

Day 144 - WEDNESDAY: May 3rd

Leviticus 24

Leviticus 24:1-23 NKJV

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute forever in your generations. He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually. "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And 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 offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute." Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. "Then you shall speak to

the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death. 'Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal. 'If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD your God.' "

Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for this chapter: “The lamps of the menorah were to be lit and kept burning every day (verse 2; Exodus 27:20; Exodus 30:7-8). This was symbolic of God's Spirit and His laws. Each day, we must have the light of God burning in us through His Spirit and living by His Word. David prayed to God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalms 119:105). Echoing this, Solomon wrote: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs and instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). When people see us, they should see God shining *through* us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Just as with the tabernacle lamps, this requires attentiveness and vigilance.

The phrase "from evening until morning indicates tending the lamps twice a day, not tending them throughout the night" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Leviticus 24:2-4). Similarly, we must seek God when we awake each day and before we go to sleep each night to make sure that our spiritual "oil" is renewed (compare Matthew 25:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16)—allowing us to shine every day.

In verses 19-20 of Leviticus 24, we come to the "eye-for-an-eye" principle, mentioned earlier in Exodus 21:23-25. We stated in our highlights on that passage that this was apparently not generally meant to be a literal requirement in meting out justice—that just recompense was the concern. The judges of Israel might have required death or beating with a certain number of stripes. And that would have been literal. But we have no evidence that the judges ever *required* a hand to be cut off or other bodily mutilation (although it is possible that they did since there is no way at present to really know).

It may be that they would *allow* the offended party to exact that penalty from someone who had cut *his* hand off (similar to God's allowance for the nearest of kin to a murder victim to act as an avenger of blood). As mentioned in the highlights for Exodus 21, a big reason for the principle was not just so that the punishment would fit the crime but so that the punishment would not go *beyond* the crime. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on Leviticus 24:19-20: "Its purpose was not to *require* the injured party to inflict *equal* bodily harm on the one who had injured him, but to *forbid* him from inflicting *greater* bodily harm."

Of course, while God's system may have allowed justice to be measured out in kind as described, His desire was for mercy in the face of remorse—and also for restitution and care for the victim. If someone cut another person's hand off, the person who lost his hand would be wiser to *not* cut the offender's hand off. The judges would perhaps order a beating for pain and suffering and that the offender work (maybe for the rest of his

life) to provide the lost livelihood to the one who lost his hand and was no longer able to work. (If the offender's hand was cut off too, he could not work to help the victim. So it would not seem to really help matters—except in giving some sense of justice and providing a deterrent in the society.)

The same goes for blinding an offender if he has blinded someone else. This would create two needy beggars instead of just one. It seems wiser to demand that the seeing criminal be indebted and perhaps indentured to the victim.” [END]

Verse 2 – John Gill’s commentary states: “this was to be at the public expense, and it belonged to the community to supply the priests with oil for the light of the candlestick in the temple, [Exo 25:6](#); and this oil was not to be any sort of oil, as train oil, or oil of nuts, almonds, &c. but oil of olives, and not any sort of that, but the purest, which was the first that was taken from them; it seems there were three sorts, the first of which was pure, and this beaten in a mortar, and not ground in a mill” [END]

Verse 5 – Likely corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel (12).

Verse 7 – Frankincense was put into gold bowls “by” each pile of bread. The frankincense was then burned upon the altar as God’s portion, and the bread was given to the priest to eat.

Verse 8 – John Gill’s commentary states: “That is, the priest or priests then ministering, who should bring new cakes and place them in the above order, having removed the old ones, which was done in this manner; four priests went in, two had in their hands the two rows (of bread), and two had in their hands two cups (of frankincense); four went before these, two to take away the two rows (of the old bread), and two to take away the two cups (of frankincense); and they that carried in stood in the north, and their faces to the south and they that brought out

stood in the south, and their faces to the north; these drew away (the old bread) and they put them (the new), and the hand of the one was over against the hand of the other, as it is said, "before me continually", Exo 25:30; that is, at the same time the hands of the one were employed in taking away, the hands of the other were employed in setting on; so that there was always bread upon the table:" [END]

Verse 11 – The JFB commentary states: “It was a common practice among the Egyptians to curse their idols when disappointed in obtaining the object of their petitions. The Egyptian mind of this youth thought the greatest insult to his opponent was to blaspheme the object of his religious reverence. He spoke disrespectfully of One who sustained the double character of the King as well as the God of the Hebrew people; as the offense was a new one, he was put in ward till the mind of the Lord was ascertained as to his disposal.” [END]

This is the first time we see this idea of “blaspheming the name of the Lord”. The word blasphemed comes from the root “to puncture”. It means “to pierce, to bore”. It’s used in the idea of wounding the one you insult.

Additionally, it says he “cursed”. This word comes from the root “to make light” and means “to bring contempt, to despise, be of little account”.

It’s clear here that this youth in his fight, chose to in some way insult the name of the Lord with the intent to diminish God in some way.

Verse 14 – The Matthew Poole’s commentary states: “they gave public testimony that they heard this person speak such words, and did in their own and in all the people’s names desire and demand justice to be executed upon him, that by this sacrifice God might be appeased, and his

judgments turned away from the people, upon whom they would certainly fall if he were unpunished.”