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Leviticus

The book of Leviticus describes what happened with God's people after he freed them from slavery in Egypt. The previous book of Exodus told how God brought his people out of Egypt to Mount Sinai in the desert. There he gave laws to Moses to give to the people. These laws included plans for a movable structure called the Holy Tent or Meeting Tent. It would serve as the visible place of God's presence with his people.

Leviticus continues the story of Exodus with what happened on the day God entered the Holy Tent. Leviticus is different in the way it tells the story of God's people. Genesis and Exodus tell long stories about the lives of many people. Leviticus describes in detail the instructions God gave to his people.

In the first part of the book, God calls to Moses from inside the Holy Tent. It is usually called the Meeting Tent because it was where God met with Moses. And at the entrance to this tent is where Moses met with the people in God's presence. The book of Leviticus makes clear how difficult it is for people to be in the presence of God. God is holy, and to be in his presence, people must be holy.

Leviticus begins with God speaking to Moses at the entrance of the Tent and giving him instructions to pass on to the people of Israel. These instructions are later made public when Moses gathers all the people in front of the Meeting Tent. Everyone heard what they were supposed to do. And it was Moses' respon-

sibility to make sure that the people did their part. Moses, Aaron and other leaders had their own special jobs to do. And all the people heard what those jobs were so they could be sure that Moses and the other leaders did their part. It is clear that Leviticus was meant for everyone in God's family. It was for leaders and followers, rich and poor, old and young.

Leviticus deals with all kinds of different rules for the Israelites. It covers everything from food laws to punishment for crimes. Most of these rules are instructions about how the people can be holy in order to come into the presence of God for worship.

In the book of Leviticus, God instructs Israel how to...

Offer proper sacrifices (1:1 – 7:38)

Choose priests for the people (8:1 – 10:20)

Live clean lives (11:1 – 15:33)

Purify the people from sin (16:1-34)

Live day-to-day as God's chosen people (17:1 – 26:46)

Make special gifts to God (27:1-34)

Instructions About Sacrifices and Offerings

1 The LORD called out to Moses from inside the Meeting Tent and said, ²“Tell this to the Israelites: When you bring an animal as an offering to the LORD, you may choose it from your cattle or from your flock of sheep and goats.

³“If you bring one of your cattle as a burnt offering, it must be a male that has nothing wrong with it. You must take the animal to the entrance of the Meeting Tent where the LORD will accept the offering. ⁴You must put your hand on the animal's head. Then the Lord will accept

it as your burnt offering to make you pure.

⁵“You* must kill the young bull in front of the LORD. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will bring the blood to the altar that is near the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They will splash the blood on all four sides of the altar. ⁶You must remove the skin from that animal and then cut the animal into pieces. ⁷Aaron’s sons, the priests, will put the fire on the altar and arrange the wood on the fire. ⁸They will lay the pieces of the animal, including the head and fat, on top of the burning wood. ⁹You must wash the legs and inner parts of the animal with water. Then the priest will bring all these parts to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

¹⁰“If you offer a sheep or a goat as a burnt offering, it must be a male that has nothing wrong with it. ¹¹You must kill the animal on the north side of the altar in front of the LORD. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splash the animal’s blood on all four sides of the altar. ¹²You must cut the animal into pieces and remove the head and the fat. The priest will then lay them on top of the wood that is burning on the altar. ¹³You must wash the legs and inner parts of the animal with water. Then the priest will bring all these parts to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

¹⁴“If you offer a bird as a burnt offering to the LORD, that bird must be a dove or a young pigeon. ¹⁵The priest will bring the offering to the altar. There the priest will remove the bird’s head, drain out the blood on the side of the altar and burn the head on the altar. ¹⁶He will remove the bird’s tail and inner parts and throw them onto the pile of

ashes east of the altar. ¹⁷Then the priest will tear the bird open by its wings, but he must not divide it completely into two parts. So he will bring the bird to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

Grain Offerings

2 “When you give a grain offering to the LORD, your offering must be made from fine flour. You must pour oil on this flour and put frankincense on it. ²Then you must bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests. One of them will take a handful of the fine flour with oil and all the frankincense. He will bring this part to the altar, which shows that the whole offering is for me. There it will be burned up as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ³The rest of that grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the LORD is very holy.

⁴“If you give a grain offering that was baked in the oven, it must be made from fine flour without yeast. It may be bread mixed with oil or wafers with oil poured over them. ⁵If you bring a grain offering cooked in a baking pan, it must be made from fine flour without yeast and mixed with oil. ⁶You must break it into pieces and pour oil over it. It is a grain offering. ⁷If you bring a grain offering cooked on a griddle, it must be made from fine flour mixed with oil.

⁸“When you bring grain offerings made from these things to the LORD, you must give them to the priest, and he will take them to the altar. ⁹Then the priest will take part of the grain offering and lift it up to show that the whole offering is for me. He will bring it to the altar to be burned up as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ¹⁰The rest of that grain of-

*1:5 You Or “They (the priests)”. Also in verse 11.

fering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the LORD is very holy.

¹¹“You must not give any grain offering to the LORD that has yeast in it. You must not burn yeast or honey as a gift to the LORD. ¹²You may bring yeast and honey to the LORD as an offering from the first harvest, but they must not be put on the altar to be burned as a sweet smell. ¹³Also, you must put salt on every grain offering you bring. You must not forget to add salt, because it represents God’s agreement with you. Always put salt on these offerings.

¹⁴“When you offer the first part of your grain harvest, roast the fresh grain and grind it. Then you may bring it as a grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁵You must put oil and frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. ¹⁶The priest must burn part of the crushed grain with the oil and all the frankincense on it to show that the whole offering is for me. It is a gift to the LORD.

Fellowship Offerings

3 “If you offer one of your cattle as a fellowship offering, it can be a bull or a cow. But the animal you offer to the LORD must have nothing wrong with it. ²You must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill the animal at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splash the blood on all four sides of the altar. ³You must take part of that fellowship offering and offer it as a gift to the LORD. You must take the fat that is over and around the inner parts. ⁴You must take the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. You must also remove the fatty part of the liver that is near the kidneys. ⁵Then Aaron’s sons will burn all these parts on the altar along with the burnt offering that is on the wood burn-

ing on the altar. It is a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

⁶“If you offer a sheep or a goat as a fellowship offering to the LORD, whether it is a male or a female, it must have nothing wrong with it. ⁷If you bring a lamb as an offering to the LORD, ⁸you must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons will splash the animal’s blood on all four sides of the altar. ⁹You must take part of the fellowship offering and offer it as a gift to the LORD. You must cut off the tail close to the backbone. Then you must offer the tail with all its fat and the fat that is over and around the animal’s inner parts. ¹⁰You must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscles. You must also offer the fatty part of the liver. You must remove it with the kidneys. ¹¹Then the priest will take that part to the altar to be burned up as food, a gift to the LORD.

¹²“If the offering is a goat, you must bring it before the LORD. ¹³You must put your hand on the goat’s head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, must splash the goat’s blood on all four sides of the altar. ¹⁴You must take part of the fellowship offering and offer it as a gift to the LORD. You must remove the fat that is over and around the animal’s inner parts. ¹⁵You must remove the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. You must also remove the fatty part of the liver. You must remove it with the kidneys. ¹⁶Then the priest will burn these parts on the altar as food. The smoke will be a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. All the best part, the fat, belongs to the LORD. ¹⁷This rule will continue forever through all your generations. Wherever you live, you must never eat fat or blood.”

Offerings for Accidental Sins

4 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites this: A person might sin without meaning to and do something that the LORD commanded should not be done. For example:

³“The anointed priest[†] might do wrong and bring punishment on the people for his sin. In that case, he must offer a young bull to the LORD as an offering for his own sin. The bull must have nothing wrong with it. ⁴The anointed priest must bring the bull to the entrance of the Meeting Tent in front of the LORD. He must put his hand on the bull’s head and kill the bull in front of the LORD. ⁵Then the anointed priest must get some of the blood from the bull and take it into the Meeting Tent. ⁶He must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle the blood seven times before the LORD in front of the curtain of the Most Holy Place. ⁷The priest must put some of the blood on the corners of the incense altar. (This altar is in the Meeting Tent, in front of the LORD.) He must pour out the rest of the bull’s blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) ⁸Then the priest must take all the fat from the bull for the sin offering. He must take the fat that is on and around the inner parts. ⁹He must take the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. He must also take the fatty part of the liver. He must remove it with the kidneys. ¹⁰The priest must take all these things and burn them on the altar for burnt offerings, just as he does for the fellowship offering.[‡] ^{11–12} But the priest must carry out the bull’s skin, inner parts

and body waste, and all the meat, including the head and legs. He must carry those parts outside the camp to the special place where the ashes are poured out. He must put those parts on the wood and burn them there on the ash pile.

¹³“The whole community of Israel might sin by mistake and fail to follow all the LORD’s commands. If this happens and the community does not see it when it happens, they are still guilty. ¹⁴When they learn about that sin, the community of Israel must offer a young bull as a sin offering. They must bring the bull to the Meeting Tent. ¹⁵The leaders of the people must put their hands on the bull’s head in front of the LORD. Then they must kill the bull in front of the LORD. ¹⁶The anointed priest must get some of the bull’s blood and take it into the Meeting Tent. ¹⁷He must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times in front of the curtain before the LORD. ¹⁸He must put some of the blood on the corners of the altar. (This altar is inside the Meeting Tent, in front of the LORD.) He must then pour out all the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) ¹⁹Then he must take all the fat from the animal and burn it on the altar. ²⁰He must do the same with this bull as he did with the bull for his own sin offering. In this way the priest will make the people pure, and God will forgive them. ²¹The priest must carry this bull outside the camp and burn it, just as he burned the other bull. This is the sin offering for the whole community.

²²“A ruler might do something that the LORD his God has said must not be

[†]4:3 *anointed priest* Special oil was poured on the priest’s head to show that God chose him to serve. Here, this refers to the high priest. Also in verse 16.

[‡]4:10 *just as ... fellowship offering* See Lev. 3:1-5.

done. Even if he did not know at the time that he was committing a sin, he is still guilty. ²³ As soon as he learns that he has sinned, he must bring a male goat that has nothing wrong with it as his offering. ²⁴ The ruler must put his hand on the goat's head and kill the goat at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. The goat is a sin offering. ²⁵ The priest will take some of the blood of the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ²⁶ The priest will burn all the goat's fat on the altar, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. In this way the priest will make the ruler pure, and God will forgive him.

²⁷ "Finally, one of you common people might sin without meaning to. You might break one of the commands of the LORD and become guilty of doing something he said must not be done. ²⁸ If you learn about that sin, you must bring a female goat that has nothing wrong with it as your sin offering. ²⁹ You must put your hand on the animal's head and kill it at the place for the burnt offering. ³⁰ Then the priest will take some of the goat's blood on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. ³¹ The priest will then remove all of its fat, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. Then he will bring it to the altar as a sweet smell to the LORD. The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

³² "If you bring a lamb as your sin offering, you must bring a female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. ³³ You must put your hand on the animal's head and kill it as a sin offering in the place where people kill the burnt offering. ³⁴ The priest will take some of the

blood from the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of the lamb's blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵ He will then remove all the lamb's fat, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. Then he will bring it to the altar as a gift to the LORD. The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

Offerings for Other Sins

5 "You may hear an announcement asking for any witnesses of a crime to come and testify in court. The announcement may include a curse against any witness who does not come and tell what they saw. If you saw something or knew something but did not tell it, you are guilty of doing wrong and will be punished.

² "Anyone who touches something unclean, like the dead body of any kind of unclean animal, becomes unclean. But you might forget that you touched those things and became unclean and then later remember your guilt.

³ "Or you might touch something unclean that came from the body of another person and forget that this happened. You may not remember your guilt until later.

⁴ "Or you might make a careless promise to do something. It may be for something that is good for you or bad for you. People make all kinds of careless promises. But then you might forget to do what you promised. You might even forget that you made the promise until someone reminds you. ⁵ When you remember that you are guilty of any of these things, you must confess whatever you did wrong or failed to do. ⁶ Then you must bring an offering to the LORD as a penalty for your sin. You must bring a female lamb or a female goat as a sin of-

fering. The priest will offer this sacrifice to make you pure from your sin.

⁷“If you cannot afford a sheep or a goat, you must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as the penalty for your sin. One bird must be for a sin offering, and the other must be for a burnt offering. ⁸Take them to the priest. First, the priest will offer one bird for the sin offering. He will break its neck without pulling off its head. ⁹The priest will sprinkle some of the blood from the sin offering on the side of the altar. Then he will pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰Then he will offer the second bird according to the rules for a burnt offering. The priest will do all this to make you pure from your sin, and God will forgive you.

¹¹“If you cannot afford two doves or two pigeons, you must bring one kilogramme¹ of fine flour as your sin offering. You must not put oil or frankincense on the flour because it is a sin offering. ¹²You must bring the flour to the priest. The priest will take a handful of the flour, which represents the whole amount. He will burn it on the altar with the other gifts to the LORD. It is an offering to remove sin. ¹³The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you. The part that is left will belong to the priest, just as with the regular grain offering.”

