We offer Him to God. Because of this, everything else we enjoy about Him and His offering together also receives the value He has for God.

The priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering represents the believer who is aware that fellowship is based on nothing but the blood poured out by Christ. The blood makes him think of the price paid for him and through which he is now entirely of Christ (1Pet 1:1-2). This brings great gratitude and joy. The believer who knows this presupposes that gratitude and joy also in other believers and desires to share it with such believers, to have fellowship therein.

The feast, the eating, must take place on the same day that the sacrifice is offered (verse 15). This prescription shows that the connection to the altar is of great importance. When the flesh is eaten the next day, the thought of the offering being brought on the altar is blurred. God does not want that. With every sacrifice of thanksgiving He expects the thought of the cross of Christ. There is no thanksgiving possible without the cross.

We can't live on yesterday's experience. God expects us to come to the altar with a new offering of praise every day. We may examine the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11), for these testify about the Lord Jesus (Jn 5:39). We notice new compassions of the Lord every morning (Lam 3:22-23). Then we have an abundance of reasons for a new sacrifice of praise every day, don't we?

A votive or freewill offering may be eaten the next day (verse 16). This is an offering that has a more sustainable character than the offering of thanksgiving. An offering of thanksgiving is brought more spontaneously. A votive or freewill offering has been considered. When we meet, it may be that we start sacrificing more spontaneously as the service progresses. It is also possible that during the week we have already been busy with the meeting and the offering of the Lord Jesus. The gratitude in connection with the cross also has a longer effect.

But even then it is not so that we can move forward for a long time with what we have seen of the Lord Jesus. That is what verses 17-18 have to say to us. There will be a growing desire to see more of Him. Thoughts that linger and that we only cherish because we don't want to discover new things from the Lord Jesus are counterproductive. They become an

obstacle in our spiritual life. Growth stops. Then we must judge ourselves and our thinking, to become free from iniquity. This creates space for the preparation of a new votive or freewill offering that is pleasant to God and in which fellowship with others can be experienced. When fellowship manifests itself in fixed forms and along well-trodden paths, it degenerates into dead orthodoxy.

Practicing fellowship as suggested in partaking of this sacrificial meal is subject to conditions (verses 19-21). The table, the expression of fellowship, is the Table of the Lord and therefore holy. The offerings belong to God (verses 20-21). Worship belongs to God. What goes on in our hearts during the service does not belong to us. God has put it in our hearts, to our joy, that we may partake of what Christ's offering means to Him and in His own joy about it.

No uncleanness may be associated with this. This uncleanness can be caused in different ways. In the first place it can happen that the flesh has come into contact with something unclean (verse 19). An application of this is that if anyone has wrong thoughts about the Person or the work of the Lord Jesus, he is unclean and cannot partake of the Lord's Supper, the fellowship meal at the Lord's Table. He can only partake when he has corrected his wrong thinking about the Person or the work of the Lord Jesus.

A second case is that the person who wants to eat the flesh is unclean himself (verse 20). An application is that one does not judge sin in his life. From such a person it must be concluded that he has not only fallen into sin, but that he lives in sin. If anyone does not judge sin in his life and after several attempts by others is not willing to judge that sin (Mt 18:15-20), he cannot take part in the Lord's Supper, the fellowship meal held at the Lord's Table. Such a person is called "the wicked man" and, if he already partake of the Lord's Supper, must be removed from among the believers (1Cor 5:13b). He can only (again) take part when he judges and confesses his sin for God and people.

A third case is that someone, although clean himself, is unclean by consciously staying in contact with uncleanness (verse 21). An application is if someone wants to partake of the Lord's Supper, while he is part of a church where no discipline is exercised over public evil. For example, that

group allows unmarried cohabitation or living in a homosexual relation and allows people who live this way to partake of their supper. Anyone who stays in touch with it remains in touch with the wickedness that is present in that church and is therefore defiled. Such a person cannot partake of the Lord's Supper, the fellowship meal held at the Lord's Table. He can only partake if he withdraws from this wickedness, which in practice means that he withdraws from that church (2Tim 2:19-22).

Verses 22-27 | Prohibition to Eat Fat or Blood

22 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall not eat any fat [from] an ox, a sheep or a goat. 24 Also the fat of [an animal] which dies and the fat of an animal torn [by beasts] may be put to any other use, but you must certainly not eat it. 25 For whoever eats the fat of the animal from which an offering by fire is offered to the LORD, even the person who eats shall be cut off from his people. 26 You are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. 27 Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

God watches over His people to appropriate too much of the offering. The provision that it is forbidden to eat fat and blood comes after the peace offering. Peace offerings are offerings of which a great part can be eaten. Yet there remains something that is only for God, to which He asserts His exclusive right: the life (blood) and the inner strength (fat) belong entirely to Him.

There are parts in the work of the Lord Jesus for which God has not given us the ability to penetrate. From no animal its fat may be eaten. The fat speaks of the energy of the animal. The fat of the sacrificial animal speaks of the energy with which the Lord Jesus completed the work. Only God can measure and appreciate this energy perfectly.

Also the blood should never be eaten. Blood is the life of the creature. Life belongs to God. When life is taken, it must be done in the knowledge that it belongs to God (Lev 17:10-14; Gen 9:6). That is why the blood must be poured out.

God has determined: "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). We may believe that the blood cleanses us from all our sins (1Jn

1:7b). But what the deep meaning of the blood of Christ is to God cannot be fathomed by a man's understanding. Anyone who does try to do so will fall into error.

Verses 28-36 | The Part of the Priest

28 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 29 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. 30 His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the LORD. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before the LORD. 31 The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. 32 You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33 The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as [his] portion. 34 For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as [their] due forever from the sons of Israel. 35 'This is that which is consecrated to Aaron and that which is consecrated to his sons from the offerings by fire to the LORD, in that day when he presented them to serve as priests to the LORD. 36 These the LORD had commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel in the day that He anointed them. It is [their] due forever throughout their generations.'"

The blood and fat of the peace offering are brought to the altar and thus offered to God. The breast and the right thigh of this offering are for the priest. The rest of the offering is for the offeror and all with whom he wants to celebrate and who are clean.

Anyone who comes with a peace offering must bring it with "his own hands". We cannot leave the offering of the peace offering to others. In the meeting this applies to every brother and every sister. God wants to receive from each individual what is present in the heart. The brothers may express this out loud (1Cor 14:34).

The breast is where the heart is. The breast speaks of the *love* of the Lord Jesus. A priest is particularly concerned about this. The priest is also given

the right thigh, which speaks of the strength and perseverance we see in the way the Lord Jesus has gone. Love and strength we also see in Song of Songs 8 (Song 8:6). It is the love and strength of the work of the Lord Jesus through which the fellowship is established.

Verses 37-38 | Confirmation of the Laws of the Offerings

37 This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings, 38 which the LORD commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai.

Moses received these instructions for the offerings of the LORD at Mount Sinai. God has thus expressed His will that the people should bring Him offerings. The area in which these offerings are to be brought is also emphasized: it is “in the wilderness of Sinai”. This makes us clear that God expects us to “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb 13:15) while living on earth.

Leviticus 8

Introduction

After the description of the offerings, what the priests bring, now follows the historical ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests. We become witnesses of the institution of the priesthood. The institution happens according to the description in Exodus 29, which announces the priesthood and sets out the instructions for how the institution must happen (Exo 29:1-46).

Verses 1-5 | Moses Must Ordinate Aaron and His Sons

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread, 3 and assemble all the congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting." 4 So Moses did just as the LORD commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, 5 Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded to do."

In Aaron and his sons we see a type or a shadow of the Lord Jesus as High Priest and the believers as priests. All believers are priests (1Pet 2:5). That is the principle. Unfortunately, not all believers of the church function as priests. The Old Testament pictures show how we can practically live up to our priesthood, how as a believer we can become a priest. God wants us to bring spiritual sacrifices to Him.

The priestly service is not only a personal matter. It concerns the whole congregation: the whole congregation of Israel comes together at the tent of meeting (verses 3-4). Priestly service in the Old Testament is mainly performed for the benefit of the people, i.e. for others. The priesthood of the believers is especially expressed in the meetings of the believers when they gather as a church in the place where God dwells (Mt 18:20).

Verse 6 | Aaron and His Sons Washed With Water

6 Then Moses had Aaron and his sons come near and washed them with water.

Here washing with water is not to wash away something unclean. A believer who wants to be a priest uses the water of the Word not only to be cleansed, but above all to remain clean.

Verses 7-9 | The High Priestly Garments Put On

7 He put the tunic on him and girded him with the sash, and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the artistic band of the ephod, with which he tied [it] to him. 8 He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. 9 He also placed the turban on his head, and on the turban, at its front, he placed the golden plate, the holy crown, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The garments of the High Priest speak of the high priestly service of the Lord Jesus. He is the heavenly Man and holds a heavenly high priesthood, while everything He does shows His Divine glory. He represents God's people before God. In Exodus 28 the garments are described in detail (Exo 28:1-43). The description there takes place in a different order than here. Here we see how the garments are put on successively, so from inside to outside. In Exodus, the garments are described from outside to inside (Exo 28:4; Lev 8:7-8). For the meaning of the garments, see the comments on Exodus 28.

Verses 10-12 | The Anointing

10 Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. 11 He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. 12 Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

Not only must there be sanctified priests, but everything they perform their service with must also be sanctified. Only that which is anointed by the Holy Spirit – the anointing oil speaks of Him – and thereby sanctified, can be brought into connection with God.

Aaron as a picture of the Lord Jesus is anointed with oil even before blood has been applied to him. With the sons of Aaron as a picture of the believers who are priests, blood is first applied and then oil. In the spiritual

application this means that the Holy Spirit can come on the Lord Jesus without the application of blood, for He is the perfect, sinless Man. We are sinners by nature. The Holy Spirit can only come on such people after they have been cleansed of their sins by the blood of the offering of Christ.

Verse 13 | Put On the Priestly Garments

13 Next Moses had Aaron's sons come near and clothed them with tunics, and girded them with sashes and bound caps on them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

After Aaron is clothed with his high priestly dignity as a picture of the Lord Jesus, his sons can now be clothed as priests. There is only a priesthood of all believers possible because the Lord Jesus has made them competent for it. The priestly garments speak of the dignity that the believers now possess to draw near to God as priests in the sanctuary.

In the letter to the Hebrews we see how we are perfectly sanctified by the offering of Christ (Heb 10:14). Because of this we have confidence to draw near to God as priests (Heb 10:19,22a). An additional incentive to do so is the presence of the Lord Jesus there as the "great priest over the house of God" (Heb 10:21).

Verses 14-24 | The Offerings for Ordination

14 Then he brought the bull of the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. 15 Next Moses slaughtered [it] and took the blood and with his finger put [some of it] around on the horns of the altar, and purified the altar. Then he poured out [the rest of] the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. 16 He also took all the fat that was on the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat; and Moses offered it up in smoke on the altar. 17 But the bull and its hide and its flesh and its refuse he burned in the fire outside the camp, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 18 Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 19 Moses slaughtered [it] and sprinkled the blood around on the altar. 20 When he had cut the ram into its pieces, Moses offered up the head and the pieces and the suet in smoke. 21 After he had washed the entrails and the legs with water, Moses offered up the whole ram in smoke on the altar. It was

a burnt offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 22 Then he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 23 Moses slaughtered [it] and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 24 He also had Aaron's sons come near; and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. Moses then sprinkled [the rest of] the blood around on the altar.

Three offerings are brought for the ordination of Aaron's sons:

1. a sin offering (verse 14),
2. a burnt offering (verse 18) and
3. an offering of ordination (verse 22).

The offering of ordination is a special form of the peace offering.

Aaron and his sons lay their hands on all three offerings. As we have seen before, laying on the hands means identification with that on which the hands are laid. If you want to be a priest, you must identify yourself with the work of the Lord Jesus.

In relation to the *sin offering* it means that, in order to perform priestly service, I must be well aware that all my sins have passed to the Lord Jesus, that He has borne my sins and has been judged for them. Equally, I may and must be aware that I stand before God in all the pleasantness of the offering of the Lord Jesus that He brought to God as *burnt offering*. I derive my dignity to be a priest not from something in myself, but exclusively from Him.

If I am now ordained for God as a priest, I can only accomplish my task as a priest dedicated to God if I see that the Lord Jesus is the great Priest, who is perfectly dedicated to God in everything. He has always perfectly done everything the Father has commanded Him to do (Jn 6:38; 10:18; 14:31a).

It is remarkable that all the offerings here are brought by Moses. The priests are not yet able to do so, they are not yet ordained. Moses can do that. He doesn't need ordination. He is a picture of the Lord Jesus as the Teacher of righteousness.

We have already seen what happens to the sin offering and the burnt offering in Leviticus 4 and Leviticus 1, respectively. This also applies to the offering of ordination, although this has not been explicitly mentioned. The offering of ordination is a special kind of peace offering. In Leviticus 7 it is mentioned separately in the summary of the laws on sacrifices, but in connection with the peace offering (Lev 7:37).

The animal of the ordination offering is a ram, as is the burnt offering. This means that our ordination and dedication as priests must have the same character as the burnt offering. Our ordination and dedication must have the same characteristics as the ordination and dedication of the Lord Jesus (cf. Eph 5:1-2). That means the commitment of our whole person.

That the ordination offering is a special kind of peace offering is evident from the special application of a part of the blood. The blood of the ordination offering is applied to three body parts (verses 23-24). The blood of Christ, His dedication to death, is the foundation of our dedication.

The blood is first applied to the ear. The ear speaks of listening, hearing, obeying. This is where every true priestly service begins. First we must listen to know what the Lord asks of us, how He wants everything to be. Only then can we hold act (hand) and walk (foot), in accordance with the meaning and value of the blood.

Verses 25-29 | The Wave Offering

25 He took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the entrails, and the lobe of the liver and the two kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. 26 From the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake and one cake of bread [mixed with] oil and one wafer, and placed [them] on the portions of fat and on the right thigh. 27 He then put all [these] on the hands of Aaron and on the hands of his sons and presented them as a wave offering before the LORD. 28 Then Moses took them from their hands and offered them up in smoke on the altar with the burnt offering. They were an ordination offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to the LORD. 29 Moses also took the breast and presented it for a wave offering before the LORD; it was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The fat and the grain offering – bread, cake, waver – speak respectively of the energy and the perfect life of the Lord Jesus. The right thigh speaks of His power to walk on earth. For this he derives His strength from His fellowship with the Father.

All this is put on the hands of Aaron and his sons, symbolically laying hold of their lives. In the picture this indicates that by doing so they clearly understand Who the Lord Jesus is and what He has done for their ordination. They move it back and forth before God's face. They show it all to God, to let Him as it were enjoy the glory that He found in the life of the Lord Jesus. When we present it to God in this way, we also enjoy it ourselves.

Moses offers the wave offering on the altar. He gets the breast, after he has moved it as a wave offering before the LORD. The breast is reminiscent of the heart and thus of the love of the Lord Jesus who is the origin of everything. The love of the Lord Jesus is fully satisfied in the result of His work by which the priesthood was established. This is something we should also think about when we are surprised to realize that we are now able to perform priestly services.

Verse 30 | Sprinkling of Oil and of Blood

30 So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

After the offerings are brought, Aaron and his sons are sprinkled with oil and blood, consecrating them to the priesthood. All conditions, as God has determined, are fulfilled. Oil and blood speak of the fact that the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ are the foundation upon which we, connected to Christ, have our place with God (cf. 1Pet 1:2).

Verses 31-32 | The Food of Aaron and His Sons

31 Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, "Boil the flesh at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and eat it there together with the bread which is in the basket of the ordination offering, just as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' 32 The remainder of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn in the fire.

The above actions are necessary to put them in the position of priests. They have laid a God-given foundation for priestly service. What is still needed is the strength to exercise that service. For this purpose, Moses gives Aaron and his sons the flesh of the ordination offering, a peace offering, and the accompanying cakes to eat. It is food for Aaron and his sons. Without this food, there will be no true priestly service.

Believers who know that they have been called or ordained to priestly service, feed themselves with the thought that they owe this privilege to what the Lord Jesus did on the cross, by giving Himself completely to God there. They also think of Him in connection with their ordination to priest in His perfect dedication to God in His life on earth, which is represented in the bread. They share these grateful thoughts with the Lord Jesus, the true Aaron, through whom He also, as it were, feeds Himself.

Any remaining flesh and bread must be burned. What we cannot grasp from the work and life of the Lord Jesus, we should not try to understand, but we must remove it.

Verses 33-35 | Place and Period of the Ordination

33 You shall not go outside the doorway of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the day that the period of your ordination is fulfilled; for he will ordain you through seven days. 34 The LORD has commanded to do as has been done this day, to make atonement on your behalf. 35 At the doorway of the tent of meeting, moreover, you shall remain day and night for seven days and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you will not die, for so I have been commanded."

The period of the ordination is seven days. That speaks of our whole life. The number seven is the number of perfection. Seven days means a complete period. With the eighth day (Lev 9:1) a new period begins. The time of our priestly ordination is our whole life. We are "continually", every day of our life, priests (Heb 13:15).

However, our priestly service is in a special way connected to the tent of meeting. God wants our daily, continuous priestly service always to be connected in our hearts with the place where He comes to meet His people, that is for us the local church.

God wants us as priests to be in the right place – “the doorway of the tent of meeting”, during the period determined by Him – “day and night for seven days” – and in the right mind – “keep the charge of the LORD”. Only if we keep His commandments and ensure that the service happens as He wills, we will be able to continue to perform our priestly service. If we do not take into account Him and His will, our priestly service will ‘die’ (Lev 10:1-2).

Verse 36 | Aaron and His Sons Obey

36 Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things which the LORD had commanded through Moses.

The obedience of Aaron and his sons is impressive and exemplary. Unfortunately, it soon becomes clear how this is deviated from (Lev 10:1). It is to be hoped that this obedience will also be found in the present priesthood of the believers with all the believers. Unfortunately, professing Christianity shows how much the priesthood of all believers has been renounced there as well. Even where the priesthood of all believers is confessed, often it is not put into practice.

Leviticus 9

Verses 1-2 | Offerings of Aaron and His Sons

1 Now it came about on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; 2 and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, [both] without defect, and offer [them] before the LORD.

The ordination lasted seven days (Lev 8:33). Then there comes an "eighth day". The eighth day speaks of a new beginning. Something starts that has never been before. After the ordination Aaron and his sons will bring their first offerings. It is a day that will never be repeated in its meaning. You can only do something for the first time once.

Our ordination lasts our entire life, but there is again and again an eighth day. Our priesthood can always be new. With this eighth day is connected the appearance of the glory of the LORD (verses 4,6,23). We are going to see more and more of the glory of the Lord Jesus. If He then actually appears, only then our priestly service will take place in a completely new way.

Aaron's service is in the foreground in this chapter. Moses addresses him. Aaron is the one who brings the offerings. His sons, who are a picture of the church that has insight into the service of the true Aaron, disappear into the background. They will give him the blood every time. The sons of Aaron in a spiritual sense are those who have received a special impression of the meaning and value of the blood of the true offering, the Lord Jesus, by occupying themselves with it. Blood is the foundation of all true priestly service.

Verses 3-4 | Offerings of the people

3 Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, "Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for a burnt offering, 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."

On the eighth day, it is also expected of “the sons of Israel” to bring offerings. Always the offering of Christ remains the foundation. We can base our whole lives on this and also all eternity. Everything has value to God only if it is connected with His Son and the offering He has brought. Forever we will remember Him as the One to Whom we owe that we may be in glory. In the different offerings we see how we will think of Him.

He has removed all obstacles by becoming the “sin offering” for us. Forever we will remember Him as the One Who is glorified by God and by Whom God could perform all His purposes by becoming for Him the “burnt offering”. He is the One through Whom there will be eternal fellowship with the Father and the Son and with one another by becoming the “peace offering”. Forever we will remember His perfect life on earth, where He did everything by the Holy Spirit, as we see it in the “grain offering mixed with oil”.

Verses 5-6 | To the Front of the Tent of Meeting

5 So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole congregation came near and stood before the LORD. 6 Moses said, “This is the thing which the LORD has commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.”

What we consider and be busy with, the offering of the Lord Jesus in all its aspects for all eternity, may already begin on earth at the “tent of meeting”. When we come together as a church, we may enjoy the privilege of performing priestly service in a special way. There, the Lord Jesus Himself is in the midst and He begins the song of praise (Heb 2:12) to the glory of God, and we may, as it were, join Him in it. We will then see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Verses 7-21 | Aaron and His Sons Offer the Offerings

7 Moses then said to Aaron, “Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as the LORD has commanded.” 8 So Aaron came near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin offering which was for himself. 9 Aaron’s

sons presented the blood to him; and he dipped his finger in the blood and put [some] on the horns of the altar, and poured out [the rest of] the blood at the base of the altar. 10 The fat and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver of the sin offering, he then offered up in smoke on the altar just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11 The flesh and the skin, however, he burned with fire outside the camp. 12 Then he slaughtered the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. 13 They handed the burnt offering to him in pieces, with the head, and he offered [them] up in smoke on the altar. 14 He also washed the entrails and the legs, and offered [them] up in smoke with the burnt offering on the altar. 15 Then he presented the people's offering, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people, and slaughtered it and offered it for sin, like the first. 16 He also presented the burnt offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. 17 Next he presented the grain offering, and filled his hand with some of it and offered [it] up in smoke on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning. 18 Then he slaughtered the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings which was for the people; and Aaron's sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. 19 As for the portions of fat from the ox and from the ram, the fat tail, and the [fat] covering, and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver, 20 they now placed the portions of fat on the breasts; and he offered them up in smoke on the altar. 21 But the breasts and the right thigh Aaron presented as a wave offering before the LORD, just as Moses had commanded.

Aaron is only a picture of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus does not have to offer for Himself; Aaron, as a sinful man, must bring offerings for himself (Heb 5:1-3; 7:28). Aaron brings the offerings of and for himself and the people. The various offerings and their significance have already been before our attention in the previous chapters. God shows in these pictures that He, as it were, does not become tired of speaking and hearing about His Son.

Before Aaron offers for others, he first offers for himself. It is a principle in God's Word that we must first pay close attention to ourselves before we can occupy ourselves with someone else: "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1Tim 4:16; Mt 7:3-5).

Verse 22 | Aaron Blesses the People

22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

After bringing the offerings Aaron blesses the people. This is the blessing with which Christ blesses His people on the basis of the offering made: “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them” (Lk 24:50). The offering of Christ is always the basis of the blessings of Israel – and of the church – by which the people can be maintained in their existence.

As for the church, the Lord Jesus does not have to come out. For us the veil is torn and we have access into the holy place (Heb 10:19), where we see that God has accepted the offering. The Holy Spirit has come to give us the certainty of the offering accomplished and accepted by God. We can enter with confidence.

We can also notice the blessing that is given today by Himself on the basis of the His offering. It is the blessing that is brought to man in the gospel.

Verse 23 | Blessing and Glory

23 Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

What is written in the first part of this verse applies to Israel in the present time. Moses enters the tent of meeting with Aaron. Moses and Aaron are together a picture of the Lord Jesus as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb 3:1). The entry of Moses and Aaron into the tent of meeting is a picture of the entry of the Lord Jesus into the holy place, into the heavens, of which the tabernacle is a picture (Heb 9:23-24). He is still in the holy place. When He appears again, they will see Him and come to repentance and confession (Zec 12:10) and worship Him (Lev 9:24b). When He appears to His people (Heb 9:28), He will bless them.

Verse 24 | The LORD Accepts the Offering

24 Then fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw [it], they shouted and fell on their faces.

Then a great moment comes: the burnt offering and the fat pieces, that is what is only for the LORD, are consumed by Him with fire (Jdg 6:21; 13:20; 1Kgs 18:38; 1Chr 21:26; 2Chr 7:1). It presents the complete acceptance of the work of the Lord Jesus by God as a work accomplished entirely to His glory in a power that only God knows perfectly and can enjoy.

The reaction of the people is to rejoice also in what God has given in the offering. They fall on their faces in worship before Him. All honor and admiration go out to Him Who, by reason of the offering, has connected them to Himself and has chosen them to be His people to dwell among them.

Leviticus 10

Verses 1-3 | Strange Fire Offered

1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

After the ordination of the priesthood and the bringing of the first offerings and the joy that it has given, an anticlimax follows immediately in this chapter. In the last verse of the previous chapter fire descends upon the altar and all fall on their faces to worship. Here the same fire descends and kills the two oldest sons of Aaron. Thus, on the day of Pentecost the Spirit comes down to testify of the acceptance of the offering of Christ by God, showing Himself as "tongues as of fire" (Acts 2:2-3a). A little later the Spirit is a Spirit of judgment for Ananias and Sapphira, who worship God with the strange fire of their corrupt hearts (Acts 5:5a,10a).

It concerns the two most chosen men on earth: from the chosen people, the chosen tribe, the chosen family, of which the eldest son is the successor of his father as high priest. They occupy the highest position. They have been privileged to climb up to the LORD with Moses (Exo 24:1). It is precisely their privileged position that makes their offence so serious. God wants to be treated as holy in those who come near Him (verse 3; cf. Eze 9:6; 1Pet 4:17a). The transgression of what God has commanded always has serious consequences, especially for those who are supposed to know His commandments. This is also experienced by David when, against the LORD's commandment, he has the ark transported on a new cart (2Sam 6:3-9).

