

Leviticus 6 - 10  
Instructions for Worship  
December 23, 2018

Next Week. Leviticus 11-16

Proverbs 28:8. “He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.”

Wesley's Questions for Class Meetings. #1. “Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?”

What does the Bible Mean?

Read. Leviticus 6:1-7.

The lesson begins with instructions regarding four cases of misappropriating another's property for acquisition through deceit. These are civil cases. In each one the person swears falsely in the name of God. That is a violation of God's integrity. The sins involve deceit about entrusted items, cheating, finding of property covered with a lie or just false swearing about property. The cases are intentional acts. Regarding these, “The Lord said to Moses:” In the Complete Jewish Bible (CBJ, both the Old and New Testaments!) it says, “Give this order to Aaron and his sons.” So Moses is to pass God's words to the priests.

The guilty party may repair the damage through remorse and restoration of the value plus one-fifth and also offering a ram. The ritual repairs the loss and brings forgiveness to the guilty party. The guilty must “bring to the priest, that is, [through the priest] to the Lord, his guilt offering ....”

In Israel's law the focus concentrates on the injured party. *Restitution* is emphasized rather than *retribution*. Voluntary confession changed wrongdoing to unwittingly committed from premeditated. The guilty *accepted responsibility* with confession, *restored relationships* with restitution and *repaired the relationship with God* through sacrifice.

Centuries later in rabbinic law it was declared that transgressions between man and God are settled on the Day of Atonement. Transgressions between man and his fellow are only settled by appeasing the injured person.

Read. Leviticus 6: 8-18.

This speech by God is directed to Aaron and his sons regarding burnt offerings and cleansing the ashes from them. Repeatedly the instructions note that the fire must be kept burning. The fire is of divine origin (coming out from the presence of the Lord – Leviticus 9:24); it is sacred. The text refers to regular evening and morning sacrifices.

They are perpetual. They are associated with God's presence. They may even refer to, "...and there was the morning and evening, the ... day."

The cleaning of the ashes is ritualized by the garments worn by the priest and the prescribed disposal in a set aside, clean place.

The grain offering instructions focus on consumption by the priests. The grain must be eaten in a holy place in the court of the Tent of Meeting because the offering is holy and anything it touches is holy and set apart.

Read. Leviticus 6:19-7:10.

This section is a host of details regarding sacrifice. The instructions are tedious and beyond my ability to make sense of them even with resources. Likely you are relieved to skip this section!

Read. Leviticus 7:11-21.

The section begins "These are the regulations for ...." The CBJ says, "This is the law (torah). It is read as "instruction." The ancient word torah means "to shoot [an arrow] at a target and to "educate" or "instruct." So, the law is instruction to us. The section deals with three types of fellowship offerings, thank (7:12-15), vow (7:16) and freewill (7:16).

Persons eating sacrificed food in the sanctuary area had to be ritually clean and the food could not come into contact with anything unclean. The punishment for violation was left to God. The offender was, "...to be cut off from his people (or your kin)." This was probably a divine threat to exterminate one's lineage if one were unclean and *deliberately* ate sacrificed food.

Read. Leviticus 7:22-38.

The section deals with the priest's share and eating fat. Eating fat and blood was prohibited. Fat belonged to the Lord. Blood represented the life of the sacrificed animal. Fat from animals suffering a natural death or killed by a wild animal could be used but not eaten. The section ends with a summary statement. The instructions are for the whole community – not just the priests. They were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Presentations to Yahweh reflect the interests and concerns of the entire community.

Leviticus 8: 1-36. *The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons.*

Moses brought Aaron and his sons and their garments and the anointing oil and the bull and rams and unleavened bread for sacrifice and they gathered with the entire community at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The emphasis is on carrying out the word of God which is the basis of sacred (holy) persons and places. Moses was the mediator.