Guilt Offerings for Other Sins

¹⁴The LORD gave this command to Moses for the people: ¹⁵“You might sin against me without meaning to by failing to give the offerings that belong to me or by using them in a wrong way. If you do that, you must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it as a guilt of-

fering for your penalty. Or you may offer the value of the ram in silver. Use the same weight for the silver that the priests use. ¹⁶You must replace or pay for what belonged to me and add one-fifth of that amount as a fine. Give it to the priest. He will use the ram to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

¹⁷“You might sin by doing any of the things the LORD said must not be done, and you might not know for sure what you did, but you feel guilty. You can still pay for your sin. ¹⁸You must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it (or the same amount in silver) to the priest. The priest will offer the ram to make you pure. And God will forgive you for the sin you did without knowing what it was. ¹⁹This is a guilt offering. You must make payment to the LORD for any wrong you have done.”

Sins of Dishonesty

6 The LORD said to Moses, ²“You are guilty of sin against the LORD when you do any of these things: when you lie about what happened to something you were taking care of for someone else; when you lie about money you received; when you steal something; when you cheat someone; ³when you find something that was lost by another person and lie about having it. And you are also guilty when you make a false oath to deny being dishonest in any of these ways. ⁴If you sin in any of these ways and come to know that you are guilty, you must make things right. You must give back whatever you stole or whatever you took by cheating. You must return whatever you took as a security deposit, or whatever you found and lied about having ⁵and made a false oath about. You must pay the full price and

¹5:11 *one kilogramme* Literally, “1/10 of an *ephah*”.

then add one-fifth of that amount as a fine. You must give it all to the true owner as soon as you understand that you are guilty. ⁶You must also bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it as a guilt offering to the LORD (or the same amount in silver) to the priest. ⁷Then the priest will go to the LORD to make you pure, and God will forgive you for whichever of these things you did that made you guilty.”

Burnt Offerings

⁸The LORD said to Moses, ⁹“Give this command to Aaron and his sons: This is the law for the burnt offering. The burnt offering must stay on the altar all night until morning. The altar’s fire must be kept burning. ¹⁰The priest must change clothes and put on the special linen underwear and linen robe. Then he must gather up the ashes from the fire and burnt offerings and set them down by the altar. ¹¹Then he must take off the special clothes and put on the other clothes and carry the ashes outside the camp to a special place that is pure. ¹²The fire that was started on the altar must never be allowed to stop burning. Every morning the priests must put wood on the altar. They must arrange the burnt offerings on the wood, and they must burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. ¹³That fire must always be kept burning on the altar. It must never be allowed to stop burning.

Grain Offerings

¹⁴“This is the law for the grain offering: The sons of Aaron will bring it to the front of the altar as an offering to the LORD. ¹⁵There must be some oil and

frankincense on the grain offering. The priest will take a handful of the fine flour and oil from the grain offering, together with all the frankincense that is on the offering. He will burn this part, which represents the whole amount, on the altar as a sweet-smelling offering to the LORD.

¹⁶“Aaron and his sons will use the rest of that grain to make bread without yeast. This must be eaten in a holy place within the courtyard around the Meeting Tent. ¹⁷I have given this part of the grain offering as the priests’ share of the gifts offered to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy. It must not be baked with yeast. ¹⁸Any male descendant of Aaron may eat from these gifts to the LORD. This is their share forever throughout your generations. Whatever touches these offerings will be made holy.”

The Priests’ Grain Offering

¹⁹The LORD said to Moses, ²⁰“This is the offering that Aaron and his sons must bring to the LORD when Aaron is anointed to be the high priest. They must bring one kilogramme[§] of fine flour for a grain offering. This will be offered at the times of the daily offering—half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. ²¹The fine flour must be mixed with oil and baked on a pan. After it is cooked, you must bring it in, break it into pieces and offer it as a sweet-smelling gift to LORD.

²²“In the future, when Aaron’s descendants take their place as the anointed priests,** they will continue to make this grain offering to the Lord. This rule will continue forever. The grain of-

[§]6:20 *one kilogramme* Literally, “1/10 of an *ephah*”.

**6:22 *anointed priests* Special oil was poured on the priest’s head to show that God chose him to serve. Here, this refers to the high priest.

fering must be completely burned for the LORD. ²³Every grain offering that a priest gives must be completely burned. It must not be eaten.”

The Law for the Sin Offering

²⁴The LORD said to Moses, ²⁵“Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law for the sin offering. The sin offering must be killed in the place where the burnt offering is killed before the LORD. It is most holy. ²⁶The priest who offers the sin offering must eat it. But he must eat it in a holy place within the courtyard around the Meeting Tent. ²⁷Touching the meat of the sin offering makes a person or a thing holy.

“If any of the sprinkled blood falls on a person’s clothes, you must wash the clothes in a holy place. ²⁸If the sin offering was boiled in a clay pot, the pot must be broken. If the sin offering was boiled in a bronze pot, the pot must be washed and rinsed in water.

²⁹“Any male in a priest’s family may eat the sin offering. It is very holy. ³⁰But if the blood of the sin offering was taken into the Meeting Tent and used in the Holy Place to make people pure, that sin offering must not be eaten. It must be completely burned in the fire.

Guilt Offerings

7 “These are the rules for the guilt offering, which is very holy: ²A priest must kill the guilt offering in the same place where they kill the burnt offerings. Then he must splash the blood from the guilt offering around the altar.

³“The priest must offer all the fat from the guilt offering. He must offer the fat tail and the fat that covers the inner parts. ⁴He must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the lower

back muscle. He must also offer the fatty part of the liver. He must remove it with the kidneys. ⁵He must bring these things to the altar as a gift to the LORD. It is a guilt offering.

⁶“Any male in a priest’s family may eat the guilt offering. It is very holy, so it must be eaten in a holy place. ⁷The guilt offering is like the sin offering. The same rules are for both offerings. The priest who does the sacrificing will get the meat for food. ⁸He will also get the skin^{††} from the burnt offering. ⁹Every grain offering belongs to the priest who offers it. That priest will get the grain offerings that were baked in an oven, or cooked on a frying pan or in a baking dish. ¹⁰The grain offerings will belong to Aaron’s sons. It doesn’t make any difference if the grain offerings are dry or mixed with oil. The sons of Aaron will all share this food.

Fellowship Offerings

¹¹“This is the law for the sacrifice of fellowship offerings that you bring to the LORD: ¹²People can bring fellowship offerings to show their thanks to God. If you bring your sacrifice to give thanks, you should also bring bread made without yeast mixed with oil, wafers with oil poured over them and loaves made of the best wheat flour mixed with oil. ¹³You must also bring loaves of bread made with yeast to go with your fellowship offering. ¹⁴Offer one each of these different kinds of bread as a gift to the LORD. Then it will belong to the priest who splashes the blood of the fellowship offerings. ¹⁵The meat of the fellowship offering must be eaten on the same day it is offered as a way of showing thanks to God. None of the meat should remain until the next morning.

^{††}7:8 *skin* This was used for making leather.

¹⁶“If you bring a fellowship offering simply because you want to give a gift to God or because it is part of a special promise you made to him, the sacrifice should be eaten the same day you offer it. But if there is any left, it must be eaten the next day. ¹⁷If any meat from this sacrifice is still left over on the third day, it must be burned in the fire. ¹⁸If anyone eats the meat from the fellowship offering on the third day, the Lord will not accept it as a sacrifice. It will have no value for that person, and to the Lord it will be like rotten meat! Whoever eats it will be responsible for their sin.

¹⁹“People must not eat any of the meat that touches anything unclean. They must burn this meat in the fire. Whoever is clean may eat the meat from the fellowship offering. ²⁰But anyone who is unclean and eats the meat from the fellowship offerings that was offered to the LORD must be separated from their people.

²¹“You can become unclean by touching something that is unclean—an unclean person, an unclean animal or any other disgusting unclean thing. If you touch any of these things and then eat meat from the fellowship offerings given to the LORD, you must be separated from your people.”

²²The LORD said to Moses, ²³“Tell the Israelites: You must not eat any fat from your cattle, sheep or goats. ²⁴You may use the fat from any animal that has died by itself or was torn by other animals, but you must never eat it. ²⁵Whoever eats the fat from an animal that was offered as a gift to the LORD must be separated from their people.

²⁶“No matter where you live, you must never eat blood from any bird or

any animal. ²⁷Anyone who eats blood must be separated from their people.”

Rules for the Offerings Presented to God

²⁸The LORD said to Moses, ²⁹“Tell the Israelites: If you bring a fellowship offering to the LORD, you must present that gift to the LORD yourself. ³⁰You must bring the fat and the breast of the animal to the priest. Then he will lift up the breast in front of the LORD to show it was presented to God. ³¹The priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast of the animal will belong to Aaron and his sons. ³²You must also give the right thigh from the fellowship offering as a gift to the priest. ³³That part of the fellowship offering will belong to the priest[‡] who carries the blood and fat to the altar. ³⁴I will accept the breast that was lifted up and the gift of the right thigh from the Israelites. Then I will give these things to Aaron and his sons. This is their share from the fellowship offerings of the Israelites forever.”

³⁵This will be the share of the offerings to the LORD that belongs to Aaron and his sons. It will be given to them as soon as they begin to serve as the LORD’s priests. ³⁶The LORD commanded the Israelites to give those parts to the priests once they have been anointed. That will be their share from the Israelites forever.

³⁷These are the laws about burnt offerings, grain offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, fellowship offerings and offerings for when the priests are appointed. ³⁸The LORD gave these laws to Moses on Mount Sinai when he commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to the LORD in the desert of Sinai.

[‡]7:33 *the priest* Literally, “him of the sons of Aaron”.

Moses Appoints the Priests

8 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Take Aaron and his sons and their clothes, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket of bread without yeast. ³Then gather the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.”

⁴Moses did what the LORD commanded him. The people met together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ⁵Then Moses said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded us to do.”

⁶Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. ⁷Moses put the long shirt on Aaron and tied the cloth belt around him. Then Moses put the robe and the ephod on Aaron and tied the beautiful cloth belt around him. ⁸Moses put the judgement pouch on Aaron and put the Urim and Thummim inside its pocket. ⁹He also put the turban on Aaron’s head. He put the strip of gold on the front of the turban. This strip of gold is the holy crown. Moses did this just as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁰Then Moses took the anointing oil and sprinkled it on the Holy Tent and everything in it. In this way he made them holy. ¹¹He sprinkled some of the anointing oil on the altar seven times. He sprinkled the oil on the altar, on all its tools and dishes and on the bowl and its base. In this way he made them holy. ¹²He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head to make him holy. ¹³Then Moses brought Aaron’s sons forward. He put their long shirts on them, tied belts around them and put special caps on their heads. He did everything just as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁴Then Moses brought out the bull for the sin offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the bull’s head. ¹⁵Then

the bull was killed and its blood collected. Moses took the blood and used his finger to put some of it on all the corners of the altar. He did this to purify the altar. Then he poured out the blood at the base of the altar. By doing this, he made the altar holy, ready for the sacrifices that would take away sin. ¹⁶Moses took all the fat from the inner parts of the bull. He took the fatty part of the liver with the two kidneys and the fat on them. Then he burned them on the altar. ¹⁷Moses took the bull’s skin, its meat and its body waste outside the camp. He burned these things in a fire outside the camp. He did everything just as the LORD had commanded him.

¹⁸Then Moses brought the ram for the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the ram’s head. ¹⁹Then the ram was killed. Moses splashed the blood on the sides of the altar. ^{20–21}He cut the ram into pieces. He washed the inner parts and legs with water. Then he burned the whole ram on the altar. He burned the head, the pieces and the fat as a burnt offering. It was a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded.

²²Then Moses brought the other ram. This ram was used for appointing Aaron and his sons to become priests. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the ram’s head. ²³Then the ram was killed and Moses put some of its blood on the tip of Aaron’s right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁴Then Moses brought Aaron’s sons close to the altar. He put some of the blood on the tip of their right ears, on the thumb of their right hands and on the big toe of their right feet. Then he splashed the blood on the sides of the altar. ²⁵He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat on the inner parts, the fat covering of the liver,

the two kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. ²⁶ A basket of bread without yeast is put before the LORD each day. Moses took one of those loaves of bread, one loaf of bread mixed with oil and one wafer. He put these pieces of bread on the fat and on the right thigh of the ram. ²⁷ Then he put all of it in the hands of Aaron and his sons. Moses lifted these pieces to show he was offering them before the LORD. ²⁸ Then Moses took these things from the hands of Aaron and his sons and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering. So this was the offering for appointing Aaron and his sons as priests. It was a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ²⁹ Moses took the breast and lifted it to show he had presented it to the LORD. It was Moses' share of the ram for appointing the priests. This was just as the LORD had commanded him.

³⁰ Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar. He sprinkled some on Aaron and on Aaron's clothes. He sprinkled some on Aaron's sons and on their clothes. In this way Moses made Aaron, his clothes, his sons and his sons' clothes holy.