What is happening here reflects a principle that we have already noted. This principle is that man always almost immediately corrupts what God

gives him in goodness. We see here a repetition of what Adam does when he enjoys all that God has created for him. Within a short time, he forfeited its blessing by disobedience to God's commandment. We also see it with Noah, who is given authority over a cleansed earth. He is not capable of authority over himself. Later in case of the kingship we see the same thing. And also the church has not remained in the blessings she initially enjoys, but becomes unfaithful and connects with the world.

What is wrong with Nadab and Abihu is not that they do what God has forbidden, but that they do what He has not commanded them to do. They do not violate any particular commandment, but act as they deem appropriate. According to the norms of the world, they do not revolt against God. They want to serve God. But they do so in a way that is different from what God has made known about it. They use their own fire, not the fire that God has sent down on the altar.

The conduct of Nadab and Abihu speaks of the introduction of strange, self-created elements in worship. They can be elements from Jewish worship, or practical elements, but it is strange fire, it does not belong in the service God wishes. It is the religion of the flesh. In professing Christianity, this was soon the case. The priesthood in professing Christianity is spiritually dead by strange fire. Whoever wants to remain free from it, will have to be subjected to the searching of God's Word (Lev 8:35).

Aaron keeps silent. It is a telling reaction. God's intervention does not evoke any resistance in him. He acknowledges with his silence that there is nothing to excuse. We can learn this from Aaron's attitude: if God judges, it suits us to remain silent. The elders do the same when Nehemiah is angry with them because of their behavior (Neh 5:8).

Verses 4-7 | Reaction of Moses

4 Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp." 5 So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. 6 Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not

become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the LORD has brought about. 7 You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the LORD's anointing oil is upon you." So they did according to the word of Moses.

Moses takes action. This event must not endanger the priesthood. Aaron and his sons may have the thought: The priesthood is too risky; we are not starting with it. God does not want that. He wants the priesthood to be maintained and that failing priests be dealt with in accordance with His holiness. The remaining brothers are not allowed to touch their brothers. When they do, they become defiled and unfit for the priesthood. They also are not allowed to show any signs of mourning.

Two of Aaron's nephews, Mishael and Elzaphan, are ordered to carry away the dead bodies. In the family line they are further away from the killed priests and will not so quickly in their emotion come to a wrong action. It is important, for example, that in a case of discipline, we should not be guided by certain feelings of connection to persons who have done something that should be disciplined. These may be literal family ties, but also people who have meant a lot to us spiritually.

All close ties should not play a role in things God has judged. If we allow these ties to play a role, then our own priestly service 'dies'. That is why it is wise, in a disciplinary case, for the immediate family to keep their distance. If close relatives do interfere, there is a danger that they will become unfit to perform priestly services, and God does not want that.

That does not mean that we are called upon to be insensitive. The people may mourn. As ordinary members of God's people, we will experience the death of a priest as sorrowful. But the priesthood must not be omitted "for the LORD's anointing oil is upon you". God desires that we approach Him with a sincere heart as priests to worship Him (Heb 10:19-22).

Verses 8-11 | No Wine or Strong Drink for Priests

8 The LORD then spoke to Aaron, saying, 9 "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your

generations— 10 and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, 11 and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.”

The ban on the use of wine or strong drink follows immediately on bringing foreign fire. This gives substance to the idea that Nadab and Abihu may have come to their actions by using wine or strong drink. Wine and strong drink fog the mind. Israelites are allowed to use it, but Aaron and his sons, the priests, are not. When entering in the presence of God, worldly influences should not play a role. Otherwise our view of the distinction between holy and profane, between what is of God and what is not of Him, fades. The call in Ephesians 5 is in line with this (Eph 5:18).

The natural blessings, of which wine is a picture, come from God. They are good. But they should not play a role in worship. It is like the honey that should not be present in the grain offering (Lev 2:11). Natural things easily extinguish the working of the Spirit. Wine and strong drink can be seen in the use of compelling music or pompous rhetoric. They fog the thoughts and easily distract from the goal of glorifying God.

Verses 12-15 | What Is for the Priests

12 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, “Take the grain offering that is left over from the LORD’s offerings by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. 13 You shall eat it, moreover, in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons’ due out of the LORD’s offerings by fire; for thus I have been commanded. 14 The breast of the wave offering, however, and the thigh of the offering you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they have been given as your due and your sons’ due out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel. 15 The thigh offered by lifting up and the breast offered by waving they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat, to present as a wave offering before the LORD; so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as the LORD has commanded.”

After the negative, what the priests are not allowed to take – wine and strong drink – now comes the positive, which the priests are allowed to take. They may eat of the grain offering (verses 12-13), of the peace offering

(verses 14-15) and of the sin offering (verses 16-20). Priestly service cannot consist solely of abstaining from things. It is a (negative) condition, but not enough. To be able to offer, we must feed on what we offer.

Eating is having fellowship in the most intimate way. Eating takes place in “a holy place” (verse 13), that is, in the presence of God, before His face, in His presence. The priests eat the grain offering. For us it means that we ‘eat’ from the Lord Jesus as the perfect Man on earth, where He is perfect to the glory of God. We also ‘eat’, together with God’s people, of the strength and love with which the Lord Jesus accomplished the work, respectively the thigh and the breast of the peace offering.

Verses 16-20 | Eating the Sin Offering

16 But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up! So he was angry with Aaron’s surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, 17 “Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD. 18 Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded.” 19 But Aaron spoke to Moses, “Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the LORD?” 20 When Moses heard [that], it seemed good in his sight.

The sin offering is also food for the priest. Eleazar and Ithamar seem to have been negligent here. They had to eat from it, but did not. Not only did the two eldest sons fail, but Aaron and the two surviving sons also failed. The eldest sons acted in their own will. This is not the case with Aaron and the other sons; they act out of weakness. Their excuse is therefore accepted by Moses.

A priest should not only burn another person’s sin offering on the altar. In some cases he also has to eat from it. For us, this means that a spiritually-minded believer, someone who does priestly service, should not only lead a fellow believer to confession of guilt. In addition, he must also eat from the sin offering, that is to say, he must spiritually empathize with

what the Lord Jesus had to suffer for that sin, what it cost Him to bear the punishment for it.

Aaron and his sons burned the sin offering, but did not eat it. It indicates the weakness that is also found in us. It is also often easier for us to point out a sin to someone than to penetrate the feelings of the Lord Jesus and to identify ourselves, as it were, with that sin. Aaron admits his weakness. God has understanding and indulgence for this (cf. Heb 5:1-2), which is never the case with sin.

Leviticus 11

Introduction

This chapter gives the food prescriptions for all Israelites, not only for the priests. Priests have to deal with a service in the sanctuary. The Israelite is the ordinary member of God's people in daily life. In verses 44-45 the reason for these food prescriptions are given: the holiness of the LORD. In Deuteronomy 14, where we find the same food regulation, Moses addresses the Israelites as "sons of the LORD" (Deu 14:1). Our position as sons for God sets the standards for our food.

Eating is taking something to us, making something our own, something we process inwardly, making it a part of ourselves. We are told not to eat from animals that represent spiritual evil in actions and thinking. We at the same time are encouraged to use food that represents holiness and spiritual life. Food gives us energy. In the pictures of Scripture, what we spiritually take in determines our way of life. What the food represents becomes visible in our behavior. If we feed ourselves with Christ, He will become visible in us.

In Christendom the literal distinction between clean and unclean animals has been removed. God says to Peter to kill and eat of a mixture of clean and unclean animals (Acts 10:9-16), by which according to the law all animals were unclean. God has cleansed all those animals. For the believer, its application is that he "died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world" (Col 2:20). Therefore, he should not submit to decrees, such as the food laws, which say "do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (Col 2:21). He can say with the apostle Paul: "I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom 14:14a).

Verses 1-8 | Whatever Divides a Hoof and Chews the Cud

1 The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth. 3 Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, [and] chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. 4

Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof: the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you. 5 Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; 6 the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; 7 and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. 8 You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

The land animals are not said to be an abomination, as is later said of the swarming things. The latter are, as it were, stuck with the earth. This is not the case with the normal land animals. God does, however, make a distinction between animals that His people may eat and may not eat. He gives the positive characteristics of the clean animals: they must divide the hoof and chew the cud.

The characteristics of the clean animals belong together. They must both be present. The spiritual application of chewing the cud is that we think about what we take in spiritually, for example when we read something, that we give it time to let it sink in. If we read the Bible or anything about the Bible, we should not do superficially, not quickly and much, but calmly and thoughtfully and then read it again and think about it, consider it.

In-depth Bible study is good, but not enough. What we have made our own by eating and chewing the cud, God wants to see in a walk that is to His honor. We see that in the divided hoof. The divided hoof gives stability to the walk. Being steadfast and unwavering are features that the Lord expects of the Christian serving Him until He comes (1Cor 15:58). It is about "the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness" (Tit 1:1b). That is the truth that becomes visible in a Godly walk.

Someone can be like a pig. He can gobble the food, but he wants to live as a Christian. Someone can also be like a camel. He can take a lot inwardly and chew the cud, but have a practice that is in conflict with that. There is no such thing as practical Christendom alone. How can there be practice, if there is no education, if one does not know the principles of God's Word? And if knowledge does not lead to a corresponding practice, it is not good either. Both are needed.

Verses 9-12 | Fins and Scales

9 *‘These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. 10 But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, 11 and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. 12 Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.*

It concerns all water animals in all waters. In Scripture, the seas usually speak of difficult situations, trials, through which believers must find their way. In the fish species that can be eaten, we see the characteristics that help a believer to go through them. Fins give power to swim against the current and keep the right course; scales protect against wrong influences from their surroundings.

Verses 13-23 | Winged Animals

13 *‘These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, 14 and the kite and the falcon in its kind, 15 every raven in its kind, 16 and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, 17 and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, 18 and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, 19 and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat. 20 ‘All the winged insects that walk on [all] fours are detestable to you. 21 Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on [all] fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. 22 These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds. 23 But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you.*

Of the birds and winged animals, not a single clean animal is mentioned, although they do exist (Gen 8:20). Thus a dove may serve as an offering to God (Lev 1:14). Birds speak in general of the inhabitants of the airspace. There is talk about “the birds of the air”. Usually this happens in a negative sense (Mt 13:4,32; Rev 18:2). They then represent demonic influences that move in the heavenly spheres.

In a spiritual sense, these are persons or spirits of a non-earthly nature who feel at home in the Christian area, but are unclean. Many demonic influences in the form of false teachings have entered professing Christianity. They are like birds of prey, as the eagle and the vulture, which live at the expense of the death of others. It is to be applied to robbing away the honor of God and claiming it for oneself. Eating such birds means allowing oneself to be used in this evil work.

The only exceptions in this long line of unclean winged animals are some species of locusts (verses 21-22). Above their four feet they have two jointed legs or jumping legs with which they jump on the earth. This allows them to move above the earth over a long distance. They may be eaten. They formed the food of John the baptist (Mk 1:6).

For us, to detest what God has forbidden to eat means in practice: "Abhor what is evil" (Rom 12:9b).

Verses 24-28 | Touching Which Makes Unclean

24 'By these, moreover, you will be made unclean: whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, 25 and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. 26 Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof but do not make a split [hoof], or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean. 27 Also whatever walks on its paws, among all the creatures that walk on [all] fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, 28 and the one who picks up their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; they are unclean to you.

Not only is it forbidden to eat unclean animals, but also to touch the carcass causes uncleanness. Touching does not go as far as eating, but it already has a wrong effect. The uncleanness lasts until the evening. Cleansing of clothes must take place. We become unclean by what we see or hear, even without opening ourselves completely to it, without eating of it in a spiritual sense. Yet, even unconsciously, our behavior can be influenced by it. That is corrected by washing ourselves with the water of God's Word (Eph 5:26), that is by reading God's Word.

Verses 29-31 | Swarming Thing That Are Unclean

29 *'Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things which swarm on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard in its kinds, 30 and the gecko, and the crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand reptile, and the chameleon. 31 These are to you the unclean among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening.*

The swarming things are animals that do not rise from the earth, but are identified with it. They are also forms of life that resemble the serpent, which is a picture of satan (Gen 3:14). It represents feeling at home on earth. The book of Revelation speaks several times of “those who dwell on the earth” (Rev 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,14; 14:6; 17:8), meaning people who see the earth as their home, as their final abode. They feel at home there and do everything they can to keep it that way.

For us, eating such animals means being involved in earthly matters in a way that we pursue them, that we seek them. Paul warns: “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col 3:2). Of those about whom he grieves that they walk as “enemies of the cross of Christ”, he must say: “Who set their minds on earthly things” (Phil 3:18-19). We can become so immersed in our earthly activities that they become our life. Then we become equal to the people of the world. That striving makes us earth-dwellers, while we belong in heaven and confess to be citizens of heaven.

Lessons can be learned from each of these animals. Not that it is easy to know of every animal the lesson it teaches us, but they are not mentioned for nothing. The lesson of the mole (verse 29) is clear. This animal lives underground, closed off from daylight. It teaches us that we should not do secret things that cannot bear the light of the day. That the mole is not on our spiritual menu, Paul says as follows: “But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame” (2Cor 4:2) and elsewhere: “Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, ... for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret” (Eph 5:11-12).

An obvious lesson we also see in the chameleon (verse 30). In our everyday language the animal is sometimes called in a saying and then we all know what kind of person it is to whom this saying applies: to behave like a cha-

meleon. It is someone who can adapt to any situation and talk along with anyone, like the chameleon can change color to adapt to its environment. It is easy to recognize ourselves in it if we behave among believers as we should, while we, when we are in the world, adjust our behavior accordingly because we want to keep it as friend.

Verses 32-40 | Touching a Dead Animal Makes Unclean

32 Also anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead becomes unclean, including any wooden article, or clothing, or a skin, or a sack—any article of which use is made—it shall be put in the water and be unclean until evening, then it becomes clean. 33 As for any earthenware vessel into which one of them may fall, whatever is in it becomes unclean and you shall break the vessel. 34 Any of the food which may be eaten, on which water comes, shall become unclean, and any liquid which may be drunk in every vessel shall become unclean. 35 Everything, moreover, on which part of their carcass may fall becomes unclean; an oven or a stove shall be smashed; they are unclean and shall continue as unclean to you. 36 Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean. 37 If a part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing which is to be sown, it is clean. 38 Though if water is put on the seed and a part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you. 39 'Also if one of the animals dies which you have for food, the one who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening. 40 He too, who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and the one who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

A “wooden article” – wood grows out of the earth – and an “earthen vessel” represent a person (Acts 9:15; 1Thes 4:4); “clothing” represents our behavior; “a skin, or a sack” is a means of storing something; “any article of which use is made” is all that is helpful to live life as a member of God’s people. If anything of it has become unclean by putting it in the service of earthly life and not in the service of God, it must be put in the water, that is, it must undergo the water bath of the Word. Then it becomes clean again and usable for the master. An earthen vessel must be broken. An earthen vessel is what we are by nature (2Cor 4:7).

Water in which something unclean has come is unclean, and makes unclean what comes into contact with it (verses 34-35). If God's Word is deprived of its true meaning by our thoughts, if we give it our own explanation and pass it on, then also those who hear it become unclean.

Living water cannot become unclean (verse 36). The Word of God, made alive by the power of the Spirit, transcends all uncleanness. If we are living sources, uncleanness will have no hold on us. "Rivers of living water" will flow from our "innermost being" (Jn 7:38) if we live in close fellowship with the Lord Jesus and feed ourselves with His flesh and drink of His blood (Jn 6:54-56).

In seed for sowing is also the power of life (verse 37). This life reveals itself by dying. This is a picture of the Lord Jesus who died and thereby "brought life and immortality to light" (2Tim 1:10; cf. Jn 12:24). Life in Him overcomes death.

Verses 41-43 | Swarming Things Are Detestable

41 'Now every swarming thing that swarms on the earth is detestable, not to be eaten. 42 Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on [all] fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable. 43 Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean.

All crawling animals shall not be eaten. In these verses not only does the prohibition sound, but also the LORD lets us hear His disgust about it several times. These animals are "detestable" (verses 41-42). He then says strongly that one who takes one of these animals, renders himself "detestable" (verse 43). This shows how much we get the characteristics of the food we eat. In the swarming animals we see not only a picture of earthly things, but also of the motives behind them. It represents the low instincts of man fallen into sin under the influence of the devil.

Verses 44-45 | Reason for Ban on Eating Swarming Animals

44 For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the

swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45 For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

The reason for these laws is given here. The spiritual lessons that it contains for us must be linked to the fact that we are children of God. Because He is holy, we must be holy too (1Pet 1:15-16). It is a heavenly holiness, which can be perfectly seen in the Lord Jesus on earth. This should make us realize that we have a responsibility to see what we eat as spiritual food, because what we eat determines how we express ourselves. We will have to ask ourselves what we ‘eat’: Will this make us look more like the Lord Jesus or will we look more like the world?

Verses 46-47 | Purpose of the Eating Commandments

46 This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, 47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

The laws indicate the law of nature that our behavior, our actions and our speaking, is formed by what we eat. God determines what is the food that enables us to distinguish between clean and unclean. We have to keep in mind that what we take to us and thus give the opportunity to sink in, influences our behavior in the world and toward our fellow believers.

Unclean food comes within our reach in the form of certain reading material that enters our homes or all kinds of programs that we can listen to or watch. Taking it in forms or deforms our behavior as believers. If we are not fussy with what we allow to influence our mind, then in our practice the separation between clean and unclean will not be clearly present. We then shift in our behavior unnoticed – at least for ourselves unnoticed, but others do perceive it – increasingly toward the world.

Leviticus 12

Introduction

Leviticus 11 is about defilement by something that man takes from the outside. In Leviticus 12 it is about the problem that man is unclean in himself. Here we have the uncleanness of human nature or the uncleanness of the indwelling sin. Man is unclean by birth and unclean because he can only bring unclean children into the world. In Leviticus 13 we also see this uncleanness break out in the different forms of leprosy.

Verses 1-5 | Unclean By Giving Birth

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male [child], then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. 3 On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4 Then she shall remain in the blood of [her] purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed. 5 But if she bears a female [child], then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of [her] purification for sixty-six days.

In Leviticus 11 one who touches something unclean is unclean until the evening. Here, in Leviticus 12, when a child is given birth, the period of uncleanness and purification is the longest we find in Scripture. For the mother, this period covers for the birth of a boy forty days and for the birth of a girl eighty days. This indicates the seriousness of the problem.

This is not about the uncleanness and purification of the child, but of the mother. This is also expressed by David in Psalm 51 (Psa 51:7; cf. Job 14:4; 25:4). The children are unclean because they are born from sinful parents. The source is not good. Everything that comes forth from man is unclean (Mt 15:18). The only exception is the Lord Jesus. He is the clean One Who is born out of an unclean one.

The time that the woman is unclean is seven days for a boy and fourteen days for a girl. After those days follows a time of purification: in the case

of a boy thirty-three days and in the case of a girl sixty-six days. After the days of her purification, she has to bring an offering.

In the circumcision of the boy, it is acknowledged – spiritually seen – that the child is unclean. Circumcision speaks of the death of Christ (Col 2:11). The child is brought on the basis of the death of Christ.

As long as the days of the mother's purification last, she should not go to the holy place. When those days are over, she must bring the offerings at the doorway of the tent of meeting. This we can apply to receiving at the Lord's Table. A person can only be received when the days of his purification are over, in which he has learned to know himself and has also accepted for himself the value of the work of the Lord Jesus.

The fact that the period of uncleanness and purification in the case of a girl lasts twice as long can perhaps be explained as follows. It is a reminder of the fact that sin came into the world through the woman (Gen 3:6; 1Tim 2:14).

A spiritual application is this one. The female speaks of the emotions, the feelings, the subjective. Here there is no talk of being circumcised. With those who rely on their feelings it often takes longer to accept what Christ has done. This can be seen in many Christians who feel too bad or not bad enough to be accepted by God. Sometimes such Christians find peace with God only on their deathbed and then they see something of the meaning of the burnt offering and sin offering.

Verses 6-8 | Cleansed After Giving Birth

6 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. 7 Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears [a child, whether] a male or a female. 8 But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'

After the forty or eighty days, the mother must also place herself on the basis of the offering, in the picture the offering of Christ. She must bring a burnt offering and a sin offering. When Mary has given birth to the Lord Jesus, she also offers this offering, because she too is unclean of herself (Lk 2:21-24). That she does not bring the ordinary offering, a lamb and a dove (verse 6), but two pigeons, thus the offering of the poor (verse 8), indicates the poverty of the parents of the Lord Jesus. Mary is the only exception as regards the Child she gave birth to. The Child Jesus was the perfectly clean One. He indeed is not conceived by a sinful man – and therefore has not original sin – but by God the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35).

In the woman we also can see a picture of Israel, a people who are unclean, and out of whom the Messiah was born, the clean One. In Revelation 12 we see that picture too (Rev 12:1-6). The woman there represents Israel; the male Son is the Lord Jesus.

The days of the cleansing of the people begin after 'circumcision', that is, after what happened to the Lord Jesus on the cross. Only now, in the period after the cross, can those who come to repentance see what they have all done and been and are still naturally. It often takes quite a while to see that. This applies both to Israel and to the individual believer of the church. The more I get to know myself, the more I abhor myself.

The result of this purifying period is that we really place ourselves on the basis of the burnt offering and the sin offering. Only then are we also able to understand something of the value of the Lord Jesus' work for God and that God looks at us in Him (burnt offering). The burnt offering comes first and therefore has the emphasis. It is only then that we are able to understand something of the meaning of the sin offering, that we are a little more aware of it.

Leviticus 13

Introduction

The more we have learned what Leviticus 12 wants to say to us, the more we will be preserved for what we find in this chapter.

This chapter is about the outbreak or a possible outbreak of leprosy in a member of God's people. Leprosy is a picture of the outbreak of sin, which also makes unclean everyone who comes into contact with it. Leprosy is also used by God as a punishment for sin with Miriam, Gehazi and Uzziah (Num 12:5-10; 2Kgs 5:20-27; 2Chr 26:16-21). It is a disease that starts small and spreads slowly over the body, until the whole body is sick. It is an incurable disease that only God can cure (2Kgs 5:7). The appearance is distorted by it, the leper gets a repulsive appearance.

The leper in this and the next chapter is not a picture of the sinner who lives in the world without God. These chapters are about *a member of the people of God*. With someone who has been hiding behind the blood of the lamb, leprosy can occur. It is the picture of sin that breaks out in a believer. It is something that is small, but gets bigger and bigger, until sin breaks out in all its intensity. Such a person must be excluded. It is humbling that this is such a long chapter. It proves how much we need this 'treatment of evil'.

Many different facets in which sin can manifest itself are brought to our attention. It must therefore bring us to self-judgment. If in practice we are priests – in principle every believer is, but not every believer lives as such – then we must first apply these things to ourselves and then also to others. That is not only to condemn sin, but also to help the sinner, and especially to keep God's dwelling place clean.

Verses 1-8 | Suspicion of Leprosy

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes an infection of leprosy on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3 The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and

the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean. 4 But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate [him who has] the infection for seven days. 5 The priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the infection has not changed [and] the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days. 6 The priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and if the infection has faded and the mark has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is [only] a scab. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. 7 "But if the scab spreads farther on the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again to the priest. 8 The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy.

The LORD speaks to Moses and Aaron about this important matter: outbreak of leprosy in a member of his people. This leprosy can present itself in different ways. Its symptoms appear on the skin. A swelling may appear. In the spiritual application a swelling is what puffs up, arrogance. A severe form of being puffed-up is, for example, that of the arrogance of having knowledge of God's Word (1Cor 8:1).

A scab may also appear. A scab or an ulcer is an ostentatious wound. We can apply this, for example, to injustice that has been done to us and that we still cannot forgive. It keeps on festering in us and when we are reminded of the person or the act, the anger in us flares up. Not being able to forgive can become a lack of the mind of forgivingness over time. A root of bitterness then springs up that defiles both the person himself and others (Heb 12:15).

The third symptom that may indicate leprosy is a bright spot. We can apply this to, for example, enjoying sin (Heb 11:25). It is sin that has a certain attraction, but always deceives us (Heb 3:13).

Whoever is suspected of leprosy must be brought to the priest. The decisive factor is not what the leper thinks of it, but the judgment of the priest. When you are suspected of leprosy, it is not right to talk about 'a triviality to which you should pay no further attention'. Someone who is sincere will want to cooperate in the investigation. The priest is the Lord Jesus.

He is never mistaken. The point is not whether someone *feels* leprous, but whether he *is*.

Not every sin that a believer does is leprosy. Sometimes a sin indicates it, but after investigation it may appear that it is not. Someone who says or does something in drift, sins. If this is of short duration, there is no state of leprosy. However, if someone persists in his attitude, if it turns out that the evil is deeper than just a temper, there is talk of leprosy. Leprosy does not primarily indicate what someone has *done*, but what someone *is*. Sin breaks out because of the indwelling sin. Leprosy indicates the source, the cause, not the act.

The investigation must be done by the priest, by someone who is used to being in the presence of God. He knows God's thoughts and knows how to apply them correctly, both to himself and to others. A priest in practice is a spiritual brother or sister, to whom the first verse of Galatians 6 applies (Gal 6:1).

