

# Leviticus 22-23

## Chapter 22 – More on the Priests

22:1-16 focuses on the fact that what a person touches will have an affect on their ability to serve the Lord.

This is an important concept. When we lose sight of the holiness of God, the presence of God and a proper fear of God, we will tend to touch things that are forbidden.

That touch will affect our service even if it does not affect our ability to communicate, or sing, or play an instrument. The danger is when we touch the forbidden and remain in ministry without repentance. Soon our hearts will be hardened to the Lord. Remember, God spoke through Balaam and his donkey. The fact that God uses us should never lead us to think that our behaviors do not matter to Him.

The clear principle in the text is that we become defiled when we touch what is forbidden

The secret then is separation

Leviticus 22:2

“Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the Lord.

Daniel's life is a good example of this truth. He refused to be corrupted by Babylon and as a result had a tremendous ministry in his workplace

His story is recorded in Daniel chapter one. We read that a great attempt was made to make all the young men conform to the ways of Babylon. They were given Babylonian names and manipulated with the finest dining the state had to offer. Rather than giving in to this subtle coercion, Daniel purposes in his heart to remain faithful to the Lord. The result of his commitment was that others joined in and ultimately the gospel was furthered. It seems that even the king was led to faith in Daniel's God.

We could apply this same truth to the job site, the classroom or even the home.

Daniel was not a pastor, priest or prophet. He was a believer working in a secular environment and yet had a powerful impact upon his world for the kingdom of God

The list of things that would make a person unclean include

- leprosy
- Dead bodies
- Sexual activity

**Leviticus 22:6-7**

The person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water.

And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food.

If a person became contaminated by touching the wrong things the solution was to wash with water.

Because sins were atoned for at the altar where sacrifice was made, all that was necessary for a person in covenant with God to become "clean enough" for service was to wash with water.

We see a similar truth under the new covenant. The cross atones for all our sin, but it is necessary for us to confess sin, turn from it and allow the Word to wash us

One of the manifold purposes of the Word of God is that it provides a cleansing for the child of God. It actually has the ability to wash the contaminated brain of those who have looked upon what is forbidden

John 15:4

"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken unto you"

Psalms 119:11

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word"

Ephesians 5:26

"... The washing of water with the Word of God"

Chapter 22 concludes addressing what may be offered to God.

**Two principles stand out.**

1. Free will - they gave as they were moved by the spirit. We should do the same

Leviticus 22:19

you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats.

2. They were to give their best

Leviticus 22:20

Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.

22:21 "...It must be perfect to be accepted"

Specific details are given

Leviticus 22:22-24

Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the Lord.

Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

'You shall not offer to the Lord what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land.

It might do is good to examine what we are giving to God, is our

- o Time defective or is it our best
- o Talents defective or is it our best
- o Funds defective or is it our best
- o Energy defective or is it our best

**The motivation behind giving our best is the holiness of God and all He has given to us**

Leviticus 22:32-33

You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord."

Chapter 23 is structured around the national annual festivals of Israel.

The regulations of this chapter are given from the viewpoint of an ordinary worshiper. The instructions are not for the priests, we saw those earlier, but for the people.

Numbers 28–29 addresses the same feasts

The word Feast literally means “an appointed time or place.” God set up appointed times and places for the people to meet with Him.

The feasts are referred to as "Holy Convocations"

Holy - apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness

Convocation - an assembly

These feasts were days that were set apart from all other days and were to be considered holy. As such there were observances but the main focus was spiritual. It became easy however to focus upon the natural observances and rituals and lose sight of the Lord and the real reasons for the holiday

This is not uncommon. The church of Ephesus was guilty of the same thing and we see this practiced today.

Churches are often filled with ritual and yet tragically lacking of the Holy Spirit

Jerusalem is the most religious place on the planet and people observe a variety of practices without ever really focusing upon the Lord.

This chapter will refer to ??? Of the feasts

## **The first of these was the sabbath**

### **Leviticus 23:3**

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

Once a week time was set apart to stop secular endeavors and focus on the Lord.

They were to rest and observe the holiness of the day.

As time went on synagogues were developed as ways for the community of believers to gather for worship

Synagogues came into being in the Persian period and possibly as early as the Exile. In time the synagogues came to be a new focal point of Judaism as Jews lived farther and farther from their ancestral land and the temple that had been the focus of their religion. A parallel development was the transition from leadership by priests and Levites to leadership by scribes. These changes made possible the survival of Judaism as a religion centered around the law of Moses after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. (Eerdmans bible dictionary)

Psalms 78 seems to be a cry because of the collapse of Judah to Babylon. In the midst of this cry a reference is made to the synagogues

Psalms 74:8

They said in their hearts,

“Let us destroy them altogether.”