³¹ Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "I told you, 'Aaron and his sons must eat these things.' So take the basket of bread and meat from the ceremony for appointing the priests. Boil that meat at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Eat the meat and bread at that place. Do this as I told you. ³² If any of the meat or bread is left, burn it. ³³ The ceremony for appointing the priests will last for seven days. You must not leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent until that time is finished. ³⁴ Everything we did today was what the LORD commanded us to do in order to make you pure. ³⁵ You must stay at the entrance of the Meeting Tent day and night for seven days. If you don't obey the LORD's commands,

you will die! The LORD gave me these commands."

³⁶ So Aaron and his sons did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

God Accepts the Priests

9 On the eighth day, Moses called for Aaron and his sons and the leaders of Israel. ² He said to Aaron, "Take a bull and a ram. There must be nothing wrong with them. The bull will be a sin offering, and the ram will be a burnt offering. Offer these animals to the LORD. ³ Tell the Israelites, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and take a calf and a lamb for a burnt offering. The calf and the lamb must each be one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁴ Take a bull and a ram for fellowship offerings. Take these animals and a grain offering mixed with oil for an offering to the LORD. Do this because the LORD will appear to you today.'"

⁵ So all the people came to the Meeting Tent. They all brought the things that Moses had commanded. All the people stood before the LORD. ⁶ Moses said, "You must do what the LORD commanded. Then the glory of the LORD will appear to you."

⁷ Then Moses told Aaron: "Go and do what the LORD commanded. Go to the altar and offer sin offerings and burnt offerings. Do what will make you and the people pure. Take the people's sacrifices and make them pure."

⁸ So Aaron went to the altar. He killed the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering was for himself. ⁹ Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to Aaron. Aaron put his finger in the blood and put it on the corners of the altar. Then he poured out the blood at the base of the altar. ¹⁰ He took the fat, the two kidneys and the fatty part of the liver from

the sin offering. He burned them on the altar just as the LORD had commanded Moses. ¹¹ Then Aaron burned the meat and skin on a fire outside the camp.

¹² Next, Aaron killed the animal for the burnt offering. His sons brought the blood to him, and he splashed the blood on the sides of the altar. ¹³ Aaron's sons gave the pieces and head of the burnt offering to Aaron, and he burned them on the altar. ¹⁴ He also washed the inner parts and the legs of the burnt offering and burned them on the altar.

¹⁵ Then Aaron brought the people's offering. He killed the goat that was an offering to remove the people's sins, like the earlier offering for his own sin. ¹⁶ He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the way the Lord had commanded. ¹⁷ He brought the grain offering to the altar. He took a handful of the grain and put it on the altar beside that morning's daily sacrifice.

¹⁸ Aaron also killed the bull and the ram that were for the fellowship offerings from the people. His sons brought the blood to him, and he splashed this blood on the sides of the altar. ¹⁹ Aaron's sons also brought him the fat of the bull and the ram. They brought the fat tail, the fat covering the inner parts, the two kidneys and the fatty part of the liver. ²⁰ Aaron's sons put these fatty parts on top of the breasts of the bull and the ram. Aaron burned them on the altar. ²¹ He lifted the breasts and the gift of the right thigh to show he was offering them before the LORD, just as Moses had commanded.

²² Then Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them. After he finished offering the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings, he came down from the altar.

²³ Moses and Aaron went into the Meeting Tent. They came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ Fire came from the LORD and burned the burnt offering and fat on the altar. When all the people saw this, they shouted with joy and then bowed to the ground to show their respect.

God Destroys Nadab and Abihu

10 Then Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their incense dishes and put some fire and incense in them. But they did not use the fire that was on the altar—they took fire from another place and brought it to the LORD. This was not what he had commanded. ² So fire came from the LORD and destroyed Nadab and Abihu, and they died there in front of the LORD.

³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "The LORD says, 'The priests who come near me must respect me. I must be holy to them and to all the people.'" So Aaron did not say anything about his sons dying.

⁴ Aaron's uncle Uzziel had two sons. They were Mishael and Elzaphan. Moses said to these sons, "Come here and get your cousins' bodies and carry them away from this holy place and take them outside the camp."

⁵ So Mishael and Elzaphan obeyed Moses. They carried the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp. Nadab and Abihu were still wearing their long shirts.

⁶ Then Moses said to Aaron and his other sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Don't show any sorrow! Don't mess up your

hair or tear your clothes![¶] If you do anything to show your sorrow, you will be killed, and the Lord will show his anger against everyone. But let all the other people of Israel, your relatives, cry for those the Lord destroyed with fire. ⁷But you must not even leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent. If you leave, you will die because the Lord's anointing oil is on you." So Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar obeyed Moses.

⁸Then the Lord said to Aaron, ⁹"You and your sons must not drink wine or beer when you come into the Meeting Tent. If you do, you will die. This law continues forever through each generation. ¹⁰You must be able to clearly tell the difference between what is holy and what is not holy, between what is clean and what is unclean. ¹¹And you must teach the people about all the laws that the Lord gave them through Moses."

¹²Aaron had two sons who were still alive, Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said to Aaron and his two sons, "When people give sacrifices as a gift to the Lord, some of the grain offering is not burned. Use that grain to make bread without yeast. You, the priests, must eat that bread near the altar because that grain is very holy. ¹³The portion of food for you and your sons will come from the special gifts to the Lord, so you must eat that food in a holy place.

¹⁴"You, your sons and your daughters may all eat the breast and thigh that were lifted up before the Lord as an offering. But you must eat these in a place that is clean because they come from the fellowship offerings. They are your share of those offerings that the Israelites give to God. ¹⁵The people must bring the gifts of fat from their animals as part of

the sacrifice. They must also bring the thigh of the fellowship offering and the breast that is lifted up to show it is offered in front of the Lord. Then it will be your share of the offering. It will belong to you and your children. That part of the sacrifices will be your share forever, just as the Lord said."

¹⁶Moses asked about the goat for the sin offering, but it had already been burned up. Moses became very angry with Aaron's other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said, ¹⁷"Why did you not eat the sin offering in the holy area! That meat is very holy! God gave it to you to remove the guilt of the people—to make the people pure before the Lord. ¹⁸That goat's blood was not brought into the Holy Place. So you should have eaten the meat in the holy area, just as I commanded!"

¹⁹But Aaron replied, "Look, today they brought their sin offering and burnt offering before the Lord. But you know what terrible things have happened to me today! Do you think the Lord would have been happy if I had eaten the sin offering today?"

²⁰When Moses heard this, he agreed.

Choosing Animals for Food

11 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²"Tell the Israelites: These are the land animals you can eat: ³if an animal has hooves that are split into two parts, and if that animal also chews the cud, then you may eat the meat from that animal.

⁴⁻⁶"Some animals chew the cud, but they don't have split hooves. Don't eat these animals. Camels, rock badgers and rabbits are like that, so they are unclean for you. ⁷Other animals have hooves

[¶]10:6 *mess up ... clothes* Messed up hair and torn clothes showed that a person was mourning (see mourn in the Word List) for a dead person.

that are split into two parts, but they don't chew the cud. Don't eat these animals. Pigs are like that, so they are unclean for you. ⁸ Don't eat the meat from these animals. Don't even touch their dead bodies! They are unclean for you.

Rules About Sea Food

⁹ "You may eat all fish from the sea or a river if they have fins and scales. ¹⁰ But you must not eat any creature that lives in the sea or in a river and does not have fins and scales. Any living thing like that, large or small, should be disgusting to you. ¹¹ And because these things will always be disgusting, you must never eat meat from any of them. Don't even touch the dead body of a creature like that! ¹² Anything that lives in the water and does not have fins and scales should be disgusting to you.

Birds That Must Not Be Eaten

¹³ "There are birds that are wrong for you to eat. Think of them as disgusting and stay away from them. These include eagles, vultures, buzzards, ¹⁴ kites, all kinds of falcons, ¹⁵ all kinds of black birds, ¹⁶ ostriches, nighthawks, seagulls, all kinds of hawks, ¹⁷ little owls, cormorants, great owls, ¹⁸ white owls, pelicans, ospreys, ¹⁹ storks, all kinds of herons, hoopoes and bats.

Rules About Eating Insects

²⁰ "Don't eat insects that have wings and crawl. They should be disgusting to you! ²¹ But you may eat the insects that have wings and crawl if they have legs with joints above their feet so that they can hop. ²² You may eat all kinds of locusts, crickets and grasshoppers. ²³ But stay away from all the other insects that

have wings and crawl. They should be disgusting to you.

²⁴ "There are also some animals that will make you unclean. If you touch the dead bodies of these animals, you will be unclean until evening. ²⁵ If you pick up any part of their dead bodies, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

More Rules About Animals

²⁶⁻²⁷ "You must not touch the dead bodies of animals that are unclean for you. These include animals that don't have hooves that are clearly split or that don't chew the cud. Also, all the four-footed animals that have paws^{§§} are unclean for you. If you touch the dead bodies of any of these animals, you will be unclean until evening. ²⁸ If you pick up the dead bodies of these unclean animals, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening. These animals are unclean for you.

Rules About Crawling Animals

²⁹ "These small animals are unclean for you: moles, mice, all kinds of large lizards, ³⁰ geckos, sand reptiles and chameleons. ³¹ Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

Rules About Unclean Animals

³² "When one of these unclean animals dies, anything it falls on will be unclean. Whether it is made from wood, cloth, leather or the rough cloth used for mourning, it must be washed with water. It will be unclean until evening. Then it will be clean again. ³³ If any of these unclean animals dies and falls into a clay dish, anything in the dish will become unclean. And you must break the

§§11:26-27 *paws* The soft feet with claws on certain animals.

dish. ³⁴If water from the unclean clay dish touches any food, that food will become unclean. Any drink in the unclean dish will become unclean. ³⁵If any part of a dead, unclean animal falls on anything else, that thing is unclean. It may be a clay oven or stove. It must be broken to pieces. These things will remain unclean. They will always be unclean for you.

³⁶“If the dead body of an unclean animal falls into a spring or a well that collects water, the water will remain clean. But anyone who touches the dead body of that animal will be unclean. ³⁷If any part of the dead body of such an animal falls on seed that is to be planted, that seed is still clean. ³⁸But if the seed is soaking in water when the dead body falls on it, that seed will be unclean for you.

³⁹“Also, if an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its dead body will be unclean until evening. ⁴⁰If you eat meat from this animal’s body, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening. If you pick up the dead body of the animal, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

⁴¹“You must not eat anything that crawls on the ground. Such creatures are disgusting! ⁴²You must not eat any of the reptiles that crawl on their bellies or that walk on all four feet or any creatures that have many feet. It is disgusting for you to eat such things! ⁴³And these things can make you disgusting. So stay away from them so that you do not make yourselves unclean. ⁴⁴I am the LORD your God. I am holy, so you should dedicate yourselves to me and be holy. Don’t make yourselves unclean by eating anything that crawls on the ground. ⁴⁵I, the

LORD, brought you out of Egypt so that I could be your God. I am holy, so you must be holy too.”

⁴⁶These are the rules about all the land animals, birds, all living creatures that live in the water and all creatures that crawl on the ground. ⁴⁷These rules will help the people know what is clean and what is unclean. And they can know which animals they can eat and which animals they cannot eat.

Rules for Women After Giving Birth

12 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites: When a woman gives birth, she will be unclean, just as she is during her monthly period of bleeding. If the baby is a boy, the mother will be unclean for seven days. ³The baby boy must be circumcised on the eighth day. ⁴Because of the blood from childbirth, another 33 days must pass before she can touch anything that is holy. She must not go to the Holy Tent until the time of her purification* is finished. ⁵But if she gives birth to a girl, the mother will be unclean for 14 days, just as she is during her monthly period. Because of the blood from childbirth, another 66 days must pass before she becomes clean.

⁶“After the time of her purification is finished, the mother of a baby girl or boy must bring special sacrifices to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. She must bring a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or young pigeon for a sin offering. ⁷⁻⁸If the woman cannot afford a lamb, she may bring two doves or two young pigeons. One bird will be for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. The priest will offer them before the LORD. In this way the priest will make her pure, and she will be clean

*12:4 *purification* Being made clean or acceptable to God for worship.

from the blood of childbirth. These are the rules for a woman who gives birth to a baby boy or a baby girl.”

Rules About Skin Diseases

13 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²“Someone might have a sore on their skin, or a rash or a bright spot that might develop into a dreaded skin disease. That person must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, who also serve as priests. ³The priest must look at the sore on the person’s skin. If the hair in the sore has become white, and if the sore seems deeper than the person’s skin, it is a dreaded skin disease. When the priest has finished looking at the person, he must announce that the person is unclean.

⁴“There might be a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin, and the hair in that spot has not turned white. If so, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. ⁵On the seventh day, the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. ⁶Seven days later, the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing their clothes, that person will be clean again.

⁷“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the priest has seen the person and decided that he is clean, that person must come again to the priest. ⁸If the priest sees that the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. It is a dreaded skin disease.

⁹“Whoever has a skin disease must be brought to the priest. ¹⁰If the priest sees

that there is a white sore on the skin, and if the hair has become white and the skin looks raw in the sore, ¹¹it is a dreaded skin disease that will not go away. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. No waiting period is needed, because the priest can see that the person is unclean.

¹²“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. ^{13–14}If the priest sees that the disease has covered the whole body and all the skin is white and free from sores, the priest must announce that the person is clean. But if there are any open sores, the person is not clean. ¹⁵When the priest sees the open sores, he must announce that the person is unclean. Any sores show that it is a dreaded skin disease and is unclean.