The investigation is to help the (possible) leper. In case he is not leprous, it is a great sin to remove him from the camp. No haste is needed. If it is not immediately clear that it is leprosy, a person suspected of leprosy must be isolated for seven days. Seven days of investigation speaks of a complete period.

The case where someone has a bright spot is discussed in more detail. The proof that it is leprosy is provided when the hair on that white spot has also turned white. It is not only a white spot, but what emerges from it has the same appearance. White hair is not a deterrent. Sin does not always scare off; it can even seem attractive. Nevertheless, there is talk of leprosy and such a person must be pronounced unclean. The hair has turned white when, for example, someone insists, contrary to the Scriptures, that the forsaking of meetings of the church is a free choice (Heb 10:25).

Before there is talk of white hair, there may first be a bright spot. Such a bright spot is for example when we notice that someone prays less and reads less in the Bible and visits the meetings less. It seems to indicate that fellowship with the Lord is no longer so important. Priestly investigation must show whether this is due to sin in life or whether there are other causes, such as illness, weakness, disappointment.

The investigation into the cause takes place in all rest: twice seven days. If there is no clarity, we have to wait, each time for a complete period. It really must be proven, earlier there will be no pronouncement or otherwise acquittal. We must wait until the Lord makes the matter clear. The Lord Jesus points to this rest in the investigation when He indicates how to deal with a brother who is sinning (Mt 18:15-17).

Verses 9-11 | Chronic Leprosy

9 “When the infection of leprosy is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. 10 The priest shall then look, and if there is a white swelling in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is quick raw flesh in the swelling, 11 it is a chronic leprosy on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

“Chronic leprosy” is an old leprosy. It is a leprosy that has been there for a long time, but is now coming out. The form in which it happens is in a white swelling with white hair and raw flesh in the swelling. In this, another aspect of leprosy emerges, namely leprosy as a picture of sin in man’s own will. If man’s own will shows itself, if his own will is not kept in death, but is always present asleep, a swelling will arise and raw flesh will become visible.

A certain sin can be cherished for a long time in the form of thoughts. If that thinking is not judged, this thinking will betray itself in the way of speaking and will finally lead to action. In this case, no further investigation is necessary. The priest will have to pronounce the “unclean” immediately.

Verses 12-13 | Pronounced Clean

12 If the leprosy breaks out farther on the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of [him who has] the infection from his head even to his feet, as far as the priest can see, 13 then the priest shall look, and behold, [if] the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce clean [him who has] the infection; it has all turned white [and] he is clean.

Here we see the case of someone who is totally leprous – he is “covered with leprosy” (Lk 5:12) – and who is pronounced clean. That is the picture

of someone in whom sin has had its full development and who confesses this. That makes it clean. As long as someone lives in sin and evil has not yet had its full effect, it will go from bad to worse. But whoever is completely bound in it, whoever is leprous from head to foot and goes to the priest, is pronounced clean. There is nothing more that can become leprous.

We see this in someone who no longer hides anything, but says the full truth (Mk 5:33). Sin is confessed without withholding anything, the whole life in sin is judged. We are then dealing with someone who no longer seeks any excuse for his sinful state (Lk 5:8,12; 18:13; Rom 7:18; Job 42:6; Isa 6:5). Only through a complete confession can a person become clean.

The priest cannot heal. He can only pronounce clean. God alone can heal someone. The Lord Jesus did it during His life on earth. He is God! He can touch a leper without becoming unclean himself and say, "I am willing; be cleansed!" with the result: "And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Mt 8:3). He commands lepers to go to the priest with the prescribed offering, but also "as a testimony to them" (Lk 5:14), that is, the priests must notice that God is present. The testimony of healing is that God – only He can heal leprosy – appeared in Christ – He has healed the leprosy. Only God can bring a person to confession. He does so on the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus as the "Advocate with the Father" (1Jn 2:1). The 'priests' can be used to bring someone to confession.

Verses 14-17 | Raw Flesh

14 But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. 15 The priest shall look at the raw flesh, and he shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean, it is leprosy. 16 Or if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest, 17 and the priest shall look at him, and behold, [if] the infection has turned to white, then the priest shall pronounce clean [him who has] the infection; he is clean.

After someone has been declared clean, there may be a relapse. Someone can fall into sin again. Then he must be pronounced unclean again. If sin is then removed again, he is also pronounced clean again. With God, return is possible every time sin is truly confessed. A sincere confession is no guarantee that sin will never be committed again. God knows this and

keeps the door open to come back with confession (cf. Mt 18:21-22). There must be the purpose not to sin anymore (Pro 28:13).

Whoever is completely leprous, but still shows raw flesh, will not be pronounced clean. An application of this is the sinner who recognizes himself as a sinner, but in whom sin is still active. These are the people who say "I have sinned", but still continue to serve sin, like Pharaoh (Exo 9:27; 10:16), Balaam (Num 22:34) and Saul (1Sam 15:24).

Verses 18-23 | In the Place of the Boil

18 "When the body has a boil on its skin and it is healed, 19 and in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a reddish-white, bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest; 20 and the priest shall look, and behold, [if] it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the infection of leprosy, it has broken out in the boil. 21 But if the priest looks at it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it and it is not lower than the skin and is faded, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; 22 and if it spreads farther on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection. 23 But if the bright spot remains in its place and does not spread, it is [only] the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

At the place of a healed boil, a white swelling or a reddish-white, bright spot occurs. The priest must investigate whether there is leprosy. Investigation should show whether someone is clean or unclean. There also has to be looked deeper than the surface. A person is pronounced unclean if it is spread farther, which shows that the infection is effective and therefore dangerous.

An infection can be temporary. The seven days of isolation will prove it. An outburst of anger can have a one-off character. But it has to be checked if there is anything present that indicates that the cause of the anger is not gone. This can be seen by the friction that persists with the person at whom the anger is directed or the attitude that is adopted.

Verses 24-28 | In the Place of a Burn

24 "Or if the body sustains in its skin a burn by fire, and the raw [flesh] of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, 25 then the priest shall

look at it. And if the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears to be deeper than the skin, it is leprosy; it has broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy. 26 But if the priest looks at it, and indeed, there is no white hair in the bright spot and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; 27 and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads farther in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy. 28 But if the bright spot remains in its place and has not spread in the skin, but is dim, it is the swelling from the burn; and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is [only] the scar of the burn.

A burn on the skin can also show symptoms of leprosy. The raw flesh “becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white”. The priest must look at the hair on that spot, because that indicates what is under the surface. He must look deeper than just the appearance and not rely on appearances. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, possibly after seven days of isolation, the priest will pronounce him clean or unclean.

The burn can be applied to irritations, touchy. If there are things that annoy us, what is our reaction? It can go in the inner feelings, the criticism spreads, and finally nothing is good anymore. This attitude of anger and bitterness should be judged. If that happens in self-judgment, such a person is clean. If this does not happen, evil will continue to spread and someone will have to be removed as an evil one. This is only possible after thorough and full investigation.

Verses 29-44 | Leprosy of the Head

29 “Now if a man or woman has an infection on the head or on the beard, 30 then the priest shall look at the infection, and if it appears to be deeper than the skin and there is thin yellowish hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scale, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard. 31 But if the priest looks at the infection of the scale, and indeed, it appears to be no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate [the person] with the scaly infection for seven days. 32 On the seventh day the priest shall look at the infection, and if the scale has not spread and no yellowish hair has grown in it, and the appearance of the scale is no deeper than the skin, 33 then he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the scale; and the priest shall

isolate [the person] with the scale seven more days. 34 Then on the seventh day the priest shall look at the scale, and if the scale has not spread in the skin and it appears to be no deeper than the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. 35 But if the scale spreads farther in the skin after his cleansing, 36 then the priest shall look at him, and if the scale has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellowish hair; he is unclean. 37 If in his sight the scale has remained, however, and black hair has grown in it, the scale has healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean. 38 "When a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, [even] white bright spots, 39 then the priest shall look, and if the bright spots on the skin of their bodies are a faint white, it is eczema that has broken out on the skin; he is clean. 40 "Now if a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald; he is clean. 41 If his head becomes bald at the front and sides, he is bald on the forehead; he is clean. 42 But if on the bald head or the bald forehead, there occurs a reddish-white infection, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead. 43 Then the priest shall look at him; and if the swelling of the infection is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the body, 44 he is a leprous man, he is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his infection is on his head.

Leprosy on the head or in the beard is the worst form of leprosy. The investigation shall be carried out in the same way as in the other cases. But the pronouncing of uncleanness takes place in more seriously, more emphatic terms: the priest "shall surely pronounce" him unclean (verse 44). This is understandable when we consider that leprosy on the head has to do with thinking. Anyone who has unholy thoughts about the Lord Jesus or God's Word is a great danger to his surroundings. There should be no dealings with a false teacher (2Jn 1:10-11; 2Tim 2:17-22).

Leprosy on the head represents having one's own ideas. It points to the reasoning of the things of God with the human mind, the pride of the intellect. It is the assumption of a place in the things of God that do not belong to him. It is not for nothing that God strikes Uzziah with leprosy at his forehead (2Chr 26:16,20).

Verses 45-46 | Acknowledgment of Uncleanness

45 "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46 He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

The leper must indicate by his appearance and by his confession that he is unclean. He must also be removed from the daily contact with his fellow citizens, as happened with Uzziah (2Chr 26:21a). Everything is a protection for God's people, but above all a duty to the holiness of God Who dwells with His people. He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. The leper is excluded and may not enter the sanctuary. In the church too, the evil must be removed from the midst (1Cor 5:13b).

The leper is forced to acknowledge his uncleanness. In a spiritual sense, this is not a confession that can be seen as a beginning of restoration. Restoration only comes when there is repentance of sin. This restoration begins by crying "unclean!, unclean!", followed by "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!", as the ten leprous men do who meet the Lord Jesus (Lk 17:12-13).

Torn clothes indicate that there is no covering before God. The uncovered hair of the head symbolizes the acknowledgment of the head exposed to God's wrath. To cover the moustache was a sign of mourning (Eze 24:17,22). This was generally done by throwing the skirt of the garment over the lower part of the chin. To cover the moustache or upper lip means that nothing can be said that is to the glory of God. The only thing that such a person can proclaim is his own uncleanness.

Verses 47-59 | Leprosy on Fabrics

47 "When a garment has a mark of leprosy in it, whether it is a wool garment or a linen garment, 48 whether in warp or woof, of linen or of wool, whether in leather or in any article made of leather, 49 if the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is a leprous mark and shall be shown to the priest. 50 Then the priest shall look at the mark and shall quarantine the article with the mark for seven days. 51 He shall then look at the mark on the seventh day; if the mark

has spread in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in the leather, whatever the purpose for which the leather is used, the mark is a leprous malignancy, it is unclean. 52 So he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather in which the mark occurs, for it is a leprous malignancy; it shall be burned in the fire. 53 "But if the priest shall look, and indeed the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, 54 then the priest shall order them to wash the thing in which the mark occurs and he shall quarantine it for seven more days. 55 After the article with the mark has been washed, the priest shall again look, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though the mark has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether an eating away has produced bareness on the top or on the front of it. 56 "Then if the priest looks, and if the mark has faded after it has been washed, then he shall tear it out of the garment or out of the leather, whether from the warp or from the woof; 57 and if it appears again in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is an outbreak; the article with the mark shall be burned in the fire. 58 The garment, whether the warp or the woof, or any article of leather from which the mark has departed when you washed it, it shall then be washed a second time and will be clean." 59 This is the law for the mark of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean.

Leprosy can occur not only in people, as described so far, but also in a garment. The next chapter also mentions leprosy on houses (Lev 14:33-53). Leprosy in a garment speaks of sin in behavior, in attitude, in what is seen of someone. People are what is present in someone, a garment is what is seen to or from someone.

In this sense Jude also uses it in his letter when he writes: "Hating even the garment polluted by the flesh" (Jude 1:23). Jude writes that in connection with helping others who have come under the power of sin to be delivered from it. He warns that this help will not result in the care provider himself being affected by the defilement in which the others find themselves. He must hate every touch, every influence of uncleanness on his behavior – presented in "the garment polluted by the flesh" – and keep far away from him.

The importance of a garment is the meaning it has. Thus is the tunic of the Lord Jesus “seamless, woven in one piece” (Jn 19:23). This is a symbolic indication of Who He Himself is. His conduct, His way of acting, His whole revelation is perfect, from His coming from above, from heaven, to His return to heaven. There is never any wrong or contradiction in what He says or does.

We may have ‘leprosy’ in our habits, in our behavior, in the profession we exercise, in the places we go to. It concerns everything that the people around us perceive of us. They do not hear what we have to say in the first place, but they see how we live.

If the mark of leprosy in a garment has spread after seven days of quarantine, it must be burned. If there is no spreading, it must be washed and quarantined again for seven days. If it turns out that the disease has spread anyway, it still has to be burned with fire. The water of cleansing did not help. If there is no spread, the marked area must be torn out of the garment.

This treatment of a garment on which the mark is seen shows in picture that the Word of God must be applied to our external behavior, our habits, and not just to our hearts. There are professions that a believer cannot exercise. Think of the owner of a bar or dealer in slot machines and all kinds of other professions that incite people to sin. When a person comes to faith, he will change his profession in these cases. There are also professions of which certain sub-parts can be sinful, for example, to declare an amount in excess of the actual costs. These can be ‘torn out’. The rest is preserved. The Word of God is indispensable as a guideline in this.

The danger is not the garment itself, but that it affects the person. I can live in an environment that is not good. Then I have to ‘burn’ it, which for me means that I have to leave and live somewhere else. I can work in an environment that poses a special danger to me, for example, that a Christian must behave in a worldly way as a hostess and because of that must give up her Christian identity. Perhaps that part of the work could be ‘torn out’ by asking if she does not need to perform that task. If that is not possible, it may become necessary to change jobs.

Leviticus 14

Introduction

Leprosy is a picture of sin that becomes active in the believer, not as a temporary effect, but as a part of life. The picture of leprosy also focuses on the defiling effect of sin. We all can be *caught* in any trespass (Gal 6:1; Jam 3:2). That is something else than *living* in sin and that is what it is about with leprosy as a picture of sin.

Leprosy is the sin that defiles a person permanently. Its characteristic is perseverance in one's own will. Such a person must be removed and dwell outside the camp (Lev 13:46). For the church this means: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (1Cor 5:13b). The removal of the leper is with a view to self-preservation for the people, but also with a view to healing and restoration of the leper, because restoration is possible. This chapter describes how to deal in case of restoration.

Verses 1-9 | Cleansing of the Leper

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6 [As for] the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. 7 He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. 8 The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. 9 It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean.

The LORD speaks here only to Moses (cf. Lev 13:1; 14:33), because he is a picture of the Lord Jesus as Mediator, as the One Who makes it all right between God and the member of God's people who has lived in sin.

When the priest hears of the healing of a leper, he goes to the leper. In this we see a characteristic of a spiritual believer: he will pay attention to indications that there is a change for the better in someone who has been removed from among the believers because of perseverance in sin.

The priest does not do anything about healing, nor can he. He can only determine whether the infection of leprosy has healed. Then the cleansing can begin. The leprosy in the spiritual sense is disappeared when the believer "confesses and forsakes" sin (Pro 28:13). Then there will be complete humiliation noted.

If someone is healed, he cannot return to the camp immediately. Cleansing must happen first. The cleansing represents in picture that the Lord Jesus and His work in various aspects are placed before the attention, so that such a person may again take the right foundation before God. He has lost sight of this through his sin. Something has disappeared – the infection, the sin – and instead something, or rather: Someone, another Person: the Lord Jesus, must come. Confession is not enough. We must also become aware that the Lord Jesus had to suffer and die for that sin.

Two clean birds should be taken on the first day. They are a picture of the Lord Jesus. Actually this is not an offering. Nothing is brought on the altar and no blood is offered to God. The offerings will only come on the eighth day (from verse 10). The two birds together must depict that the Lord Jesus is the Man Who came from heaven, Who died, but rose again. One bird is slain. The other is identified with it and is let go free over the open field. This shows that the Lord Jesus is both "delivered over because of our transgressions" and "raised because of our justification" (Rom 4:25). After living in sin for a period, we must become aware of this again.

The blood of the slain bird is in an "earthenware vessel" in which is "running water". That too refers to the Lord Jesus and His work. The earthenware vessel indicates that He became Man (Heb 2:14a). Running water is water that rises from the earth. It is not stagnant water, but there is life in it. It refers to the Word of God that is made alive by the power of the Holy

Spirit. In the Lord Jesus we see the Holy Spirit at work; the Word of God is in Him; He is the Word and is eternal. In addition, there is the blood as a result of His death.

When the Lord Jesus died and one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, “immediately blood and water came out” (Jn 19:34). Blood and water are both needed for cleansing. Blood is for atonement, “for without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22b). The blood is more in connection with God. The water has more to do with confession and is more connected to the sinner. If he confesses his sins, he may know that God is “faithful” to His Word “and righteous” in view of the work of Christ, “to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1Jn 1:9).

There are other things: cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop. Cedarwood comes from Lebanon. It speaks of impressive, natural grandeur. Hyssop is a small, little plant that does not impress. Solomon speaks of both as extremes (1Kgs 4:33a). Crimson or scarlet is a picture of royal, earthly glory. All this is present with the Lord Jesus. We see that in the Gospels. It is all gone in the death, His death. But He has risen and because of that these things regain their meaning.

All previous actions are then applied to the leper. In this picture we see that cleansing is not removing the wrong thing, but getting a view of the Lord Jesus and His work again. Then he who has been cleansed must wash his clothes, which speaks of bringing his conduct under the control of God’s Word (Eph 5:26). He must also shave off all his hair, which says that he renounces all natural honor (1Cor 11:15). Then he must bathe himself in water, which means that he places his whole life under the Word of God, so that there is no more room for sin.

He is allowed to come back to the camp, but has to stay outside his tent for seven days. He has been taken up again in the people of God, but has not yet taken his own familiar place again. Someone who has a gift can be restored to God’s people after a sinful way, but cannot immediately exercise that gift again. That too takes time. After a fullness of time, seven days, he has to shave off all his hair again and wash his clothes and body and then he is clean.

Verses 10-20 | Cleansing on the Eighth Day

10 "Now on the eighth day he is to take two male lambs without defect, and a yearling ewe lamb without defect, and three-tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log* of oil; 11 and the priest who pronounces him clean shall present the man to be cleansed and the aforesaid before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 12 Then the priest shall take the one male lamb and bring it for a guilt offering, with the log of oil, and present them as a wave offering before the LORD. 13 Next he shall slaughter the male lamb in the place where they slaughter the sin offering and the burnt offering, at the place of the sanctuary—for the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest; it is most holy. 14 The priest shall then take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put [it] on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 15 The priest shall also take some of the log of oil, and pour [it] into his left palm; 16 the priest shall then dip his right-hand finger into the oil that is in his left palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of the oil seven times before the LORD. 17 Of the remaining oil which is in his palm, the priest shall put some on the right ear lobe of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the guilt offering; 18 while the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm, he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD. 19 The priest shall next offer the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Then afterward, he shall slaughter the burnt offering. 20 The priest shall offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be clean.

*One log is about half a liter.

Then the eighth day comes. That speaks of a new beginning. This new beginning is again characterized in a special way by the Lord Jesus, His Person and work, as expressed in the offerings brought on that day.

The first offering is a guilt offering (verse 12). Living in sin is a choice, an act, by which someone is taking guilt on himself. The three cases of leprosy of the people of God in the Old Testament – Miriam, Gehazi and Uzziah (Num 12:5-10; 2Kgs 5:20-27; 2Chr 26:16-21) – show this. For this

reason, a guilt offering must be brought, which speaks of the awareness that the Lord Jesus had to undergo the judgment of God because of that choice for sin. This was the only way in which this guilt could have been extinguished.

The blood of the guilt offering is put on the lobe of the right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. The whole practical life is brought under the value of the blood. The question we have to ask ourselves when we listen to something, when we want to do something or when we want to go somewhere is: Is it all sanctified by the blood?

Oil is put on the blood. Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit. The blood of Christ for justification and the anointing of the Holy Spirit for sanctification are inextricably linked. After the price of the blood through which we are justified and purchased, follows a life of holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit allows us to live according to the value of the blood applied.

The rest of the oil is put on the head of the one to be cleansed. It is a special blessing for someone who, as a believer, confesses his sinful way. It is not necessary to live in sin to get such a blessing. It is the privilege of every priest. To be a priest, it is not necessary to have been a leper first. This requires fellowship with God. This leads to higher blessings.

Then the sin offering and the burnt offering are brought. This results in full restoration. The full scope of the Lord Jesus' work is placed before the attention of the restored believer. He sees how the source, the root, of sin was judged in the Lord Jesus and how he is accepted by God on the basis of His work and in Him. He is clean.

Verses 21-32 | Cleansing of Someone Who Is Poor

21 "But if he is poor and his means are insufficient, then he is to take one male lamb for a guilt offering as a wave offering to make atonement for him, and one-tenth [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil, 22 and two turtledoves or two young pigeons which are within his means, the one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. 23 Then the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, before the LORD. 24 The priest shall take the lamb of the guilt

offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall offer them for a wave offering before the LORD. 25 Next he shall slaughter the lamb of the guilt offering; and the priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put [it] on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 26 The priest shall also pour some of the oil into his left palm; 27 and with his right-hand finger the priest shall sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before the LORD. 28 The priest shall then put some of the oil that is in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the guilt offering. 29 Moreover, the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement on his behalf before the LORD. 30 He shall then offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, which are within his means. 31 [He shall offer] what he can afford, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the one to be cleansed. 32 This is the law [for him] in whom there is an infection of leprosy, whose means are limited for his cleansing."

Someone who is poor may come with a smaller offering. This does not apply to the guilt offering. The picture here is one who has come to confess his wrong way, but who spiritually does not have much insight into the scope of sin and therefore does not have such a deep understanding of what the Lord Jesus had to suffer. He does know, however, that his guilt has been removed by the work of the Lord Jesus. He does not know much about the source of sin and being accepted by God. For the rest it is dealt with as in the previous case.

Verses 33-42 | A Mark of Leprosy on a House

33 The LORD further spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying: 34 "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession, 35 then the one who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, '[Something] like a mark [of leprosy] has become visible to me in the house.' 36 The priest shall then command that they empty the house before the priest goes in to look at the mark, so that everything in the house need not become unclean; and afterward the

priest shall go in to look at the house. 37 So he shall look at the mark, and if the mark on the walls of the house has greenish or reddish depressions and appears deeper than the surface, 38 then the priest shall come out of the house, to the doorway, and quarantine the house for seven days. 39 The priest shall return on the seventh day and make an inspection. If the mark has indeed spread in the walls of the house, 40 then the priest shall order them to tear out the stones with the mark in them and throw them away at an unclean place outside the city. 41 He shall have the house scraped all around inside, and they shall dump the plaster that they scrape off at an unclean place outside the city. 42 Then they shall take other stones and replace [those] stones, and he shall take other plaster and replaster the house.

The third case of leprosy is that on a house. That is only now being discussed because it is a special case. This case cannot happen in the wilderness, where the Israelites have no houses. They only have them in the land. God points to that time (verse 34).

The house can be applied to the house of Israel, which will ultimately be leprous and must be torn down. God will have to set aside the house of Israel, His people, when it appears that they forget Him, and serve the idols, and reject their Messiah. It is also applicable to professing Christianity as a whole.

Another application is that to a local church as an expression of the house of God. If sin is found there, it must be judged. It can be limited to the mark of leprosy on one or a few stones, on one person or a few persons. Just as stones can be broken away, those who live in sin must be removed from the local church. Stones represent believers (1Pet 2:5). Believers who live in sin must be removed from among the believers of the local church (1Cor 5:13b).

It is *God* Who puts the mark of leprosy on a house (verse 34). That is, if sin is given a place in a local church, we must acknowledge that God has allowed it. He allows this to reveal who is for Him (1Cor 11:19).

The owner of the house refers to those who bear responsibility, that in the church everything goes as God wills. This thought is represented in "the angel of the church" (Rev 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). They can be addressed as people who recognize evil. They go with it to the priest. He is expected to

do something about it, for he is supposed to be spiritual-minded and to know God's thoughts. He, in practice, lives in God's presence.

The priest investigates. He knows what the stones should look like. He can determine whether stones have a different color. He is not hasty. First the house is cleared, so that evil does not spread any further. The house is then closed for seven days. When after that it turns out that there are stones with the mark of leprosy, those stones must be torn out.

When the leprous stones have been removed, the whole house must be scraped. The local church must cleanse itself of the influence of sin. The members must humble themselves, acknowledge their share and prove themselves clean (2Cor 7:11). Then other stones are put in their place. The Lord gives blessing when discipline is exercised in the right mind and thus compensates for the loss.

Verses 43-47 | The Mark Breaks Out Again in the House

43 "If, however, the mark breaks out again in the house after he has torn out the stones and scraped the house, and after it has been replastered, 44 then the priest shall come in and make an inspection. If he sees that the mark has indeed spread in the house, it is a malignant mark in the house; it is unclean. 45 He shall therefore tear down the house, its stones, and its timbers, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall take [them] outside the city to an unclean place. 46 Moreover, whoever goes into the house during the time that he has quarantined it, becomes unclean until evening. 47 Likewise, whoever lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and whoever eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

The mark can break out again in the house. This happens when the previous case of leprosy has not been thoroughly purified. The whole house must then be torn down and taken out of town. It is the picture of a local church that does not judge sin in its midst. Such a local church can then no longer be recognized as such by the Lord. If sin is not judged, He cannot be in the midst.

