

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 24

This chapter treats of the oil for the lamps, and the ordering of them, (^{<1241>}Leviticus 24:1-4); of the making of the shewbread cakes, and the setting of them on the table, (^{<1245>}Leviticus 24:5-9); and an Israelite having blasphemed the name of the Lord, and inquiry being made what should be done to him, he, and so any other person guilty of the same, is ordered to be stoned to death, (^{<1249>}Leviticus 24:10-16); on occasion of which several laws are repeated concerning killing a man or a beast, or doing injury to any man, (^{<1247>}Leviticus 24:17-23).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After he had delivered to him the laws concerning the purity of the priests, and the perfection of the sacrifices they were to offer, and concerning the feasts the people were to keep, he spoke to Moses of some other things which concerned both people and priests:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Command the children of Israel*, etc.] Moses was the chief magistrate under God, and being clothed with authority from him, had power to command the children of Israel to do what the Lord required of them:

that they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten, for the light; 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, (^{<1256>}Exodus 25:6); and this oil was not to be any sort of oil, as train oil, or oil of nuts, almonds, etc. 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; (see Gill on “^{<1271>}Exodus 27:20”);

to cause the lamps to burn continually; the lamps in the golden candlestick, which were seven, (^{<1257>}Exodus 25:37); or “the lamp”, in the singular number, as it is in the original text; the western lamp, which is said

to be always kept lighted, from which the rest were lighted when out; though the oil was undoubtedly for the supply of the lamps, that they might burn always, night and day; or from night tonight, as Jarchi; and both on sabbath days and working days, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Ver. 3. *Without the vail of the testimony*, etc.] That is, on the outside of the vail which divided between the holy and holy of holies, and which was before the ark in which the testimony or law was:

in the tabernacle of the congregation; which the apostle calls the first, namely, the holy place in which the candlestick, with its lamps, stood, (^{309D}Hebrews 9:2);

shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually, that is, the lamp or lamps, or candlestick, in which they were, or the light of them; his business was, and so every priest's that succeeded him, to supply the lamps with oil, to dress, him, and snuff them, that they might burn clear, and burn always, and that before the Lord, in the presence of the Lord:

[it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations; until the Messiah should come, the true light, which would put out all such typical ones, and by his Gospel spread light in all his churches throughout the world; (see Gill on "¹²⁷¹Exodus 27:20") and (see Gill on "¹²⁷²Exodus 27:21").

Ver. 4. *He shall order the lamps on the pure candlestick*, etc.] So called, as Jarchi suggests, for these two reasons, partly because it was made of pure gold, and partly because it was to be kept pure and clean, and free from ashes, by the priest; (see ¹²⁵¹Exodus 25:31);

before the Lord continually; which both respects the situation of the candlestick, and the work about it, which Aaron was to do continually before and in the presence of the Lord. Jarchi thinks this ordering respects the measure of oil for every night, which he says, according to the wise men, was half a log for every lamp, which was about a quarter of a pint of oil.

Ver. 5. *And thou shalt take fine flour*, etc.] Of wheat, and the finest of it: *and bake twelve cakes thereof*; answerable to the twelve tribes, as the Targum of Jonathan, which were typical of the spiritual Israel of God;

two tenth deals shall be in one cake; that is, two tenth parts of an ephah, which were two omers, one of which was as much as a man could eat in one day of the manna: so that one of these cakes was as much as two men could eat of bread in one day; each cake was ten hands' breadth long, five broad, and seven fingers its horns, or was so high ^{f845}.

Ver. 6. *And thou shalt set them in two rows*, etc.] The twelve cakes:

six on a row; not by the side of each other, but six upon one another:

upon the pure table; the shewbread table, so called because overlaid with pure gold, and kept clean and bright, (^{<0254>}Exodus 25:24);

before the Lord; for this stood in the holy place, in the same place as the candlestick did, which has the same position, (^{<0204>}Leviticus 24:4); of the mystical and typical sense of these cakes, (see Gill on "^{<0250>}Exodus 25:30").