¹⁶“If the sores heal and the skin becomes white, the person must go back to the priest. ¹⁷If the priest sees that the skin has become white, the person who had the sores is clean, and the priest must announce this.

¹⁸“Someone might have a boil on their skin that has healed. ¹⁹It might swell and become white or change into a bright, white spot with red streaks in it. If this happens, the person must show that spot to the priest. ²⁰If the priest sees that the spot is deeper than the skin and that the hair on it has become white, he must announce that the person is unclean. The spot is a dreaded skin disease that has broken out from inside the boil. ²¹But if the priest looks at the spot, and there are no white hairs in it, and the spot is not deeper than the skin but is faded, the priest must separate the person for seven days. ²²If the spot spreads on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is unclean; it is a dis-

ease. ²³ But if the bright spot stays in its place and does not spread, it is only the scar from the old boil. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

²⁴⁻²⁵ “Someone might get a burn on the skin. If the raw skin becomes a white spot or a white spot with red streaks in it, the priest must look at it. If that white spot seems to be deeper than the skin and the hair at that spot has become white, it is a dreaded skin disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. ²⁶ But if the priest sees that there is no white hair in the bright spot, and the spot is not deeper than the skin but is faded, the priest must separate the person for seven days. ²⁷ On the seventh day, the priest must look at the person again. If the spot has spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is a dreaded skin disease. ²⁸ But if the bright spot has not spread on the skin but has faded, it is only a scar from the burn. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

²⁹ “Someone might have a sore on the scalp[†] or beard. ³⁰ A priest must look at the sore. If the sore seems to be deeper than the skin, and if the hair around it is thin and yellow, the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is a dreaded skin disease. ³¹ If the sore does not seem deeper than the skin, and there is no dark hair in it, the priest must separate that person for seven days. ³² On the seventh day, the priest must look at it again. If the sore has not spread, and there are no yellow hairs growing in it, and it does not seem deeper than the skin, ³³ the person must shave. But the sore area should not be shaved.

The priest must separate that person for seven more days. ³⁴ On the seventh day, the priest must look at the sore again. If it has not spread, and it does not seem deeper than the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. After washing their clothes, that person will be clean. ³⁵ But if the sore spreads on the skin after the person has become clean, ³⁶ then the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has spread, the priest does not need to look for yellow hair. The person is unclean. ³⁷ But if the priest thinks that the sore has not spread, and black hair is growing in it, the sore has healed. The person is clean, and the priest must announce this.

³⁸ “If anyone has white spots on the skin, ³⁹ a priest must look at them. If the spots on that person’s skin are dull white, the disease is only a harmless rash. That person is clean.

⁴⁰ “A man might begin to lose the hair on his head. It is only baldness, so he is clean. ⁴¹ A man might lose hair from his forehead. He is clean. It is only another kind of baldness. ⁴² But if there is a red and white sore on his scalp, it is a dreaded skin disease. ⁴³ A priest must look at him. If the swelling of the sore is red and white and looks like a dreaded skin disease that appears on other parts of the body, ⁴⁴ then he has a dreaded skin disease on his scalp. The person is unclean, and the priest must announce that he is unclean.

⁴⁵ “People with a dreaded skin disease must warn other people. They must shout, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ They must tear their clothes at the seams. They must let their hair grow wild,[‡] and they must cover their mouth. ⁴⁶ They are un-

[†]13:29 *scalp* The skin on a person’s head. Also in verse 42.

[‡]13:45 *They must tear ... wild* This also showed that a person was very sad about something.

clean the whole time that they have the disease. They are unclean and must live outside the camp.

⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸“Some clothing might have mildew on it. The cloth could be linen or wool, woven or knitted. Or the mildew might be on a piece of leather or on something made from leather.

⁴⁹If the mildew is green or red, it must be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰The priest must look at it and put it in a separate place for seven days. ⁵¹⁻⁵²On the seventh day, he must look at it again. It doesn't matter if the mildew is on leather or cloth or if the cloth is woven or knitted. And it doesn't matter what the leather was used for. If the mildew has spread, the object is unclean because the mildew is harmful. The priest must burn it.

⁵³“If the priest sees that the mildew did not spread on the object, it must be washed. It doesn't matter if it is leather or cloth or if the cloth is knitted or woven, it must be washed. ⁵⁴He must order the people to wash it. Then he must separate the clothing for seven more days. ⁵⁵After that time, the priest must look at it again. If the mildew still looks the same, the object is unclean. It doesn't matter if the mildew has not spread; you must burn that cloth or piece of leather. It doesn't matter whether the mildew was on the inside or outside.

⁵⁶“But if the priest looks at that piece of leather or cloth, and the mildew has faded, he must cut the infected spot out of the piece of leather or cloth. It doesn't matter if the cloth is woven or knitted. ⁵⁷But the mildew might come back to that piece of leather or cloth. If that happens, the mildew is spreading, and the object must be burned. ⁵⁸If the mildew did not come back to the piece of leather or to the woven or knitted cloth after

washing, it must be washed again. Only then will it be clean.”

⁵⁹These are the rules for mildew on pieces of leather or cloth, whether the cloth is woven or knitted.

Rules for Cleansing Those With Skin Diseases

14 The LORD said to Moses, ²“These are the rules for people who have had a skin disease and have been made well. This is what the priest must do on the day they are to be made clean. ³The priest must go to them outside the camp and look to see if the skin disease is healed. ⁴If they are healthy, the priest will tell them to do these things: they must bring two clean birds that are still alive, a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth and a hyssop plant. ⁵Then the priest will order one bird to be killed and its blood drained into a clay bowl full of fresh water. ⁶He must take the other bird that is still alive and the piece of cedar wood, the piece of red cloth and the hyssop plant and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. ⁷He must sprinkle the blood seven times on those who had the skin disease. Then he must announce that they are clean. After that, the priest must go to an open field and let the live bird go free.

⁸“The people going through this purification ceremony must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe their bodies in water. Then they will be clean. They may then go into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days. ⁹On the seventh day, they must shave off all their hair. They must shave their head, their beard and their eyebrows—yes, all their hair. Then they must wash their clothes and bathe their bodies in water. Then they will be clean.

¹⁰“On the eighth day, anyone who had a skin disease must take two male lambs that have nothing wrong with them and a one-year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. They must also take three kilogrammes[¶] of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering and a third of a litre[§] of olive oil. ¹¹The priest will bring that person and those sacrifices before the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ¹²The priest will take one of the male lambs and the oil as a guilt offering. He will lift them in front of the LORD to show they were presented to God. ¹³Then the priest will kill the male lamb in the holy place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest. It is very holy.

¹⁴“The priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering. He will put some of this blood on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of that person. ¹⁵The priest will also take some of the oil and pour it into his own left palm. ¹⁶Then the priest will dip the finger of his right hand into the oil that is in his left palm. He will use his finger to sprinkle some of the oil seven times before the LORD. ¹⁷Then he will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the person to be made clean. He will put that oil on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of the oil on the tip of the person’s right ear, on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the person’s right foot. ¹⁸He will put the oil that is left in his palm on the

head of the person to be made clean. In this way he will make that person pure before the LORD.

¹⁹“Then the priest must offer the sin offering to make that person pure. After that, he will kill the animal for the burnt offering. ²⁰He will then offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. In this way the priest will make that person pure, and that person will become clean.

²¹“A poor person might not be able to afford all these offerings. So that poor person can use one male lamb as a guilt offering. It will be presented to God so that the priest can make that person pure. The poor person must take one kilogramme^{**} of fine flour mixed with oil. This flour will be used for a grain offering. The poor person must also take a third of a litre of olive oil ²²and two doves or two young pigeons. Even poor people can afford these things. One bird will be a sin offering, and the other will be a burnt offering.

²³“On the eighth day of his cleansing, that person will bring these things to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent before the LORD. ²⁴The priest will take the lamb for the guilt offering and the oil, and he will lift them up to show they were offered before the LORD. ²⁵Then he will kill the lamb for the guilt offering, take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of that person. ²⁶He will also pour some of this oil into his own left palm. ²⁷He will use the finger of his right hand to sprinkle some of the oil

[¶]14:10 *three kilogrammes* Literally, “3/10”, probably meaning 3/10 of an *ephah*.

[§]14:10 *a third of a litre* Literally, “1 log”. Also in verse 21.

^{**}14:21 *one kilogramme* Literally, “1/10 of an *ephah*”.

that is in his left palm seven times before the LORD. ²⁸ Then he will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the person to be made clean. He will put that oil on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of the oil on the tip of the person's right ear, on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the person's right foot. ²⁹ He will put the oil that is left in his palm on the head of the person to be made clean. In this way he will make that person pure before the LORD.

³⁰ "Then the priest must offer two doves or two young pigeons, whichever the person can afford. ³¹ He must offer one of these birds as a sin offering and the other bird as a burnt offering. He must offer the birds with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make that person pure before the LORD, and that person will become clean."

³² This is the law for a person with a skin disease who cannot afford the sacrifices needed at the time of his cleansing.

Rules for Mildew in a House

³³ The LORD also said to Moses and Aaron, ³⁴ "I am giving the land of Canaan to your people. Your people will enter that land. At that time I might cause mildew to grow in someone's house. ³⁵ The person who owns that house must come and tell the priest, 'I see something like mildew in my house.'

³⁶ "Then the priest must order the people to take everything out of the house before he goes in to look at the mildew. Then the priest will not have to say everything in the house is unclean. After the people have taken everything out of the house, the priest will go in to look at the house. ³⁷ He will look at the mildew. If the mildew on the walls of the house has spots that are a green or red colour, and if the mildew goes into the wall's

surface, ³⁸ he must go out of the house and lock the house for seven days.

³⁹ "On the seventh day, the priest must come back and check the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls of the house, ⁴⁰ then he must order the people to tear out the stones with the mildew on them and throw them away. They must put these stones at a special unclean place outside the city. ⁴¹ Then the priest must have the entire house scraped inside. The people must throw away the plaster that was scraped off the walls. They must put that plaster at a special unclean place outside the city. ⁴² Then new stones must be put in the walls, and the walls must be covered with new plaster.

⁴³ "Maybe someone took away the old stones and plaster and put in new stones and plaster. And maybe mildew appears again in that house. ⁴⁴ Then the priest must come in and check the house. If the mildew has spread in the house, it is a disease that spreads quickly to other places. So the house is unclean. ⁴⁵ The house must be torn down. All the stones, plaster and pieces of wood must be taken to the special unclean place outside the city. ⁴⁶ Anyone who goes into that house will be unclean until evening. ⁴⁷ Anyone who eats in that house or lies down in there must wash their clothes.

⁴⁸ "After new stones and plaster are put in a house, the priest must check the house. If the mildew has not spread through the house, the priest will announce that the house is clean, because the mildew is gone.

⁴⁹ "Then, to make the house clean, the priest must take two birds, a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth and a hyssop plant. ⁵⁰ He will kill one of the birds and let its blood drain into a clay bowl full of fresh water. ⁵¹ Then he will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the

piece of red cloth and the live bird and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Then he will sprinkle that blood on the house seven times. ⁵²In this way he will use these things to make the house clean. ⁵³He will go to an open field outside the city and let the live bird go free. In this way the priest will make the house pure. The house will be clean.”

⁵⁴These are the rules for how to manage any dreaded skin disease, including sores. ⁵⁵They also include instructions for dealing with mildew on pieces of cloth or in a house, ⁵⁶swellings, rashes or bright spots on the skin. ⁵⁷These rules teach how to decide when someone or something is clean or unclean. These are the rules for skin diseases and mildew.

Keeping the Body Pure

15 The LORD also said to Moses and Aaron, ²“Say to the Israelites: Any man who has a genital discharge is unclean. ³He is unclean whether the discharge continues to flow or whether it is blocked.

⁴“If a man with a discharge lies on a bed, that bed becomes unclean. Everything he sits on will be unclean. ⁵If you touch that bed, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. ⁶If you sit on anything that he sat on, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. ⁷If you touch him, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. ⁸If he spits on you, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. ⁹If that man sits on a saddle, it will be unclean. ¹⁰If you touch or carry anything that was under him, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. ¹¹If he touches

you, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

¹²“If a man with a discharge touches a clay bowl, that bowl must be broken. If he touches a wooden bowl, that bowl must be washed in water.

¹³“When a man is healed from his discharge, he must wait seven days to begin the cleansing ceremony. Then he must wash his clothes and bathe his body in fresh water to be judged clean. ¹⁴On the eighth day, he must take for himself two doves or two young pigeons and come before the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He will give the two birds to the priest. ¹⁵The priest will offer the birds, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make that man pure before the LORD.

¹⁶“If a man has a flow of semen, he must bathe his whole body in water. He will be unclean until evening. ¹⁷If the semen is on any clothing or leather, that clothing or leather must be washed with water. It will be unclean until evening. ¹⁸If a woman has sex with a man, and he has a flow of semen, both the man and the woman must bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening.