A church where the evil has penetrated so much that there is no longer any cleansing can no longer be recognized as a church. It is removed from the circle of houses that make up the city and is taken out of the city. In

the practice of the interconnectedness that exists between local churches it will mean that such a church will no longer be visited and other local churches will not receive anyone from such a church. This is related to the fact that the Lord Jesus can no longer be there because of not removing the evil from the midst. Every spiritually-minded church will see this and act in accordance with it.

Anyone who somehow still has something to do with the house, even briefly, before it is torn down, is unclean. By reading God's Word, the defilement is removed. By reading God's Word, inverted influences gained through the stay are discovered and condemned and the thoughts are focused on the Lord Jesus.

Verses 48-53 | Cleansing of the House

48 "If, on the other hand, the priest comes in and makes an inspection and the mark has not indeed spread in the house after the house has been replastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean because the mark has not reappeared. 49 To cleanse the house then, he shall take two birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop, 50 and he shall slaughter the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 51 Then he shall take the cedar wood and the hyssop and the scarlet string, with the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird as well as in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 He shall thus cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the running water, along with the live bird and with the cedar wood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet string. 53 However, he shall let the live bird go free outside the city into the open field. So he shall make atonement for the house, and it will be clean."

Pronouncing a house clean, as with a person, happens by putting the Person of Christ before the attention, as He is represented in the various offerings (verses 4-9).

Verses 54-57 | Summary

54 This is the law for any mark of leprosy—even for a scale, 55 and for the leprous garment or house, 56 and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot— 57 to teach when they are unclean and when they are clean. This is the law of leprosy.

We are at the end of the detailed description of the forms of leprosy and its cleansing. The LORD here says again that the law He has given for this applies to every form of leprosy: the leprous person, the leprous garment and the leprous house.

This law serves “to teach”. Paul says to Timothy: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching ... in righteousness” (2Tim 3:16). Teaching has to do with being ‘trained’ or ‘educated’. What Paul connects with righteousness, we can connect here with unclean and clean. The training or education for this happens when we read God’s Word. We then get teaching in how to see when something is unclean and when something is clean.

Leviticus 15

Introduction

As with the leper, this chapter is about defilement. However, there is a big difference between the defilement discussed in this chapter and defilement caused by leprosy. Leprosy is sin, and therefore defilement, through one's *own will*. A discharge is something that happens involuntarily, without intent. It is a discharge that comes from a human being, without even committing a sin. These are discharges such as nocturnal ejaculation, monthly menstruation and other discharges that, like a giving birth in Leviticus 12, are related to human nature. Discharges defile precisely because they originate from the nature of man who has fallen into sin.

The lesson we can learn from this chapter is that there are things we say or do, without the intention of hurting anyone, but which still have a wrong effect. They originate spontaneously from us, we can't do anything about it, but we often feel immediately thereafter that it didn't come from the new life. We realize that the Lord Jesus would not have spoken or acted like that.

Verses 1-12 | If Someone Has a Discharge

1 The LORD also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. 3 This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge. 4 Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean. 5 Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening; 6 and whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting, shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 7 Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 8 Or if the man with the discharge spits on one who is clean, he too shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until

evening. 9 Every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean. 10 Whoever then touches any of the things which were under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who carries them shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 11 Likewise, whomever the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 12 However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.

The discharge in question here does not seem to indicate a seminal emission, because it is mentioned separately in verse 16. Thought is of gonorrhoea, a venereal disease, or diarrhoea. Whoever has the discharge is unclean. Anyone who or anything touched by the unclean one is also unclean. Anyone who touches something that is touched by the unclean person also becomes impure. Mentioned are: his bed (verses 4-5), his chair (verse 6), his body (verse 7), his saliva (verse 8), his saddle (verse 9), everything which is under him (verse 10).

Anyone who is unclean by touching someone who has a discharge or what has come into contact with it, is unclean until the evening. To clean himself he needs to wash his clothes and himself.

An application is that hearing unclean language influences our use of language and we also express language that makes us unclean. To be cleansed of this uncleanness, we must read God's Word, of which the water is a picture. By reading God's Word we recognize the origin of our speaking or acting. We humble ourselves before the Lord and bring our conduct and our speaking back into conformity with the Word of God. It's about things we do unconsciously, things that have crept into our minds.

Although the defilement extends further than in the case of a leper, there is no offering or removal out of the camp, as in the case of a leper. In leprosy we see sin revealing itself as real corruption. That corruption is present in nature, but is allowed in the heart. A long-term operation is necessary to clean the conscience. In the case of a discharge, one should only wash oneself with water once and in some cases only bring a bird as a sin offering and a bird as a burnt offering. This shows that these cases of uncleanness are not charged as heavily as in the case of the leper. God makes a differ-

ence in the nature of sin. It is important that we do the same. This requires of us continued dependence on Him and His Word.

Verses 13-15 | Cleansing a Man From a Discharge

13 Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and will become clean. 14 Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest; 15 and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD because of his discharge.

There are two forms of cleansing:

1. Cleansing of someone or what has become unclean by contact, either of the discharge or of what has become unclean by contact with the discharge. This has been dealt with in the previous verses (verses 1-12).
2. Cleansing of him who has the discharge and is therefore unclean. This is dealt with in the abovementioned verses (verses 13-15).

In the cleansing of the one who has the discharge, offerings are brought. It presents the work of the Lord Jesus as the means of atonement. We see that He was the sin offering and the burnt offering. The defilement has been removed. There is no investigation by the priest, as with the leper. It is not a public evil.

If the discharge has stopped, a period of cleansing follows. It takes seven days. On the seventh day he must wash his clothes and bathe his body. On the eighth day two pigeons are offered as offerings. This happens at the tent of meeting, by the priest.

Our whole behavior influences the meeting. Therefore, we should always as priests examine ourselves whether a discharge has occurred, or whether we have been in contact with someone who has a discharge, through which things have crept into our speaking and behavior that are not suitable for God's presence. We may then think of the offering of the Lord Je-

sus, Who was made a sin offering, and at the same time as a burnt offering was God's perfect pleasure.

Verses 16-18 | Unclean By a Seminal Emission

16 Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. 17 As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening. 18 If a man lies with a woman [so that] there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.

A seminal emission makes unclean. It seems to be about two cases:

1. the nightly seminal emission (which is also called the 'wet dream');
2. the seminal emission during sexual intercourse.

Just like the birth of a child, this is not about a sinful act. There is no guilt, no offering is prescribed.

As Christians, we know that sexuality is a gift from God. We can talk about it, but we will not do so in an inappropriate way. Not because we are ashamed of it, but because it is something intimate. We may say more about it than is appropriate, as it were an involuntary seminal emission.

Seminal emission during sexual intercourse also causes the need for both husband and wife to wash themselves with water. Even in the most intimate experience of unity between two people it is necessary to be determined that it is not a perfect, uncontaminated unity. This is not to restrict pleasure, but to strengthen the desire for the unity of which sexual intercourse speaks (Eph 5:31-32).

In both cases it is necessary to apply water. By reading the Word of God, our thoughts are cleansed of the filth that sticks through the world to what God has given as beautiful in marriage. With Him, the picture of Christ and the church and the love of Christ for the church always stands before the attention. That is how it should be with us. If husband and wife together use the water of the Word, they will be cleansed of the filth that the world makes of the sexual intercourse, on the one hand, and on the other hand they will see and experience it as God intended.

Verses 19-27 | When a Woman Has a Discharge

19 *'When a woman has a discharge, [if] her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. 20 Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean. 21 Anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 22 Whoever touches any thing on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. 23 Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. 24 If a man actually lies with her so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. 25 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. 26 Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. 27 Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.*

The discharge of a woman has two forms. The first form is that of menstrual discharge, the monthly discharge (verses 19-24). What applies to the discharge of the man in verses 2-12 also applies here to the periodic discharge of the woman. The second form is that of discharges outside menstruation (verses 25-27). The woman who is healed by the Lord Jesus in the midst of a crowd suffers from this form of discharge, called hemorrhage (Mk 5:25-29; Lk 8:43-48).

Although, as said, it is an involuntary discharge, the discharge makes unclean. It is even so that the LORD compares the defilement of His people with the idols with the monthly uncleanness of a woman (Eze 36:17). The continuing discharge ultimately leads to death. Also, all the time that the discharge lasts, she may not enter the sanctuary, that the tabernacle of the LORD may not be defiled (verse 31). Given the nature of this discharge, there is a relationship with leprosy. Therefore David mentions them in the curse he pronounces on the house of Joab in one breath (2Sam 3:29).

Verses 28-30 | Cleansing of a Woman From a Discharge

28 When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean. 29 Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them in to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. 30 The priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the LORD because of her impure discharge.'

For the cleansing of her who has had a discharge, the same ritual applies as for the man who is cleansed from the defilement of his discharge (verses 13-15).

Verse 31 | Purpose of Cleansing

31 "Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them."

The necessity of cleansing the defilement is because God's dwelling is among His people. Where He dwells, that is now in the church and in the believer, uncleanness may have no place. God and something of sin are not compatible.

Verses 32-33 | Law for the One With a Discharge

32 This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it, 33 and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.

The detail with which the law on the discharge is given shows how much the LORD has in mind the welfare of His people. He would like to be in their midst and indicates in His grace how this privilege can be enjoyed by pointing out what prevents Him from being with them.

Leviticus 16

Introduction

This chapter is the heart of the book. It is its foundation. Here the question is answered how a holy God can dwell among an unholy people and have fellowship with them.

The offerings in the first chapters of this book are almost always made by individual Israelites, either voluntarily – burnt offering and grain offering –, or compulsorily – sin offering and guilt offering. There is no question of a special day. The offerings on the day of atonement must be brought annually on a prescribed day and are for the whole people. The emphasis is on the sin offering and the blood. In picture the cross is presented in the most fundamental way in this chapter as the place where the Lord Jesus died as the sin offering, thereby laying the foundation for the fellowship between God and His people.

The Passover represents the foundation of salvation, the deliverance out of Egypt. The day of atonement covers more. This makes it possible for a redeemed people to have fellowship with God and to approach Him in the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is a picture of the heaven of heavens where the throne of God is and where we may approach boldly as priests. “We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). The letter to the Hebrews is in fact one great comment on Leviticus 16. This is especially evident in the differences between Leviticus and the letter to the Hebrews:

1. The veil is still closed here; in the letter to the Hebrews the entrance is free.
2. Aaron is a sinful high priest, while the Lord Jesus is perfect.
3. In Leviticus we see a repetition of sacrifices and thus a recurring reminder of sins (Heb 10:1-3); in the letter to the Hebrews it is about an offering that has been made once and for all: “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb 10:14).

The repetition proves that it is nothing more than a symbol; the strength lies in pointing to the offering of the Lord Jesus.

4. In Leviticus the priest stands; in the letter to the Hebrews He sits down (Heb 10:11-12).

Verses 1-2 | Reason for the Day of Atonement

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. 2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.

The starting point of this chapter is the death of two of the most privileged people on earth (Lev 10:1-2). If it is impossible for them to enter the presence of God without dying, then the total loss of man is established. How then can a man approach God? God reveals this in picture in this chapter. It answers the question: How can the holy God dwell among such men? God indicates the way.

The high priest lays the foundation for this by the offering he brings every year. On that one day he may enter the holy place. But not without blood, that he must offer for himself and for the people (Heb 9:7). The blood comes from different offerings. Every offering speaks of the Lord Jesus.

Verses 3-4 | How Aaron Must Enter the Sanctuary

3 Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on.

When entering the holy place Aaron does not wear his official garments for glory and for beauty with which he represents the people before God. He wears simple white linen clothes. This speaks of the personal purity and practical righteousness of the Lord Jesus. He is the only One Who was able to accomplish the work on the cross for the benefit of others. On the cross He did not look after the interests of the people in view of their weaknesses, but made Himself one with their sins. He made their sins His, as He prophetically speaks of "My iniquities" (Psa 40:12).

Verses 5-11 | The Offerings That Aaron Must Bring

5 He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. 7 He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 8 Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. 11 "Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself.

There are two sin offerings: one for Aaron and his house, the other for the people. There is a difference in animals: a bull and a goat. There is also a difference in number: one bull for himself and his house and two goats for the people. Aaron and his house represent the Lord Jesus and God's heavenly people, the church (Heb 3:1,6). The people are God's earthly people Israel. A bull is a greater offering. The church has a greater insight into and appreciation for the work of the Lord Jesus than Israel.

Two goats are needed to represent the truth of atonement. The first goat is for the LORD, the second for the people. First, God's holy demands must be met, then the needs of the people. Both goats also present two aspects of atonement. The goat for the LORD represents the work of the Lord Jesus by which all the holy demands of God are fulfilled. In this way the *offer* of the reconciliation based on the work of the Lord Jesus can be made to all men. The work is so great and perfect that all men *can* be saved (1Tim 2:3-6; Acts 17:30; 2Cor 5:19-21).

The other goat, that is sent away, proposes the substantiation. On this goat are confessed the sins of all who belong to the people of God (verse 21). In this we see that the Lord Jesus has borne the sins, not of all men, but only of those who accept God's offer of reconciliation, that is, those who repent. The Lord Jesus gave His life "a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). Here is not "for all", but "for many". The word 'for' here has the meaning of 'instead

of', while the word 'for' in 1 Timothy 2 means 'extending to', in the sense of an offer (1Tim 2:6).

Verses 12-13 | The Incense

12 He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring [it] inside the veil. 13 He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on [the ark of] the testimony, otherwise he will die.

The high priest enters the sanctuary with his hands full of incense. For Aaron as a sinful person it is, that he may not die. The cloud of incense fills the sanctuary and envelops him. The Lord Jesus Himself does not need any incense to enter the sanctuary. He entered by virtue of all His glories, His attributes, all of which are a pleasant fragrance to God. Incense does not speak so much of what He has done, but of what and Who He is.

Verse 14 | The Blood of the Bull

14 Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle [it] with his finger on the mercy seat on the east [side]; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

The blood of the bull is sprinkled on and in front of the mercy seat. The blood on the mercy seat is for God. He sees the blood as a covering, a fulfilment of His holy demands written on the tablets of the law that lie in the ark under the mercy seat. One sprinkling is enough for Him. He perfectly knows the value of the blood.

The blood in front of the mercy seat is for us, priests. We may approach God on the basis thereof to serve Him as priests. For the priest, the blood is sprinkled seven times. That is to give us absolute certainty that we can be there because of the value of that blood.

Verses 15-19 | The Goat for the LORD

15 "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy

seat. 16 He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. 17 When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. 18 Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. 19 With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it.

The goat which is for the LORD (verse 8) is slaughtered for the sake of the people. Its blood, as well as the blood of the bull, is sprinkled on and before the mercy seat in the sanctuary. This is for the atonement of the sanctuary because of the sins of the Israelites, that God may continue to dwell among them.

God's honor is restored through the work of the Lord Jesus. He has returned to God what He has not stolen, namely God's glory (Psa 69:4). The dishonor we have done to God has been taken away by the Lord Jesus by glorifying Him, obeying Him in everything, and accomplishing His work perfectly. Therefore first the goat is slaughtered which is for the LORD. God must have the first place, only then will our need come.

The foundation of reconciliation with God was established by the Lord Jesus. God has demanded all His righteous demands as the holy and righteous God from the Lord Jesus. He made Him sin (2Cor 5:21; Rom 8:3). The Lord Jesus has perfectly fulfilled all God's demands and desires. God is perfectly satisfied with regard to sin. On that basis God can now offer reconciliation to every human being (2Cor 5:20). Every human being can be reconciled to God (Tit 2:11; 1Tim 2:6). In sending Christ to earth, God has stretched out His reconciling hand to the world (2Cor 5:19).

The Lord Jesus is now in heaven. No man is present when He "through his own blood" enters the heavenly sanctuary as the basis of an eternal redemption which He has obtained (Heb 9:11-12). He is "designated by God as a High Priest" (Heb 5:10a). Because we may enter the sanctuary (Heb

10:19; Eph 2:18), we may know what Israel does not know yet, because the veil is still closed for them.

Blood is applied to the sanctuary, to the objects which are therein, and to the tent of meeting and the altar. In Hebrews 9 it says that the tabernacle is a copy of heaven (Heb 9:23-24). On the basis of the blood, once all *things* – so not: all people! – will be reconciled to God (Col 1:20).

Verses 20-22 | The Live, Send Away Goat

20 “When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. 21 Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send [it] away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who [stands] in readiness. 22 The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

Aaron identifies himself with the live goat – laying on hands is identification. Then he confesses all the sins, which are “all the iniquities”, the evil deeds of the Israelites. The sins are put on the goat, as it were. Then the goat is released in the wilderness.

It refers to the Lord Jesus, Who has taken upon Himself the sins of all who believe in Him (1Pet 2:24). He has confessed every sin of every believer before God as His own sin, and He has borne the judgment over those sins. God says: “I will remember their sins no more” (Heb 8:12). The believer may know and say: “You have cast all my sins behind Your back” (Isa 38:17b). He has thrown them “into the depths of the sea” (Mic 7:19b). He has put them away “as far as the east is from the west” (Psa 103:12), that is, infinitely far away. They are borne “to a solitary land”. Where sin is, there is no dwelling place for God, neither for people who are reconciled to God.

Verses 23-26 | Other Garments, Bathe, Offering

23 “Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. 24 He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of

the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. 25 Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar. 26 The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp.

After having sprinkled his blood his special work is done and he puts on his normal clothes again. Then he brings the ram for a burnt offering for himself and for the people. With the burnt offering he also brings the fat of the sin offering on the altar. This also speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus. The atonement cannot be separated from the perfect glorification of God, which is contained in the same work.

Everyone who has been in contact with sin must cleanse himself. The water bath of the Word works the cleansing.

Verses 27-28 | Burnt With Fire Outside the Camp

27 But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. 28 Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp.

From the sin offerings the blood is brought into the sanctuary and the bodies are brought outside the camp. This is also the place of the Christian (Heb 13:11-13), following the Lord Jesus. The camp stands for the organized religion in professing Christianity, where man is respected and takes the position of mediator between God and man. As a result, the Lord Jesus is not given the first and only place. The Christian is with Christ in the sanctuary in heaven; on earth he is with Him in a place of reproach.

Verses 29-31 | Statute for the Day of Atonement

29 "[This] shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; 30 for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.

Thinking of the atonement causes humbleness. After all, it is our sins that have made the work of the Lord Jesus necessary. We have dishonored God through our sins.

No work may be done on that day. The work of the Lord Jesus excludes any human activity. For everyone for whom this work has been accomplished, the result is: peace.

Verse 32 | High Priestly Follow-Up

32 So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments,

This verse shows that the institution in Israel is imperfect. There is succession of the priesthood, while the Lord Jesus is High Priest permanently (Heb 7:23-24).

Verses 33-34 | Atonement Once a Year

33 and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year." And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, [so] he did.

These verses are a summary of this chapter. Although this law can only be fulfilled in the seventh month, we already read here that it is done "as the LORD had commanded Moses". Here is looked ahead to the realization.

Leviticus 17

Verses 1-9 | A Part of Each Sacrifice Is for the Lord

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the LORD has commanded, saying, 3 "Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, 4 and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present [it] as an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people. 5 The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the LORD, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD. 6 The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the LORD. 7 They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations." ' 8 "Then you shall say to them, 'Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man also shall be cut off from his people.

Of all the slaughtered animals, the Israelites must bring a portion to the doorway of the tent of meeting in order to sacrifice it to the LORD. In the situation described here, an animal is slaughtered to be eaten with others. It therefore has the character of a peace offering, which speaks of fellowship between the members of God's people and of God's people with the priest and with God.

In the precept that God gives here, He expresses that He does not want His people to have fellowship with one another without His involvement. For God, every slaughtered animal has the character of a peace offering. He wants His people to know this clearly. The application for us is: Do we share every joy we have, with God and with all the people of God?

The peace offering is a picture of the Lord Jesus. He is the center of our fellowship and its foundation. We are “called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Cor 1:9). The right translation is not “fellowship *with*” but “fellowship *of*”. This means that the fellowship is characterized by Jesus Christ, that He is the common object of all who are part of this fellowship. Friendships must also have this center and foundation. The eldest son from Luke 15 wants a young goat from his father to celebrate alone with his friends (Lk 15:29b). He doesn’t want to have his father with him. That is the evil of his way of celebrating.

The flesh meals of the people are either dedicated to the LORD, or to the demons. The devil is successful when God is kept out of our feasts. It is in his interest that the Lord Jesus is not the center of our conversations.

Paul applies this in his first letter to the Corinthians. He points out to the Corinthians, in connection with the Lord’s Table, Israel and their service at the altar in offering the peace offering: “Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?” (1Cor 10:18). In this context he warns not to act as the nations do and says: “I do not want you to become sharers in demons” (1Cor 10:20). Paul mentions the people of Israel who sat down to eat and drink, and who rose up to play “idolaters” because they kept God out of this feast (1Cor 10:7; Exo 32:6). Idols are demonic powers. We are called upon to flee from idolatry (1Cor 10:14).

Fellowship with God is not limited to a single event per year, as at the day of atonement for Israel. Fellowship is an everyday matter. We experience and express fellowship in a special way in celebrating the Lord’s Supper at the Lord’s Table, but it is not limited to that. Fellowship with God and with each other is a matter of every day. God wants to be present at all our ‘meals’ and enjoy the relationship with each other and with the Lord Jesus.

In our personal lives, in everything we do, we will contribute to or detract from fellowship with God and with one another. It enhances the testimony that we have as believers on earth or it harms it. That is why we have to ask ourselves personally: Can I share what I do with my brothers and sisters with joy, or would I rather not want them to know, because I know that my behavior will make them sad? How I behave when I am alone, or with people from the world, is important.

Verses 10-14 | Prohibition to Eat Blood

10 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' 12 Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.' 13 So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. 14 "For [as for the] life of all flesh, its blood is [identified] with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

This section is about eating blood. Twice before in this book God spoke about the blood (Lev 3:17; 7:26). The blood should not be eaten, because life is in the blood and life belongs to God. Blood is not only life; it is also the means of making atonement (verse 11). We may eat an animal, but God retains the right to blood. We acknowledge God's right to life by not eating blood.

The ban on eating blood does not only apply to Israel. The first Christians are also told this as an everlasting commandment (Acts 15:28-29). Eating blood or, for example, blood sausage, remains prohibited.

Verses 15-16 | Food That Makes Unclean

15 When any person eats [an animal] which dies or is torn [by beasts], whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. 16 But if he does not wash [them] or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

Eating "[an animal] which dies or is torn [by beasts]", means eating an animal of which the blood has not come on the altar. Nor has its blood been poured out in the manner prescribed by God, nor has it been covered with earth (verse 13). Someone who eats unconsciously of such an animal is unclean. It must be said to him, and when he hears it, he must wash his

clothes and bathe himself in water. If he does not, he shows indifference in the things of God and “he shall bear his guilt”.

Applied to us, it means that we feed ourselves with something that is not first dedicated to God. It can be material or spiritual. We may enjoy all that God has created, but it is important that we realize that it comes from Him. We do this by thanking Him for it. Then we involve Him in it (1Tim 4:4-5). If we forget that and become aware of it, we must confess it.

Leviticus 18

Introduction

In this chapter we read a lot of what we also read in Leviticus 20. The distinction is that in this chapter God as the "LORD" is in the foreground, while in Leviticus 20 the emphasis is on God's holiness. There we read about the punishments for the sins that are necessarily given ample attention to here.

Verses 1-4 | Do Not Do as Egypt or Canaan

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am the LORD your God. 3 You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. 4 You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God.

God puts Himself every time before the attention of the people as the LORD, the God of the covenant with His people. By doing so, He wants them to take on His features and not those of the nations around them. There is a special warning for the influence of Egypt and Canaan. After the laws with a view to their sacrificial service, the so-called ceremonial laws, God now gives some moral laws with a view to their sexual intercourse.

Egypt represents the world without God. In Egypt there is a lot of human wisdom (Acts 7:22). For the Christian, the danger of Egypt is discussed in the letter to the Colossians. It also warns against wisdom that takes people captive (Col 2:8). The Colossians are in danger of mixing their faith with the wisdom of the world. Paul reminds them that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

Canaan is the land of blessings that God has given His people. The great danger there is not so much wisdom, culture and science, but the great corruption that reigns there. The Christian is put in the heavenly places, of which Canaan is a picture. But that does not mean that there are no dangers. It is precisely in the letter to the Ephesians, where the blessings

of the Christian are described, that strong warning is given for any form of corruption (Eph 4:17-19). Giving in to this corruption means that we will lose the blessings.

The Christian is a new creation, he has been created “in [the likeness of] God” (Eph 4:24). He received Christ (Col 2:6) and learned Christ (Eph 4:20). The danger is that we adapt to the world around us in its character of Egypt or in its character of Canaan. Then we no longer show the new, but the old man.

The great contrast we see here is the contrast between the statutes and judgments of the world in its various forms and the statutes and judgments of God. The following of the former means death, the keeping of the latter means life.