They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

Synagogues were designed as places where the people could meet for prayer, worship and the study of the word. We see this in the New Testament in life of Christ and the book of acts. Paul took advantage of the study of the law and prophets as a means to share Christ with the Jewish population of any given area

Today, while the sabbath is not mandatory, we have been exhorted to establish weekly meetings for sturdy, worship, prayer and fellowship

1 Corinthians 16:2

On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Hebrews 10:25

not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

In addition to weekly gathering Israel's calendar also included yearly retreated where the people traveled to Jerusalem for worship, fellowship and recommitment

### **The first of these was Passover followed by Unleavened Bread**

Leviticus 23:4-8

This feast were designed to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt and to look forward to the work of the messiah who would provide freedom from sin through His own shed blood

Luke 1:74-75

To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,  
In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

**Passover** points to the work of Christ on the cross

It is unique among the feasts in that it's origin is before the Law. It represents the means by which Israel was delivered. All other feasts illustrate a work among the redeemed people, this one illustrates the redemption itself.

The feast of Unleavened bread speaks to the believer's walk with God which should be marked by the removal of sin and sinful practices

When they first ate the Passover in Egypt, the Israelites had their loins girded and their shoes on, ready for a journey, and they ate standing up, as if in a hurry to be away. In later years, they ate sitting or reclining. This may symbolize the fact that they were in the land resting in the fulfilled promises of God

It is worth noting that this is the only sacrifice we read of Jesus offering and He did so on the night before He became our Passover lamb

**Passover** took place on 14th of the first month and Unleavened bread began on the 15th

The feasts began with a special Sabbath celebration and ended with the same. Each day in between was marked with special sacrifices

A lamb of the first year was selected by the head of the family and was slain. Its blood was sprinkled first on the door posts and the lamb was roasted and eaten with unleavened bread and a salad of bitter herbs

We know that Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, but We cannot be certain of the ceremonies practiced by Christ because things changed over the centuries.

For example, the original Passover meal had no wine, but by the time of Jesus wine was a part of the meal, having been added about a hundred years before His birth

In the afternoon, the two disciples, Peter and John, went to the temple with the paschal lamb. There the lamb was killed, with the nearest priest catching the blood in a gold or silver bowl, passing it to the next in the row of priests until it reached the priest nearest the altar, who instantly sprinkled it on the altar's base. The lamb was then flayed and the entrails removed to be burnt on the altar with incense. At dark the lamb was roasted. They likewise provided bread, wine, bitter herbs, and sauce.

It is worth noting that the New Testament does not record the ceremonial aspect of the meal. However, the leading incidents of the feast are all vividly before us—handing 'the sop dipped in the dish,' 'breaking of bread,' 'giving thanks,' 'distributing of the cup,' and 'the concluding hymn.' Even the exact posture at the Supper is known to us.

This may be because we would be prone to emphasize all the ceremony and lose sight of the establishing of the new covenant with its very simple ceremony of bread and the fruit of the vine (as the NT calls it)

## The Feast of First Fruits

Leviticus 23:10

"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

Next in the year was the feast of first fruits which took place the day after the sabbath following Passover

Leviticus 23:15

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

### How it was celebrated

- Bringing a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest to the priest
- waving the sheaf before the Lord

- Offering a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord
- With a grain and a drink offering

One interesting note was that:

Leviticus 23:14

You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain **until** the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The purpose then of the feast was to thank the Lord for what He has provided while looking forward to what He promises to continually bring.

### What it symbolized

This feast was symbolic and pointed to the resurrection of Christ. Just as the first fruits pointed to a more complete harvest that would follow so the resurrection of Christ points forward to the resurrection of the saints.

Job 19:25-26

For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,

1 Corinthians 15:20

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:23

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

The resurrection not only proves that Christ is the Son of God and that all His promises are true, it also proves that there is life after death. Just as Christ rose from the dead in a glorified body, fit for heaven, never to die again so we who have trusted Christ will arise in glorified bodies, fit for heaven and will ever be in the presence of the Lord. Those who have rejected Christ and His atoning death will also rise, but to judgment instead of life. Those who do not believe will face the second death and remain eternally separated from God.

