
LEVITICUS 24:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Pure olive oil must be provided for the lamps, Lev 24:1, Lev 24:2. Aaron is to take care that the lamps be lighted from evening to morning continually, Lev 24:3, Lev 24:4. How the shew-bread is to be made and ordered, Lev 24:5-8. Aaron and his sons shall eat this bread in the holy place, Lev 24:9. Of the son of Shelomith, an Israelitish woman, who blasphemed the name, Lev 24:10, Lev 24:11. He is imprisoned till the mind of the Lord should be known, Lev 24:12. He is commanded to be stoned to death, Lev 24:13, Lev 24:14. The ordinance concerning cursing and blaspheming the Lord, Lev 24:15, Lev 24:16. The law against murder, Lev 24:17. The lex talionis, or law of like for like, repeated, Lev 24:18-21. This law to be equally binding both on themselves and on strangers, Lev 24:22. The blasphemer is stoned, Lev 24:23.

LEVITICUS 24:2 "Command the children of Israel, that they bring to you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually.

Verse 2

Pure oil olive - See every thing relative to this ordinance explained on Exo 27:20, Exo 27:21 (note).

LEVITICUS 24:3 Outside of the veil of the Testimony, in the Tent of Meeting, shall Aaron keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD continually: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

LEVITICUS 24:4 He shall keep in order the lamps on the pure gold lamp stand before the LORD continually.

LEVITICUS 24:5 "You shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it: two tenth parts of an ephah shall be in one cake.

Verse 5

Bake twelve cakes - See the whole account of the shew-bread in the notes on Exo 25:30 (note); and relative to the table on which they stood, the golden candlestick and silver trumpets carried in triumph to Rome, see the note on Exo 25:31.

LEVITICUS 24:6 You shall set them in two rows, six on a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 24:7 You shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be to the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire to the LORD.

LEVITICUS 24:8 Every Sabbath day he shall set it in order before the LORD continually. It is on the behalf of the children of Israel an everlasting covenant.

LEVITICUS 24:9 It shall be for Aaron and his sons; and they shall eat it in a holy place: for it is most holy to him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.”

LEVITICUS 24:10 The son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelite woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp.

Verse 10

The son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, etc. - This is a very obscure account, and is encumbered with many difficulties.

1. It seems strange that a person proceeding from such an illegal mixture should have been incorporated with the Israelites.
2. What the cause of the strife between this mongrel person and the Israelitish man was is not even hinted at. The rabbins, it is true, supply in their way this deficiency; they say he was the son of the Egyptian whom Moses slew, and that attempting to pitch his tent among those of the tribe of Dan, to which he belonged by his mother's side, Lev 24:11, he was prevented by a person of that tribe as having no right to a station among them who were true Israelites both by father and mother. In consequence of this they say he blasphemed the name of the Lord. But,
3. The sacred text does not tell us what name he blasphemed; it is simply said ויקב את השם *vaiyihkob eth hashshem*, he pierced through, distinguished, explained, or expressed the name. (See below, article 10). As the Jews hold it impious to pronounce the name יהוה *Yehovah*, they always put either אדוני *Adonai*, Lord, or השם *hashshem*, The Name, in the place of it; but in this sense *hashshem* was never used prior to the days of rabbinical superstition, and therefore it cannot be put here for the word *Jehovah*.
4. Blaspheming the name of the Lord is mentioned in Lev 24:16, and there the proper Hebrew term is used יהוה שם *shem Yehovah*, and not the rabbinical השם *hashshem*, as in Lev 24:11.
5. Of all the manuscripts collated both by Kennicott and De Rossi, not one, either of the Hebrew or Samaritan, has the word *Jehovah* in this place.
6. Not one of the ancient Versions, Targum of Onkelos, Hebraeo-Samaritan, Samaritan version, Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint, or Vulgate Latin, has even attempted to supply the sacred name.
7. Houbigant supposes that the Egypto-Israelitish man did not use the name of the true God at all, but had been swearing by one of his country gods; and if this was the case the mention of the name of a strange god in the camp of Israel would constitute a very high crime, and certainly expose to the punishment mentioned in Lev 24:14.
8. Probably the word השם *hashshem* was the proper name of some Egyptian deity.
9. The fifteenth verse seems to countenance the supposition that the god whose name was produced on this occasion was not the true God, for it is there said, whosoever curseth his god, אלהיו *elohai*, shall bear his sin - shall have the punishment due to him as an idolater; but he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, יהוה שם *shem Yehovah*, shall surely be put to death - when he blasphemeth the name (שם *shem*) he shall die, Lev 24:16.

10. The verb נָקַב *nakab*, which we translate blaspheme, signifies to pierce, bore, make hollow; also to Express or Distinguish by Name; see Isa 62:2; Num 1:17; 1Chr 12:31; 1Chr 16:41; 1Chr 28:15; or, as the Persian translator has it, *sherah kerd, mir an nam*, he expounded or interpreted the name. Hence all that we term blasphemy here may only signify the particularizing some false god, i. e., naming him by his name, or imploring his aid as a helper, and when spoken of the true God it may signify using that sacred name as the idolaters did the names of their idols. On blaspheming God, and the nature of blasphemy, see the notes on Mat 9:3. In whatever point of view we consider the relation which has been the subject of this long note, one thing is sufficiently plain, that he who speaks irreverently of God, of his works, his perfections, his providence, etc., is destitute of every moral feeling and of every religious principle, and consequently so dangerous to society that it would be criminal to suffer him to be at large, though the longsuffering of God may lead him to repentance, and therefore it may be consistent with mercy to preserve his life.