Verse 5 | Do This and You Shall Live

5 So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.

Here we read the motivation for keeping the commandments: to receive and enjoy life. This verse is quoted four times in the Old Testament: three times in the book of Ezekiel (Eze 20:11,13,21) and once in the book of Nehemiah (Neh 9:29). It is quoted three times in the New Testament (Lk 10:25-28, Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12).

The last two texts (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12) show that no man has received the promised life. For there was no man who complied perfectly with the statutes and judgments of God. Only when one repents and receives new life from God on the basis of faith he can live to the glory of God and do His will wholeheartedly. The law says: Do this and you will live. The gospel says: Live and you will do.

Verses 6-16 | Incest

6 None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD. 7 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness. 8 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of your sister, [either] your father's

daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10 The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours. 11 The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's blood relative. 13 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's blood relative. 14 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt. 15 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

The acts that are described in verses 6-23 are acts of incest. They run counter to God's original purpose with marriage and sexuality. This should be self-evident to God's people. You assume them in the world and not in the people of God. That God addresses all these warnings to His people shows how necessary it is, because His people are also capable of these sins. God shows evil in its most horrible forms. He knows better than man himself to what he can degrade.

God here forbids sexual intercourse between blood relatives. The Hebrew words for 'nakedness' and 'uncover' are euphemisms, that is, softened or covered terms, for sexual intercourse. Here it concerns illicit sexual intercourse or fornication (Eze 16:36; 23:18). Such relations are unnatural.

The prohibition starts with the general ban on sexual intercourse with a blood relative. Sexual intercourse is forbidden here with:

1. mother;
2. stepmother;
3. half-sister (same father or mother);
4. grandchild;
5. half-sister (from the father's second marriage);
6. aunt, the sister of father or mother;
7. aunt, the wife of the father's brother;
8. daughter-in-law;
9. sister-in-law.

Verses 17-20 | Other Illicit Sexuality

17 You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness. 18 You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness. 19 'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity. 20 You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her.

Forbidden is also the sexual intercourse with:

1. a woman and her daughter and a woman and her granddaughter;
2. a woman and her sister;
3. a woman who has her period;
4. a woman married to another person.

Verse 21 | Prohibition to Offer Children

21 You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

The Molech is the national god of the Ammonites. In the context of the text, this does not seem to be primarily a fire offering, but an ordination of children to temple prostitution. It is a spiritual fornication that underlies carnal fornication.

Verse 22 | Prohibition of Homosexual Intercourse

22 You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

Homosexual intercourse is the sin of Sodom (Gen 19:5), from which also the Israelites do not keep themselves free (Jdg 19:22). God gives people over to these degrading passions, when they honor the creature above the Creator (Rom 1:24-27).

Verse 23 | Prohibition of Intercourse With an Animal

23 Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.

The prohibition of intercourse with an animal is given more often (Lev 20:15-16; Exo 22:19; Deu 27:21). The fact that this prohibition is also presented to the people of God shows that this horrible sin is also possible among God's people.

From a spiritual point of view, an animal is a symbol for people who ignore the existence of God in an absolute way or reject Him absolutely. We see this attitude in the two beasts described in the book of Revelation (Rev 13:1-18). Where there is no longer any connection whatsoever with the living God, man sinks into the deepest corruption. To that the greatest conceivable shame is connected, of which he is not conscious through his total closing off for any revelation from God.

Verses 24-30 | God Does Not Tolerate Abominations

24 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. 25 For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. 26 But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, [neither] the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); 28 so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. 29 For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do [so] shall be cut off from among their people. 30 Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God.'"

If Israel takes over the actions of the nations around them, they will be spewed out like those nations. Persons who surrender to such horrible acts as described above shall be cut off from among their people. God has given them His statutes and His judgments to keep them from doing these abominations.

When God gives a certain revelation, He wants this revelation to work fully through in man's life, that man takes it into account in his practice. The purity of marriage is of the utmost importance. God begins His warnings

therewith. Paul writes about this in the letter to the Colossians and the letter to the Ephesians.

The antidote to all the evils mentioned in this chapter is given in verse 30. By 'taking in' that, we are kept from the abominations found in the world, which connect with our flesh. This antidote is: remain in the Word of God. The chapter concludes with the same statement about God as that with which it begins.

Leviticus 19

Introduction

The variety of subjects in this chapter shows the versatility of life. We see here that all aspects of human life are under the authority of God's law.

Verses 1-2 | Holiness of God Is the Starting Point

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

Leviticus 18 is mainly negative; this chapter also contains positive elements. Separation is not only to distance oneself from certain forms of evil, as Leviticus 18 emphasizes, but also means sanctification to a certain goal or a person. This is about sanctification to God, about positive dedication to Him.

What comes to the fore in this chapter concerns the whole people of God and not only Aaron and his sons. It is not so much the priestly service, but the daily life of the members of God's people. All members of God's people are needed for the implementation of these precepts. Nowhere else in Leviticus is the whole people approached in the way that is done here. God wants to see His holiness reflected in all members of His people. It is as with the new man which had been created in the likeness of God (Eph 4:24). To show this new man all believers are needed.

In Leviticus 18 the emphasis is on the LORD, which means on Him as the One Who stands in a covenant relationship with His people. In this chapter the emphasis is on the holiness of the LORD. We must realize that the holy God of the Old Testament is also the holy God of the New Testament (1Pet 1:15-16). That we are no longer under the law, but under grace, does not change anything about God's holiness. Behind all the commandments of God stands His holiness.

Verses 3-4 | Relationship to Parents, Sabbath and Idols

3 Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God. 4 Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the LORD your God.

Both commandments mentioned in verse 3 summarize the whole law. It is about the acknowledgment of the authority granted by God and the authority of God Himself.

Reverence for God, Whom we do not see, is shown in the first place by reverence for father and mother whom we can see (cf. Mal 1:6a). Father and mother are God's first authority on earth that a human being has to deal with as soon as he is born. The honoring of father and mother applies as long as they live and not only when we live with them at home. The mother is first mentioned. Even when the father has died, the commandment remains to honor her.

This commandment to reverence the first authority with which a person on earth is confronted is linked to the sabbath commandment. By observing God's sabbaths, the Israelite shows his recognition of God. A certain usefulness can be assumed in all commands. This is not directly seen in the sabbath commandment. A person can rather see it as a day with a loss of productivity. He who keeps this commandment does it, because God has said it.

In the spiritual application, the sabbath commandment lays the foundation for all relationships. If we rest in the rest of God, that is in the work of Christ, there will also be rest in the family relationships in the acknowledgment of the obligations God has given in them.

Father and mother (family) and sabbath (rest after work) were instituted by God before the fall into sin. These institutions are the pillars of a peaceful world order and civil prosperity. All who belong to God's people may restore these pillars in a spiritual sense.

The commandment of honoring father and mother also applies to the church (Eph 6:2). The sabbath commandment cannot be kept literally, because God's rest with regard to creation is disturbed by sin (Jn 5:16-17). For creation this rest is still future (Heb 4:9). In a spiritual sense God rests in the work of His Son and we too may rest in it.

The child who is taught to honor father and mother will also honor God and keep away from idols. Also the connection with one's neighbor can only be good if the upwards connection, with God, is good. If God no longer stands before our attention, because other things have become more important – idols in any form –, the relationship with our immediate neighbors, our family members, will chill.

Verses 5-8 | Provisions for the Peace Offering

5 'Now when you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. 6 It shall be eaten the same day you offer [it], and the next day; but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire. 7 So if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an offense; it will not be accepted. 8 Everyone who eats it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned the holy thing of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

All forms of fellowship with our brothers and sisters, only have meaning through the peace offering. That seems to be the reason for reiterating the conditions relating to the peace offering. The peace offering, the fellowship offering, must be renewed each time (cf. Lev 7:15-18).

We must always remember that our fellowship with each other and with God is based on the work of the Lord Jesus. If our fellowship, which we first experienced as a result of the work of the Lord Jesus, has descended to the level of the world, then that fellowship is an abomination to God. For Him there is only one fellowship: the fellowship characterized by His Son Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:9).

Verses 9-10 | Remnants of the Harvest

9 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

The care and protection of one's neighbor follow the tribute to God in the peace offering. To sacrifices of praise and thanks are inextricably linked the sacrifices of mercy (Heb 13:15-16). The harvest time is a time of joy, in

which we also want others to share. What others get from us is not loss or waste, but will bring us blessing (cf. Rth 2:19).

It is our task to ensure that our poor neighbor gets food anyway. It is not God's will that there should be poor Israelites. If they are, it can be their own fault. But God does not want the wealthier to withdraw from the poor. That is also the case spiritually. If believers have been lazy in getting to know their richness, then the Lord wants us to share something with them so that they can enjoy the richness we have come to know.

Verse 11 | Do Not Steal, nor Deal Falsely, nor Lie

| 11 *'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.*

God's people need these exhortations. They are also in the letter to the Ephesians, to whom the highest blessings have been revealed. In that letter not only something is forbidden, but also the positive side is pointed out. Then, instead of lying, we speak the truth: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one [of you] with his neighbor, for we are members of one another" (Eph 4:25). And instead of stealing, there is giving away: "He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have [something] to share with one who has need" (Eph 4:28; Col 3:9).

Verses 12-13 | Swear Falsely, Oppress, Rob and Wages

| 12 *You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.* 13 *'You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob [him]. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.*

It is a great sin if we withhold from others what we owe them. This applies both literally (Jam 5:4) and spiritually (Mt 18:32b-33). What we do to our neighbor, we do to ourselves. In the body of Christ we are united as members. What one member does, affects the other. If one member suffers, all members suffer. The fact that this is not always experienced in this way does not take away anything from the truth of it.

Verse 14 | Caring for the Deaf and the Blind

| 14 *You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.*

Someone can be deaf because of a physical defect; he can be deaf because he is outside the hearing of the curser; he can also keep himself deaf for a curser (Psa 38:14a). A deaf person does not hear the curse, but God hears it and heavily blames the man who curses. Insulting people who are unable or unwilling to defend themselves is perceived by God.

Placing a stumbling block before the blind is also shabby. If we are spiritually allowed to see a certain truth, we can put a stumbling block in the way of others who may be blind to that certain truth (cf. 1Cor 8:8-9; Rom 14:13).

We are capable of such despicable things. Even David shows a deep aversion to the lame and the blind (2Sam 5:8). But God is not like that. And we should show Him. After all, we were created in His likeness.

Verses 15-16 | Fair Judgment

15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. 16 You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD.

An honest judgment, without regard to the person, is acting according to the example of God. Jehoshaphat acts according to this rule when he appoints judges. He says: "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe" (2Chr 19:7). James warns of making this distinction and speaks of "evil motives" (Jam 2:1-4).

We will not destroy our neighbor's life, which happens when we make life impossible for him by slandering him. He who goes around as a slanderer is causing death and destruction among God's people. In Ezekiel 22, slander and murder are also connected (Eze 22:9a). Whoever seeks the good for his brother or sister is doing his utmost to let the other enjoy life in its richest form in the midst of the company of God's children. The Lord Jesus is the life.

Verse 17 | The Duty to Reprove

17 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

To reprove someone is also a form of love and care for one's neighbor (Psa 141:5; Pro 27:5-6). To endure sin in him and not to say anything about it means to hate him. If the neighbor continues to live in his sin, he lacks fellowship with God and his fellow believers. Reproving must be done in love. Love covers sin for others, but not for the sinner himself. The attitude of "am I my brother's keeper? (Gen 4:9) is the attitude of Cain and stands against what God says here.

Verse 18 | Love One's Neighbor

18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

Like verse 17, this verse shows that it is not only about outward actions, but about the inner motives that lead to the outward actions as well. It's about the mind from which we act.

A higher standard applies to us: to love one another as God and Christ have loved us. In the law I am the norm, in Christendom Christ is the norm. If I am the norm, I will not disadvantage another person. If Christ is the norm, I will give myself for the other (1Jn 3:16). This is possible through the new life I have, for that life is Christ Himself and that acts in me no differently than in Him.

Verse 19 | Prohibited Mixing

19 'You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.

A second series of commandments begins with the instruction "you are to keep My statutes". Here God forbids three forms of mixing: of animals, of seeds and of garment materials. Probably when mixing animals, we should not think of 'breeding' in the first place, but of being unequally yoked (Deu 22:9-11). Just as we should not separate what God has merged in His order of creation, we should not merge what God has separated in His order of creation. He has created everything according to its kind (Gen 1:25). In both cases, what God has given is corrupted.

The spiritual lesson is that it is forbidden to mix things that don't belong together. We see that in Christianity where law and grace or the flesh and the Spirit are mixed together. This evil is denounced in the letter to the Galatians. We also see it in the mixture of faith in the Lord Jesus with pagan philosophies, which is the subject of the letter to the Colossians. In 2 Corinthians 6 there are other forms of mixing that are forbidden (2Cor 6:14-18).

Verses 20-22 | Sexual Intercourse With a Female Slave

20 'Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for [another] man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, [however], be put to death, because she was not free. 21 He shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. 22 The priest shall also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed, and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him.

Slaves must also be recognized as human beings having their rights. A female slave may not be reduced to a business property. In a spiritual sense we see here another example of a wrong mixture: a man who has fellowship with a slave. That too is to apply to identifying oneself with legal principles, to allow them in life. Anyone who does something like that is to blame.

Verses 23-25 | Eating the Fruit of the Land

23 'When you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; [it] shall not be eaten. 24 But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. 25 In the fifth year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am the LORD your God.

When the people have come into the land, the fruit of trees they plant in the land is at first unclean. That fruit is still, as it were, fed by soil cultivated by the Canaanites. For three years, eating it was forbidden to God's people, because it was still too closely linked to the stain that adjoined the country.

The fruit in the fourth year may be eaten, but must be offered to God. He also asserts his right to the first fruits with regard to the fruits of the trees, the same as with animals and children. The acknowledgment of this birth-right will lead to a greater yield for the people.

Application: everything that comes out of the world is unclean. What does not come from God Himself is unclean. Therefore, we must bring the earthly things into connection with God's Word and prayer. In this way we sanctify the things of the world we use (1Tim 4:4-5). Then also it gets a richer meaning, a greater yield, it is more to the glory of God.

Verses 26-31 | Idolatrous Practices

26 'You shall not eat [anything] with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying. 27 You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard. 28 You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD. 29 'Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and the land become full of lewdness. 30 You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary; I am the LORD. 31 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

Given the connection between the commandment not to eat anything that still contains blood here, eating anything with blood seems to be a pagan custom. The other prohibitions are also connected to the distinction that God wants to see maintained between pagan customs and what is appropriate for a people with whom He is connected as the God of the covenant.

Nor does He allow us any trip into the realm of darkness, for example by reading a horoscope. Christians who think that reading a horoscope, even if it is 'for fun', does nothing to them, are terribly wrong. Every entry into the realm of darkness is spiritual fornication and unacceptable to a jealous God.

This prohibition is also proof of His love for His people who will destroy themselves with these things. The country will become full of shame and will become a disgust toward the surrounding peoples. Saul did not comply with the prohibition of verse 31 and died (1Chr 10:13).

Verses 32-37 | Revere, Love and Do Justice

32 *'You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.* 33 *'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.* 34 *The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.* 35 *'You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity.* 36 *You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt.* 37 *You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD.'*"

Honoring an elderly person means honoring God. Old people living with God can count on God's recognition (Pro 16:31; 20:29). It is a testimony of wisdom if we follow Him therein. We can learn from their experiences (Job 32:6-7). Today, old people are no longer considered significant. Euthanasia is a socially accepted means of solving the problem of the elderly. A country that deals with its old people in this way will degenerate into disorder (Isa 3:5).

God's people must not only love their neighbor, who is their fellow countryman. Their love must also go out to the stranger who is in their land. God's people represent a God Who is also love. They experienced this for themselves when they were strangers in Egypt and He took care of them and took them out of slavery. For us, loving and giving love is also easier if we think about how much love has been proven to us. "We love, because He first loved us" (1Jn 4:19).

To do justice and measure with an honest measure shows respect for the LORD, for His salvation and for the neighbor who also is connected to Him on the basis of the same work of salvation. To do wrong under the appearance of justice is deceit and hypocrisy. Using a large measure when buying goods and using a small measure when selling goods does bring a lot of profit, but it is unlawful and is at the expense of the property of the neighbor. This evil is often denounced (Pro 20:10; Amos 8:5b; Pro 20:23; Mic 6:10).

Leviticus 20

Introduction

Many of the sins mentioned here are also in Leviticus 18. There they are forbidden so that they are not committed. But here the sanctions are given if the sins mentioned have actually been committed. The determination of a penalty is necessary if there is to be a law. Without a sanction there is no law. The death penalty must be applied to all the sins mentioned here, with the exception of those mentioned in verses 19-21. The death penalty must act as a deterrent and prevent such sin from being followed.

This chapter also describes sins, not of the world, but of the people of God. In Israel the death penalty means to the church: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (1Cor 5:13b). The wicked man, that is, he who lives in sin, is thus excluded from the fellowship life of the people of God.

Verses 1-6 | Giving to Molech and Turning to Spiritism

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "You shall also say to the sons of Israel: 'Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy name. 4 If the people of the land, however, should ever disregard that man when he gives any of his offspring to Molech, so as not to 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 those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech. 6 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.

The sins in these verses are sins against God. Verses 1-5 are about sacrificing children to the idol Molech and verse 6 is about engaging with demons, spiritism. Saul is someone who engages in spiritism. He goes to a medium in Endor to ask for the spirit of a dead one (1Sam 28:8). It is

the apostasy of the LORD, an open breach of covenant, for which the only punishment is being cut off from the people.

Stoning with stones is the usual death penalty. It is a punishment in which the whole people are active to get rid of the evil from among them. Every member is involved in the execution of the verdict, because every member throws a stone. In carrying out this sentence the whole people carry out the will of the LORD.

Every sin of the people defiles God's sanctuary and profanes His holy Name. This does not mean that these sins are committed in the sanctuary. But because the sanctuary is in the midst of the people, every sin is connected to it. We too do not sin apart from the sanctuary, which is now the church where God dwells (1Cor 3:16; Mt 18:20). Sin must be removed from the local church, either by the person judging himself by repentance of sin, or by the removal of the wicked man from the midst of the church (1Cor 5:13b). If sin is not removed, God must leave there.

The people become complicit of sin and of the judgment God executes about it if they do not care about sin. Such an attitude proves indifference against evil. It can indicate a secret or even public consent of evil.

It is the greatest folly to ask the devil, the liar and father of lies, for information and to ask the ancient enemy of God for advice. This action also gives the devil the honor only due to God. Contact with demons is referred to here as "playing the harlot". The people are connected with God. By dealing with demons they break covenant, that is adultery. We show this adulterous behavior when we make friends with the world (Jam 4:4a).

Verses 7-8 | Commission to Be Holy

7 You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8 You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

Verse 7 looks at the principle that we consecrate ourselves and sanctify ourselves from all that does not belong to God so that we can be with Him (1Pet 1:15-16). It is the mind to be as He is. Verse 8 refers to our behavior, our actions. This must show obedience to His commandments. If we first sanctify ourselves, the tree will be known by its fruits.

God is holy, so the people must behave as He is. He doesn't want to see behavior in them like that of the nations, but a behavior in which He can recognize himself. He wants His people to proclaim His excellencies (1Pet 2:9-10). This is manifested when the people keep His statutes and practice them.

Verses 9-21 | Sexual Sins

9 *If [there is] anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him.* 10 *If [there is] a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.* 11 *If [there is] a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.* 12 *If [there is] a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.* 13 *If [there is] a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.* 14 *If [there is] a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst.* 15 *If [there is] a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal.* 16 *If [there is] a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.* 17 *If [there is] a man who takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he bears his guilt.* 18 *If [there is] a man who lies with a menstruous woman and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has exposed the flow of her blood; thus both of them shall be cut off from among their people.* 19 *You shall also not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for such a one has made naked his blood relative; they will bear their guilt.* 20 *If [there is] a man who lies with his uncle's wife he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they will bear their sin. They will die childless.* 21 *If [there is] a man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They will be childless.*

The sins in these verses are sins to one's neighbor, but also to oneself. By committing these sins, God's order of creation is trampled underfoot. They are cases of incest and unnatural sexual intercourse and sexual perversity.

The list of the most terrible sins is preceded by that of cursing the father or the mother (verse 9). That is not for nothing. It's not about once cursing parents, how bad that already is, but wishing them evil. It is an attitude of revolt, which does not want to acknowledge God's authority in the parents. This paves the way for every conceivable atrocity. Atrocities are the result of the unrestrained following of one's own will with the rejection of all authority. It is not only the lack of respect, but the conscious cursing of the parents. That reveals a corrupt will. Anyone who does so takes blood guilt on himself and must be killed.

The cases that follow in verses 10-18 and to which the death penalty should be applied are:

1. Adultery.
2. Sexual intercourse with his father's wife.
3. Sexual intercourse with the daughter-in-law.
4. Homosexual intercourse.
5. Sexual intercourse with a woman and her mother (the death penalty is carried out here by burning or it is to be understood that after the death penalty the bodies are burned).
6. Sexual intercourse of a man or a woman with an animal.
7. Sexual intercourse of a man with his half-sister (penalty: public execution).
8. Sexual intercourse with a woman who has menstruation.

Sexual intercourse with his father's wife is the sin of Reuben (Gen 35:22). At that time this law was not yet there and it does not cost him his life. He does lose his birthright through it (Gen 49:3-4). The adulterer in the church in Corinth also committed this sin (1Cor 5:1). The spiritual death penalty – excommunication – is applied to him (1Cor 5:13b).

There follows the case of sexual intercourse with an aunt and a sister-in-law (verses 19-21). The death penalty is not pronounced, but it is declared that they will bear their iniquity. The guilt will continue to rest on them, without

any possibility of cleansing by offering. The punishment is childlessness, with which God Himself takes up the judgment of this sin (Hos 4:10).

Verses 22-26 | Set Apart for God

22 'You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. 23 Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. 24 Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 25 You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. 26 Thus 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.

To be kept from the sins of the nations lies only in observing all God's statutes and all God's ordinances. If they do not, but act as the people God has driven out before them, He will also drive them out of the land. The danger for us is the same, that we take over the habits of the world around us.

God has set His people apart from those around them, that they may belong to Him. They must maintain that separation. They must distinguish between clean and unclean food, a distinction that God has made. To acknowledge this distinction and to act accordingly, that is to say to eat only the clean and not to eat the unclean, will be their blessing.

That distinction, or that separation, must also be made by us. Spiritually applied we will be kept from all the mentioned forms of evil if we feed ourselves with spiritually clean food. Then our thoughts will be pure, and our actions will be to the glory of God. However, if we feed ourselves with the food of the world, we will think like the world and we will behave like the world.

This chapter focuses on the prohibition of "anything that creeps on the ground" (verse 25). This means that God addresses His people at their lowest instincts, so that they will not be given room to assert themselves.

Verse 27 | Death Penalty for a Medium

27 *'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.'*"

A demon is always busy to try to remove the distinction set by God and tempts people to enter into a forbidden spiritual realm. Those who are tempted to do so make a covenant with the devil and thereby with death and hell, which will be their part. To maintain such a man in God's people exposes them to the great danger of visiting him or her (verse 6), which means a clear rejection of God.

Leviticus 21

Verses 1-6 | Regulations for Deaths

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'No one shall defile himself for a [dead] person among his people, 2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother and his father and his son and his daughter and his brother, 3 also for his virgin sister, who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself. 4 He shall not defile himself as a relative by marriage among his people, and so profane himself. 5 They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh. 6 They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

There are things an ordinary Israelite can do, but a priest cannot. Here it is about defilement by touching a dead person. Only in the case of close family members may the priest touch them. The high priest may not even touch his father or mother when they have died (verse 10.11).

We are both ordinary members of God's people and priests. As ordinary members we spend every day in the world. As priests we serve in the sanctuary in the presence of God. In our priestly service we shall not allow things that do have a place in our lives as people of God.

We can be so busy with our hobby or other forms of pastime that this occupies our thinking on Sunday morning. Then we will not be able to perform priestly service. There can also be all kinds of worries that absorb us so much that we are also hindered in our priestly service.

(Pagan) custom of mourning is forbidden for priests. We may be sad, but not in the way of the world, which is without hope with respect to those who are asleep (1Thes 4:13). The natural feelings should not determine our priestly service. It is about bringing the food of God, what is due to Him.

The place of every aspect of life is determined by God, whether it is joy or mourning. The Lord Jesus did not allow Himself to be guided by natural feelings in His service on earth. When His mother wants to interfere in His

service, He reprimands her with the seemingly harsh words: “Woman, what does that have to do with us?” (Jn 2:4). Yet He loves her and thinks of her in His most painful moments. When He hangs on the cross, He gives His mother over to the care of His disciple John with the words “behold, your mother” (Jn 19:27).

Our first responsibility is the service to God, only then that to our relatives and others (Mk 3:31-35). Our service to God certainly includes caring for our relatives and especially for our parents (Mt 15:4-6). To neglect that concern with a reference to our service to God is hypocrisy. But when it comes to the claim relatives want to make on our service to God, we must reject it.

Verses 7-9 | The Wife and a Daughter of a Priest

7 They shall not take a woman who is profaned by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God. 8 You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, am holy. 9 Also the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by harlotry, she profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

Affection is good, but God wants us as priests to be careful about it. Those to whom sin clings cannot be persons to whom we connect. The holiness of God remains the norm in all things. That makes the harlotry of a daughter of a priest so serious. How did she get to that point? Her sin has consequences for her father’s priestly service. In it we see the seriousness of her sin, that she must be burned with fire. A person who has come to know God’s holiness in such close proximity and then dares to act in this way, is given up to the judgment of burning.