Aaron and his sons were washed. They put on the vestments as described in Exodus. Moses then used the oil to *anoint* and therefore *consecrate* or *sanctify* (make holy) the Tabernacle and everything in it. He also poured oil on Aaron. The *anointed one* (Messiah) comes from the Hebrew root word meaning “the blood”.

The bull was offered to make atonement for and to purify the altar. A ram was offered to provide a pleasing odor to God. A second ram was offered as a sacrifice for ordination and well-being. The unleavened bread was also offered. The entire process followed the instructions as set forth in Exodus.

The ordination ritual lasted seven days. Everything was repeated each day. The priests passed from their common and profane lives to holy lives.

Read. Leviticus 9:1-24.

Aaron begins his active priesthood on the eighth day. It was the day following the dedication of Aaron, his sons, and the leaders of Israel. Moses had anointed Aaron. In the time of the Second Temple, the Talmud said it was the Sanhedrin who had the authority to appoint the High Priest. Aaron presented sacrifice for the first time. Moses’ instructions emphasize five points:

- The process must follow God’s commands.
- The sacrifices must be offered at the door of the tent.
- The whole community must be present to witness and participate.
- The purpose is to bring atonement or reconciliation on behalf of the community.
- The act of ritual will lead to the appearance and glory of Yahweh.

Aaron presented offerings of a bull and ram for purification and a burnt offering. He then presented sacrifices and offerings on behalf of the people: a purification offering, a burnt offering and a well-being offering. Aaron “lifted his hands” and blessed the people (the priest always raised his hands when he blessed the people) and the glory of the Lord appeared. The Lord’s fire consumed the burnt offering and fat. The people shouted and fell on their faces.

Read. Leviticus 10: 1-20.

Immediately after worship is established, priestly evil (wrongdoing, misconduct, unlawfulness) takes place. This is parallel to the golden calf following the receipt of the Law. Nadab and Abihu (Aaron’s oldest sons) offered unauthorized (unholy) fire before the Lord – There is only speculation as to what the sin was, but it was something not as God had commanded. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed Nadab and Abihu. They died before the Lord. Moses told Aaron that this is what God meant when he said:

“Among those who approach me (are near me)  
I will show myself holy (be consecrated);

In the sight of all the people  
I will be honored (glorified).”

Moses called on Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Uzziel – the uncle of Aaron, to carry their cousins outside the camp and they did so.

Then Moses warned Aaron and his remaining sons to not mourn or you will die, and God will be angry with the whole community. But all the others in the community could mourn. This event had consequences for later priests. While on duty they could not show traditional signs of mourning. Further, once on duty, priests were not to abandon their duties even if death struck.

God speaks directly to Aaron the only time he does so in Leviticus. He and his sons are to drink no wine or strong drink, so they may not die. This is one of the speculations as to the sin of Nadab and Abihu. They were to distinguish the holy from the common and the clean from the unclean. The differences were to be carefully observed. Further they are to teach the statutes of the Lord as spoken to Moses to the people.

The chapter ends with a discussion between Aaron and Moses as to who is to eat what sacrifices. The status of what remained was questionable. Aaron was afraid to do anything that might be wrong. Moses yielded.

#### What does the Bible mean to me?

1. If a “money value” were assigned to your sins, what would they be worth?
2. How the judicial practices of our society compare with the intent and execution of God’s law?
3. Has your “fire for God” ever gone out?
4. What do the various offerings and sacrifices tell us about the process of reconciliation then and now - with God and with man?
5. How do you show thanks to God?
6. Some take the dietary passages regarding fat as reason to eat kosher. What do you think?
7. How might, or should we show respect for blood as the symbol of life.
8. How have our pastors been like and unlike the priests of the OT?
9. What are our rituals? What do they illustrate? How important are they/
10. Do we symbolize our faith with jewelry, clothing, decision making ritual or offerings?
11. Is there a link between spiritual cleanliness and leadership?
12. How does WUMC distinguish between the sacred and the not sacred?
13. Do our Aldersgate class members help keep us accountable and spiritually clean?