



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

LEVITICUS
& HEBREWS

Week 2

What Are Those White Spots?

DAY 8

Leviticus 13:1-59

Have you ever been quarantined or had to enforce a quarantine? What for?

- 1.** What was the prescribed treatment for an infectious disease (13:2-8), particularly open flesh wounds and chronic skin disease (13:9-17)?
- 2.** Why see the priest? (a) priests had medical degrees, (b) disease was thought to be a punishment for sin, (c) God heals, (d) our spiritual and physical well-being are intertwined.
- 3.** How did a harmless “rash” differ from an “infectious skin disease” (13:2-8)?
- 4.** Is “whiteness” a sign of health or ill-health? What other symptoms were indicators of dreaded disease?
- 5.** What were the social consequences of being declared “unclean” (13:26, 31-33, 45-46)? Did the cure seem worse than the disease?
- 6.** What regulations protected people from the spread of mildew (15:47-59)?

- 1.** Leprosy was a most feared disease in ancient Israel. What for you is a most fearful disease? (a) cancer, (b) AIDS, (c) Alzheimer’s, (d) heart disease.
- 2.** If you were to get one of these frightening diseases, what could a minister or priest offer you? (a) prayer, (b) encouragement, (c) hope for eternal life, (d) an answer to the question, “Why me?”
- 3.** If a sore went more than skin deep, it was thought to be contagious. How can Christians discern what a person is like beneath his or her physical appearance?

*What the NIV Bible translates as **infectious skin disease** (13:2; 14:3) was not necessarily leprosy or Hansen’s disease, but a number of diseases affecting the skin. The same word could be translated “mildew” (13:47; also 14:34, 55).*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

*“Then he
is to release
the live
bird in the
open fields
outside the
town.”*

Leviticus 14:53



Photo by Warren Watson—PTM

Cleaning House

Leviticus 14:1-57

When was the last time you cleaned house? Are there places in your home where dirt accumulates and mildew grows? How do you get rid of it?

- 1.** Regarding the treatment of disease, what reason do you see for the two birds (14:4-7)? For shaving all body hair (14:8-9)? For the two lambs (14:10-13, 24-25)? For anointing head-to-toe with oil (14:15-18, 26-29)? For washing all clothes (15:4-11)?
- 2.** What provisions were made for the poor (14:21-32)? Do you believe this was fair?
- 3.** How did all these procedures “make atonement” (14:18-21, 29, 31)?
- 4.** What was the prescribed treatment for a house infected with a dangerous mildew (14:33-53)? What was so bad about mildew?
- 5.** Why tear down the entire house if the mildew grew? Should we do this today? Why or why not?
- 6.** Is there a connection between physical cleanliness and spiritual cleanliness?

- 1.** Is mildew in this chapter a metaphor for the infectiousness of sin? What about the infectiousness of Christ-less, legalistic religion?
- 2.** Destruction of an entire building was sometimes required to eradicate physically toxic microbes. Likewise, religious institutions may need destruction to help eradicate the virus of religion.
- 3.** Can you think of any friends who have become spiritually toxic—from whom you may need to distance yourself? Who will detoxify you?

*Concerning **infectious skin disease** (14:2), see note at day 8. Ancient Middle Eastern homes were commonly made of plastered stone or mud brick. Such a house with **mildew** conditions would be an unhealthy place to live because of allergins and toxins produced by some molds and mildews.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

DAY 10

Scapegoats

Leviticus 16:1-17:16

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Have you ever “scapegoated” someone else for something you did? Have you been a scapegoat?