For the priest it is a great dishonor that his daughter has acted like this. He will wonder what his failure has been in it. When children of believers who perform a certain service among the believers go to serve the world, this is a stain on the service of the parents. In such cases it is not possible to perform certain functions in the church (1Tim 3:4-5). At the same time, children of believing, God-fearing parents also bear a great personal responsibility and will be judged all the more severe. This severe judgment we see in “be burned with fire”.

Verses 10-15 | Holiness of the High Priest

10 'The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; 11 nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself [even] for his father or his mother; 12 nor shall he go out of the sanctuary nor 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 shall take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people, 15 so that he will not profane his offspring among his people; for I am the LORD who sanctifies him.'

The holiness standards for the high priest are even stricter. These correspond to those for the Nazarite (Num 6:1-7). There is talk of a special consecration to God. The high priest is here called "the highest among his brothers". This is especially true of the Lord Jesus. He is called "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29) and "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18). These 'brethren' are the believers (Heb 2:11).

The high priest's wife shall be a virgin. This points us to the bride of the Lord Jesus, who is also presented as such (2Cor 11:2). A virgin has had no sexual intercourse with anyone else and is there entirely for the bridegroom. Thus the Lord Jesus sees His bride, the church.

Verses 16-24 | Exceptions for Priestly Service

16 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "Speak to Aaron, saying, 'No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to offer the food of his God. 18 For no one who has a defect shall approach: a blind man, or a lame man, or he who has a disfigured [face], or any deformed [limb], 19 or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, 20 or a hunchback or a dwarf, or [one who has] a defect in his eye or eczema or scabs or crushed testicles. 21 No man among the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to offer the LORD's offerings by fire; [since] he has a defect, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God. 22 He may eat the food of his God, [both] of the most holy and of the holy, 23 only he shall not go in to the veil or come near the altar because he has a defect, so that he will

not profane My sanctuaries. For I am the LORD who sanctifies them.” 24 So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel.

There are a few exceptions to exercising the priesthood:

1. Daughters – only sons may be priests. The female speaks of the position, the male of the power in which the position is realized. Knowing that you are a priest is one thing, being a priest in practice is another. Only an orthodox confession (‘daughter’) doesn’t make someone a priest (‘son’).
2. If someone is too young – priests must have reached a certain age. In order to be able to practice priestly service, a certain degree of spiritual growth or maturity is needed.
3. If someone has a certain physical defect. A priest can be a son, can have reached a certain age and yet be unfit to be a priest. Someone with a defect may eat of the holy things (verse 22). He is not unclean. Yet he is not allowed to exercise priestly service.

The defect he has does not have to be his own fault. Blindness can, spiritually-applied, result from wrong teaching. Others are given strongly one-sided spiritual teaching, which makes them deformed, causing the proportions in understanding the truth to become unbalanced.

What is not possible in Israel in the literal sense – to help someone get rid of his deformity – is possible in the spiritual application in the church: the Lord Jesus can bring about change in a state of deformity if we entrust ourselves to Him.

Leviticus 22

Introduction

In Leviticus 21, a physical defect is a reason why one may not serve in the sanctuary. In Leviticus 22 the reason is mentioned: defilement. If you have a physical defect, you are not defiled. Although offering is not allowed, one may eat of the holy things. The latter is also prohibited in case of defilement.

Verses 1-5 | Three Kinds of Uncleaness

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy [gifts] of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the LORD. 3 Say to them, 'If any man among all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy [gifts] which the sons of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from before Me; I am the LORD. 4 No man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or who has a discharge, may eat of the holy [gifts] until he is clean. And if one touches anything made unclean by a corpse or if a man has a seminal emission, 5 or if a man touches any teeming things by which he is made unclean, or any man by whom he is made unclean, whatever his uncleanness;

Here three cases of uncleanness are mentioned.

1. Unclean by leprosy. Leprosy is a picture of sin breaking outward.
2. Unclean by a discharge. A discharge is something that originates from someone and that defiles others who come into contact with it, for example false teaching. These defilements are permanent.
3. Unclean by touching something unclean, like a corpse or an unclean animal. Touching a corpse, can happen in our going through this world. This uncleanness can be transient, for it is possible to be cleansed from it, as we see in the following verses.

Verses 6-7 | Cleansing By Water

6 a person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy [gifts] unless he has bathed his body in water. 7 But when the sun sets, he will be clean, and afterward he shall eat of the holy [gifts], for it is his food.

We cannot always avoid touching the world and the defilement it causes. It makes us unclean. But the means to be clean is given: washing with water. For us it means that we must be cleansed by the water of the Word (Eph 5:26). This happens when we read God's Word and take it into our hearts. We then perceive we have become unclean, we condemn it before God and experience His peace in our hearts again.

Verses 8-9 | Prohibition to Eat a Torn Animal

8 He shall not eat [an animal] which dies or is torn [by beasts], becoming unclean by it; I am the LORD. 9 They shall therefore keep My charge, so that they will not bear sin because of it and die thereby because they profane it; I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

Eating a carcass is prohibited. What we read for diversion, during the week, is not food for the priest with which he can come to God. According to Leviticus 17, all flesh to be eaten must first be offered to the LORD as a peace offering.

What is "torn" is an animal that has been killed by force. A sacrificial animal has also died in an unnatural way, but has been killed with the sacrificial knife before God. It is emphasized again that the LORD has sanctified them and that they must therefore behave in this way.

Verses 10-16 | Eating of the Holy Gift

10 'No layman [literally: stranger], however, is to eat the holy [gift]; a sojourner with the priest or a hired man shall not eat of the holy [gift]. 11 But if a priest buys a slave as [his] property with his money, that one may eat of it, and those who are born in his house may eat of his food. 12 If a priest's daughter is married to a layman, she shall not eat of the offering of the [gifts]. 13 But if a priest's daughter becomes a widow or divorced, and has no child and returns to her father's house as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's food; but no

layman shall eat of it. 14 But if a man eats a holy [gift] unintentionally, then he shall add to it a fifth of it and shall give the holy [gift] to the priest. 15 They shall not profane the holy [gifts] of the sons of Israel which they offer to the LORD, 16 and [so] cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy [gifts]; for I am the LORD who sanctifies them.”

In these verses we have further provisions about who may and may not eat of the holy gift. It is only allowed for the priest. An exception is the one who was bought by the priest or who was born in his house. In both cases, the priest has full authority over them. Being bought by the Lord Jesus and being reborn and thereby belonging to His family entitles one to partake of in the priestly meal.

A priestly daughter who marries outside the priestly family forfeits the right to eat of the holy gifts. She is still a member of the people, but she has lost the right. Application: a believer who knows what it is to perform priestly service marries a believer who does not know that service. This will affect his own priestly service. If such a person marries someone who is not a member of the people of God at all, an unbeliever, it will have an even greater negative influence.

A priest's daughter can return to her father when she is widowed, or rejected, and has no children. Then she can eat again from her father's food. We can apply this to someone who, after sad experiences, returns to what he professed in his youth. Then such a person may again take the priestly food.

It may also happen that inadvertent, yet unauthorized, someone eats of the holy things. Then there is guilt, but one can become free of it by bringing a guilt offering. There are situations in which someone partakes of the priestly service and the enjoyment thereof, when he is actually unauthorized. This can happen when someone does or says something that hurts another person, without intent. A guilt has arisen. If he becomes aware of this, a guilt offering can be offered, which in the spiritual sense means that it is remembered that the Lord Jesus had to die for it.

Verses 17-25 | The Sacrificial Animals

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 “Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘Any man of the house of Israel or

of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they present to the LORD for 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 Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. 21 When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22 Those [that are] blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD. 23 In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted [member], you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted. 24 Also anything [with its testicles] bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the LORD, or sacrifice in your land, 25 nor shall you accept any such from the hand of a foreigner for offering as the food of your God; for their corruption is in them, they have a defect, they shall not be accepted for you.”

In these verses the attention is focused on the sacrificial animals themselves. The word about this is not only addressed to Aaron and his sons, but to the whole people. They may only come with voluntary offerings, but these offerings must be perfect (cf. Mal 1:8,13-14). Then the offeror will be pleasing to God.

Animals with certain defects represent the lack of understanding that the offeror has of the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus. Some aspects are emphasized and others are not taken heed of. It is important to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2Pet 3:18). It is important that we see more and more and remember that He is the perfect Lamb, “unblemished and spotless” (1Pet 1:19), of Whom even the wicked Pilate testified: “I find no guilt in this man” (Lk 23:4,14,22).

Yet the grace of God goes so far that – even if the insight into the work of the Lord Jesus is imperfect – we may still come with that offering although its members are too long or too short. It refers to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus that is unbalanced. A disabled offering from a pure heart God appreciates more than no offering out of fear. God does not suppose the possibility that someone intentionally brings a disabled offering.

It indeed is in case of a voluntary gift. As a vow offering it may not be brought. The distinction seems to be that a voluntary gift arises more spontaneously, while a vow offering has a certain reason and consideration. Someone who has just been converted does not yet know much about the Lord Jesus, but brings an offering in his spontaneity, without having really thought about it. In doing so, he can use expressions of gratitude that injures the work of the Lord Jesus or in which he says something of the Lord Jesus that does not belong to Him. God cannot accept this of anyone who has already seen or should have seen more of the Lord Jesus.

What God does not accept are sacrifices that have been dealt with carelessly, so that the offeror is to blame for the defects in the offering. Nor does He accept them when they have arrived in the land. Nor does he accept the sacrifices brought by a member of God's people by the hand of a foreigner. The so-called beauty that unbelievers tell us about the Lord Jesus, God does not take from our hands. He wants us to occupy ourselves with the Lord Jesus and to be taught by His gifts. The offerings which are so worked in our hearts will make us acceptable to God.

Verses 26-33 | No Unnatural Things

26 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted as a sacrifice of an offering by fire to the LORD. 28 But, [whether] it is an ox or a sheep, you shall not kill [both] it and its young in one day. 29 When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. 30 It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning; I am the LORD. 31 So you shall keep My commandments, and do them; I am the LORD. 32 "You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you, 33 who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God; I am the LORD."

Here are some unnatural things that might be given a place in the service of God, but for which there are warnings.

For the first seven days, nothing should happen to a newborn animal. Only from the eighth day on can it serve as an offering. This is reminiscent

of the newborn boy who is circumcised on the eighth day (Lev 12:2-3). Circumcision presents the judgment and cleanses. Animals are of course not circumcised, but the picture is the same. The first seven days they are, as it were, under the stain of ancient creation. The eighth day always speaks of a new beginning.

Every unnatural element in the offering is forbidden (verse 28; cf. Exo 23:19b). God acknowledges natural relationships. The Lord Jesus also acknowledges them, as He does during His life on earth (Jn 19:27).

The sacrifice of thanksgiving must be eaten on the same day it is killed. What is consecrated to the LORD is also spiritual food for the offeror. If we worship God for His Son, it is, though not the goal, strengthening for the inner man. You can't gain that reinforcement by thinking back a while later of what you brought then. Dedication to God is a matter that must be fresh every time. We can't bring Him old stuff, things that we gave to Him in the past.

God gives His commandments to a people who have been redeemed by Him out of Egypt for the purpose that He will be their God. The Lord Jesus redeemed us to make us His own people, a people who are dedicated to Him and who acknowledge Him in all things in gratitude.

Leviticus 23

Introduction

In the previous chapters we read about holy persons, holy garments, holy gifts and holy places. In this chapter we read about seven holy times or feast times. The feasts are presented in this chapter in their context, through which the feasts give a prophetic description. Three feasts are called a feast: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths (Exo 23:14-16; Deu 16:16).

The seven feasts – seven is the number of perfection or of a full period – describe the way through which God will bring His people from the cross, to the peace of the great sabbath that will dawn for creation: the millennial kingdom of peace. This is the time when everything that God has planned for the earth has come to fulfillment. The chapter begins and ends with the sabbath (verses 3,39).

If we want to study the prophecy in Scripture, we find many indications in the so-called “three great sevens”: the *seven feasts* here, the *seven parables* about the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13, and the *seven letters* to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.

An overview of the feasts and their prophetic meaning:

1. The Passover (verse 5) – The death of the Lord Jesus.
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (verses 6-8) – The sanctified life of the redeemed.
3. The sheaf of the first fruits (verses 9-14) – The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
4. The Feast of Weeks (verses 15-21) – The coming of the Holy Spirit on earth, through which the church came into existence.

Interim (verse 22) – The time that the church is on earth is the time that Israel is scattered among the nations. When the time of the church on earth is over, a remnant of Israel will be saved, that will be new Israel (Rom 11:25-26). They will receive the promised blessing, in which the Gentiles will also have a share through them.

5. The Feast of the trumpet (verses 23-25) – There is a spiritual awakening of a remnant in Israel. The scattered Israelites return to their country.
6. The day of atonement (verses 26-32) – Repentance and conversion and acceptance of the remnant by the LORD.
7. The Feast of Booths (verses 33-43) – The remnant, which is the whole of the new Israel of God, enjoys the promised blessing of the millennial kingdom of peace.

Verses 1-2 | The Appointed Times Are the LORD's

1 The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these:

God has His appointed times, He destined them for Himself. God has determined them in this way and in that order because in those feasts He shows His ways with His people.

Numbers 28 and 29 also mention these feasts, but there the emphasis is more on the offerings that have to be brought. Here the emphasis is on the holy convocations that must take place on those days. This indicates that these feasts are not experienced individually, but as a people. The application for us does not lie in keeping Christian holidays, but in the one meeting that the church knows: "our own assembling together" (Heb 10:25), the meeting of the church, which we will not forsake. In the meeting of the church, the aspects of all appointed times are dealt with in a spiritual sense.

The appointed times or feasts are those of the LORD. He calls them here "My appointed times" because they are determined or purposed by Him. On those days the people must come together and it is especially important what the LORD gets. For that purpose, these feasts must be 'proclaimed' and on those days God's people are called together. It goes out from the LORD and He is the center of it. What Jeroboam does, who organizes a feast for Israel "in the month which he had devised in his own heart" (1Kgs 12:33), is therefore rebellion against God.

Verse 3 | The Sabbath Command

3 *For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.*

The sabbath is separate from the feasts (verses 37-38). The chapter begins with it and ends with it. World history also begins and ends with it: at creation God rests on the seventh day; this world closes its history with the sabbath of the millennial kingdom of peace, the sabbath rest that remains for the people of God (Heb 4:9). Sin soon disturbed the peace of the beginning. This is why the situation that the Lord Jesus speaks of now still applies when He says: "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working" (Jn 5:17). The seven feasts indicate the way God goes to come to the rest of the end.

In a spiritual sense, the life of the believer begins with rest. Only when he has found rest in the work of the Lord Jesus he has rest for his conscience. Then, with that rest in his heart, he can go his way and work for the Lord Jesus in a world where that rest is not present. In that respect, he may look forward to the coming rest of the kingdom of peace. When the believer dies, he may enter into the rest of God in heaven and rest from all his works of faith he has done on earth (Heb 4:10).

The sabbath is the day on which God has rested. It is the rest of God. He wants His people to share in it. The people are obliged to keep that day, as laid down in the law: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exo 20:8). The sabbath is also a day of remembrance in relation with the redemption of the people from the power of Egypt (Deu 5:14-15). Egypt is a picture of the world and sin.

The kingdom of peace shows both aspects: God rests, and the curse is removed and sin restricted. Another meaning of the sabbath is that of a covenant between God and His people (Eze 20:12; Exo 31:12-17). It is a special feature in the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

The sabbath rest that will soon be on earth is already characteristic of the believer. The believers can enjoy this rest together when they come together and have a "holy convocation". It is the rest of conscience through the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus (Mt 11:28). God wants to come

together with His people especially because He enjoys the peace that the Lord Jesus has brought. God rests in Him and in His work. It is a sabbath for all our dwellings, not only during the meetings. This peace may characterize our whole life.

Verse 4 | Order to Proclaim the Appointed Times

4 'These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them.

Now come the feasts that will lead to the peace of the kingdom of peace. They have already been mentioned once in the introduction in connection with the prophetic meaning. Now it is a matter of "the times appointed for them":

1. The Passover must be held on the 14th of the first month.
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately follows the Passover and is held from the 15th to the 22nd of the first month.
3. The sheaf of the first fruits is offered on a sabbath after the beginning of the harvest.
4. The Feast of Weeks, the middle one, is celebrated in the third month, fifty days after the offering of the first fruits; this feast is called the Feast of Weeks because it takes place seven weeks after the previous one.

The fifth feast is the start of the second group of three feasts that take place exactly half a year later:

5. The Feast of new moon is on the 1st of the seventh month.
6. The day of atonement is on the 10th of the seventh month.
7. The Feast of Booths is from the 15th to the 22nd of the seventh month.

There is a link between the first group of feasts and the second group of feasts:

1. On 10-1 the Passover lamb must be taken into the house; on 10-7 is the day of atonement.
2. On 15-1 the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; on 15-7 the Feast of Booths begins.

Another division of the feasts can be made according to the words "the LORD spoke to Moses": verses 1,9,23,26,33.

The harvest feasts can only be celebrated in the land. There are three harvest feasts:

1. The feast of the sheaf of the first fruits is celebrated when the very first grain comes from the land. That is the barley harvest.
2. Fifty days later the wheat harvest follows (Exo 9:31-32; Rth 1:22; 2:23) and the wave breads are brought.
3. In the seventh month the last harvest feast, the Feast of Booths, takes place on the occasion of the harvest of grapes and olives.

Verse 5 | The Passover

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

The feasts start with the Passover. The salvation on earth, represented in the sabbath as a picture of the kingdom of peace, begins with what the Passover represents: Christ and His work on the cross (1Cor 5:7b). Similarly, the rest that a sinner has for his conscience is to be found in Christ and His work on the cross. In Exodus 12 God declares the Passover to be a new beginning, "the beginning of months ... the first month of the year" (Exo 12:2). There, the seventh month of the year becomes the first month of the year. A sinner who comes to conversion gets and starts a new life.

The first celebration, in Egypt, is in view of the redemption from Egypt. The blood frees them from the judgment of God. It is a unique celebration. It is a picture of the conversion of a sinner. Each subsequent celebration is a remembrance of that event (Num 9:1-5). This is reflected in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which we celebrate every first day of the week. Here in Leviticus the Passover is a feast for the LORD. It is important that we learn what the Passover Lamb means to *God* as the foundation upon which He will have a new heaven and a new earth, where sin is no longer thought of.

Verses 6-8 | Feast of Unleavened Bread

6 Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.

8 But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.”

Immediately after the Passover follows the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These two feasts form a unity. In Luke 22 both feasts are identified: “The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover” (Lk 22:1). The Feast of Unleavened Bread is characterized by the absence of leaven. The total absence of leaven, which is a picture of sin, has characterized the walk and nature of Christ on earth and is also fulfilled in us as far as we realize Christ in our lives.

In the pictures of Scripture, leaven always represents sin, in which sin manifests itself in various forms:

1. “The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Mt 16:5-12). By this is meant the doctrine of Pharisees, that is, the legalism or adding to God’s Word, and the doctrine of the Sadducees, that is the rationalism or taking away from God’s Word.
2. The “leaven of Herod” (Mk 8:15), these are the carnal pleasures.
3. “Old leaven”, “leaven of malice and wickedness” (1Cor 5:8), which is a sinful life practice.
4. “A little leaven” (Gal 5:9), represents heresy about the work of the Lord Jesus.
5. The “leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour” (Mt 13:33). This is no exception to the fact that leaven always represents sin. It represents the introduction of idolatrous principles into the kingdom of heaven (Zec 5:5-11).

Eating unleavened bread is a picture of feeding on the Lord Jesus, in Whom nothing of sin is present. That goes for His life on earth, His existence before that and for His life now in heaven. He has been the true grain offering on earth, in which no leaven may be present (Lev 2:11).

We can only ‘eat’ of Him if we know the meaning of the Passover. First we must feed ourselves with His death, only then we can feed ourselves with His life. Without repentance and being born again He can only be a good example, but no food.

The feast is celebrated for seven days. Seven is the number of completeness and represents here our whole life. On the first and seventh day there must

be a holy convocation. Nothing of human effort or obligation should play a role in this. An offering by fire must be made every day. All honor goes to the LORD; He is praised. In this way we may experience the meetings and our lives may also take place around the meetings as a praise for the Lord.

Verses 9-14 | The Sheaf of the First Fruits

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD [for] a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. 14 Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

Here begins a new feast. The sheaf of the first fruits – literally: the sheaf of the beginning – must be brought “the day after the sabbath”, that is, on the first day of the new week. The Lord Jesus celebrated the Passover on Friday and died on Friday. The next day, the sabbath, is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and then He lies in the grave. On the first day of the week He rose from the dead and that is the day the sheaf of the first fruits is brought to the priest. The sheaf of the first fruits speaks of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. He is the first fruits of those who are asleep (1Cor 15:20,23), the beginning of a new harvest for God.

From a spiritual point of view, the connection with the previous feast is important. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus, after having perfectly glorified God in the realm of sin through His death, has left behind everything that controls that realm. Death, sin, the power of satan, judgment, have no connection with Him at all anymore. The awareness that I am connected with such a One, Someone Who has risen from the dead, gives me the strength to lead an ‘unleavened life’.

In John 19 it says: "For that Sabbath was a high day" (Jn 19:31). That sabbath is high for three reasons:

1. it has always been the most important day of the week;
2. it is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the feast that follows directly on the Passover;
3. it is the sabbath that precedes the feast of the sheaf of the first fruits.

God has made sure that the Lord Jesus died on the day the Passover is celebrated and that He rose up on the day the sheaf of the first fruits is brought to the priest. Thus, the first three feasts, and also the Feast of Weeks, the Pentecost, that follows fifty days later, are fulfilled exactly in the year that the Lord Jesus dies.

The feast of the sheaf of the first fruits can only take place in the land. The sheaf of the first fruits must be brought to the priest. He waves it before the LORD, and that makes him who brings the sheaf acceptable. Through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we are pleasing to God. As priests, we can tell the Father about the risen Lord.

What other impact could that have than to add a burnt offering and a grain offering? The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is inseparable from His perfect life and death in which He glorified God. It is not possible to think of Him without thinking of the cross. The drink offering of wine is not lacking. It represents the joy that this offering gives to God.

The prohibition "until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth" (verse 14) is the prohibition to eat anything from the new harvest before anything has been brought to "your God". We can learn from this that we must always begin with God, every day, every meal, every intention, every work (cf. Mt 6:33). It is important to honor Him "from the first of all your proceeds" (Pro 3:9).

As for the spiritual consumption of the food of the land, this precept suggests that it can only be consumed if we connect it with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This has made it possible for us to enjoy all the blessings that the land, the heavenly places, has for us.

Verses 15-21 | The Two Wave Breads

15 'You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. 16 You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD. 17 You shall bring in from your dwelling places two [loaves] of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths [of an ephah]; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to the LORD. 18 Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. 19 You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. 20 The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

The feast of the sheaf of the first fruits is for the dwelling places (verse 14). It refers to our being busy at home with the risen Lord. This being busy is a preparation, a spiritual exercise, for the next feast that follows after fifty days. To this feast another holy convocation is linked.

Fifty days after the sheaf of the first fruits, another first fruits is brought (verse 17). The sheaf of the first fruits is of barley. The first fruits of the Feast of Weeks is of wheat. This is also called "a new grain offering" (verse 16). The sheaf of the first fruits comes directly from the field and is offered directly to the LORD. The first fruits of the Feast of Weeks undergoes a process of grinding and baking to make the wave breads of it. This new grain offering contains leaven. It comes before the LORD, but not on the altar (Lev 2:12).

This points to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which takes place fifty days after the Lord has risen, on Pentecost on a first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4). As a result, the church comes into existence. The sheaf of the first fruits represents the Lord Jesus. The wave breads do not represent the Lord Jesus, but the church. The church consists of people who are sinners by na-

ture. But the working of the leaven (sin) is brought to a halt by the judgment that the Lord Jesus has borne. This we see in the picture of the bread that is baked in the fire by which the leaven is deprived of its working.

The bread has to be prepared at home in the time between the first fruits and the Feast of Weeks. That is a time of preparation. It is brought along from the dwelling places. About the fifty days that lie between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and Pentecost, something is said in the beginning of the book of Acts (Acts 1:1-5). In those days the Lord spoke with His disciples "of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), that is about God's testimony on earth during the absence of the Lord Jesus.

The number "two" in the "two [loaves] of bread" indicates that the church consists of believers from two groups of people: Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14-16). The number 'two' also indicates an adequate testimony (2Cor 13:1). The two loaves speak of the testimony of God that is given on earth by the church as a result of the work of the Lord Jesus and is founded upon it.

The breads are breads of wheat. The church has the same life as the Lord Jesus. He is the grain of wheat that fell into the earth and died, and produced much fruit (Jn 12:24). The church bears witness to what the Lord Jesus has been on earth. The members of the church show the new nature, that is the nature of Him Who is now in heaven.

The church is presented here in the first fruits. Thus the New Testament also speaks of the believers as first fruits (Jam 1:18; Rom 8:23; Heb 12:23).