¹⁹“When a woman has a discharge from her monthly period of bleeding, she will be unclean for seven days. Anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. ²⁰Everything she lies on during her monthly period will be unclean. And everything she sits on during that time will be unclean. ²¹Whoever touches her bed must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. ²²Whoever touches anything she has sat on must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. ²³It doesn’t matter if they touched the woman’s bed or if

they touched something she sat on, they will be unclean until evening.

²⁴“If a man has sex with a woman during her monthly period, he will be unclean for seven days. Every bed he lies on will be unclean.

²⁵“If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not during her monthly period, or if she has a discharge after that time, she will be unclean, just as during the time of her monthly period. She will be unclean for as long as she has a discharge. ²⁶Any bed she lies on during the time of her discharge will be like her bed during the time of her monthly period. Everything she sits on will be unclean, just as it is during the time she is unclean from her monthly period. ²⁷Whoever touches these things will become unclean. They must wash their own clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. ²⁸After the woman’s discharge stops, she must wait seven days. After that, she will be clean. ²⁹Then on the eighth day, she must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ³⁰Then the priest must offer one bird for a sin offering and the other bird for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will purify the Holy Tent before the LORD from the woman’s uncleanness.

³¹“So you must separate the Israelites who have become unclean. If you don’t keep them separate, they might come into the Holy Tent where I live among them and make it unclean. And then they would have to die!”

³²These are the rules for anyone with a discharge from the body. They are for

men who become unclean from a flow of semen, ³³and for women who become unclean from their monthly period. They are for anyone, man or woman, who has a bodily discharge, and for any man who has sex with a woman during the time she is unclean.

The Day of Purification

16 Two of Aaron’s sons died while offering incense to the LORD.^{††} After that time, the LORD spoke to Moses. ²The LORD said, “Talk to your brother Aaron. Tell him that he cannot go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place any time he wants to. Behind that curtain is where I appear in a cloud above the cover that is on top of the Holy Box. If Aaron goes into that room at the wrong time, he will die!

³“Here are the instructions Aaron must follow to enter the Most Holy Place: he will bring a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴He will bathe his whole body with water and put on the holy linen clothing—the linen underclothes next to his body, the linen long shirt, the linen belt and the linen turban on his head. ⁵He will also bring the animals that he gets from the Israelite community—two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

⁶“Aaron will bring forward the bull he brought for his own sin offering, which he will use to purify^{‡‡} the Most Holy Place for himself and for his family. ⁷He will also take the two goats and bring them before the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ⁸Aaron will throw lots

^{††}16:1 *Two of Aaron’s sons ... LORD* See Lev. 10:1-2.

^{‡‡}16:6 *purify* The Hebrew word means “to wipe clean” or “to erase” a person’s sins. Also in verses 11,16,17,34.

for the two goats. One lot will be for the LORD. The other lot will be for Azazel.[¶]

⁹“Aaron will bring forward the goat chosen to be offered to the LORD. This is the goat that Aaron will later sacrifice as a sin offering. ¹⁰But the goat chosen by lot for Azazel will be left standing alive before the LORD. This goat will later be sent out into the desert to Azazel to remove the sins of the people.

¹¹“Aaron will bring forward his bull, which he will offer as a sin offering to purify the Most Holy Place for himself and for his family. He will kill his bull as a sin offering. ¹²Then he will take a firepan full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD. Aaron will take two handfuls of sweet incense that has been ground into powder and take it into the room behind the curtain. ¹³He will put the incense on the fire before the LORD. Then the cloud of incense will hide the cover that is over the Box that holds the Agreement.^{§§} This way Aaron will not die. ¹⁴Aaron will dip his finger into the bull’s blood and sprinkle it on the east side of the cover of the Holy Box. Then he will sprinkle the blood seven times in front of the Holy Box.

¹⁵“Then Aaron will kill the people’s goat as a sin offering. He will bring this goat’s blood into the room behind the curtain. He will do with the goat’s blood as he did with the bull’s blood. He will sprinkle the goat’s blood on the cover and in front of it. ¹⁶In this way Aaron will purify the Most Holy Place from all the uncleanness, disobedience and other sins of the Israelites. He will also purify the Meeting Tent, because it stands

in the middle of people with all their uncleanness.

¹⁷“No one must be in the Meeting Tent when Aaron goes in to purify the Most Holy Place. No one is to go in there until Aaron comes out after purifying it for himself, his family and all the Israelites. ¹⁸Then Aaron will go out to the altar that is before the LORD. Aaron will make the altar pure. He will take some of the blood from the bull and from the goat and put it on each of the corners at the top of the altar. ¹⁹Then he will dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it on the altar seven times. In this way Aaron will make the altar clean and holy from all the uncleanness of the Israelites.

²⁰“When Aaron has finished purifying the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent and the altar, he will bring the live goat to the front of the tent. ²¹He will put both his hands on the head of the goat. Then he will confess all the wickedness of the Israelites, all their acts of disobedience and all their other sins. In this way Aaron will lay the people’s sins on the goat’s head. Then he will send the goat away into the desert. A man will be standing by, ready to lead this goat away. ²²So the goat will carry all the people’s sins on itself into the empty desert. The man who leads the goat will let it loose in the desert.

²³“Then Aaron will enter the Meeting Tent. He will take off the linen clothes that he put on when he went into the Most Holy Place. He will leave these clothes there. ²⁴He will bathe his whole body with water in a holy place. Then he will put on his clothes. He will come out and offer his burnt offering and the peo-

[¶]**16:8 Azazel** This name means “scapegoat”, “the goat for God” or “the goat demon”. This might be the name of a particular place in the desert where the goat was released. Also in verses 10,26.

^{§§}**16:13 Box that holds the Agreement** Literally, “Testimony”. See Agreement in the Word List.

ple's burnt offering. He will make himself and the people pure. ²⁵ Then he will burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

²⁶ "The man who led the goat to Azazel must wash his clothes and bathe his whole body in water. After that, he may come into the camp.

²⁷ "The bull and the goat for the sin offerings will be taken outside the camp. (The blood from these animals was brought into the Most Holy Place to make it pure.) The skins, bodies and body waste of those animals will be burned in the fire. ²⁸ Then the man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe his whole body in water. After that, he may come into the camp.

²⁹ "This law will always continue for you: on the tenth day of the seventh month, you must control your desires,* and you must not do any work. And the immigrants living among you should not do any work either. ³⁰ On this day, the priest will offer the sacrifices to make you pure and remove all your sins. Then you will be clean for the LORD. ³¹ You must control your desires because this day is a very important day of rest for you. This is a law that will continue forever.

³² "In the future this ceremony will be done by the priest who will be anointed and appointed to serve after his father. That priest will put on the holy linen clothes ³³ and make the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent and the altar pure. He will do this for the priests and all the people. ³⁴ This law will continue forever. Once every year you will purify the Israelites from all their sins."

So Aaron did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

Rules About Killing and Eating Animals

17 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the Israelites. Tell them that this is what the LORD has commanded: ³⁻⁴ Any Israelite who wants to kill a bull, lamb or goat must bring it to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. There it will be presented as an offering to the LORD before the LORD's Holy Tent. If you kill one of these animals anywhere else, inside or outside the camp, it will be the same as committing murder. You will be separated from your people because you are guilty of spilling blood! ⁵ This rule is so that you will stop killing animals for sacrifice out in the field. Now you must bring them to the LORD. You must bring any animals that you want to sacrifice to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. There you can give them to the priest so that he can offer them as fellowship offerings to the LORD. ⁶ The priest will splash their blood against the LORD's altar near the entrance of the Meeting Tent. And the priest will burn the fat from those animals on the altar as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ⁷ In this way you will stop being unfaithful to me by offering sacrifices to your 'goat gods'. This law will continue forever.

⁸ "Tell the people: Any citizen of Israel or immigrant living among you might want to offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice. ⁹ They must take the sacrifice to the entrance of the Meeting Tent and offer it to the LORD. Whoever does not do this will be separated from their people.

¹⁰ "I will turn against those who eat blood whether they are citizens of Israel or immigrants living among you.

***16:29 control your desires** Literally, "deny yourselves". This probably means avoiding food, drink, sex and similar pleasures. Also in verse 31.

I will separate them from their people.
¹¹This is because the life of the body is in the blood. I have told you that you must pour the blood on the altar to purify yourselves. It is the blood that makes a person pure. ¹²That is why I am telling you Israelites and the immigrants living among you that you must not eat blood.

¹³“If any of you, whether Israelite or immigrant living among you, goes hunting and kills a wild animal or bird that you are allowed to eat, you must pour the blood of that animal on the ground and cover it with dirt. ¹⁴This is because the life of every kind of animal is in its blood. So I gave this command to the Israelites: don’t eat the blood of any animal! Whoever eats blood must be separated from their people.

¹⁵“If any of you, whether Israelite or immigrant living among you, eats an animal that died by itself or was killed by some other animal, you will be unclean until evening. You must wash your clothes and bathe your whole body with water. ¹⁶If you don’t wash your clothes and bathe your whole body, you will be punished for your guilt.”

Rules About Sexual Relations

18 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites: I am the LORD your God. ³You must not follow the customs of Egypt where you lived, and you must not follow the customs of the Canaanites where I am leading you. You must not follow their laws. ⁴You must obey my rules and follow my laws. I am the LORD your God. ⁵You must obey my rules and my laws. By obeying them, you will live. I am the LORD.

⁶“None of you men must ever have sex with[†] your close relatives. I am the LORD.

⁷“You must never bring shame to your father by having sex with your mother. She is your mother, so you must not have sex with her. ⁸You must not have sex with any wife of your father, because any wife he has is only for him.[‡]

⁹“You must not have sex with your sister or stepsister, whether she is the daughter of your father or your mother. It doesn’t matter if she grew up in your own home or another home.

¹⁰“You must not have sex with your granddaughter. It doesn’t matter whether she is the daughter of your son or the daughter of your daughter. They are under your protection until they are married.

¹¹“If your stepsister’s father belongs to the same family group as your father, she is your sister. So you must not have sex with her.

¹²“You must not have sex with your father’s sister. She is your father’s close relative. ¹³You must not have sex with your mother’s sister. She is your mother’s close relative. ¹⁴You must not have sex with the wife of your father’s brother. She is your aunt. Your uncle is the only one who may have sex with her.

¹⁵“You must not have sex with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife, so you must not have sex with her.

¹⁶“You must not have sex with your brother’s wife. Only your brother may have sex with her.[¶]

¹⁷“You must not have sex with a mother and her daughter or her granddaughter. It doesn’t matter if this grand-

[†]18:6 *have sex with* Literally, “uncover the nakedness of”. Also in verses 7,9-12,15-19.

[‡]18:8 *any wife ... for him* Literally, “she is the nakedness of your father.”

[¶]18:16 *Only your brother ... with her* Literally, “She is the nakedness of your brother.”

daughter is the daughter of this woman's son or daughter. Her daughter and granddaughters are her close relatives. It is shameful and wrong to do this.

¹⁸“While your wife is still living, you must not take her sister as another wife. This will make the sisters become enemies. You must not have sex with your wife's sister.

¹⁹“You must not have sex with a woman during her monthly period of bleeding. She is unclean during this time.

²⁰“You must not have sex with your neighbour's wife. This will only make you filthy.[§]

²¹“You must not give any of your children through the fire to Molech. If you do this, you will bring disgrace on the name of your God. I am the LORD.

²²“Men, you must not have sex with another man as with a woman. That is a disgusting sin!

²³“Men, you must not have sex with any animal. This will make you filthy. And women, you must not have sex with any animal. It is against nature!

²⁴“Don't make yourself unclean by doing any of these wrong things! I am throwing nations off their land and giving it to you because they did those terrible sins. ²⁵They made the land filthy, and I am punishing the land for the sin done there, and it will vomit out the people who live there.

²⁶“So you must obey my laws and rules. You must not do any of these disgusting sins. These rules are for the citizens of Israel and the immigrants living among you. ²⁷Those who lived in the land before you did all these disgusting things. So the land became filthy.

²⁸If you do these things, you will make the land filthy. And it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were there before you. ²⁹Whoever does any of these disgusting things must be separated from their people! ³⁰Obey my command and do not follow the disgusting ways of the people who were here before you. Do not make yourself filthy with such things. I am the LORD your God.”

Israel Belongs to God

19 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell all the Israelites: I am the LORD your God. I am holy, so you must be holy.

³“Each of you must honour your mother and father and keep my special days of rest. ^{**} I am the LORD your God!

⁴“Do not worship idols. Do not make statues of gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

⁵“When you offer a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD, you must offer it in the right way so that you will be accepted. ⁶You must eat it the same day you offer it or on the next day. But if any of that sacrifice is left on the third day, you must burn it in the fire. ⁷You must not eat any of that sacrifice on the third day. It will be unclean, and it will not be accepted. ⁸You will be guilty of sin if you do that, because you did not respect the holy things that belong to the LORD. If you do that you will be separated from your people.

⁹“When you cut your crops at harvest time, do not cut all the way to the corners of your fields. And if grain falls on the ground, you must not gather up that grain. ¹⁰Don't pick all the grapes in your

§18:20 *filthy* Or “polluted” or “unclean”. Also in verses 23,25,27.

