

Mon.
31
March

Verse to Learn

More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Psalms 19:10



reading



Leviticus 20:1-27 - A Separated People

notes

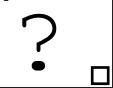


The first part of this chapter deals with Molech worship and witchcraft. The word Molech means king. Molech is the god of Ammon and part of the whole religion of Baal. Molech represents kingship and power; to sacrifice children to Molech supposedly buys you protection and power. The child is brought and passed through a literal fire. If the child survives, it is assumed to be blessed by Molech; if it dies, then that is considered to be the god's rightful sacrifice. The punishment for this isn't confined just to those who practice it, but to the nation that tolerates it. The Lord is a jealous God who takes idolatry and murder very seriously. Molech worship is an abomination to God; it is the final sin that results in Israel and Judah being carried away into exile (Jeremiah 32:35). This is not just a crime of ancient Israel. Today millions of children are killed through abortion as sacrifices to the gods of convenience, selfishness, and power.

The second part of this chapter deals with sins against the family. It begins with laws about cursing your parents - this isn't talking about a fussy baby or an angry toddler, but those who are in deliberate, constant, unrepentant rebellion against their parents and ultimately against God whom the parents represent. Adultery, incest, homosexuality, and bestiality are also forbidden as attacks upon God's structure of one man and one woman making a family. God takes the protection of the family so seriously, that these attacks upon it are an abomination to Him.

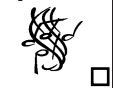
Finally, God calls the Israelites to holiness, to be set apart. If they act like the world around them, God will judge them and take away the blessings He has given them. Holiness is the key. That has not changed. Will we be holy, as God defines it, or will we have the spirit of the world?

questions



1. What is Molech worship?
2. How does God define the family?

praise



Ps. 102:11-20

prayers



1. Pray that you would be holy as God is holy.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Alex McNeil.
4. Pray for family matters.

Sat.
5
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Leviticus 23:23-44 - Autumn Feasts

notes



The first day of the seventh month is to be kept as a solemn rest. The blowing of the trumpets is an announcement from the Lord, the King of Israel to His people that the glad, joyous, festive sabbath month has begun. The great day of atonement, and the supreme festivity of the feast of tabernacles is at hand.

The Day of Atonement is described more fully in chapter 16, but the main purpose of the Day of Atonement is to remove the sins of the people that stand between them and God and bring about complete restoration to God's favour. The people are to do no work and focus on humbling themselves and repenting through fasting.

The sin of Israel having been removed, the last and greatest of all the feasts follows: the Feast of Booths. This feast lasts a week and is held for two reasons. First, it is a feast of thanksgiving to God at the end of the harvest. Secondly, it reminds the people of the time they spent living in the wilderness and how God brought them into the Promised Land.

These autumn feasts have parallels today. The Feast of Trumpets points to the preaching of the Word of God, calling men and women to turn to the Lord. The Day of Atonement, besides being fulfilled in Christ, reminds us of our need to humble ourselves and repent and seek the Lord. The Feast of Booths points to the joy of eternity, when all the people of God will rejoice and praise Him, when His harvest will be completed.

These festivals constantly remind Israel that their religion is one of joy. God desires us to be joyful before Him. Joyfulness is especially connected with the Sabbath because every Sabbath points forward to the eternal joy of the new heavens and the new earth.

questions



1. What do these festivals remind us of?
2. What does the Sabbath point to?

praise



Ps. 104:13-21

prayers



1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow; that sinners would be converted and Christians grow in their faith.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Betty Reilly.
4. Pray for family matters.

Fri.

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Leviticus 23:4-22 - Spring Feasts

notes

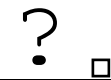


Passover takes place on the 14th day of the 1st month, and more instructions are given in Exodus 12-13. John draws our attention to the connection between Jesus and the Passover lamb. We are told that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36); that the death of Jesus takes place at Passover time (John 19:14), and that none of Jesus' bones are broken - just like the Passover lamb (John 19:31-36)

The 15th day begins the week long Feast of Unleavened Bread. This reminds people of the Exodus when they had to leave quickly with no time to leaven their bread. Firstfruits is not another feast or festival, but an important day within the Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it is the time when the first sheaf of the grain harvest is offered to the Lord. The act of waving the sheaf symbolises that this is a gift dedicated to God in praise and thanksgiving. It shows that the whole crop belongs to God and expresses hope that God will bless them. This is to be done on the day after the regular weekly Sabbath that takes place in the middle of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the year that Christ dies, Passover falls on a Friday, so that the following day (Saturday) is not only the special Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread but the ordinary weekly Sabbath. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the day after the Sabbath, to become the firstfruits of those who belong to God.