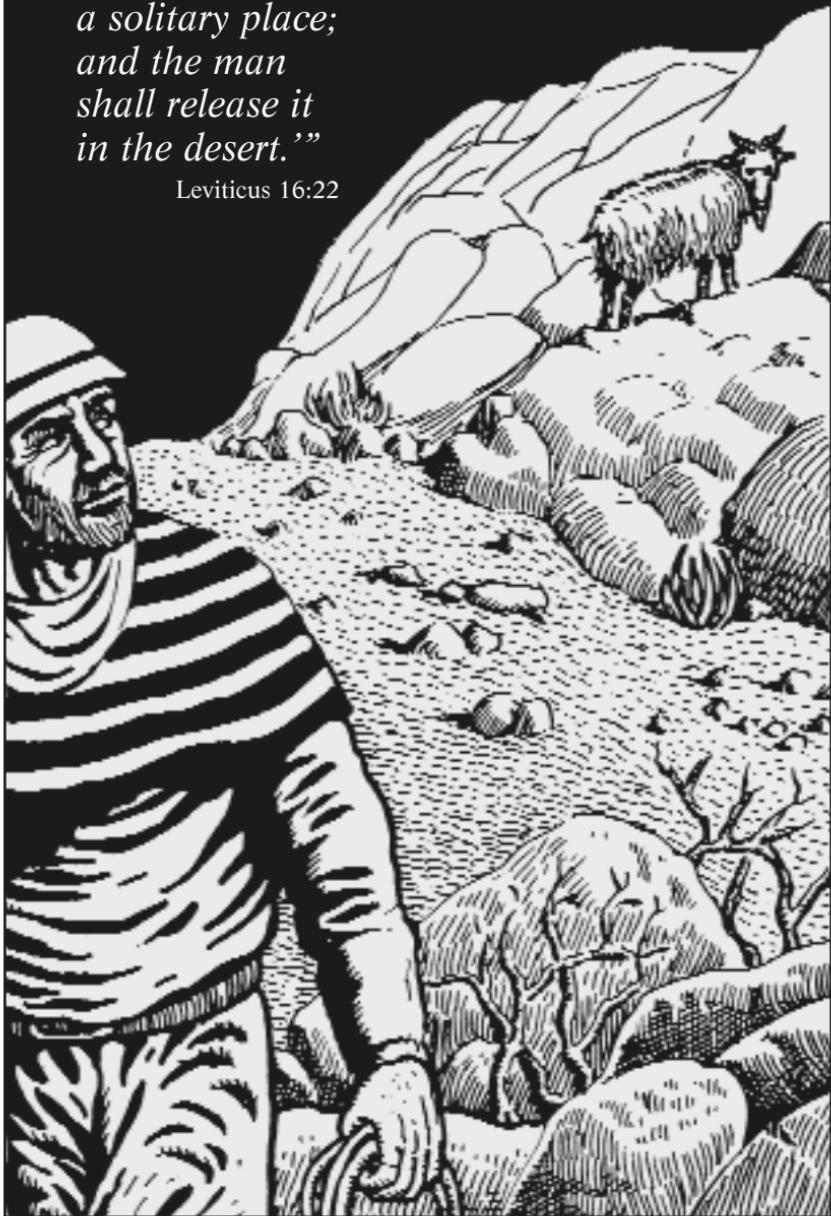
- 1.** List the steps necessary for Aaron to enter the Holy Place on the annual Day of Atonement (Note that 16:11-22 expands the steps outlined in 16:6-10). What was significant about these steps?
- 2.** How was Aaron like or unlike Christ (Heb 7:26-28). Compare the two goats to Christ (Heb 7:26-28). How is Christ like both?
- 3.** How and why was animal sacrifice limited to the Israelite priesthood and the central sanctuary (17:1-9)? Why no private sacrifice?

- 1.** Based on Leviticus 16-17, what would you tell a person who hopes to earn their way into heaven by living a good life, untainted by sin?
- 2.** What makes it possible to enter into God’s presence—now and at death? (a) confessing sin, (b) a priest’s intercession, (c) taking communion, (d) claiming the blood of Jesus, (e) God is with us at all times.
- 3.** What “idols” rival God and divert your time and attention from worshipping him exclusively? How can you get rid of those things?

The **Atonement cover** (16:2) was the lid covering the ark, the box housing the covenant (see Ex 25:17, 22). When applied to Christ (Rom 3:25), the Hebrew word for “atonement cover” has been variously translated “mercy seat,” “propitiation” and “sacrifice for atonement.” **Goat idols** (17:7) were satyrs or demons that were believed to haunt the ancient wilderness. Goat worship was practiced in pagan religions in Egypt and Canaan. **Life... is in the blood** (17:11). As a complex fluid that carries oxygen and nourishment, blood sustains physical life. But the spiritual meaning of blood goes much deeper, in that it makes **atonement**. It represents a life given to bring forgiveness for sin that deserves death. This atonement finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who voluntarily shed his blood as the ultimate expression of God’s love, giving sinful humans eternal life.

*“The goat will
carry on itself
all their sins to
a solitary place;
and the man
shall release it
in the desert.”*

Leviticus 16:22



Artwork by Basil Wolverton

DAY 11

Don't Try This at Home!

Leviticus 18:1-30

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

Has your family been affected by sexual sin?

- 1.** What kinds of interpersonal relationships are prohibited here?
- 2.** Do you see any room for exceptions here or are these prohibitions absolute and universal?
- 3.** Why should illicit sex be avoided (18:2-5, 24-30)? (a) it makes one sick, (b) it goes against natural law, (c) it destroys families, (d) it's not a good example to others, (e) it destroys love.
- 4.** Which patriarchs in Genesis were guilty of immoral sex as identified here in Leviticus?
- 5.** Since the law wasn't written in their day, were they guilty? Does this mean that sinners are better off without a law that only brings conviction of sin (see Ro 2:1-16)?
- 6.** Some practices that are considered immoral today were not included in this list of no-nos—for example polygamy and child marriage (no age limit is given here). Why do you think these were omitted?

LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** If it was reported to you first, what actions would you take to help the victim of an inappropriate sexual relationship? What would you do for the perpetrator?
- 2.** Family ties are not to be exploited for sex, but rather to honor one another. How do you honor and protect other family members?