**19:3 *special days of rest* Or “Sabbaths”. This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all the special days when the people were not supposed to work. Also in verse 30.

vineyard or pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. You must leave those things for poor people and for immigrants. I am the LORD your God.

¹¹“You must not steal. You must not cheat people. You must not lie to each other. ¹²You must not use my name to make false promises. If you do that, you will bring disgrace on the name of your God. I am the LORD!

¹³“You must not cheat or rob your neighbour. You must not hold a hired worker’s wages overnight until morning. ††

¹⁴“You must not curse anyone who is deaf. You must not do anything to make a blind person fall. But you must respect your God. I am the LORD.

¹⁵“You must be fair in judgement. You must not show special favour to the poor. And you must not show special favour to important people. You must be fair when you judge your neighbour.

¹⁶You must not go around spreading false stories about other people. Don’t stand by quietly and allow your neighbour to be wrongly put to death. I am the LORD.

¹⁷“Don’t secretly hate any of your neighbours. But tell them openly what they have done wrong. Then you will not be just as guilty of sin as they are. ¹⁸Forget about the wrong things people do to you. Don’t try to get even. Love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD.

¹⁹“You must obey my laws. You must not let your animals mate with animals of a different kind. You must not sow your field with two kinds of seed. You must not wear clothing made from two kinds of material mixed together.

²⁰“It may happen that a man has sex with a woman who is the slave of an-

other man. But this slave woman has not been bought or given her freedom. If this happens, the man must pay a fine to her owner. But they will not be put to death because the woman was not free.

²¹The man must bring his guilt offering to the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He must bring a ram for a guilt offering. ²²The priest will make him pure by offering the ram as a guilt offering before the LORD. The offering is for the man’s sin, which will then be forgiven.

²³“In the future, when you enter your country, you will plant many kinds of trees for food. After planting a tree, you must wait three years before you can use any of the fruit from that tree. You must not eat that fruit. ²⁴In the fourth year, all the fruit from that tree will belong to the LORD, a holy offering of praise to him. ²⁵Then, in the fifth year, you can eat the fruit from that tree. And the tree will produce more and more fruit for you. I am the LORD your God.

²⁶“You must not eat any meat with blood still in it.

“You must not try to use different kinds of magic to tell the future.

²⁷“You must not cut the hair on the side of your head. You must not trim the edges of your beard. ²⁸You must not cut your body as a way to remember the dead. You must not make any tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

²⁹“Do not dishonour your daughters by making them become prostitutes. If you do that, others will do the same, and your whole land will be filled with shameful sin.

³⁰“You must not work on my special days of rest. You must honour my holy place. I am the LORD.

††19:13 Workers were paid at the end of each day for the work they did that day. See Matt. 20:1-16.

³¹“Do not try to contact ghosts or the spirits of the dead for advice or secret knowledge. This will make you unclean. I am the LORD your God.

³²“Show respect to old people and give them honour. You must respect your God. I am the LORD.

³³“Do not mistreat immigrants living among you. ³⁴You must treat them the same as you treat your own citizens. Love them as you love yourselves. Remember, you were immigrants in Egypt. I am the LORD your God!

³⁵“You must be fair when you judge people, and you must be fair when you measure and weigh things. ³⁶Your baskets should be the right size. Your jars should hold the right amount of liquids. Your weights and scales should weigh things correctly. I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

³⁷“You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am the LORD.”

Warning Against Worshipping Idols

20 The LORD said to Moses, ²“You must also tell the Israelites these things: Anyone among you who gives one of their children to the false god Molech must be put to death! It doesn’t matter if they are a citizen of Israel or an immigrant, you must throw stones at them and kill them. ³I will turn against them and separate them from their people, because they gave their children to Molech. They brought disgrace on my holy name. And they made my holy place unclean. ⁴Maybe the common people will ignore them. Maybe they will not kill those who gave their children to Molech. ⁵But I will turn against these people and their families.

I will separate them from their people. I will separate anyone who is unfaithful to me and chases after Molech.

⁶“I will turn against anyone who tries to contact ghosts or spirits of the dead for advice or secret knowledge. Whoever does this is being unfaithful to me. So I will separate them from their people.

⁷“Dedicate yourselves to me and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. ⁸Remember and obey my laws. That is how I, the LORD, make you my holy people.

⁹“Whoever curses their father or mother must be put to death. They cursed their father or mother, so they are responsible for their own death!‡‡

Punishments for Sexual Sins

¹⁰“If a man has sex with his neighbour’s wife, both the man and the woman are guilty of adultery and must be put to death! ¹¹If a man has sex with his father’s wife, both the man and the woman must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death. Only his father may have sex with her.

¹²“If a man has sex with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. They have committed a disgraceful act! They are responsible for their own death.

¹³“If a man has sex with another man as with a woman, both of them have done a disgusting thing. They must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹⁴“If a man has sex with a woman and her mother, it is a disgrace. That man and both women should be burned to death! Never let such a shameful thing happen among your people.

¹⁵“If a man has sex with an animal, both the man and the animal must be put

‡‡20:9 *so they ... death* Or “so his blood is on him”.

to death. ¹⁶If a woman has sex with an animal, you must kill the woman and the animal. They must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹⁷“It is a shameful thing for a brother and his sister or half-sister to marry each other and have sex with each other.”[¶] They must be punished in public. They must be separated from their people. The man who has sex with his sister must be punished for his sin.^{§§}

¹⁸“If a man has sex with a woman during her monthly period of bleeding, both the woman and the man must be separated from their people. They sinned because they exposed her source of blood.

¹⁹“You must not have sex with* your mother’s sister or your father’s sister. That is the sin of having sex with a close relative. You must be punished for your sins.[†]

²⁰“A man must not have sex with his uncle’s wife. Only his uncle may have sex with her. That man and his uncle’s wife will be punished for their sins. They will die without children.[‡]

²¹“It is wrong for a man to take his brother’s wife. That would make them unclean. Only his brother may have sex with her! They will have no children.

²²“You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am leading you to your land. You will live in that country. If you obey my laws and rules, that land will not vomit you out. ²³I am forcing other people to leave that country because they have done all

those shameful things—things that disgust me! So do not live the way those people lived. ²⁴But I have told you that you will get their land. I will give their land to you. It will be your land! It is a land filled with many good things.[¶] I am the LORD your God. I have treated you differently from other people. ²⁵So you must treat clean animals differently from unclean animals. You must also treat clean birds differently from unclean birds. Don’t eat any of these unclean birds or animals or things that crawl on the ground. I have said that these things are unclean for you. ²⁶I have separated you from other nations to be my own special people. So you must be holy because I am the LORD, and I am holy.

²⁷“It is wrong for any man or woman to contact a ghost or the spirit of a dead person and allow that spirit to take control of them. Anyone who does this must be put to death. You must kill them with stones. And they are responsible for their own death.”

Rules for Priests

21 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell these things to Aaron’s sons, the priests: A priest must not make himself unclean by touching a dead person. ²But if the dead person was one of his close relatives, he can touch the dead body. The priest can make himself unclean if the dead person is his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother or ³his

[¶]20:17 *sex with each other* Literally, “he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness.”

^{§§}20:17 *The man ... sin* Literally, “He will carry his guilt.”

*20:19 *have sex with* Literally, “uncover the nakedness of”. Also in verse 21.

[†]20:19 *You ... sins* Literally, “You will carry your guilt.”

[‡]20:20 *That man ... children* Literally, “They must bear their childlessness. They will die.”

[¶]20:24 *land ... things* Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey”.

unmarried[§] sister. (This sister is close to him because she has no husband. So the priest may make himself unclean for her if she dies.)⁴ But a priest must not make himself unclean and unholy if the dead person was his wife or a relative by marriage.**

⁵“Priests must not shave bald spots on their heads. They must not shave off the edges of their beards. They must not make any cuts in their bodies. ⁶Priests must be holy for their God. They must not bring disgrace on God’s name. They offer special gifts to the LORD, the food of their God.

⁷“A priest is holy for his God, so he must not marry a prostitute or any woman who has had sex without being married or a divorced woman. ⁸You must treat the priest as holy, because he is the one who offers the food of your God. Yes, treat the priest as holy, because I am holy. I am the LORD, and I make you all holy.

⁹“If a priest’s daughter becomes a prostitute, she ruins her reputation and brings shame to her father. She must be burned to death!

¹⁰“The high priest was chosen from among his brothers. The anointing oil was poured on his head. He was chosen to wear the special clothes, so he must not do things to show his sorrow in public. He must not leave his hair uncombed or tear his clothes. ¹¹He must not make himself unclean by touching a dead body. He must not go near a dead body, even if it is his own father or mother. ¹²The high priest must not leave God’s holy place to attend a funeral. If he touches a dead body and re-

turns, he will make God’s holy place unclean. The anointing oil was poured on the high priest’s head to make him holy. I am the LORD.

¹³“The high priest must marry a woman who is a virgin. ¹⁴He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, a woman who has been raped or a prostitute. The high priest must marry a virgin from his own people ¹⁵so that he will not keep his children from being holy and serving as priests. I am the LORD, who makes the high priest holy.”

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷“Tell Aaron: If any of your descendants have anything wrong with them, they must not offer the food to their God. ¹⁸Any man who has something wrong with him must not serve as priest and bring sacrifices to me. These men cannot serve as priests: blind men, lame men, men with bad scars on their faces, men with arms or legs that are too long, ¹⁹men with broken feet or hands, ²⁰men with bent backs, men who are dwarfs,^{††} men who are cross-eyed, men with rashes or bad skin diseases and men with crushed testicles.

²¹“If one of Aaron’s descendants has something wrong with him, he cannot approach the altar to bring gifts to the LORD. And he cannot offer the food to his God. ²²He is from the family of priests, so he can eat the food offered to his God, both the holy and the most holy food. ²³But he cannot go near the curtain of the Most Holy Place, and he cannot go near the altar. This is because he has something wrong with him. He must not make my holy places unholy.

§21:3 *unmarried* Literally, “virgin”, a girl who was never married and never had sex.

**21:4 Or “A master must not become unclean among his people.”

††21:20 *dwarfs* A small person whose body stopped growing properly.

I am the LORD, and I make these places holy.”

²⁴So Moses told these things to Aaron, Aaron’s sons and all the Israelites.

22 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell Aaron and his sons: The gifts that the Israelites bring to me become holy. They belong to me, so you priests must show respect for these gifts. If you don’t, you will bring disgrace on my holy name. I am the LORD. ³If any of your descendants is unclean and touches these things that the Israelites have offered to me as holy, that person must be separated from me. I am the LORD.

⁴“If any of Aaron’s descendants has a dreaded skin disease or a discharge, he cannot eat the holy food until he becomes clean. This rule is also for any priest who is unclean because he touched a dead body or has had a flow of semen. ⁵He can also become unclean if he touches any unclean crawling animal or an unclean person. It doesn’t matter what made that person unclean. ⁶If he touches any of these things, he will be unclean until evening. He must not eat any of the holy food. He must bathe his body in water, or he cannot eat the holy food. ⁷He will be clean only after the sun goes down. Then he can eat the holy food because it is his share.

⁸“A priest must not eat any animal that died by itself or that was killed by wild animals. If he eats that animal, he will be unclean. I am the LORD.

⁹“The priests must obey my instructions to them. They must be careful not to dishonour the holy things. If they are not careful, they will become guilty of sin and die. I am the LORD who makes them holy. ¹⁰Only a priest’s family can eat the holy food. A foreigner staying with the priest as a hired worker must not eat any of the holy food. ¹¹But if the priest buys a person as a slave with his

own money, that person may eat some of the holy things. Slaves who were born in the priest’s house may also eat some of the priest’s food. ¹²A priest’s daughter might marry a man who is not a priest. If she does that, she cannot eat any of the holy offerings. ¹³A priest’s daughter might become a widow, or she might be divorced. If she does not have any children to support her, she may go back to live in her father’s house, as when she was a child. There she can eat some of her father’s food. But only people from a priest’s family can eat this food.

¹⁴“Whoever eats some of the holy food by mistake must give the priest the price of that food and add another one-fifth of the price as a fine.

¹⁵“The Israelites will bring offerings to the LORD. These offerings become holy, so the priests must not let them be used in a wrong way. ¹⁶They must not let the people eat these offerings. If they do, they are guilty of doing wrong, and they must pay for it. I am the LORD who makes the priests holy.”

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸“Tell Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites: A citizen of Israel or an immigrant living in Israel might want to bring an offering. It might be because of a promise that person made, or it might just be a special sacrifice that person wanted to give to the LORD as a burnt offering. ^{19–20}These are gifts that the people bring because they really want to give a gift to God. If the gift is a bull or a sheep or a goat, the animal must be a male. And do not bring an offering that has anything wrong with it. The offering will not be accepted and will do you no good.

²¹“You might bring a fellowship offering to the LORD. That fellowship offering might be payment for a special promise that you made. Or maybe it is a special gift that you wanted to give to

the Lord. It can be a bull, sheep or goat, but it must be healthy. There must be nothing wrong with that animal. ²²You must not offer to the LORD any animal that is blind, that has broken bones or is lame, or that has a discharge or a bad rash or scabs. You must not offer sick animals as a gift to the LORD. You must not put anything like that on his altar.