Many offerings are brought with the wave breads. This is in accordance with the rich fruit of the work of the Lord Jesus. We see this rich fruit in the church. There is now also a sin offering included in the offerings (verse 19). This is necessary to provide for the failure of our testimony before God on earth. This sin offering is missing with the sheaf of the first fruits, which is a picture of the Lord Jesus. There is also a peace offering, the offering that represents the fellowship between God and His people and between the members of the people themselves.

The priest waves the loaves before the LORD. The priest may also eat from it. As priests we may, as God's witness on earth as "pillar and support of the truth" (1Tim 3:15), wave the truth of the church back and forth before God. We may tell Him how great that is for Him and us. That is also food

for us. It gives strength to put this truth into practice. We must remember, however, that it is about Him Who is the truth and Who is presented in the following verse as the mystery of the fear of God: "By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory" (1Tim 3:16).

To the waving of the loaves another holy convocation is linked. The Lord does not want our meetings to be experienced by us as a kind of service work. He wants us to have our services as feasts for *Him*. Otherwise, "the feasts of the LORD" become "feasts of the Jews" (Jn 6:4; 5:1; 7:2) or a feast of brothers and sisters, which means a great degradation of these feasts.

Verse 22 | The Needy and the Alien

22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.'"

This verse is important because of the prophetic meaning of the whole chapter. When the harvest of the first fruits has been harvested, not all the harvests have been harvested. When the church is taken from the earth, there remains a testimony for God on earth. The gleaning is for the needy and the alien. The needy belongs to God's people. In the needy we see a picture of the remnant that will later be in Jerusalem and that will be miserable and poor. In the alien we see a picture of the nations to whom the gospel of the kingdom will come and that they will accept.

Verses 23-25 | Feast of the Blowing of Trumpets

23 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 'Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing [of trumpets], a holy convocation. 25 You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.'"

Here begins a new speaking of the LORD, a new section. The feasts that follow now take place in the seventh month, which used to be the first month. It is a new beginning that heralds the end – in Exodus 23 we read of "the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year" (Exo 23:16). The last

three feasts follow each other in quick succession. They are celebrated on the first day, the tenth day, and the fifteenth to the twenty-second day.

With Israel, the month always begins with the new moon and the trumpet must be blown: "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day" (Psa 81:3). The moon receives its light from the sun and reflects that. The testimony of Israel is obscured. But there comes a time when it will start to shine again. That is when the church is raptured. God will first deliver His people from the distress of their enemies. Then the people will pass on again the light that comes from God.

The day starts with rest, to come to reflection. That is always the start of something new. The starting signal is given by the trumpet (Num 10:3,10; Isa 27:13). The trumpet is a picture of the Word of God. When God's Word enters into the heart and conscience, it first works humiliation, stopping one's own efforts, coming to rest. The first signs of the restoration that Israel will experience will be that they humble themselves before the LORD (Zec 12:10-14). We see that in the next feast.

Verses 26-32 | The Day of Atonement

26 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. 28 You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. 29 If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. 30 As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 32 It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath."

The day of atonement is discussed in detail in Leviticus 16. Here it is about the prophetic connection with the other feasts. The sacrifices for Aaron and his house are not mentioned here. There is only a fire offering. The emphasis here is on humiliation and renunciation of any work.

The thought of atonement must work humility with us. Atonement is necessary because of our sins. We have not been able to bring about this atonement. To reconcile us with God, it was necessary that the Lord Jesus was made sin and poured out His blood, that is, He died, for the wages of sin is death. Through His blood He has worked atonement. It is not possible in any other way.

The joy of the Feast of Booths – the next and concluding feast – must necessarily be preceded by humiliation. Only after the confession, which the people will pronounce with the words of Isaiah 53 (Isa 53:1-12), it can become a feast. On the day of atonement the High Priest will come from the sanctuary. Then they will see the One Whom they have pierced, and He will forgive them.

Verses 33-36 | The Feast of Booths

33 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. 35 On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 36 For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.

The harvest of wine and olives are the reason for the Feast of Booths. Wine is a picture of joy (Psa 104:15a), (ointment-)oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit (1Jn 2:20,27). Both are connected to the kingdom of peace. The Holy Spirit will bring joy to all who live in the kingdom of peace. This is the purpose of God's ways for the earth in general and Israel in particular.

The offerings brought on this feast are described in detail in Numbers 29 (see the explanation there). Israel will understand in the future that the blessing of the kingdom of peace is based solely on the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

To the Feast of Booths an eighth day is linked (verse 36). It looks forward to eternity. In John 7 the Lord Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit on this eighth day (Jn 7:37-39). He says the Spirit will come when He is glorified in heaven. This was on Pentecost, which caused the birth of the church. The church is not a subject of prophecy. Prophecy always has to do with the earth, and the church does not belong to the earth, but to heaven, to eternity.

Verses 37-38 | The Offerings at the Feasts

37 'These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD—burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, [each] day's matter on its own day— 38 besides [those of] the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

Before a further description of the Feast of Booths takes place, a reminder of the most important elements of the feasts takes place as a kind of summary:

1. The feasts must be proclaimed as “holy convocations”. The people must come together to approach God and have fellowship with Him.
2. This fellowship is expressed in a special way in the bringing of offerings.
3. The priests and the whole people are reminded that all other offerings will also be brought, which is reflected by the word “besides”.

Verses 39-44 | Continuation of the Feast of Booths

39 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 40 Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 You shall thus celebrate it [as] a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It [shall be] a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, 43 so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'” 44 So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD.

Here the LORD continues the description of the Feast of Booths. The entire harvest of the land has been gathered in. Can it be anything else, but that the whole people, full of gratitude to the LORD, celebrate for Him? If we

look at all the blessings that God has blessed us with, can it be anything else, but that our hearts flow over with gratitude and joy?

The feast begins with a sabbath's rest – which does not mean that the first day of the feast also is on a sabbath – and it ends with it. This feast represents the time called “the administration suitable to the fullness of the times” (Eph 1:10a). This is the time when God's purpose is fulfilled of “the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth” (Eph 1:10b). Christ will then reign over creation as the true Adam together with His church as His wife.

From the different fruits and branches of trees, booths have to be made. It is all symbolic for knowing oneself placed in the blessings of the promised land. The foliage of beautiful trees speaks of enjoyment for tongue and eye. Everything that is tasted and seen is a benefit for the senses of man. There is nothing that disturbs. The palm branches speak of victory and refreshment (Jn 12:13; Rev 7:9; Exo 15:27). The continuous green of the boughs of leafy trees speaks of permanent youthfulness, while the boughs of willows of the brook show that where once was weeping, there joyous cheers have replaced it.

The whole scene of booths is one great song of praise for God's great deeds. He has done everything for the people to bring it into the blessing promised by Him. He led them out of the slavery of Egypt and finally brought them into eternal peace through His ways. Just as He once freed His people from the power of the enemy and brought them into the promised land, so in the near future He will save His people from distress and bring them into the promised blessing. They have lost the blessing of the land through unfaithfulness. That will not happen again in the future. He will give His laws into their hearts, and His people will serve Him. He is worthy of eternal praise for this – and it will happen.

The joy which will soon be the portion of Israel and of creation may now already be the portion of the believer every day (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1Jn 1:4). They may and can enjoy that joy because they have new life, life from God, eternal life. They will soon enjoy this life in perfection when the Lord Jesus comes to take the church to Himself.

Leviticus 24

Introduction

Leviticus 23 has shown the great prophetic line in God's history of salvation. The first four feasts have found their application in the church. The application of the three feasts of the seventh month to Israel is yet to come. Leviticus 24 makes clear how the prophetic state of Israel is. The first section (verses 1-9) shows the service of the high priest in the sanctuary, which he performs at night. The second section (verses 10-23) shows why Israel is set aside. To this end, an event serves as an illustration. This event is the second to occur in Leviticus, after the death of Aaron's sons in Leviticus 10 (Lev 10:1-2). This event must also serve to demonstrate an important principle.

Verses 1-2 | Oil for the Light

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually.

Verses 2-4 are an almost verbatim repetition of what we read in Exodus 27 (Exo 27:20-21). In Numbers we see that Aaron carries out the command (Num 8:3). The oil used must be brought by the Israelites. The people are involved in maintaining the light in the sanctuary. In this way God determines that the whole people ensure that there is light in the sanctuary. It is their responsibility to live in accordance with that light. The following event (verses 10-23) shows that they have failed.

Verses 3-4 | The Light Must Burn Continually

3 Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD continually; [it shall be] a perpetual statute throughout your generations. 4 He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure [gold] lampstand before the LORD continually.

The high priest must ensure that the light from the lampstand continually burns at night. To do this, he must supply the candlestick with oil.

Prophetically, this indicates that the people, even though they may seem lost and find themselves in spiritual darkness, are separate from God, yet through the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus continue to exist in heaven as a memorial before the face of God.

The light shines in the sanctuary. The world does not see it. It highlights the heavenly things by which we can already see what our heavenly blessings are (Jn 16:13). We also may spread that light. We do this by talking about these things with other believers. The light of the lampstand falls in the first place on the lampstand itself, that is, the Lord Jesus will be the subject of the conversation.

The lamps must be kept burning at night, when the people are enveloped in darkness. The people sleep, but will be brought back to life by the blowing of the trumpet (Lev 23:24). Until then, the High Priest ensures that the light in the sanctuary continues to shine.

The service of the people before God takes place periodically, at prescribed times. The service of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest to the people is not periodically, but continually and uninterrupted. It is also an encouragement to us that the Lord always thinks of us, even if we do not always think of Him.

Verses 5-9 | The Bread of the Presence

5 "Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths [of an ephah] shall be [in] each cake. 6 You shall set them [in] two rows, six [to] a row, on the pure [gold] table before the LORD. 7 You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, [even] an offering by fire to the LORD. 8 Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the LORD continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. 9 It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the LORD's offerings by fire, [his] portion forever."

There is also care for the bread of the Presence on the table. What is said here about the bread of the Presence is an addition to what we read about them in Exodus 25 (Exo 25:23-30).

The twelve loaves of the bread of the Presence represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The pure incense on it indicates that from the people, as God sees

them according to His counsel, a pleasant fragrance of the pure frankincense rises in His sanctuary. The frankincense speaks of the Lord Jesus, because in themselves the people have nothing that is pleasing to God.

In the sanctuary we see how God's plans continue to shine brightly, even if the people are unfaithful. In the light of the lampstand God constantly sees the bread of the Presence: picture of the people, carried by the table, picture of the Lord Jesus. It always says: "before the LORD" (verses 3,4,6,8).

The loaves of the bread of the Presence are made of fine flour. This is also used to make the grain offering (Lev 2:1). It is the fruit of the earth and speaks of the Lord Jesus as the perfect Man on earth. He is also the life of the believers and therefore the twelve loaves of the bread of the Presence speak of the people of God.

The priests make themselves one with the people by eating this bread. Those who are used to being in God's presence feed themselves with the thought that God loves His people despite their failures. They will share in God's love for His people and that will inspire them to serve that people, despite their unfaithfulness.

Verses 10-23 | Blasphemy and the Punishment for It

10 Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp. 11 The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) 12 They put him in custody so that the command of the LORD might be made clear to them. 13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. 15 You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin. 16 Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. 17 'If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. 18 The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. 19 If a man injures his neighbor, just

as he has done, so it shall be done to him: 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. 21 Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. 22 There shall be one standard for you; it shall be for the stranger as well as the native, for I am the LORD your God.” 23 Then Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and they brought the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

After having seen in the sanctuary what the people are before God, this event shows in picture what the external condition of the whole people is. Through her connection with an Egyptian man, an Israelite woman has given birth to a blaspheming son. The woman married this Egyptian during the time that she was still in slavery with the people in Egypt.

Her husband and son belong to the “mixed multitude” who went up from Egypt with the Israelites (Exo 12:38). But the son proves that his heart has remained connected with Egypt. There is no respect whatsoever for the LORD. He even defies Him by blaspheming “the Name” in a struggle with an Israelite.

The ‘Name’ refers to the whole of God’s being, not a particular presentation of God as shown separately in each Name. The man does not only speak evil of it, but ‘curses’ the Name. He accuses that name of evil things against his better judgment.

This is a picture of the spiritual state of the people of Israel, of which Jerusalem is the model par excellence. What is true for Israel, is what is said of Jerusalem: “The great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified” (Rev 11:8).

Israel’s greatest sin is the blaspheming of the Lord Jesus. They killed Him. That is the picture that emerges in verse 17. That is why the people have been put to death, which means that God has rejected them. It is now “Lo-ammi”, which means “not My people” (Hos 1:9). The woman is from the tribe of Dan. This tribe has an unfavorable sound and meaning among the tribes of Israel (Gen 49:16-17; Jdg 17:1-13; 18:1-31). It is noteworthy that this case of blasphemy is connected to this tribe.

As for the case itself, it is not clear what should happen to the son. Therefore he is put in custody until there is a statement of the LORD about the punishment to be applied. This is one of the four cases where Moses has to wait for a Divine answer in a situation where it is not clear how to act (Num 9:6-14; 15:32-36; 27:1-11).

The LORD determines that the man must be stoned. But first, all who have heard the blaspheme must put their hands on his head. The putting on of hands means the identification with the object on which the hands are put on. In this case, they put the guilt of the crime they witnessed on the head of the offender. They thus relieve themselves.

This blasphemer of the Name is the first to be subjected to the death penalty under the law of Moses. Later this law is abused by ungodly judges to condemn the Lord Jesus to death (Mt 26:65b-66). Stephen will be the first martyr for the Name of the Lord Jesus by abuse of this law by the same criminal judges (Acts 6:11).

The provisions for retaliation for injury or manslaughter already apply to Israel at that time (Exo 21:12-36). The case of the son of the Egyptian is the reason to declare these rules of retaliation also applicable to the stranger (verse 22). The “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” principle indicates that the penalty should be in line with the crime, not higher and not lower. It is a righteous punishment.

The two sections in this chapter are not in chronological order. In the history of the people it will be that first Israel will be rejected because of their sin and then the night will come for the people, the night in which the high priest keeps the light on. It is the grace of God that He has reversed that order. He knows the stubbornness of His people, but he acts according to his own purpose. This purpose will be carried out because of the service of the Lord Jesus now in the sanctuary.

Leviticus 25

Introduction

Leviticus 23 is about the restoration of Israel as a people. But it is not only the people who God has in mind; His eyes are also on the land. Land and people belong together (Gen 15:1-21). This chapter is about the land: “The land is Mine” (verse 23). If the people are so impoverished that the land has to be sold, this will not disrupt God’s plans. He promises a year of jubilee. Everything will return to its original owners.

Verses 1-7 | The Sabbatical Year

1 The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, 2 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. 3 Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, 4 but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5 Your harvest’s aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. 6 All of you shall have the sabbath [products] of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. 7 Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.

These verses are about the sabbatical year, not the year of jubilee. The sabbatical year is once every seven years, the year of jubilee once every fifty years. There is a correspondence. Both are a picture of the kingdom of peace. The difference is that the sabbatical year speaks of rest (Heb 4:9) and the year of jubilee of restoration (Acts 3:21) and freedom (Rom 8:21). Just as the people have to work six days and rest on the seventh day, so the land in which they will live must be worked for six years and be given a year’s rest in the seventh year.

What the LORD has to say about the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee, he says “to Moses at Mount Sinai” (verse 1; Lev 7:38; 26:46; 27:34). In

the foregoing we find above all that the LORD speaks to Moses from the tent of meeting (Lev 1:1). That emphasizes more that God wants to come together with His people to share the thoughts of His heart with them about what He has for them. Here it is about what God has in His heart regarding His land. He already spoke about this with Moses on Mount Sinai, where He also showed Moses the tabernacle, which shows His desire to dwell with His people. People and land belong together.

The sabbatical year is marked by God's faithfulness and the faith of the people in that faithfulness. In the sixth year the people may not sow, but they may reap (verses 21-23). In the seventh year they will eat of what grows naturally. God will make sure that there is enough. In the sixth year He will give so much in the land that the people will have enough to eat in the sixth, seventh and eighth year. That He promises this must be sufficient for the people. In the seventh year they are not allowed to do anything. Only in the eighth year do they sow again, so that they can harvest again in the ninth year.

The Israelites are tenants of the land. They are servants of the LORD (verse 55). God wants His people to realize this well. For six years they can enjoy all the benefits of the land. But as to the seventh year it is: "The land is Mine" (verse 23). This is not a punishment, but a blessing: they do not have to work. We also see this in the gathering of the manna. On the sixth day the people can gather twice as much, so that they do not have to gather on the seventh day.

It is "a sabbath to the LORD" (verse 4), not only for the people or for the land. It is about the rest of God. Keeping this sabbatical year for the land means that the people acknowledge God's rights to the land. This acknowledgment will give great blessing: rest and prosperity for three years (verses 20-22). Israel has never celebrated those sabbatical years, as it has never kept any commandment of God. Then God makes sure that His land gets rest by sending the people into exile (2Chr 36:21).

God lets us share in His rest. It is the only rest that can really be called rest. Nothing but what is God's rest can be our rest. God rests in the Lord Jesus and His work, and that is also our rest. We may already know this rest in our hearts. Soon it will be all over the earth. The Lord desires that we may

already know times of rest, to enjoy with Him the inheritance. For us, that means: Enjoy the blessings in the heavenly places.

A further provision is added to the use of the food that comes up naturally in the sabbatical year: that food is for everyone, not just for the owner of the land. This provision teaches them that they must be merciful and generous and share in the kindness of God which is expressed in what the earth itself produces.

Verses 8-13 | The Year of Jubilee

8 'You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, [namely], forty-nine years. 9 You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. 10 You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. 11 You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in [from] its untrimmed vines. 12 For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field. 13 'On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property.

The sabbatical year is not only a year of rest in certain cases, but also a year of restoration and freedom. Thus the Hebrew slave is released in the seventh year (Exo 21:2) and debts are remised (Deu 15:1-18). But in the year of jubilee things go much further. Then the inheritance will be restored. Everything returns to its original situation, as God purposed it to be. People are released and return to their property; a property is returned to its original owner.

The word "jubilee" means "blowing on the ramshorn". Except here in Leviticus the word 'jubilee' is only mentioned in the book of Numbers (Num 36:4). The thought of release (verse 10) is used in Isaiah 61, where we read: "To proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners" (Isa 61:1). In the following verse is spoken about "the favorable year of the LORD" (Isa 61:2; Jer 34:8,15,17; Eze 46:17).

Generally speaking, every Israelite witnesses once in his life how everything is restored to its original state. When he experiences it, he will be

reminded of paradise, where man has not had to work either, but has been able to freely enjoy everything that God has made grow. He also gets a taste of the future blessing that God will give to Israel and the whole earth under the reign of the Lord Jesus in the millennial kingdom of peace. Then everyone will also enjoy the delicious things creation provides.

In his speech to the people of Israel, in the “portico of Solomon”, Peter speaks about it. He calls upon the people to repent and return, “and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until [the] period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time” (Acts 3:20-21).

The year of jubilee, a fiftieth year, follows a sabbatical year, a forty-ninth year. The fiftieth year thus also indicates a new beginning. It is as with the eighth day, which also follows a period of seven days. This new beginning is also in connection with heaven and eternal things. The kingdom of peace has not only an earthly side, but also a heavenly side (Mt 13:43a). Abraham looked forward to this: “For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:10; Dan 7:27). The heavenly rest and glory will have their radiance on earth.

Everything in God’s Word that is about Israel, all prophecies, it all ends in the year of jubilee. There the final fulfilment of all God’s promises takes place. Then comes the “favorable year of the LORD” (Isa 61:2). For all who have accepted the Lord Jesus, this “favorable year” has already begun (Lk 4:19,21). This may be mentioned in the preaching of the gospel: “And working together [with Him], we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, “At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.” Behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”” (2Cor 6:1-2).

The ram’s horn will sound in the fiftieth year just as in all previous years on the first day of each month (Lev 23:24). But in this fiftieth year the horn will sound another time in the seventh month. Also on the tenth day, that is the day of atonement (Lev 23:27), there will be the sound of the ram’s horn. The whole land will hear it (verse 9). It will show that all tribes will be back in the land and each tribe will live in the inheritance God has given him. The horn blown on the first day of the seventh month will herald this

restoration. The restoration will be based on the atoning work of the Lord Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). Before the horn sounds as a sign of the start of the year of jubilee, another horn or trumpet will sound, the last trumpet, the trumpet of God. When that trumpet sounds, the church will be taken up from the earth and meet the Lord in the air (1Cor 15:52b; 1Thes 4:15-18).

Verses 14-17 | Year of Jubilee as Starting Point

14 If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another. 15 Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. 16 In proportion to the extent of the years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for [it is] a number of crops he is selling to you. 17 So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.

When a piece of land is sold, in reality it is not the land, but a number of crops that are sold. The calculation of the price is based on the coming year of jubilee. This method of settling debts prevents capitalism (more and more possessions) and communism (no possessions, everything of everyone).

In this way, the Israelite can have two types of land. He owns his own inheritance and he can have a land he has bought. The latter is only his property for a certain period of time. The Christian also has to deal with two kinds of ‘land’. He has his own inheritance in heaven. That is his inalienable property. He also owns earthly things. They are not his own. He is only a steward of it. He will have to give up the earthly things, nothing of them will remain his property. He will also have to account for the way in which he dealt with them.

In Luke 16 the Lord Jesus speaks of “that which is another’s” and of “that which is your own” (Lk 16:12). “That which is another’s” are our earthly blessings, “that which is your own” are our heavenly blessings. Faithfulness in the fulfilment of our earthly task and the responsible management of the earthly resources at our disposal in doing so is a prerequisite for enjoying our very heavenly possessions.

An important indication for dealing with earthly things in the light of the upcoming “year of jubilee” we read in 1 Corinthians 7 (1Cor 7:29-31). The value of what we have ‘bought’ is measured by the time that separates us from the ‘year of jubilee’. We are just before the year of jubilee. The closer we are to the coming of the Lord Jesus, the more we long for Him, the less earthly things are worth to us. Dealing with earthly matters in the light of the coming year of jubilee will save us from seeking “the things that are on earth” (Col 3:2).

Besides the idea that we are just before the ‘year of jubilee’, the fear of God is also important in our view of earthly things. The earthly things belong to Him. If we use it for ourselves, we appropriate what is His. He cannot let that happen unpunished. Real fear for God is not so much expressed in fear for punishment if we do something that He does not approve of, but is expressed in respect for Him, through which we do what pleases Him.

Verses 18-22 | Blessing In Keeping the Sabbatical Year

18 ‘You shall thus observe My statutes and keep My judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land. 19 Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it. 20 But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” 21 then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. 22 When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating [the old] until the ninth year when its crop comes in.

The enjoyment of the blessing depends on obedience of faith. It seems a venture not to sow a year. The mind reasons: How shall we get food? Faith relies on God’s promise. Whoever trusts in Him will not be ashamed. Even more: experiences His special blessing. We learn by doing so: “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD” (Mt 4:4). Experiencing the Lord’s faithfulness is a great thing. It glorifies Him and fills the heart with joy. This joy cannot be expressed in money.

If they are obedient, they can count on living securely on the land, which means that there is external security and inner rest and confidence for the

heart, without fear of enemies. They will not have to fear for their food either. It will be possible to eat their fill. By the blessing of God, with little much can happen. We lose nothing through obedience, but we win everything.

Verses 23-28 | Redemption of the Land

23 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are [but] aliens and sojourners with Me. 24 Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. 25 'If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. 26 Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, 27 then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. 28 But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.

The starting point for the rules for redemption is that the land is the land of the LORD. His is the earth and all it contains (Psa 24:1), but He has given the land of Canaan a special place. In that land He has given every tribe and family its inheritance and so He wants to see it fulfilled. Because of man's unfaithfulness, for forty-nine years there can be a state of affairs of confusion and misery. But it will not remain so. There will be a fiftieth year in which everything will be restored in such a way that God's original plan will be seen.

The Christian is aware that the redemption of his inheritance is yet to come. He already has the pledge of it, namely "the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of [God's own] possession" (Eph 1:13b-14). Anyone who is guided by the Spirit will not be tempted to give up anything of his inheritance by seeking his happiness on earth to experience it here and now.

Now it may happen that someone is forced to sell his land because he is impoverished. At the same time the LORD determines that there is always the right of redemption. One does not have to wait until the year of jubilee.

Someone else can pay his debt for him in the meantime. Then he again possesses his inheritance. But the settlement has to be done on the basis of the time that runs until the year of jubilee.

If someone remains incapable to redeem it, he will at least receive his land back in the year of jubilee, as a special proof of God's grace. Naboth has no need to renounce his inheritance. He appreciates his inheritance and refuses to sell it to Ahab or to exchange it for a vineyard of Ahab (1Kgs 21:1-3). Ahab gets the land of Naboth only through a list of murderous Jezebel (1Kgs 21:7-10).

The cases of impoverishment are becoming more and more poignant in this chapter.

1. Verse 25 refers to an impoverishment in which the poor "has to sell part of his property".
2. In verse 35 the brother is so impoverished that "his means with regard to you falter" and must be kept alive. The need is great.
3. In verse 39 the brother is so impoverished that he is obliged to sell himself.
4. In verse 47 the situation is worst: there an impoverished brother sells himself to a stranger.

Someone can become impoverished, for example due to illness or the wrong policy. In spiritual terms, poverty is often due to unhealthy, sickening activities (sins) or to being absorbed by earthly activities, a misbalance between the time spent on spiritual and earthly matters.