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row*, etc.] Two cups of frankincense, in each of which was an handful of it, and which were set by each row of the cakes, as Jarchi observes:

that it may be on the bread for a memorial; or "for the bread", instead of it, for a memorial of it; that being to be eaten by the priests, and this to be burned on the altar to the Lord, as follows:

[even] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; not the bread that was after a time taken away, and eaten by the priests, but the frankincense.

Ver. 8. *Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually*, etc.] 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", (^{<0250>}Exodus 25:30) ^{f846}; 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:

[being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant; God requiring it of them, and they agreeing to give it, as they did, either in meal or in money; for this was at the expense of the community.

Ver. 9. *And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'*, etc.] The twelve cakes of the old bread, when taken off the shewbread table; these were divided between the courses of the priests that carried in and brought out; and the high priest had half from each course, so that the half was for Aaron or the high priest, and the other half for his sons, or the priests that ministered ^{f847}:

and they shall eat it in the holy place; in the tabernacle or some court of it, and not in their own houses: it is said the shewbread was not eaten sooner than the ninth day, nor after the eleventh; how? it was baked on the evening of the sabbath, and it was eaten on the sabbath, the ninth day; if a feast day happened to be on the eve of the sabbath, it was eaten on the tenth; if the two feast days of the beginning of the year so fell, it was eaten on the eleventh day ^{f848}: the reason why it was only eaten in the holy place is,

for it [is] most holy unto him; it was one of the most holy things, which were only to be eaten by males, and in the sanctuary not as the light holy things, which were eaten in the houses and families of the priests, and by their wives and daughters also:

of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute; not that the bread was a burnt offering, but the frankincense upon it, or by it, and so having a connection with it, the whole is said to be an offering by fire: the one was given to the priests of the Lord to eat, and the other was consumed on the altar; and both were an offering to the Lord; and the frankincense being offered by fire unto the Lord, instead of the bread it was reckoned as if that was so offered.

Ver. 10. *And the son of an Israelitish woman*, etc.] Whose name, and the name of his mother, are afterwards given;

whose father [was] an Egyptian; Jarchi says, this is the Egyptian whom Moses slew, (⁴⁰⁰²Exodus 2:12); and so others in Abendana:

went out among the children of Israel; went out of Egypt with them, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and so was one of the mixed multitude, which came from thence with them, which is not improbable; some say he went out of Moses's court of judicature; but it is more likely

that the meaning is, he went out of his tent, so Aben Ezra, into the midst of the camp, to claim his rank and place among the people of Israel; though the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, take this phrase, “among the children of Israel”, to signify that he was a proselyte, and became a Jew, or had embraced the Jewish religion in all respects:

and this son of the Israelitish [woman] and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; which man of Israel, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was of the tribe of Dan, as was the mother of the man he strove with; what they strove about is not easy to say; Aben Ezra suggests, because this stands connected with the above laws, as if this man had said some things in a reviling way about the shewbread, the oil, and the offerings, and so a dispute arose between them, concerning them; but Jarchi says, it was about the business of the camp, and it is more commonly received that this man claimed a place to fix his tent on in the tribe of Dan, in right of his mother; but the other urged, that the order of fixing tents was according to the genealogies, and with the ensigns of their father’s house, and therefore he had no right to rank with them, his father being an Egyptian, and perhaps from words they came to blows, (see ⁴²¹²Exodus 21:22); though the Jewish writers understand it of their contending, at least of its issuing in a judiciary way, before a court of judicature: so it is said, when Israel dwelt in the wilderness, he (the son of the Egyptian) sought to spread his tent in the midst of the tribe of Dan, and they would not suffer it, because the ranks of the children of Israel were, every man according to his rank, with the ensigns according to the genealogy of their fathers; and they began and contended in the camp, wherefore they went into the court of judicature, the son of the woman of the daughter of Israel, and the man, a son of Israel, who was of the tribe of Dan ^{f849}.