The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on the 50th day from the day of the firstfruits offering. It is known as Pentecost from the Greek word for 50. This festival marks the completion of the harvest and gives thanks to God for His provision. Pentecost completes the Passover, just like the work of Christ in His death and resurrection is completed when the church is baptised with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

questions



1. How is Christ like the Passover lamb?
2. What happens at Pentecost in Acts 2?

praise



Ps. 104:1-12

1. Give thanks for God's provision of a Saviour in Jesus Christ.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Andrew, Heather, Carla, Connor, Caitlin, Calvin, Catherine, and Campbell Quigley.
4. Pray for family matters.

prayers



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Leviticus 21:1-24 - Priestly Holiness

notes



The concern of chapters 21 and 22 is the holiness of priests, who represent the people. Love for Jehovah must be clearly shown to be above love for family and friends. The priest may never be allowed to forget, and the people must not forget, that he is appointed by the living God to be a mediator of forgiveness and life from God to those who deserve to die; therefore, he must be visibly separate from death.

The priest is consecrated to God, and his wife must be of good character. Just as the wife's character reflects on her husband, so can the children's. The daughter of a priest represents her father's household; she is therefore under greater condemnation.

Even tighter restrictions are imposed on the high priest. His holy job of supreme mediator between God and Israel is symbolised by his anointing and his magnificent ceremonial robes. He is forbidden to show the normal signs of grief - messing up the hair and tearing the clothes. He is not even allowed to take part in the burial of his closest relatives, his father and mother, so total is his dedication to the service of God.

Various bodily deformities stop a priest from serving in the sanctuary. Again we see that holiness is physically manifested in wholeness and normality. The principle for today is that there are Christians who may just not have the gifts or abilities necessary for leadership within the Church.

Priestly holiness does not mean the priests are better than others, or that their perfections save them. In all this, they are but symbols of the only one who is truly perfect. The lamb has to be without blemish, and the High Priest as well. But only one Lamb, and only one High Priest, meets this requirement. He who knew no sin, and who is our Saviour.

questions



1. Why must the priest stay away from death?
2. Who does the High Priest symbolise?

praise



Ps. 102:21-28

1. Give thanks for our minister and elders.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Eddie and Morag McPheat.
4. Pray for family matters.

prayers



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Leviticus 22:1-33 - Holy Sacrifices

All that is unclean must be kept strictly apart from what is holy. That is the lesson God is teaching the people through these laws. It is a lesson that Christians need to remember. We can't offer to God acceptable sacrifices of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving if we are living worldly, unclean lives.

The laws in this chapter also insist that the sacrificial animals, like the priests who offer the sacrifices and the place of sacrifice, must reflect the holiness of God. Once again this points to Christ who is the perfect sacrifice, holy and sinless. After Pilate has interrogated Jesus he says, I find no fault in Him. Pilate is, essentially, pronouncing the sacrifice without blemish. Peter draws our attention to Christ as the ultimate sacrifice to which these laws point when he says that we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:19)

Chapter 22 ends urging God's people to keep these commandments. Why? Why should God's people observe these laws and be careful to do His will? First, because of who God is and what He has done for His people. He is their Saviour who has brought them out of Egypt and graciously associated Himself with them as their God. Secondly, this is the way God is honoured among His people. If they keep His commands, God is glorified. If they disobey, they bring dishonour upon God's name. Thirdly, by obeying these laws God's people will be sanctified, they will grow more holy. These reasons all apply today. God has saved us; He has brought us out of slavery to sin and death. By obeying God, we show our love and thankfulness to Him, we honour Him, and we grow in holiness.

questions



1. Why must the sacrifices be perfect?
2. What are the reasons given for obeying God's laws?

praise



Ps. 103:1-10

prayers



1. Give thanks for all that Christ has done.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Cathy Miller.
4. Pray for family matters.

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3
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Leviticus 23:1-3 - The Sabbath

Leviticus 23 is like a yearly calendar. It maps out the weeks and months, highlighting the special festivals and holy days. Israel's calendar has a beginning, a forward thrust, and an end. It not only summarises what God has done for them in the past, but it also anticipates what God will do for them in the future.

We move from holy offerings and holy food, holy places, holy priests, and holy people to holy time. Before the annual festivals are introduced the people are reminded of the weekly set time for meeting - the Sabbath of solemn rest. The Sabbath is set apart from all the other festivals that follow. It provides the model for the other holy days, and it is independent of the lunar calendar. Placing it at the head of all the holy days has the effect of emphasising its distinctiveness, that it must not be forgotten or underrated in the excitement of keeping the other holy days. The Biblical Sabbath is the only holy day commanded in the Ten Commandments, and the only one that is based on Creation. The people are to rest and not work. Not only when they are attending church are they to stop working, but they are to rest when they are in their homes.

Jesus shows by word and example how the Sabbath is to be kept. He directs His followers to keep it and by His resurrection on the eighth day transforms it, and his disciples then meet on that day. The change of day from the seventh to the first day should not come as a surprise for it is anticipated in the law. The eighth day is key in circumcision, the beginning of the priest's work, and the healing of lepers. It's also an important day in the festivals described in this chapter. The eighth day in Leviticus is a day of new birth and new beginnings, cleansing, healing, consecration, and thanksgiving - all the things we have and are as believers in Christ.

questions



1. What holy day is first described in Leviticus 23?
2. Why is the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week?

praise



Ps. 103:11-22

prayers



1. Give thanks for the Sabbath and for Christ's resurrection.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Charles, Dorothy, Laura, Stacy, Jessica, & Ethan Muir.
4. Pray for family matters.