

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 6: Leviticus 19 — Numbers 15 (February 2 — 8)

### Summary:

Leviticus 19 begins with some of the most well-known language of the book. These laws and rules form the backbone of what we would call the social welfare system in ancient Israel: gleaning rights, provision for travelers and the poor in the land, and legal rights for servants and employees. And in verse 18, we find the statement that sums it all up: "love your neighbor as yourself," a statement Jesus quoted when he was summarizing the last six of the ten commandments.

The section that follows chapter 19 deals closely with the question of holiness — ways in which God has set his people apart from the pagan nations. The principle can be summarized in chapter 19, verses 22-26: God has called his people to himself and thus we are to be holy as he is holy.

Chapters 23 through 25 introduce us to the Jewish calendar at least in the context of main events and celebrations. Instructions are given for the Sabbath, Passover, Firstfruits, Weeks (also known as Pentecost), Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and Booths (also known as Tabernacles).

Sandwiched in chapter 24 is a short narrative about a blasphemous young man who is stoned for his blasphemy. Chapter 25, though contains the language of the Sabbatical Year (seventh year) and the Year of Jubilee (the 50th year). Pay close attention to how the debts were absolved, the slaves were given their freedom (being sent out with money in his pocket), and even the land was given a rest. Repeatedly, God says that he will provide for the needs during this year if the people will observe it...yet never once do we have record of a Jubilee year being celebrated as it is commanded. Oh, the blessings we often deny ourselves because we don't trust God. Leviticus closes with a discussion of vows and items being dedicated for the Lord's use in the Temple, a law that the people often abused.

### Numbers:

The Hebrew name for the book of Numbers is "In the Wilderness" and I can't think of a more appropriate name. This book covers the 40 years of wanderings between Mt. Sinai to the edge of the River Jordan. Often the book seems daunting because it begins with a seemingly endless list of people and then offerings given to the Tabernacle. Yet, the presence of these names and gifts is a reminder to us of the interest God takes in making sure that the witness of the saints is not forgotten. These are faithful people as part of the corporate whole of Israel; their service is long forgotten, but their names are still eternally part of the Lamb's Book of Life and the scriptures testify to that reality as well.

Chapter 3 contains the transfer of the Priestly responsibility from the firstborn to the tribe of Levi, marking off the structure of the Levitical Priesthood for generations to come. In addition, the role of Nazirite, a kind of spiritual holy man amongst the people, was also instituted. The end of Numbers 6 contains the most well known Benediction likely in all of scripture. This is called the Aaronic Benediction in honor of Aaron, the High Priest who was to pronounce this over his people.

Chapter 9 is helpful in that it offers us a temporal record that it was in the second year after they left Egypt, they celebrated Passover again. Soon they would be moving across the wilderness. Sadly, one of the most pronounced themes of the book shows itself as the people leave Sinai (chapter 11): they complain about the food. Like spoiled children who do not appreciate the gift they are given, the people whine and complain about the Manna. In judgment, God sends quail to

the people that was tainted and those who craved that other than which God provided found it to bring death. In light of all of the miracles of God that he had wrought in the previous two years, the people still rejected the goodness he offered and paid with their lives for it.