Ver. 11. *And the Israelitish woman’s son blasphemed the name [of the Lord], and cursed*, etc.] As they were striving together, or when the trial was over, he being cast, fell into outrageous blasphemies against God, who made such laws for the civil polity of Israel, and cursed the judges that had given sentence against him; so the Targum of Jonathan; and so the Jews generally understand by the “name” blasphemed, the name Jehovah, which he spake out plainly, and which, they say, is ineffable, and ought not to be pronounced but by the high priest in the sanctuary; but this man expressed it in its proper sound, and made use of it to curse the man that strove with him, or the judge that judged him; so it is said in the Misnah ^{f850},

“a blasphemer is not guilty until he expresses the name;”

but it undoubtedly means blaspheming God himself, by whatsoever name:

and they brought him unto Moses; having heard his blasphemy, to charge him with it before him, or in order to have due punishment inflicted on him: as to the matter of contest between him and the Israelite, that had been decided in a lesser court of judicature, such an one as had been set up by the advice of Jethro; but though there was full proof of his blasphemy and cursing, which, perhaps, were expressed in open court; they might not know what punishment to inflict upon him for so horrid a crime, of which, perhaps, they had never had an instance before, and therefore sent him to Moses, to whom the hearing and decision of weighty matters belonged; (see ^{<0182>}Exodus 18:22);

and his mother's name [was] Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan; which is observed, as it should seem, to show in what tribe this affair happened, and what the quarrel was first about, even a place and rank in this tribe.

Ver. 12. *And they put him in ward*, etc.] In some prison, a place known in the camp, as Aben Ezra observes:

that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them; for, though this was a breach of the third command, in which God declares he would not hold such an one guiltless, (^{<0207>}Exodus 20:7); yet no particular punishment being expressed, it was not a clear case whether the Lord would punish for it himself, by an immediate stroke of his hand, or whether by the civil magistrate; and if by the latter, in what manner; for though it might be concluded, without any hesitation, that he was worthy of death, since cursing father or mother was death, (^{<0217>}Exodus 21:17 ^{<0309>}Leviticus 20:9); and much more blaspheming God, yet what death to put him to they might be at a loss about; or if that was understood of stoning, they might think this deserved a sorer punishment, and therefore consulted God about it.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] From off the mercy seat in the holy of holies, where he had promised to meet him and commune with him about anything he should inquire of him, as he did at this time:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 14. *Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp,* etc.] To show that he had no part nor lot in Israel, and that he was unworthy to be a member of their civil community, or of their church state; and, besides, the place of stoning, or where malefactors suffered any kind of death, was without the camp, as afterwards without the city, (see ^{<812>}Hebrews 13:12,13);

let all that heard [him] lay their hands upon his head; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“and the judges;”

so Jarchi remarks, that they that “heard him” are the witnesses, and the word “all” comprehends the judges: Maimonides says ^{f851} the same, and observes that hands were laid on no malefactor but the blasphemer; and this was done to show that the one had bore a faithful testimony, and the other had pronounced a righteous sentence on him; and that he had brought this guilt and punishment upon himself by his sin; wherefore it was usual for them to say, as the same writers observe,

“thy blood be upon thine own head, and we not punished for thy death, which thou hast been the cause of to thyself:”

and let all the congregation stone him; which Aben Ezra interprets of the great men of Israel; nor can it be thought that every individual of the people could cast a stone at him, but it was to be done by some of them, in the presence of them all, or as many as could conveniently get together to behold it; and this was done to show their detestation of the sin, and to deter from the commission of it: it was the same kind of punishment that was ordered to be inflicted on him that cursed his father or mother, (^{<810>}Leviticus 20:9); God, the God of mercy, requiring no sorer punishment, though it deterred a greater, for such a sin against himself, than against a common parent.

Ver. 15. *And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,* etc.] On this occasion, and gave them some laws and rules concerning the above affair, and other things:

saying, whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin; which some understand of anyone of another nation, that cursed the God he used to serve in his own country; but it can hardly be thought that a law should be made by the one only living and true God, to preserve the honour and

credit of false gods, when he is so jealous of his own glory; and those are spoken of in Scripture with the greatest contempt, as dunghill deities, and are actually cursed, (^{<2401>}Jeremiah 10:11); but they are rather to be interpreted of judges and all civil magistrates, who, as Aben Ezra observes, are sometimes called Elohim or gods, (^{<1801>}Psalm 82:1,6); and the rather, as it is probable this man had cursed his judges, and so this is a distinct sin from what follows; and not only the manner of expressing it, but the punishment of it, seem to be different; for the phrase, “to bear his sin”, is used where the punishment is not expressly declared, and is by Jarchi and others interpreted of cutting off from his people, but in what way is not certain; whereas the punishment of a blasphemer of God is before and after clearly expressed; (see ^{<0309>}Leviticus 20:19).