Daniel 12:2

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:14-15

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

## **The Feast of Weeks**

Leviticus 23:15-16

“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.

The third feast of the year took place in the early summer, 7 weeks after first fruits or 50 days after Passover. As a result it was given two different names;

- The feast of Weeks
- The feast of Pentecost

### **How it was celebrated**

- A grain offering that contained leaven
- Burnt, sin and peace offerings
- And a holy sabbath

This feast also came with a reminded to leave the corners of the field accessible to the poor of the land that they may be able to work hard and glean their own crops.

### **What it symbolized**

The feast is symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit and the establishing of the New Testament church.

It was during this feast that the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church began

Some see a picture of the church in that the feast alone was celebrated with leaven.

The church is a miraculous work of God but it is made up of saints in the midst of the sanctification process. None of us is finished and as a result the church is filled with leaven.

It is interesting that the feast designed to represent the church would come with a reminder to care for the poor.

Luke 6:20

Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you poor,

For yours is the kingdom of God.

## Fall Festivals

The final three “appointed feasts of the Lord” all occurred in the seventh month (Tishri, October–November), marked the end of the agricultural year

During the seventh month four additional Sabbaths were to be observed which emphasizes the importance of this sacred month in their worship calendar

## The Feast of Trumpets

Leviticus 23:24

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

How it was celebrated

The next feast was called trumpets. This feast was celebrated by having a sabbath rest, offering burnt, grain, sin and drink offerings and by blowing special trumpets.

The use of trumpets was an important part of Israel's daily life.

Numbers 10:2

“Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps.

### What it symbolized

This feast is symbolic of return of Christ.

The prophets linked the blowing of trumpets to the future Day of Judgment:

Joel 2:1

Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;  
For the day of the Lord is coming,  
For it is at hand:

In the New Testament, we see that the Lord’s Second Coming will be accompanied by the sound of a trumpet

A trumpet will call the church home

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—  
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

And will call forth much of the judgment upon the earth during the tribulation

Revelation 8:1-2

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

Just as the shofar called the Jewish nation to turn their attention to the Lord and ready themselves for the Day of Atonement, so will the “trump of God” call us to heaven and warn the world of coming judgment.

## **The Feast of Atonement**

Leviticus 23:27

“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

### **How it was celebrated**

Like Passover and Trumpets this was a one day observance

10 days after the trumpet was blown Israel would celebrate the day of atonement. This was the one day a year when the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and present an offering for His sin and that of the nation.

This chapter focuses not on the responsibilities of the priests but on that of the congregation of Israel

They would celebrate this day

- With a special sabbath on the 10th day of the month
- They would fast, referred here to "afflicting their souls"  
This was the only mandatory fast for the nation
- They would bring special offerings

The purpose of this day was to celebrate the means by which sin was atoned for. The priest would offer a lamb as a sacrifice and bring its blood into the Holiest place. Another lamb was set free into the Wild symbolizing that sin is removed through the blood of a substitute.

The sabbath would be a reminder that salvation was accomplished not by our work but by the work of God

The fast would illustrate the need for repentance from sin

## What it symbolized

Clearly this "Feast" illustrates the work Christ completed upon the cross. He is the lamb that was slain for the sins of the world, who took wrath upon Himself so our sins could be forgiven and we could be pardoned. As a result of the cross, the veil has been torn and we have access to God.

Hebrews 4:14

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Jesus did not enter the tabernacle made with mens hands but He passed through the heavens and entered the throne room of God. In doing so He has made a way for all of us to enter in. Through Christ our sins are forgiven and we are able to go to heaven, but we are also given daily access to the throne of God where we can fellowship with Him and receive what is necessary for our daily walk.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## The Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:34

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord.

## How it was celebrated

Five days after Yom Kippur Israel would celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This was a 7 day feast that began and ended with a special sabbath.

This feast was celebrated by

- Two additional sabbath days
- Special offerings
- Assembling with the congregation of Israel
- Dwelling in booths for a week as a reminder of God's provision during the wilderness journeys

Leviticus 23:40

And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

Leviticus 23:42-43

You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.' ”

## What it symbolized

This feast is symbolic of the provision of God.

God met the needs of His people during their time in the wilderness. Part of that time was God directed, part was a consequence of sin, but in all God met their needs. The manna did not run out when the people sinned. He continued to care for them

God promises to meet the needs of His people