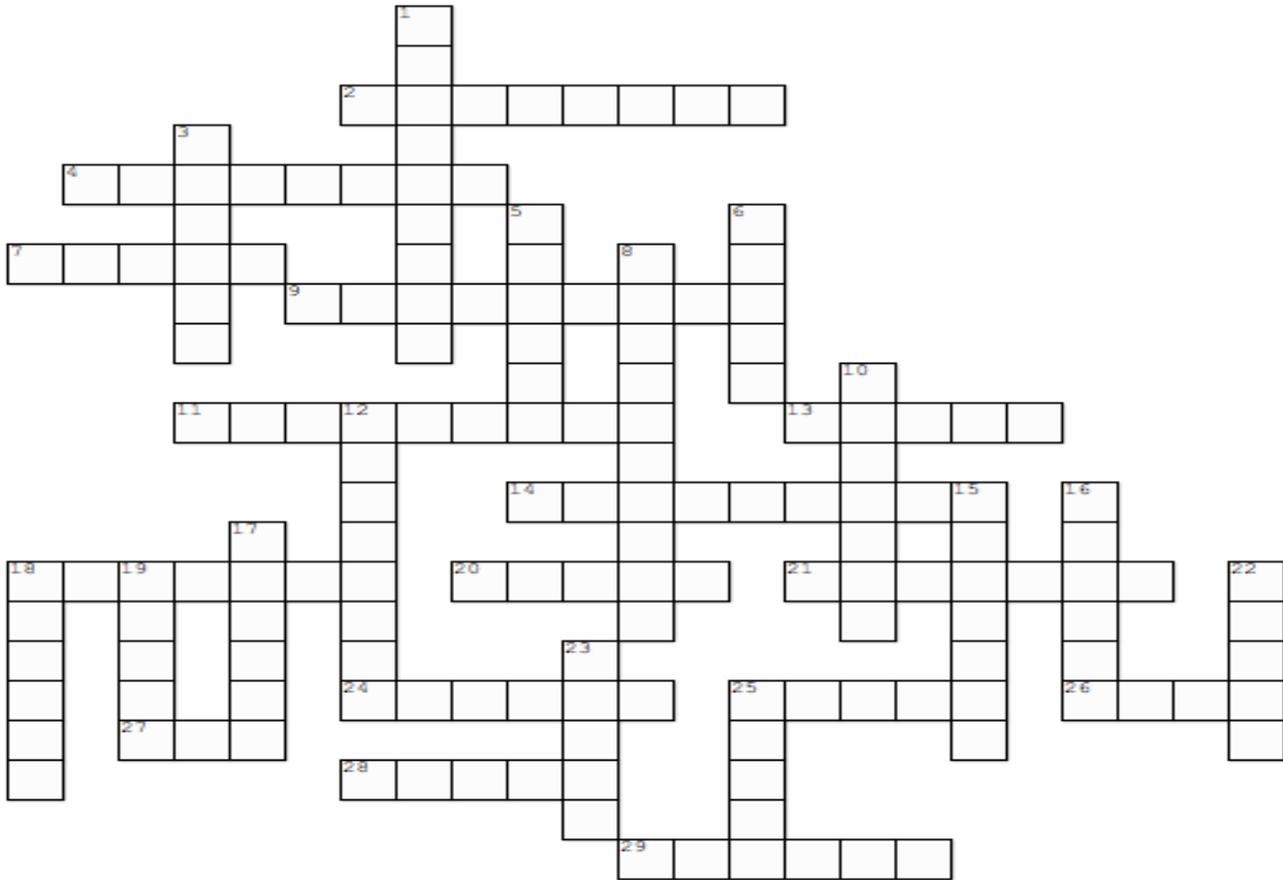
Similarly, we find Miriam, Moses' sister complaining that she is not given the authority of Moses over the people. In Miriam's case, God gave her leprosy to teach her her lesson. The spies sent into Canaan to scout the place out came back complaining about the size of the inhabitants there (all but Caleb and Joshua) and as a result of the complaining and cowardice, Israel lost their first battle, this time to the Amalekites and the Canaanites. Chapter 15 closes with some seemingly random laws regarding sacrifices, sabbath breaking and tassels on garments, but again, these are meant as a mark of God's ownership on his people, making them look and act differently than the rest of the world.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Christians often struggle with the question of which of these rules and laws still applies to us today and which have been done away with. In principle, the ancient Israelite laws can be broken into three categories: sacramental, civil, and moral. The moral laws, codified in the Ten Commandments are the foundation for all of the other laws and it is these moral laws that Jesus says will never pass away until the heavens and earth pass away. The sacramental laws, which include the various sacrifices and holy days have been fulfilled by Christ and are thus no longer binding upon us. The third group are the civil laws. This was meant as the law of ancient Israel, a nation whose religion and government were closely intertwined. As we live in America, not ancient Israel, some of the things in the civil laws do not apply to us (we no longer stone Sabbath breakers to death — though it would boost church attendance, lol!). That does not mean that this section of the law is useless, these laws provide us with some principles that can be applied in every culture and every era in a profitable way as the principle of the law is adapted to the culture. These holiness laws really fall into this third category — as Christians we are called to be holy as God is holy and we are set apart from the world (the principle), but the application is different as the food and clothing ways no longer apply to us.
- Rosh Hashanah is the seventh month in the Jewish calendar yet begins the new year. This is because they believe that God began the work of creation in the month of Tishri (7th month) and thus the seventh month of the year marked the new year though Nisan (the month they were released from slavery in Egypt) was the first month of the calendar.
- The boy who was stoned for blasphemy was from the tribe of Dan. Pay attention to this tribe because often we see them spurning the promises of God for worldly wealth and later, in the book of Revelation, they are not even included in the listing of tribes (Revelation 7:5-8).
- The dedication of animals to the service of the Lord plays a significant role in the Triumphal entry where Jesus rides the colt of a donkey into the city — a colt that had never been ridden or used for work.
- While most Nazirites took their vow as adults and then practiced the vow for a certain period of time before returning to "normal" living, there are three very famous Nazirites that were dedicated at birth and had life-long Nazirite vows: Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

# Week 6: Leviticus 19 - Numbers 15

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## Across

2. These people took a vow not to cut their hair for a season of time.
4. You shall have just or fair \_\_\_\_\_ in commerce.
7. One of the spies that was not afraid of those dwelling in the Promised Land.
9. This feast is called the Feast of Weeks but is better known to us as \_\_\_\_\_.
11. On the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month is this day of sacrifice.
13. God sent this meat to punish the people for their complaint.
14. The mother of the boy who was stoned for blasphemy.
18. Six days you shall work and the seventh is a \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.
20. Levites were required to retire at this age.
21. God gave Miriam this disease for her questioning of Moses' authority.
24. One of the tribes that was assigned to camp to the south of the Tabernacle
25. This of a hired servant shall not remain with you overnight.
26. This tribe was exempted from the Census that was taken before leaving Sinai.
27. The boy who was stoned for blasphemy was from this tribe.
28. If a Nazirite fails his vow, he needs to \_\_\_\_\_ his body and start the vow over.
29. When the Amalekites defeated Israel, they chased Israel as far as this place.

## Down

1. Nazirites were not permitted to eat food made from this.
3. Seventy of these men are appointed to be anointed to assist Moses.
5. How many loaves of bread were baked for the table in the Tabernacle?
6. This was a dedication from the produce of the land and flock that belonged to the Lord.
8. On this day of the month of Nisan, the Passover was celebrated (hint: this is a number: third, fourth, etc...)
10. Every fiftieth year was the Year of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. You shall love your \_\_\_\_\_ as yourself.
15. After you do this, you are not to gather your gleanings.
16. This was to be placed on each corner of the Israelites' Clothing.
17. One famous Nazirite that was dedicated as such from birth.
18. Moses had horns made from this material to call the tribes to attention.
19. You are called not to eat the flesh of an animal with this still in the animal.
22. You shall do all that God commands or the land will \_\_\_\_\_ you out.
23. The feast of weeks is how many weeks after the Sabbath that the sheaf offering is brought.
25. To cleanse the Levites from amongst the people, this was sprinkled on them in addition to making offerings.