²³“Sometimes a bull or lamb will have a leg that is too long, or a foot that did not grow right. If you want to give that animal as a special gift to the Lord, it will be accepted. But it will not be accepted as payment for a special promise that you made.

²⁴“If an animal has bruised, crushed, torn or cut off testicles, you must not offer that animal to the LORD. You must not do this anywhere in your land. ²⁵And you must not accept such animals from foreigners to offer as food to your God. The animals have been hurt in some way. They have something wrong with them, so they will not be accepted and will do you no good.”

²⁶The LORD said to Moses, ²⁷“When a calf or a lamb or a goat is born, it must stay seven days with its mother. Then from the eighth day on, this animal will be accepted as a sacrifice offered as a gift to the LORD. ²⁸But you must not kill the animal and its mother on the same day. This rule is the same for cattle, sheep and goats.

²⁹“You may bring a sacrifice to give thanks to the LORD. But you must do it in the right way so that it will be accepted for you. ³⁰You must eat the whole animal that day. You must not leave any of the meat for the next morning. I am the LORD.

³¹“Remember my commands, and obey them. I am the LORD. ³²Do not bring disgrace on my holy name. The Israelites must respect me as holy. I am the LORD who makes you holy. ³³I brought you out of Egypt in order to be your God. I am the LORD.”

The Special Festivals

23 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites: These are the LORD’s festivals. These must be announced as the times he has chosen for holy meetings.

Sabbath

³“Work for six days, but the seventh day, the Sabbath, will be a special day of rest, a holy meeting. You must not do any work. It is a day of rest to honour the LORD wherever you live.

Passover

⁴“These are the LORD’s festivals. You will announce these holy meetings at the times chosen for them. ⁵There will be a Passover sacrifice^{‡‡} to the LORD on the fourteenth day of the first month^{¶¶} just before dark.

Festival of Unleavened Bread

⁶“The LORD’s Festival of Unleavened Bread is on the fifteenth day of the same month. You will eat bread without yeast for seven days. ⁷On the first day of this festival, you will have a holy meeting. You must not do any work on that day. ⁸For seven days you will bring gifts to the LORD. Then there will be another holy meeting on the seventh day. You must not do any work on that day.”

^{‡‡}23:5 *Passover sacrifice* Or “protective sacrifice”. The Hebrew word translated “Passover” comes from a word meaning “to protect”.

^{¶¶}23:5 *first month* Abib (or Nisan). See Abib in the Word List.

Festival of the First Harvests

⁹The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰“Tell the Israelites: You will enter the land that I will give you, and you will harvest its crops. At that time you must bring to the priest the first bundle of grain from your harvest. ¹¹The priest will lift the bundle to show it was offered before the LORD. Then it will be accepted for you. The priest will present it to the LORD on the morning after the Sabbath day”. ¹²On that same day, you must offer a one-year-old male lamb. There must be nothing wrong with the lamb. It will be a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³You must also offer a grain offering of two kilogrammes^{§§} of fine flour mixed with olive oil. You must also offer one litre* of wine. The smell of that offering will please the LORD. ¹⁴You must not eat any of the new grain, roasted grain or bread made from the new grain until you bring that offering to your God. This law will always continue through your generations, wherever you live.

Festival of Harvest

¹⁵“From the day after the Sabbath (the day you bring the bundle of grain to be presented to the LORD), count seven weeks. ¹⁶On the day following the seventh Sabbath (that is, 50 days later), you will bring a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷On that day, bring two loaves of bread from wherever you live. That bread will be lifted up to show it was offered to God. Use yeast and two kilogrammes of flour to make those loaves of bread. That will be your gift to the LORD from your first harvest.

¹⁸“With these grain offerings bring one bull, one ram and seven one-year-old male lambs for burnt offerings to the LORD. There must be nothing wrong with these animals. Offer them together with the grain offerings and the drink offerings. The smell of these offerings will be pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁹You will also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering.

²⁰“The priest will lift them up with the bread from the first harvest to show they were offered with the two lambs before the LORD. They are holy to the LORD. They will belong to the priest. ²¹On that same day you will call a holy meeting. You must not do any work. This law continues forever, wherever you live.

²²“Also, when you harvest the crops on your land, don’t cut all the way to the corners of your field. Don’t pick up the grain that falls on the ground. Leave it for poor people and for immigrants. I am the LORD your God.”

Festival of Trumpets

²³Again the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴“Tell the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month, you must have a special day of rest. Blow the trumpet to remind the people that this is a holy meeting. ²⁵You must not do any work. You must bring an offering as a gift to the LORD.”

The Day of Purification

²⁶The LORD said to Moses, ²⁷“The Day of Purification will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. There will be a holy meeting. You must not eat any-

§§23:13 *two kilogrammes* Literally, “2/10 of an *ephah*”. Also in verse 17.

*23:13 *one litre* Literally, “1/4 *hin*”.

thing,[†] and you must bring an offering as a gift to the LORD. ²⁸You must not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Purification. On that day the priests will go before the LORD your God and perform the purification ceremony for you.

²⁹“Anyone who refuses to fast on this day will be separated from their people. ³⁰If anyone does any work on this day, I will destroy that person from among the people. ³¹You must not do any work at all. This is a law that continues forever for you, wherever you live. ³²It will be a special day of rest for you. You must not eat anything. You will start this special day of rest on the evening following the ninth day of the month.[‡] This special day of rest continues from that evening until the next evening.”

Festival of Shelters

³³Again the LORD said to Moses, ³⁴“Tell the Israelites: On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Festival of Shelters. This festival to the LORD will continue for seven days. ³⁵There will be a holy meeting on the first day. You must not do any work. ³⁶You will bring offerings as gifts to the LORD for seven days. On the eighth day, you will have another holy meeting. You must not do any work. You will bring an offering as a gift to the LORD.

³⁷“These are the LORD’s regular festivals. There will be holy meetings during these festivals. You will bring offerings as gifts to the LORD—burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings. You will bring these gifts at the right time. ³⁸You will celebrate these festivals in addition to remembering the

LORD’s Sabbath days. You must offer these gifts in addition to your other gifts and any offerings you give as payment for your special promises. They will be in addition to any special offerings you want to give to the LORD.

³⁹“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you will celebrate the LORD’s festival for seven days. The first day will be a special day of rest, and the eighth day will also be a special day of rest. ⁴⁰On the first day you will take good fruit from fruit trees. And you will take branches from palm trees, poplar trees and willow trees by the brook. You will celebrate before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹You will celebrate this festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This law will continue forever. You will celebrate this festival in the seventh month. ⁴²You will live in temporary shelters for seven days. All the people born in Israel will live in them. ⁴³This will remind your descendants that I made the Israelites live in temporary shelters during the time I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

⁴⁴So this is what Moses told the Israelites about the regular festivals to honour the LORD.

The Lampstand and the Holy Bread

24 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Command the Israelites to bring to you pure oil from crushed olives. That oil is to light the lamps every evening. ³Aaron will prepare the lamp in the Meeting Tent every night to burn before the LORD from evening until morning. This light will be outside the curtain that

[†]23:27 *You must not eat anything* Literally, “You must humble yourselves.” Also in verse 32.

[‡]23:32 *evening following ... month* A day starts at sunset.

hangs in front of the Box that holds the Agreement.[¶] This law will continue forever. ⁴Every night, Aaron must set up the lamps to burn on the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD.

⁵“Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves with it. Use two kilogrammes[§] of flour for each loaf. ⁶Put them in two rows on the gold table before the LORD. Put six loaves in each row. ⁷Put pure frankincense beside each row. This will help the LORD remember the gift. ⁸Every Sabbath day a priest will set out the bread before the LORD. This must be done every week. This agreement with the Israelites will continue forever. ⁹That bread will belong to Aaron and his sons. They will eat the bread in a holy place, because that bread is one of the special gifts to the LORD. It is the priest’s share forever.”

The Man Who Cursed God

¹⁰There was a son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian father. He was walking among the Israelites in the camp and started fighting with one of the Israelite men. ¹¹The woman’s son cursed the LORD, using the LORD’s own name, so the people brought him to Moses. (The name of the man’s mother was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, from the tribe of Dan.) ¹²The people held him as a prisoner and waited for the LORD’s decision about him to be made clear to them.

¹³Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁴“Bring the man who cursed to a place outside the camp. Then bring together everyone who heard him curse. They will put their hands on his head. And then all the people must throw stones

at him and kill him. ¹⁵Say this to the Israelites: Anyone who curses his God will be punished. ¹⁶Anyone who uses the LORD’s name as a curse must be put to death. All the people must stone him. Any immigrant living among you or a citizen of Israel who uses the LORD’s name as a curse must be put to death.

¹⁷“And whoever kills another person must be put to death. ¹⁸Whoever kills an animal that belongs to another person must give another animal to take its place.**

¹⁹“And whoever causes an injury to their neighbour must be given the same kind of injury: ²⁰a broken bone for a broken bone, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The same kind of injury a person gives to another person must be given to that person. ²¹Whoever kills an animal must pay for the animal. But whoever kills another person must be put to death.

²²“The law will be the same for immigrants living among you and for the citizens of Israel. This is because I am the LORD your God.”

²³Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the man who cursed to a place outside the camp. Then they killed him with stones. So the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses.

A Time of Rest for the Land

25 The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, ²“Tell the Israelites: When you enter the land that I am giving to you, you must let the land have a special time of rest. This will be a time dedicated to the LORD. ³You will plant seed in your fields for six years. You will trim

[¶]24:3 *Box that holds the Agreement* Literally, “Testimony”. See Agreement in the Word List.

[§]24:5 *two kilogrammes* Literally, “2/10 of an ephah”.

**24:18 *give ... its place* Literally, “pay for it, life for life”.

your vineyards for six years and bring in the land's crops. ⁴But during the seventh year, you will let the land rest. This will be a year of complete rest, a year dedicated to the LORD. You must not plant seed in your fields or trim your vineyards. ⁵You must not cut the crops that grow by themselves after your harvest. You must not gather the grapes from your vines that are not trimmed. The land will have a year of rest.

⁶"The land will have a year of rest, but you will still eat from the land's produce during its year of rest. You, your male and female slaves, your hired workers and the immigrants among you may all eat what the land produces on its own. ⁷This produce from the land will also be there for your cattle and other wild animals to eat.

Jubilee—the Year of Release

⁸"You will also count seven groups of seven years. This will be 49 years. ⁹On the Day of Purification, you must blow a ram's horn. That will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. You must blow the ram's horn throughout the whole country. ¹⁰You will make the fiftieth year a holy year. You will announce freedom for everyone living in your country. This time will be called 'Jubilee'. Each of you will go back to your own property.^{††} And each of you will go back to your own family. ¹¹The fiftieth year will be a special celebration^{‡‡} for you. Don't plant seeds, don't harvest the crops that grow by themselves and don't gather grapes from the vines that are not trimmed. ¹²That year is Jubilee. It will be a holy time for you. During that year, you may eat only what the land produces on its

own. ¹³In the year of Jubilee, you will go back to your own property.

¹⁴"Don't cheat each other when you buy or sell land. ¹⁵If you want to buy your neighbour's land, count the number of years since the last Jubilee, and use that number to decide the right price. You are only buying the rights for harvesting crops until the next Jubilee. ¹⁶If there are many years before the next Jubilee, the price will be higher. If the years are few, the price will be lower. So your neighbour is really only selling the number of crops that the land can produce in those years. ¹⁷You must not cheat each other. You must respect your God. I am the LORD your God.

¹⁸"Remember my laws and rules. Obey them and you will live safely in your country. ¹⁹And the land will produce good crops for you. Then you will have plenty of food, and you will live safely on the land.

²⁰"But maybe you will say, 'If we don't plant seeds or gather our crops, we will not have anything to eat during the seventh year.' ²¹I will order my blessing to come to you during the sixth year. The land will produce a crop in that year that will be enough for two more years. ²²When you plant in the eighth year, you will still be eating from the old crop. You will eat the old crop until the harvest of the ninth year.

Property Laws

²³"The land really belongs to me, so you cannot sell it permanently. You are only immigrants living on my land with me. ²⁴People might sell their land, but the family will always get their land back. ²⁵If someone in your country be-

^{††}25:10 *own property* In Israel, the land belonged to the family or tribe. A person might sell his land, but at Jubilee that land again belonged to the family and tribe that it was originally given to.

^{‡‡}25:11 *special celebration* Literally, "Jubilee". See Jubilee in the Word List.

comes very poor and must sell their property, a close relative must come and buy it back.²⁶ It might happen that there is not a close relative to buy back the land. But the person may still be able to get enough money to buy back his own land.²⁷ Then the years must be counted since the land was sold. That number must be used to decide how much to pay for the land. The person must then buy back the land, and he may go back to his property again.²⁸ But if this first owner cannot find enough money to buy the land back, it will stay in the hands of the one who bought it until the year of Jubilee. Then during that celebration, the land will go back to the first owner's family. And they may go back to their property.

²⁹“Anyone who sells a home in a walled city still has the right to get it back until a full year after it was sold. Their right to get the house back will continue for one year.³⁰ But if the owner does not buy back the house before a full year is finished, the house that is in the walled city will belong to the one who bought it and to their descendants. The house will not go back to the first owner at the time of Jubilee.³¹ Villages without walls around them will be treated like open fields. So houses built in these villages will go back to the first owners at the time of Jubilee.

