

CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

WEEK 5: EXODUS 39 — LEVITICUS 18 (JANUARY 26 — FEBRUARY 1)

Summary:

Exodus comes to a close with the making and consecrating of the priestly garments and then the official raising of the Tabernacle. All are washed and presented at the court of the Tabernacle and God's Glory Cloud descended into the Tabernacle. This cloud not only led the people through the wilderness, more importantly, it was a symbol that the presence of God, though veiled because of man's sin, was with them. When John will introduce his Gospel, he will intentionally use similar language to point out that Jesus is the greater Tabernacle and the Greater Temple — no longer a symbol of God's presence with us, but God in the flesh in our presence (John 1:14).

In Genesis 2 we found God dwelling with man in perfect fellowship before Man sinned, separating ourselves from God. In the Tabernacle, we find God's veiled presence coming and dwelling in temporary tents with men. In the Temple, we again find a veiled God coming and dwelling with men, but in a more permanent structure (though not eternal as the Babylonians and the Romans both proved). In Christ, we see God taking on flesh to dwell with men and as a result of Christ's atoning sacrifice, God then in His Spirit, dwelling in men (in believers). Yet, we still await a new creation where there will no longer be any separation nor any temporary state, for in the New Creation God will once again dwell perfectly with men and men with God — without any temple because that which the temple symbolized will be realized in full.

Leviticus:

The Hebrew name for the Book of Leviticus is "And He Called," representing the first words in the text. The name Leviticus comes from the Greek Translation of the Old Testament and the word "Leviticon" meaning, "Of the Levite." And that is how we typically understand this book — as a book of rules pertaining to the Levites. Yet, this could not be further from the truth. While much of the book does deal with Levitical matters, it deals first and most prominently with the matter of sin and its seriousness before the eyes of God. Blood from animals flowed not because the animals had done anything wrong, but because we have done wrong. And as you read of these horrific sacrifices and blood being sprinkled over everyone, remember, this is because of our sin and all of this prefigures the sacrifice of Christ, for it is his blood sprinkled over us that makes us clean before God (Revelation 7:14).

As you read chapters 1-7 you will notice what seems like a repetition of the sacrificial commands: burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings, and then repeated a second time. Yet, if you look closely you will recognize that the first set of offerings is for the people and the second time through it is dealing with the offerings that the priest needed to make for their own sins. There is never any sense that the priesthood is a special group of people exempt from sin; we are fallen people ministering to fallen people.

Chapters 8-10 contain the first of the interludes. Initially this begins with the ordination ritual for Aaron and his sons, consecrating them for service. Sacrifices are made, blood is splattered on their priestly garments and then they are not allowed to change those garments for the entire seven-day ritual — again, something that was meant to demonstrate how God looked upon our sin. Chapter 10 contains the portion of the interlude that is usually found most interesting. When seeking to light the coals of the altar of incense, they did not bring fire from the altar and God brought swift and permanent judgment upon them, burning them alive and then

forbidding Aaron to grieve the loss of his two sons. Once again, a reminder of the weight God places on his proper worship.

Chapters 11-15 enter into a series of cleanliness codes: what to eat, what to wear, etc... It is here that the Kosher laws come from and it is from here that we will learn more about leprosy, nocturnal discharges, and female cleansing after childbirth than any of us probably wants to know. Yet, these were part of the life of the people of Israel (as they are still today) and God saw fit to address them.