Ver. 16. *And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord*, etc.] Or, “but he that blasphemeth”, etc. from whence the Jews gather, that the name Jehovah must be expressed, or it is no blasphemy; so Jarchi; but it is not bare using or expressing the word Jehovah that is blasphemy, but speaking ill and contemptuously of God, with respect to any of his names, titles, and epithets, or of any of his perfections, ways, and works:

he shall surely be put to death; no mercy shall be shown him, no reprieve or pardon granted him: hence it is said ^{<f852>}, there is no atonement for it, by repentance, or chastisements, or the day of atonement: so blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come, (^{<0123>}Matthew 12:31,32);

[and] all the congregation shall certainly stone him; shall have no pity on him, nor spare him, but stone him till he dies:

as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name [of the Lord], shall be put to death; even a proselyte of the gate, a Gentile that sojourned among them, uncircumcised, and did not profess the Jewish religion, as well as a proselyte of righteousness, and an Israelite born; yet, if he blasphemed the God of Israel, was to lose his life without any mercy shown him.

Ver. 17. *And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.*] With the sword, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; which restrains it to any man of the children of Israel, but wrongly; for the original law respects any man whatever, (^{<0006>}Genesis 9:6); and so it does here; (see Gill on “^{<0212>}Exodus 21:12”).

Ver. 18. *And he that killeth a beast shall make it good*, etc.] Pay for it, give the value of it, or another as good as that instead of it, as follows:

beast for beast; or “soul for soul”; life for life, that is, a living one for that the life of which is taken away, and one every way as good as that.

Ver. 19. *And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour*, etc.] Does him any hurt or mischief, causes any mutilation or deformity in him by striking him:

as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him: not that a like damage or hurt should be done to him, but that he should make satisfaction for it in a pecuniary way; pay for the cure of him, and for loss of time, and in consideration of the pain he has endured, and the shame or disgrace brought on him by the deformity or mutilation, or for whatever loss he may sustain thereby; (see Gill on “⁽¹²¹⁸⁾Exodus 21:18-19”).

Ver. 20. *Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth*, etc.] Which is not to be taken strictly or literally, but for the price or value of those, which is to be given in a pecuniary way; (see Gill on “⁽¹²²⁴⁾Exodus 21:24-25”);

as he hath caused a blemish in a man, shall it be done to him; unless he gives satisfaction, and pays a valuable consideration for it.

Ver. 21. *And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it*, etc.] The same as in (⁽¹²⁴⁸⁾Leviticus 24:18), which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be observed, though Jarchi takes it to be a different law; before, he says, it speaks of him that kills a beast, here of him that makes any wound or bruise in it, which he must make good; and it must be allowed that the manner of expression is different; there it is, he that smites the soul of a beast so that it dies, here only he that smites a beast, though it dies not, yet having some damage done it, satisfaction must be made:

and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death; or he that smites a man, though he does not kill him, as Jarchi observes, only makes a wound or bruise in him, because it is not said, the soul of a man, as before; but such damages did not require death, but satisfaction in another way, as in (⁽¹²⁴⁹⁾Leviticus 24:19).

Ver. 22. *Ye shall have one manner of law*, etc.] Respecting the above things, blaspheming of the name of God, taking away the life of man, or of any beast, and of doing damage to either:

as well for the stranger as for one of your own country; the above laws were binding upon proselytes as well as Israelites, and proselytes of the gate as well as proselytes of righteousness, though the Jews commonly restrain it to the latter:

for I [am] the Lord your God; whose name is holy and reverend, and ought not to be blasphemed; and who is the Maker and preserver of man and beast, and made these laws respecting them, and expected they should be obeyed, especially by the children of Israel, whose covenant God and Father he was, and they under the greatest obligation to serve and obey him.

Ver. 23. *And Moses spake unto the children of Israel*, etc.] As the Lord had commanded him:

that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones; which were the instructions God had given to Moses upon inquiring his mind and will about this matter:

and the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses; they took the blasphemer, and led him out of the camp, put their hands on him, and stoned him with stones till he died.