³²“But about the cities of the Levites: the Levites can buy back at any time their houses in the cities that belong to them.³³ If someone buys a house from a Levite, that house in the Levites' city will again belong to the Levites at the time of Jubilee. This is because houses in Levite cities belong to those from the tribe of Levi. The Israelites gave these cities to the Levites.³⁴ Also, the fields and pastures around the Levite cities cannot be sold. They belong to the Levites forever.

Be Fair With the Poor and With Slaves

³⁵“If another Israelite from your own country becomes too poor to support themselves, you must help them as you would immigrants living among you.³⁶ Don't charge them any interest on money you lend them. Respect your God so that your own people will be able to stay alive.³⁷ Don't charge them interest on any money you lend them. And when you lend them food, don't make them bring back an added amount.³⁸ I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt to give the land of Canaan to you and to be your God.

³⁹“If another Israelite becomes so poor that they must sell themselves to you, don't make them work like slaves.⁴⁰ They should be treated like hired workers who live with you until the year of Jubilee.⁴¹ Then they can leave you, take their children, and go back to their family. They can go back to the property of their ancestors,⁴² because they are my servants. I brought them out of slavery in Egypt. They must not be sold into slavery forever.⁴³ You must not be a cruel master to them. You must respect your God.

⁴⁴“About your men and women slaves: you may buy men and women slaves from the other nations around you.⁴⁵ Also, you may buy children from the foreigners living in your land, including their children who are born in your land. These child slaves will belong to you.⁴⁶ You may even pass these foreign slaves on to your children after you die so that they will belong to them. They will be your slaves forever. You may make slaves of these foreigners. But you must not be a cruel master over your own brothers, the Israelites.

⁴⁷“There may be an immigrant living among you who becomes rich. And it may happen that one of your own people becomes poor. That person may be so poor that they sell themselves as a slave to the immigrant or to a member of the immigrant’s family. ⁴⁸Such slaves have the right for one of their own people, such as a brother, to buy them back and set them free. ⁴⁹Or their uncle, their cousin or one of their close relatives from their family can buy them back. Or if they get enough money, they can pay the money themselves and become free again.

⁵⁰“You must count the years from the time they sold themselves to the immigrant up to the next year of Jubilee. Use that number to decide the price, because the person only ‘hired’ them for that period of time. ⁵¹If there are still many years before the year of Jubilee, the one sold must give back a large part of the price. It all depends on the number of years. ⁵²If only a few years are left until the year of Jubilee, the one who was sold must pay a small part of the original price. ⁵³But that person will live with the immigrant like a worker hired from year to year. Don’t let the immigrant be a cruel master over that person.

⁵⁴“Those who sold themselves will become free, even if no one buys them back. At the year of Jubilee, they and their children will become free. ⁵⁵This is because the Israelites are my slaves. They are the slaves who I brought out of slavery in Egypt. I am the LORD your God!

Rewards for Obeying God

26 “Don’t make idols for yourselves. Don’t set up statues or sacred

stones in your land to bow down to, because I am the LORD your God!

²“Remember my special days of rest^a and honour my holy place. I am the LORD.

³“Remember my laws and commands, and obey them. ⁴If you do these things, I will give you rains at the time they should come. The land will grow crops, and the trees of the field will grow their fruit. ⁵Your threshing will continue until it is time to gather grapes. And your grape gathering will continue until it is time to plant. Then you will have plenty to eat. And you will live safely in your land. ⁶I will give peace to your country. You will lie down to sleep in peace. No one will come to make you afraid. I will remove harmful animals from your country. And armies will not come through your country.

⁷“You will chase your enemies and defeat them. You will kill them with your swords. ⁸Five of you will chase 100 men, and 100 of you will chase 10,000 men. You will defeat your enemies and kill them with your swords.

⁹“Then I will show my kindness to you. I will bless you with many children, and your nation will grow strong. I will keep my agreement with you. ¹⁰You will have enough crops to last for more than a year. You will harvest the new crops. But then you will have to throw out the old crops to make room for the new crops. ¹¹Also, I will place my Holy Tent among you. I will not turn away from you. ¹²I will walk with you and be your God. And you will be my people. ¹³I am the LORD your God. You were slaves in Egypt, but I brought you out of Egypt. You were bent low from the heavy weights you carried as slaves,

^a26:2 *special days of rest* Or “Sabbaths”. This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

but I broke the yokes that were on your shoulders. I let you walk proudly again.

Punishment for Not Obeying God

¹⁴“But if you don’t obey me and all my commands, bad things will happen to you. ¹⁵If you refuse to obey my laws and commands, you have broken my agreement. ¹⁶If you do that, I will cause terrible things to happen to you. I will make you suffer from disease and fever that will ruin your eyesight and slowly drain your strength. You will not have success when you plant your seed. And your enemies will eat your crops. ¹⁷I will turn against you, so your enemies will defeat you. These enemies will hate you and rule over you. You will run away even when no one is chasing you.

¹⁸“After these things, if you still don’t obey me, I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹And I will also destroy the great cities that make you proud. The skies will not give rain, and the earth will not produce crops.^{§§}

²⁰You will work hard, but it will not help. Your land will not give any crops, and your trees will not grow their fruit.

²¹“If you still turn against me and refuse to obey me, I will beat you seven times harder! The more you sin, the more you will be punished. ²²I will send wild animals against you. They will take your children away from you. They will destroy your animals. They will kill so many of your people that the roads will be empty.

²³“If you don’t learn your lesson after all this, and if you still turn against me, ²⁴then I will also turn against you. I—yes, I myself—will punish you seven times for your sins. ²⁵You will have broken my agreement, so I will punish

you. I will bring armies against you. You will go into your cities for safety, but I will cause diseases to spread among you. And your enemies will defeat you. ²⁶I will take away your supply of food. There will be very little bread to eat. Ten women will be able to bake all their bread in one oven. They will weigh each piece of bread before handing it out. You will eat, but you will still be hungry.

²⁷“If you still refuse to listen to me, and if you still turn against me, ²⁸I will really show my anger! I—yes, I myself—will punish you seven times for your sins. ²⁹You will become so hungry that you will eat the bodies of your sons and daughters. ³⁰I will destroy your places of worship. I will cut down your incense altars. I will put your dead bodies on the dead bodies of your idols. You will be disgusting to me. ³¹I will destroy your cities. I will make your holy places empty. I will stop smelling your offerings. ³²I will make your land empty. And your enemies who come to live there will be shocked at it. ³³I will scatter you among the nations. I will pull out my sword and destroy you. Your land will become empty, and your cities will be destroyed.

³⁴“You will be taken to your enemy’s country. Your country will be empty. So your land will finally get its rest. The land will enjoy its time of rest. ³⁵During the time that the land is empty, it will get the time of rest that you did not give it while you lived there. ³⁶The survivors will lose their courage in the land of their enemies. They will be afraid of everything. The sound of a leaf blown by the wind will cause them to run in fear. They will run as if someone is chasing them with a sword. They will

§§26:19 *The skies ... crops* Literally, “Your skies will be like iron, your land like bronze.”

fall even when no one is chasing them. ³⁷They will run as if someone is chasing them with a sword. They will fall over each other—even when no one is chasing them.

“You will not be strong enough to stand up against your enemies. ³⁸You will be lost in other nations. You will disappear in the land of your enemies. ³⁹So the survivors will rot away in their sin in their enemies’ countries. They will rot away in their sins just as their ancestors did.

There Is Always Hope

⁴⁰“But maybe the people will confess their sins. And maybe they will confess the sins of their ancestors. Maybe they will admit that they turned against me. Maybe they will admit that they sinned against me. ⁴¹Maybe they will admit that I turned against them and brought them into the land of their enemies. And maybe these stubborn people will become humble* and accept the punishment for their sin. ⁴²If they do, I will remember my agreement with Jacob. I will remember my agreement with Isaac. I will remember my agreement with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

⁴³“The land will be empty. The land will enjoy its time of rest. Then the survivors will accept the punishment for their sins. They will learn that they were punished because they hated my laws and refused to obey my rules. ⁴⁴But even though they have sinned, I will not give up on them or reject them completely. Even if they are in the land of their enemies, I will not destroy them. I will not break my agreement with them, because I am the LORD their God. ⁴⁵For them, I

will remember the agreement with their ancestors. I brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt so that I might be their God. The other nations saw these things. I am the LORD.”

⁴⁶These are the laws, rules and teachings that the LORD gave to the Israelites. These laws are the agreement between the Lord and the Israelites. The Lord gave these laws to his people through Moses at Mount Sinai.

Gifts Promised to the Lord

27 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites: If you make a special vow to give someone to the LORD as a servant, you must pay the set value for that person. ³The price for a man from 20 to 60 years old is 50 pieces[†] of silver. (You must use the official measure for the silver.) ⁴The price for a woman who is 20 to 60 years old is 30 pieces of silver. ⁵The price for a man from 5 to 20 years old is 20 pieces of silver. For a woman the price is 10 pieces. ⁶The price for a boy from one month to five years old is 5 pieces of silver. For a girl, the price is 3 pieces. ⁷The price for a man who is 60 years old or older is 15 pieces of silver. The price for a woman is 10 pieces.

⁸“If anyone is too poor to pay the price, bring that person to the priest. The priest will decide how much money the person can afford to pay.

Other Gifts to the Lord

⁹“You might promise to give an animal to the LORD. If it is a clean animal—one that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD—then any such animal promised as an offering will be holy. ¹⁰You must not put any other animal in

***26:41** *And maybe these ... humble* Literally, “If they humble their uncircumcised heart”.

[†]**27:3** *50 pieces* Literally, “50 shekels”. Also in verse 16.

its place. Don't try to trade a good animal for a bad one or a bad animal for a good one. If you try to change animals, both animals will become holy—they will both belong to the Lord.

¹¹ “The animal you promised might be one that is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD. If you promised one of these unclean animals, you must bring it to the priest. ¹² The priest will decide a price for that animal. The price will be whatever the priest decides, whether it is high or low. ¹³ If you want to buy back the animal,[‡] then you must add one-fifth to the price.

The Value of a House

¹⁴ “If you dedicate your house as holy to the LORD, the priest must decide its price. It doesn't matter whether the price he sets is high or low, that is the price for the house. ¹⁵ But if you want to get the house back, you must add one-fifth to the price. Then you will get the house back.

The Value of a Field

¹⁶ “If you dedicate part of your family's land to the LORD, the value of this field will depend on how much seed is needed to plant it. It will be 50 pieces of silver for 20 kilogrammes[¶] of barley seed. ¹⁷ If you dedicate your field to God during the year of Jubilee, its value will be whatever the priest decides. ¹⁸ But if you give your field after the Jubilee, the priest must decide its exact price. He must count the number of years to the next year of Jubilee and use that number

to decide the price. ¹⁹ If you want to buy the field back, you must add one-fifth to that price. Then you will get the field back. ²⁰ If you don't buy the field back and the land is sold to someone else, you cannot get the land back. ²¹ If you don't buy the land back by the year of Jubilee, the field will remain holy to the LORD—it will belong to the priest forever. It will be like any other thing that was given to the Lord to be his forever.

²² “If you dedicate a field to the LORD that you had bought, and it is not a part of your family's property,[§] ²³ then the priest must count the years to the year of Jubilee and decide the price for the land. Then you must pay that price for the land as something that belongs to the LORD. ²⁴ At the year of Jubilee, the land will go to the family that originally owned the land.

²⁵ “You must use the official measure in paying these prices, which is 11 grammes^{**} for each piece.

The Value of Animals

²⁶ “You can dedicate cattle and sheep as special gifts to the LORD. But if the animal is the firstborn, it already belongs to the LORD. So you cannot dedicate these animals as special gifts. ²⁷ If the firstborn animal is an unclean animal, you may buy back that animal. The priest will decide the price of the animal, and you must add one-fifth to that price. If you don't buy that animal back, the priest will sell the animal for whatever price he decides.

[‡]27:13 *buy back the animal* See Exod. 13:1-16 for the laws about giving to God or “buying back” firstborn children or animals.

[¶]27:16 *20 kilogrammes* Literally, “*homer*”.

[§]27:22 *family's property* In ancient Israel, land was given by God to the family, not the individual. Usually it could not be sold, only leased for up to 50 years.

^{**}27:25 *11 grammes* Literally, “*20 gerahs*”.

Special Gifts

²⁸“If a person dedicates something completely to the LORD, it cannot be bought back or sold. It is a very holy gift to the LORD. This gift may be a person, an animal or land from the family property. ²⁹If this gift is a person, that person cannot be bought back. That person must be killed.

³⁰“A tenth of all crops belongs to the LORD. This includes the grain from fields and the fruit from trees—a tenth

belongs to the LORD. ³¹So if you want to get back your tenth, you must add one-fifth to its price and then buy it back.

³²“Every tenth animal from a person’s cattle or sheep will belong to the LORD. ³³The owner should not worry if the chosen animal is good or bad or trade it for another animal. If this happens, both animals will belong to the LORD. They cannot be bought back.”

³⁴These are the commands that the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.