The redemption of the land can take place in different ways. Those who have to sell land can have someone who is "his nearest kinsman" who can act as a redeemer (verse 25). This is reminiscent of the Lord Jesus as the true 'Kinsman' – He partook of flesh and blood (Heb 2:14a). He paid the price through His work on the cross to redeem the inheritance from the debt that rests on it. This applies both to the land of Israel and to all creation.

An example of this acting as a redeemer can be seen in the history of Boaz and Ruth. The Lord Jesus is the true Boaz. Boaz is able to help the impoverished Naomi and Ruth to regain possession of the inheritance that Naomi

has lost (Rth 4:1-10). Thus the Lord Jesus will once as the true Boaz – Boaz means ‘in him is strength’ – bring everything back into the possession of God as the original Owner.

Verses 29-34 | Redemption of Houses

29 Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. 30 But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee. 31 The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption rights and revert in the jubilee. 32 As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession. 33 What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee, for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. 34 But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.

With the redemption of houses things are different than with the redemption of land. A house is not an inheritance. The owner does not get it back in the year of jubilee when it is sold. He has a year to buy it back. If he does not, he will lose it forever. This is about a house in a walled city. A wall speaks of separation. If that separation does not prevent us from losing things, we lose things forever. Then we have not observed the right separation, that to God. The intrusion of the world, the decay, cannot be reversed. Scripture says that this development is unstoppable. However, after losing something, there is still one year to get it back (cf. Lk 13:8-9). This is God’s grace.

The houses in villages are different. Those revert in the year of jubilee or can be redeemed. Just as those villages are, so shall Jerusalem be in the kingdom of peace, without a wall. There are no more enemies and so there is no reason to have a wall.

God has an exception for the Levites. They have no inheritance and nothing but their towns and their houses. They will get their house back in the year of jubilee.

Verses 35-55 | Attitude Toward the Poor

35 'Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. 36 Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. 37 You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. 38 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan [and] to be your God. 39 'If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. 40 He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. 41 He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. 42 For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold [in] a slave sale. 43 You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God. 44 As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. 45 Then, too, [it is] out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. 46 You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another. 47 'Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger's family, 48 then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, 49 or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself. 50 He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years. [It is] like the days of a hired man [that] he shall be with him. 51 If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own redemption; 52 and if few years remain until the year of jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In

proportion to his years he is to refund [the amount for] his redemption. 53 Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight. 54 Even if he is not redeemed by these [means], he shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him. 55 For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Three times in this section a brother is said to become impoverished (verses 35,39,47; cf. verse 25). It is about someone from the people of God, a fellow brother or a fellow sister. A believer may be spiritually impoverished. He may lose sight of his blessings. But that does not mean that we should despise such a person. On the contrary, we must help such a person, keeping in mind the year of jubilee. The year of jubilee will make up for it. Then he will get back what he has lost.

A brother may not be used as a slave by a fellow Israelite. The reason is that all the Israelites are servants of the LORD (verses 42,55). They are all redeemed from Egypt to be free. Any Israelite must be aware of this and must not therefore be harsh on another Israelite and exploit the situation. In practical terms, Christian masters must realize that they themselves also have a Master in heaven, so they themselves are also servants (Col 4:1). In spiritual terms, it applies to us that One is our Teacher or Master and that we are all brothers (Mt 23:8; cf. 1Cor 7:23).

If an Israelite has sold himself as a slave to a stranger, his brother may redeem him. Nehemiah seems to have acted in accordance with this regulation (Neh 5:8a). The Lord Jesus is the true Redeemer. He will redeem those whom He calls His brethren from the power of their adversaries. He will come and redeem the remnant of Israel. He will also give them their land and the freedom to enjoy under His benevolent rule all that He has promised.

Poverty is not what God had purposed for His people. There will be no poor when they serve Him. Then each piece of land will give its full yield. Poverty and hunger are therefore a consequence of the unfaithfulness of the people. Even today there is no reason for a believer to be spiritually poor. Spiritual poverty is the result of wrong teaching or failure to engage in digging up from God's Word the spiritual treasures to be found therein.

Leviticus 26

Introduction

After Leviticus 25, where we hear about the certainty of the restoration of all things, the certainty that God's plans will be fulfilled, this chapter follows with our responsibility as the people of God. Here we do not hear about God's counsels, but about His ways in connection with man's responsibility. This is not in conflict with His counsels, but another side of God's truth.

Here we see what God will do if man is obedient and what He will do if man is disobedient. The blessings are made dependent on what man does. In Deuteronomy 28 we hear about the same things as here, but in more detail (Deu 28:1-68). There everything is said to a people who have their wilderness journey behind them, while here the people still have to go through the wilderness.

Verse 1 | Prohibition to Make Idols

1 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a [sacred] pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God.

God first establishes His absolute exclusive right to the worship of His people. Their tribute may only go to Him and to nothing and no one else. He does not tolerate any object besides Him. He is not part of His creation. Each made object is less than Him and everything there is, is made by Him and therefore less than Him.

Verse 2 | God's Sabbaths and God's Sanctuary

2 You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD.

After the negative prohibition to make idols, follows the positive commandment to keep "My sabbaths" and to reverence "My sanctuary" (cf. Lev 19:30). This allows them to show that their heart goes out to Him instead of to the idols. It covers their entire lives. In keeping the sabbath com-

mandment they show respect for the LORD in their social life; in revering the sanctuary they show that they want to live according to God's will in their religious life.

Verses 3-13 | Promise of Blessing

3 If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5 Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. 6 I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making [you] tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. 7 But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; 8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 9 So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. 10 You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. 11 Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 12 I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 13 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that [you] would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

The blessings of the land are abundantly presented. The first blessing talked about is rains. The entire harvest depends on this (Deu 11:13-14). With obedience, rain is promised, always at the right time for the harvest. As a result, it will be a year-round harvest as it were (Amos 9:13).

They will be able to enjoy the fruit in peace, without having to be in fear of the threat of enemies or wild animals. If an enemy dares to attack them, they will chase him away with little effort (cf. Deu 32:30). The LORD will turn to them in favor. He will make them numerous and give them plenty of food.

Besides this material blessing there is also spiritual blessing. It is the privilege that He dwells among them, and will be their God, and that they will be His people. The material blessing is also proof that God dwells

constantly in their midst. The people have blessing and rest where God has rest.

They will enjoy the full result of God's deliverance out of Egypt in beneficent freedom. There will be no question of a posture bent under the slave yoke. God has broken their yoke and will make them "walk erect", they walk with their heads held high. Thus the Christian may "stand" in the grace of God (Rom 5:2). Many times in the history of Israel their deliverance out of Egypt is referred back to by the LORD. The Christian must also be reminded time and again of his salvation from the power of sin. This will keep his gratitude alive and make him longing to continue to honor God in all things.

Verses 14-17 | Consequences of Disobedience (1)

14 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, [and] so break My covenant, 16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. 17 I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you.

In verses 14-40 it is about the consequences for the people if they are disobedient. Not listening to God's commandments shows contempt for it. It is not about sins of ignorance or weakness. In that case, offerings can be made. But if the people consciously ignore God's statutes and commandments, the blessing will diminish, and God will finally expel the people from the land. The people will be scattered among the nations. The Divine threats concern Israel's future.

The scattering of the people is literally fulfilled. This could make it difficult to believe that the prophecies of Leviticus 23 and Leviticus 25 will be fulfilled for the people and the land. But God will do what He has determined. He Himself will cause conversion in the astray people. He will do a work of grace in the people so they will be in a condition that He can fulfill all His plans for the converted people.

That converted people will be a remnant, but that remnant is also “all Israel” (Rom 11:25-26a). God will bless them on the ground of His covenant with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham (verses 42,45).

The first announcement of the consequences of the disobedience of the people promise illness, hunger and defeats. The plagues result from this fearful fact that the LORD has set His face against them (verse 17). He will act with hostility against them (verses 24,28). If that is the case, any measure to avert God’s wrath will prove a worthless, futile effort. When obedient no diseases shall affect them (Exo 23:25; 15:26).

Verses 18-20 | Consequences of Disobedience (2)

18 If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.

If the discipline of God is not successful, and the people remain disobedient, the people will have to suffer even more terrible things. The fact that God speaks of following discipline indicates that He knows the heart of man, that it is incorrigible. God’s purpose with His discipline is to make His people change their ways, but the people act in a contrary way (Amos 4:6; cf. 2Chr 28:22).

In this second announcement God says that He will punish them seven times more if His first judgments are unsuccessful. Drought and infertility are promised. Facing an iron sky – no rain falls out – and a copper ground, which cannot be worked because of its hardness, they will be powerless. Every effort ends in nothing but consuming of power without any result in food. That will have to break down their pride of power.

Verses 21-22 | Consequences of Disobedience (3)

21 If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. 22 I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

If also the discipline that follows the ignoring of the second warning has no effect, and the people continue to disobey (cf. Jer 6:29), a third warning follows, pointing out what awaits them. If smaller judgments have no effect, God will send larger judgments. He will increase the plague on them, and will punish them seven times harder (cf. Dan 3:19). He will let loose the beasts of the field against them (Eze 14:21), which will eat children and cattle. For fear no one will dare to come out on the street.

Man is created to rule over the animals. By their conduct, because they have turned their backs on God, they have set themselves below the animals. Those animals will now reign over them. God uses the animals to exercise His discipline over His people.

Verses 23-26 | Consequences of Disobedience (4)

23 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. 25 I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26 When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.

If the people continue to resist, the fourth announcement follows what awaits them in seven times heavier form. The enemy will come and kill them with the sword. He who thinks he is safe from the sword in a city, will be struck with the plague and thus driven into the hands of the enemy.

The scarcity of food will be great; no one will be able to be satisfied. Ten families will have to deal with the ration for one family. Hunger will become more and more gnawing, leading people to resort to the horror of cannibalism, mentioned in the next section.

Verses 27-39 | Consequences of Disobedience (5)

27 'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. 29 Further, you will eat the flesh of your

sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. 30 I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. 31 I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. 32 I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. 33 You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. 34 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 All the days of [its] desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. 36 As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. 37 They will therefore stumble over each other as if [running] from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have [no strength] to stand up before your enemies. 38 But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. 39 So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

If the people continue to resist after all the previous disciplinary measures, the fifth announcement of disciplinary measures is also the final blow to the resistance. The people will be driven out of the land and scattered over the earth. Before that time, they will fall into cannibalism and that in its most horrible form: their own children are eaten (2Kgs 6:28-29). Egoism is so great that all natural love has disappeared. Children are not only sacrificed to idols, but here they are sacrificed purely for the sake of survival.

The LORD shall cast their corpses on the corpses of their idols, and disgust them. He Himself will destroy their cities. When the people have finally been driven out of it, the land will have rest and will be retributed for its sabbatical years which the people have withheld during their stay in it (2Chr 36:21).

The cities where the people have felt at ease and at home will be made a mess by the LORD. There will no longer be a place where they will have rest and feel at home. Nothing will remain of their sanctuaries, which as

religious places have given them a sense of security and by which they have assumed themselves to be God's people. Nothing of their religion is acceptable to God: "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon [festivals] and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing [them]" (Isa 1:13-14).

The land as a whole shall be destroyed by the LORD in a way that even their enemies shall be appalled. The people will be driven out and will be destroyed on foreign ground outside the land.

There will be no force to hold against the enemy. They will see enemies where there are none and flee as a result of their imagination (verse 17). He who rejects the fear of God will even be afraid of the sound of a driven leaf (verse 36; Pro 28:1a).

Just as it was with Israel, so it will be with the professing Christianity. If those who were once in connection with God are judged by Him because of their total hardening, this will surprise even all those who have never been in connection with Him (cf. Jer 19:8).

Verses 40-42 | Confession and Covenant

40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

If they confess, God will remember His covenant. The confession is accompanied by repentance and humiliation. However persistently the people have despised all the discipline of God, there remains a possibility of conversion. They will also do so when the need has risen to heaven. Their confession is an acknowledgment of God's righteousness in dealing with them. They will acknowledge that God has done with them according to

what they deserved. Nehemiah appealed to these verses in his prayer to the LORD (Neh 1:8-9; cf. 1Kgs 8:46-53).

Repentance means that they consider themselves guilty and understand that they have acted against God. They condemn themselves and humiliate themselves before God. Their uncircumcised heart (cf. Jer 9:26), that is to say their actions in their own will and rebellion, comes to self-judgment. Circumcision speaks of judgment on the flesh. This is what God seeks (Rom 2:29).

Verses 43-45 | God Remembers for Good

43 For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. 45 But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.”

God remembers for good. If they have the right mind, a mind that is worked by the LORD in them, and therefore also acceptable to Him, He will remember His covenant, and on that basis, He will bless them. He remains faithful to His covenant, not because of His people, but because of Himself and on the basis of the work His Son accomplished on the cross.

Verse 46 | Closing

46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

This verse closes the book of Leviticus. Moses is the mediator given by God. Through his service the people receive God's revelations, while they camp at Mount Sinai. The following chapter is a kind of appendix, but an important one.

Leviticus 27

Introduction

This chapter has to do with the rights of God to His people. He will make His people His property, no matter how far they have distracted. In this chapter we see the path by which God will realize this.

The question is not what God will do if someone is unfaithful, but what He will do if someone wants to be faithful and makes a vow about it before the LORD. Here we find the two principles, that of grace and that of responsibility. Grace in the sense that God can work consecration in believers, but also responsibility that the believer in that consecration acts according to the commandments of God. If there is consecration, God sets the standard for it, not man. The standard is the measure of the sanctuary (verse 25).

The making of vows, like the sacrifices, is very old (Gen 28:20; Job 22:27). A vow can exist in the promise to give something to God. Someone can also, to His glory, renounce something that he is permitted to possess. The idea that plays a role in making a vow is that one does something that is pleasing to Him and that one then becomes part of His special grace. It may also be the intention, in a special case in which the help of God is urgently needed, to secure this help, by solemnly committing oneself to a service in advance.

In the provisions of the law, we can distinguish two aspects with regard to vows:

1. He who does not make vows does not sin; if anyone promised anything to God, he must keep that vow (Deu 23:22-23).
2. Nothing may be promised to the LORD that belongs to Him already, or by which His order sanctified by the law is broken, or to which sin and shame cling (Lev 27:26; Num 30:3-4; Deu 23:18). Also, nothing less in value than what was actually promised to Him may be brought as payment of the vow. The reverse is also not allowed (Lev 27:10).

Vows can consist of either the promise of a consecration to God, or a withdrawal from something. In both cases it is a vow of which the purpose is

to honor Him. The law distinguishes the two cases in vows of consecration and vows of abstinence. A vow of abstinence we can see in the Nazarite vow of Numbers 6 (Num 6:1-7). In our chapter it is only about vows of consecration.

What can be consecrated to the LORD is mentioned:

1. a human being (verses 2-8),
2. an animal (verses 9-13),
3. a house (verses 14-15),
4. a piece of land (verses 16-25).

A vow can be made voluntarily, but not made undone voluntarily. A person who makes a vow and wants to be released from the obligation of it must be valued by the priest. It is important whether someone is fully aware of what he promised or whether he has made his promise a little hastily. In the latter case, he can be relieved from his promise. He can redeem his promise and for that he must be valued.

Hasty vows are often warned of (Ecc 5:4-5; Deu 23:21-23; Pro 20:25). Israel has made such a promise. At Mount Sinai they promised three times: We will do all that the LORD has spoken (Exo 19:8; 24:3,7). The LORD has not demanded such a promise. They have not been able to fulfill that promise. A price has to be paid to redeem them. That is what the Lord Jesus did.

Verses 1-8 | Consecration of Persons

1 Again, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When a man makes a difficult vow, he [shall be valued] according to your valuation of persons belonging to the LORD. 3 If your valuation is of the male from twenty years even to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 4 Or if it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels. 5 If it be from five years even to twenty years old then your valuation for the male shall be twenty shekels and for the female ten shekels. 6 But if [they are] from a month even up to five years old, then your valuation shall be five shekels of silver for the male, and for the female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. 7 If [they are] from sixty years old and upward, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 8 But if he is poorer than your valuation,

then he shall be placed before the priest and the priest shall value him; according to the means of the one who vowed, the priest shall value him.

A person who vows usually does so in case of illness or imminent danger. On condition of healing or deliverance, such a man promises then to consecrate himself, or his wife, or his child, or his slave to the LORD, as a special property.

In general, all in Israel are the property of the LORD (Exo 19:5). But whosoever promised himself so to the LORD, or was promised to Him by his parents or master, became therefore a bond-servant of the sanctuary. Such a person no longer has anything to do with social life, but must serve in the tent of meeting whenever he has the opportunity to do so.

Someone who has become the property of the LORD in this special way can redeem himself or be redeemed. The money from the redemption benefits in his place the service of the sanctuary (2Kgs 12:4). In determining the price of the value at which he can redeem himself or must be redeemed, account shall be taken of age, sex and property. Most pays he who is in the power of his life.

Age	Value
from one month to 5 years	5 shekels
from 5 years to 20 years	20 shekels
from 20 years to 60 years	50 shekels
over 60 years	15 shekels

In Exodus 30 there is a similar amount for every numbered one of twenty years and older (Exo 30:11-16). That has to do with atonement. The price paid by the Lord Jesus for atonement is the same for every member of the church: the price of His blood. The development of spiritual life that every believer possesses, is different and the measure of consecration is different. There are the little children, or babies, in the faith, young people in the faith, and fathers in the faith (1Jn 2:12-14).

The value of each person's life according to his spiritual development is determined by our Priest, the Lord Jesus. If we judge and value each other, we can be very wrong. The Lord is not. He is entitled to our whole person

and everything we have. The Macedonians understood this principle and “first gave themselves to the Lord” (2Cor 8:5).

The fact that the valuation for those over sixty years falls so dramatically from fifty to fifteen shekels may have something to do with a relapse in the spiritual life. As one gets older, there is a danger that everything is no longer experienced as before. Isaac became blind. But that’s not how it should be. Moses was one hundred and twenty and Caleb eighty-five years old, but the power of their spiritual life was not diminished.

The difference between man and woman also has a spiritual meaning. The female speaks of the position, the male represents the force with which that position is realized. It is one thing to know that you are in Christ, a child of God, that is one’s position; it is something else to live up to that, that is the realization. The Lord also knows how to value us on this. It may be that we know what we are, but we don’t show much of it in practice.

Samuel is one who has been ordained by his mother to the LORD from birth. For him no estimate needs to be paid, because his mother meets the requirements (1Sam 1:11,28).

According to His age, the Lord Jesus had to be valued at fifty shekels. However, the estimate on which He is valued is only thirty shekels of silver (Zec 11:12-13). But that is a valuation by man. God has valued Him on His true value and given Him the place of glory at His right hand.

Whoever cannot pay his estimate (verse 8), whoever feels his shortage, can go to the priest, the Lord Jesus. He knows perfectly what value we have for Him. This is beautifully expressed in the parables of the talents (Mt 25:14-30) and the pounds (Lk 19:11-27).

There is a difference between the gift someone has, the talents, and the faithfulness with which the gift is used, the pounds. The gift is different, which is expressed in the parable of the talents, where the slaves are given a different number of talents. The pound is the same for everyone, what we see in the parable of the pounds, where every slave gets one pound.

Someone who has a small gift, but who is faithful in its exercise, is valued higher than someone who has a large gift, but is unfaithful in the exercise thereof. The pursuit of the greater gift of grace is a task for all of us (1Cor

12:31a). Someone who is faithful, gets more entrusted. Ability the Lord gives; acting with them to His honor, dedicating ourselves to them, is our responsibility.

Verses 9-13 | Consecration of Animals

9 'Now if it is an animal of the kind which men can present as an offering to the LORD, any such that one gives to the LORD shall be holy. 10 He shall not replace it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; or if he does exchange animal for animal, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. 11 If, however, it is any unclean animal of the kind which men do not present as an offering to the LORD, then he shall place the animal before the priest. 12 The priest shall value it as either good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. 13 But if he should ever [wish to] redeem it, then he shall add one-fifth of it to your valuation.

Once an offering is offered to God, there is no way back. This speaks of the Lord Jesus. He has fulfilled His vow (Heb 10:7). Men have valued Him at thirty shekels of silver. That price was rejected by God (Zec 11:13).

An unclean animal may not be offered as an offering, but it can be consecrated to the LORD for another purpose, for example as a beast of burden. The quality of the animal must be judged by the priest. If it is to be redeemed again, it must be redeemed for the estimated price, which is increased by 20%. Every consecration to Him is greater to Him than we think.

Verses 14-15 | Consecration of a House

14 'Now if a man consecrates his house as holy to the LORD, then the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. 15 Yet if the one who consecrates it should [wish to] redeem his house, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may be his.

In Leviticus 14, a house can be leprous, which is negative. Here it can be consecrated to God, which is positive. The consecration of a house can be applied in the first place to the tabernacle, the house of God. That is perfectly holy for the LORD. In this it is where God dwells with His people, and His people may dwell with Him, if they are dedicated to Him. The value that the priest determines for it is fixed.

In the application to the church as the house of God we can say that for the Lord Jesus the value of God's house is fixed. He paid the full price. He redeemed the house, the church, by His death. He has also added the fifth part, that is to say that in His death He glorified God at the highest level.

The house can also be applied to the house of Israel. The LORD can no longer dwell there, but it will be consecrated again for Him. This will happen on the basis of the same work that the Lord Jesus did to consecrate the New Testament house, the church, to God.

A house we also can see as a picture of a local church. A local church may be collectively consecrated to God. Then the meetings and brotherly living together are directed toward the honor of God. Unfortunately, due to all kinds of busyness, the local church as a whole is often no longer focused on the Lord Jesus. Everyone is too busy with their own activities. Then there is the Lord Jesus Who has set and paid the price and also the fifth part extra. Because of this we can now live in it and enjoy fellowship with God, with the Lord Jesus and with each other.

Verses 16-24 | Consecration of a Part of the Field

16 'Again, if a man consecrates to the LORD part of the fields of his own property, then your valuation shall be proportionate to the seed needed for it: a homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver. 17 If he consecrates his field as of the year of jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. 18 If he consecrates his field after the jubilee, however, then the priest shall calculate the price for him proportionate to the years that are left until the year of jubilee; and it shall be deducted from your valuation. 19 If the one who consecrates it should ever wish to redeem the field, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may pass to him. 20 Yet if he will not redeem the field, but has sold the field to another man, it may no longer be redeemed; 21 and when it reverts in the jubilee, the field shall be holy to the LORD, like a field set apart; it shall be for the priest as his property. 22 Or if he consecrates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not a part of the field of his own property, 23 then the priest shall calculate for him the amount of your valuation up to the year of jubilee; and he shall on that day give your valuation as holy to the LORD. 24 In the year of jubilee the field shall return to the one from whom he bought it, to whom the possession of the land belongs.

What the field yields is for the LORD. We can compare the field with our lives. Does our life, everything we sow in it, bear fruit for Him? This has nothing to do with a great or small gift, but with our daily lives. Everyone has the opportunity to serve Him in it.

Verse 25 | The Holy Shekel

25 Every valuation of yours, moreover, shall be after the shekel of the sanctuary. The shekel shall be twenty gerahs.

The norm, by which everything is judged, is the holy shekel, the shekel of the sanctuary, the place where God dwells. He determines the value of everything and that should guide us in our valuation of everything.

Verses 26-27 | Redemption of a Firstborn Among Animals

26 'However, a firstborn among animals, which as a firstborn belongs to the LORD, no man may consecrate it; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. 27 But if [it is] among the unclean animals, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation and add to it one-fifth of it; and if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation.

The firstborn of animals belongs to the LORD anyway, without a vow (Exo 13:2). It is not just a voluntary matter. Consecration is also an obligation. We are not our own, we are “bought for a price” and by virtue of that are obliged to glorify God (1Cor 6:20).

Visiting the meetings may be voluntary, but is not a non-binding matter. We are exhorted not to forsake our own assembling together (Heb 10:25). The same goes for worship: “True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (Jn 4:23). But then follows: “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24).

Verses 28-29 | What Shall Not Be Redeemed

28 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most holy to the LORD. 29 No one who may have been set apart among men shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death.

What is devoted to destruction belongs to the LORD (Jos 6:24; 1Sam 15:3-9). The Lord Jesus was under the curse in the hours when He was made sin on the cross. An application may be that items that have been a trap for us are destroyed by us and are not offered for sale to others (cf. Acts 19:19).

Verses 30-33 | All the Tithe Are for the LORD

30 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. 31 If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. 32 For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. 33 He is not to be concerned whether [it is] good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; or if he does exchange it, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. It shall not be redeemed.'

Giving the tithes means acknowledging the sovereign rights of God over all our possessions. He is entitled to the first and the best. If we do, He rewards it (Mal 3:10).

Verse 34 | Closing

34 These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.

This book on the sanctuary concludes with consecration of our personal and communal lives, how we can live dedicated lives. It is the answer to the question that has arisen in the course of this book: "Lord, how do You want us to live in fellowship with You and serve You?" Therefore, this chapter has been added to the book and closes with again a reference to "the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the Israelites at Mount Sinai". This reference to the commandments of the LORD is God's answer to the question asked.

When God's commandments govern our hearts, we will wholeheartedly heed the exhortation: "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since [we have] a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near" (Heb 10:19-22a).

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