WINDOW
on the Word

That Israel would live by God's laws (18:5) is not to suggest that eternal salvation is ever possible by keeping the law. God made no such offer under the old covenant. Molech (18:21) was a foreign god associated with the Ammonites and Phoenicians. Worship of Molech was profane to Israel and detestable to God (20:2-5; 1Ki 3:26-27), yet King Manasseh of Judah sacrificed his sons to Molech (2Ch 33:1-6).

Social Concerns of the Covenant

DAY 12

Leviticus 19:1-37

Which “neighbors” are you most concerned about? Keep them in mind as you study this chapter.

- 1.** Which of these laws expands on the Ten Commandments? Which laws enhance family relationships? Which laws protect the poor or disabled?
- 2.** Who were Israel’s “neighbors” (19:9-18)? (a) the poor, (b) aliens, (c) hired hands, (d) the deaf or blind, (e) a brother caught in sin, (f) anyone in their vicinity.
- 3.** What did it mean in Moses’ day to “love your neighbor as yourself”? What did Jesus add to this definition of neighborliness (Mt 22:39; Mk 12:31; Lk 10:27)? What emphasis did Paul (Ro 13:9-10; Gal 5:14) and James (2:8) add?

- 1.** How are the poor, disabled and aliens treated by society today? What “stumbling blocks” are placed in their way?
- 2.** Consider: while these laws protected the poor, disabled and aliens, the new covenant supersedes them all with Jesus’ new command to “love one another” (Jn 13:34).
- 3.** Although it appears that mixing and mating regulations were primarily a prohibition against pagan worship practices (see note below), do you feel there are any spiritual implications here that Christians may apply today?

Do not mate... plant... wear (19:19). Ancient and obscure issues of horticulture, climate, comfort and cultural superstition are probably being addressed here. Canaanites practiced such mating or mixing to influence their gods to bless the fruit of their labors. However, the one true God would not be mocked or manipulated, so the Israelites were prohibited from doing certain things that resembled practices of Canaanite cults.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

*“I will set my face against
the person who turns
to mediums and spiritists....”*

Leviticus 20:6



Photo by G. A. Belluche Jr.—PTM

Crime and Punishment

DAY 13

Leviticus 20:1-27

Were you raised with a sense that every bad behavior has a consequence—that we reap according to what we sow?

1. What sexual sins and other crimes are in view here? In each case, what consequences were specified?

2. Why was sin punished so harshly? (a) to show God's attitude toward sin, (b) to deter potential offenders, (c) to prevent repeat offenses, (d) to set Israel apart for God, (e) because sinners *deserve* to be punished harshly.

1. Consider these acts, keeping in mind today's civil laws: (a) idol worship, (b) spiritual channeling, (c) cursing, (d) adultery, (e) incest, (f) polygamy, (g) bestiality. Which are illegal according to today's civil law, and which are permissible? Consider that most democracies today have freedom of religion and freedom of speech, yet ancient Israel did not.

2. The old covenant imposed civil laws and regulations for Israel. Does the new covenant impose or give the church authority to impose any such civil laws and regulations?

3. For you, is "holiness" a matter of avoiding sin or doing good deeds? Or is holiness not dependent on our behavior? Who is the source of holiness?

For the sins listed in chapter 18, the death penalty or banishment is specified by the old covenant as the punishment. God tolerates no rivals—such as Molech (20:2-5)—nor any blasphemy, which is what the phrase "curses his father or his mother" implies (20:9), as parents represented God's authority. Neither does God tolerate any violation of the created order for marriage and the family (20:9-21) and sexual sin does not go unpunished. Sinners who violate these laws are held responsible for their own deaths (20:19-20).

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

DAY 14

Fitness for Ministry

Leviticus 21:1–22:3

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

LIVING out the Word

WINDOW on the Word

Would you be more embarrassed to model a swimsuit or a wig? Why?

- 1.** What fitness-for-ministry qualifications did priests have to meet (21:1-24)?
 - 2.** What reasons might there have been behind the rule about no shaving? About whom to marry? About no “wild” children? About no physical “defect” (see 22:19)?
 - 3.** What did it mean for the priests to respect the sacred offerings? Why the need to be so careful?
 - 4.** What offerings were deemed “unacceptable” (22:18-30)?
-
- 1.** What restrictions for ministers are specified in the NT (for example, see 1Ti 3:1-7)? Physical disabilities no longer disqualify someone from the ministry, but do “character defects”? How so?
 - 2.** What would happen in some churches if a pastor or priest mishandled the communion elements?
 - 3.** What or Who qualifies you to approach God with an offering? Have any of your offerings been “unacceptable”? What “sacrifice without defect” can you offer God (see the note below)?

Shaving the head (21:5) was a pagan mourning practice, and so was forbidden to Israel along with other heathen customs. No **defect** (disability) of any kind was accepted (21:17-25) because priests and sacrificial animals (22:19-25) were to typify the perfection that only Christ embodied (Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:19). God imputes the unblemished righteousness of Christ to those who believe in him (Eph 5:26-27; Php 2:15). “**I am the Lord who makes... holy**” (Lev 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32). This phrase, repeated six times in this section, indicates that holiness comes from God, not from us.