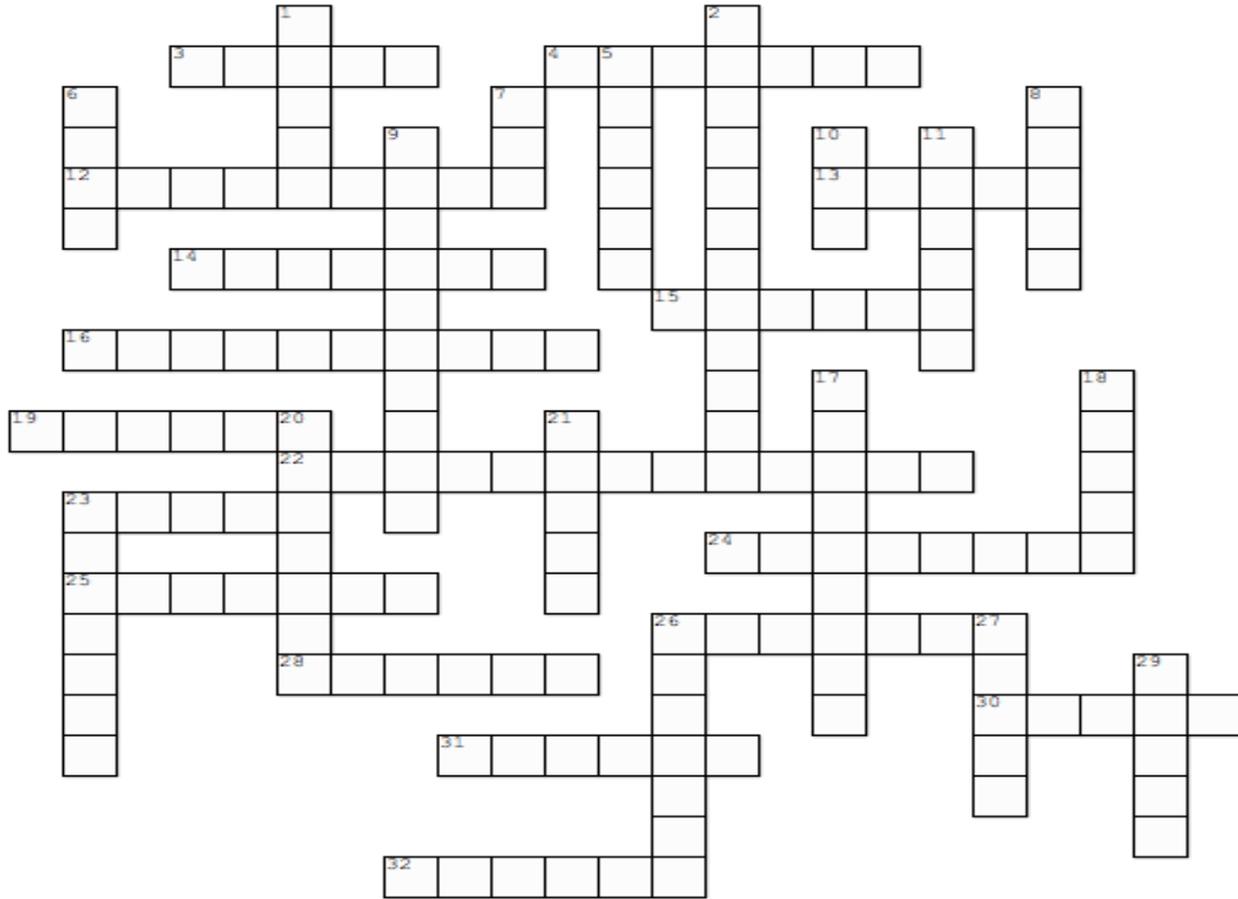
Chapter 16 deals with the Day of Atonement in detail and chapters 17-18 begin the Holiness Code, what it means (ethically) to be set apart from the nations. Chapter 18 is particularly pertinent in today's culture of promiscuity, for God reminds us that we are not to behave sexually like the pagans who live in the land around us...

Chromatic Notes:

- Notice the comment that the Tabernacle is erected and consecrated on the first day of the month. This is creational language — or a kind of re-creation event, where God is setting aside his people for worship and descending into their midst.
- Sometimes this Glory Cloud is referred to as "God's Shekinah Glory." Shekinah is simply the Hebrew word for dwelling place or tabernacle. Thus the "Shekinah Glory" of God is his dwelling with us.
- In the Hebrew culture that Jesus grew up in, the first 7 chapters of Leviticus formed the first primer from which children would read.
- In its 27 chapters, this book records the phrase, "And Yahweh spoke..." 37 times, more so than any other Old Testament book.
- Leviticus can be broken into six manuals of worship and holiness broken up with two interludes: Chapters 1-7 being a manual of sacrifice for all Israel; Chapters 11-15 as a manual of cleanliness; Chapter 16 as a manual for the Day of Atonement; Chapters 17-24 as a Manual of the Holiness Code; Chapters 25-26 as a Manual for the Practice of Redemption; and Chapter 27 as a manual for Devoting things to the Lord. Chapters 8-10 form the first interlude and a testimony of how seriously God takes the holiness of his people, especially the priests. The final interlude is contained in chapter 24 with the stoning of a blasphemous son.
- We are not told where Nadab and Abihu got the coals to light the altar of incense, we just know that they did not come from the altar as God had commanded. The Hebrew term that is used of these coals is that they were "alien" (not as in little green men, but as in outsiders). Wherever they came from, they came from outside of the Tabernacle area and thus did not belong (much as God rejects our sacrifices if not made with a sincere and repentant heart trusting in Christ).
- Note that while Nadab and Abihu are incinerated, their priestly garments remain untouched by the fire of God.
- Note that it is sometimes suggested that the reason for the food laws was because certain animals carried diseases and parasites. Yet, that idea is rather silly when you think about it; they knew how to cook food and all of the pagan nations around them did not seem to be infested with such problems. It also does not offer an explanation for the rules on clothing and how to trim your beard. A better answer is that these rules were simply meant to set God's people apart from the people of the nations — to make them distinct in daily practice as well as in worship.
- In the laws dealing with the Day of Atonement, do not miss the language of the scapegoat — the second goat who bore the sins of the people out into the wilderness. This is a foreshadowing of Christ, as Christ is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness after his baptism (see Mark 1:12) where he symbolically entered into our sin in a baptism of repentance (2 Corinthians 5:21).

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Complete the crossword below



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

3. If you eat any of this, you are to be cut off from the people.
4. A skin disease that causes sores and eating away of the flesh.
12. This was placed on the south side of the tent of meeting opposite of the table. (hint: a menorah is one of these)
13. Moses' brother, the High Priest.
14. Based on Leviticus 11:24-28, are dogs clean or unclean.
15. Fish with fins and these were considered clean animals to eat.
16. Aaron confesses the sins of the people on the head of one of the Goats on the Day of Atonement and it is driven into the _____.
19. This winged insect was considered clean and acceptable for eating.
22. This was written on the High Priest's Headdress or crown. (4 words)
23. One of Aaron's sons who was executed for 'alien' fire.
24. The name given for the glory of God when he dwells with his people.
25. One of Aaron's sons that was not executed by God.
26. A portion of most offerings were eaten by whom?
28. This is the pagan god to whom the Canaanites sacrificed their children.
30. The Egyptians and the Canaanites practiced immoral sexual practices and God threatened Israel that if they followed said practices, the land would _____ them out.
31. The son's of this man carried Nadab and Abihu's remains off (hint: Aaron's Uncle).
32. Rules for leprosy were included not only on people and garments but also for these:

Down

1. To whom does God speak at the beginning of Leviticus?
2. This was added to the flour of grain offerings (a foreshadowing of an offering made to baby Jesus).
5. These representatives of the congregation were to lay their hands on the head of the bull when its throat was cut during a sin offering.
6. 'You shall therefore be _____, for I am holy.'
7. Clean animals chew this.
8. When birds were offered on the alter, they were to be torn open by their _____.
9. The name for the Tent of Meeting
10. The people were not allowed to eat either the blood or the _____ of the burnt offerings.
11. It was this person who was responsible for inspecting people to see if they had boils or other skin diseases.
17. Blood is not for eating, but it is for making _____. (Hint: this is the Old Testament root behind Hebrews 9:22).
18. If a man stole (or borrowed without intention of returning), he was forced to repay what he took plus a _____ on the day he recognizes his guilt.
20. This, along with the Urim, was placed in the breastpiece of the High Priest.
21. Two of these were taken from the people for a sin offering on the Day of Atonement.
23. The final set of sexual prohibitions forbids laying with these.
26. Two turtledoves or two of these were typically the sacrifice made by the poor.
27. How many days was a woman considered ritually unclean after giving birth to a male child?
29. Which day of the first month was the Tabernacle erected?