LEVITICUS 24:11 The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.

LEVITICUS 24:12 They put him in custody, until the LORD's will should be declared to them.

LEVITICUS 24:13 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

LEVITICUS 24:14 "Bring out of the camp him who cursed; and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

Verse 14

Lay their hands upon his head - It was by this ceremony that the people who heard him curse bore their public testimony in order to his being fully convicted, for without this his punishment would not have been lawful. By this ceremony also they in effect said to the man, Thy blood be upon thy own head.

LEVITICUS 24:15 You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

Verse 15

Whosoever curseth his God - יקלל אלהיו *yekallel Elohaiv*, he who makes light of him, who does not treat him and sacred things with due reverence, shall bear his sin - shall have the guilt of this transgression imputed to him, and may expect the punishment.

LEVITICUS 24:16 He who blasphemes the LORD's name, he shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him. The foreigner as well as the native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

Verse 16

Blasphemeth the name of the Lord - שם יהוה ונקב venokeb shem Yehovah, he who pierces, transfixes, or, as some translate it, expounds, the name of Jehovah; see the note on Lev 24:10. This being the name by which especially the Divine Essence was pointed out, it should be held peculiarly sacred. We have already seen that the Jews never pronounce this name, and so long has it been disused among them that the true pronunciation is now totally lost; See on the word Jehovah, Exo 6:3 (note).

LEVITICUS 24:17 "“He who strikes any man mortally shall surely be put to death.

Verse 17

He that killeth any man - Blasphemy against God, i. e., speaking injuriously of his name, his attributes, his government, and his revelation, together with murder, is to be punished with death: he that blasphemes God is a curse in society, and he who takes away, wilfully and by malicious intent, the life of any man, should certainly be put to death. In this respect God has absolutely required that life shall go for life.

LEVITICUS 24:18 He who strikes an animal mortally shall make it good, life for life.

LEVITICUS 24:19 If anyone injures his neighbour; as he has done, so shall it be done to him:

LEVITICUS 24:20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has injured someone, so shall it be done to him.

Verse 20

Breach for breach - This is a repetition of the lex talionis, which See explained Exo 21:24 (note).

LEVITICUS 24:21 He who kills an animal shall make it good; and he who kills a man shall be put to death.

LEVITICUS 24:22 You shall have one kind of law for the foreigner as well as the native-born; for I am the LORD your God.”

Verse 22

Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of your own country - Equal laws, where each individual receives the same protection and the same privileges, are the boast only of a sound political constitution. He who respects and obeys the laws has a right to protection and support, and his person and property are as sacred in the sight of justice as the person and property of the prince. He who does not obey the laws of his country forfeits all right and title to protection and privilege; his own actions condemn him, and justice takes him up on the evidence of his own

transgressions. He who does what is right need not fear the power of the civil magistrate, for he holds the sword only to punish transgressors. Universal obedience to the laws is the duty of every citizen; none can do more, none should do less: therefore each individual in a well regulated state must have equal rights and privileges in every thing that relates to the safety of his person, and the security of his property. Reader, such was the Mosaic code; such is the British Constitution.

LEVITICUS 24:23 Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they brought out him who had cursed out of the camp, and stoned him with stones. The children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Verse 23

And stone him with stones - We are not to suppose that the culprit was exposed to the unbridled fury of the thousands of Israel; this would be brutality, not justice, for the very worst of tempers and passions might be produced and fostered by such a procedure. The Jews themselves tell us that their manner of stoning was this: they brought the condemned person without the camp, because his crime had rendered him unclean, and whatever was unclean must be put without the camp. When they came within four cubits of the place of execution, they stripped the criminal, if a man, leaving him nothing but a cloth about the waist. The place on which he was to be executed was elevated, and the witnesses went up with him to it, and laid their hands upon him, for the purposes mentioned Lev 24:14. Then one of the witnesses struck him with a stone upon the loins; if he was not killed with that blow, then the witnesses took up a great stone, as much as two men could lift, and threw it upon his breast. This was the coup de grace, and finished the tragedy. When a man was stoned by the mob, then brutal rage armed every man, justice was set aside, and the will and fury of the people were law, judge, jury, and executioner. Such disgraceful stonings as these were, no doubt, frequent among the Jews. See Calmet's Dict., article Stoning, and Ainsworth on this place. What the crime of Shelomith's son was, we cannot distinctly say; doubtless it was some species of blasphemy: however, we find it was a new and unprecedented case; and as there was no law by which the quantum of guilt could be ascertained, nor consequently the degree of punishment, it was necessary to consult the great Lawgiver on the occasion; the man was therefore secured till the mind of the Lord should be known. Moses, no doubt, had recourse to the tabernacle, and received the directions afterward mentioned from Him who dwelt between the cherubim. In what way the answer of the Lord was communicated we know not, (probably by Urim and Thummim), but it came in such a manner as to preclude all doubt upon the subject: the man was declared to be guilty, and was sentenced to be stoned to death; and on this occasion a law is made relative to blasphemy in general. However sinful the Jews might have been at this time, we have reason to believe they did not take the name of the Lord in vain, and blasphemy was not known among them. But what shall we say of Christians, so called, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness? Were every blasphemer among us to be stoned to death, how many of the people would fall in every corner of the land! God is longsuffering; may this lead them to repentance! We have excellent laws against all profaneness, but, alas, for our country! they are not enforced; and he who attempts to put the laws in force against profane swearers, Sabbath breakers, etc., is considered a litigious man, and a disturber of the peace of society. Will not God visit for these things? This is not only contempt of God's holy word and commandments, but rebellion against the laws.