

Psalm 75, II Samuel 17-22, Leviticus 6-8, 11-13 (#55)

Psalm 75 — Our Righteous Judge and our proper response are seen in this psalm. *What actions does God warn us against?*

II Samuel 17— Ahithophel and Hushai are in a crucial contest to see which advice would be accepted by Absalom and the elders of Israel. Although Ahithophel gave good advice, the proposal of Hushai was accepted by Absalom since the Lord had decreed to bring disaster upon him. The sons of Zadok and Abiathar, the high priests, took the information of a possible impending attack of Absalom and his army to David so that he would cross the Jordan River and escape. A cousin of Joab by the name of Amasa became the leader of Absalom's army. During this time of adversity, many came to refresh David with beds, basins, and different kinds of food. *Although this was a time of judgment by God on David, where do we see God's sovereignty and grace toward David in this chapter?*

II Samuel 18— David again takes charge of his army and divides them into three divisions led by with Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. David commanded his three commanders, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." David's forces defeated the people of Israel who had 20,000 casualties with more of them dying from the perils of the forest than caused by the sword. Being caught by his hair in tangled branches, Absalom is killed by Joab and his armor-bearers. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, and a Cushite ran to tell David the news that Absalom is dead. David is overcome with grief because of the death of his son. *Was Joab right in disobeying David's orders and killing Absalom?*

II Samuel 19— Subsequent to being confronted by Joab about his continued mourning of the death of Absalom, David finally takes his place at the gate to receive his troops. Judah and Israel rally around David to restore him as king, and Amasa becomes the commander of the army in Joab's place. After David and his household crossed the Jordan, he was met by various people including Shimei who had previously cursed him, Ziba, Mephibosheth, and Barzillai the Gileadite who supplied his needs while David was in Mahanaim. The men of Judah and Israel get into an argument about who has priority of transporting the king back to Jerusalem. *Why did David appoint Amasa as commander of the army in place of Joab?*

II Samuel 20— A Benjaminite named Sheba rebelled against David and took the men of Israel with him. Amasa is told by David to have his army ready to go after Sheba in three days, but since he was not able to do it, Abishai was told to go in Amasa's place. When Amasa arrives at the battle late, Joab treacherously murders him and takes over as commander of the army again. Joab's troops followed Sheba to the town of Abel of Beth-maacah, and

were trying to batter the wall to make it collapse in order to get Sheba. A wise woman talked to Joab and interceded for the people of the town. An agreement was made that if they would toss the head of Sheba over the wall, then Joab would not do any further damage to the walls or the people. She convinced the people of the town to do that very thing. *As you read this story of Joab in this chapter and all the preceding incidents mentioned in scripture about him, give the good, bad, and ugly about him. Did his evil ever catch up with him? See I Kings 2:28-35.*

II Samuel 21— After three years of famine, David inquires of the Lord to find out why this famine has happened. God reveals to David that the famine occurred because King Saul had tried to exterminate the Gideonites with whom Israel had made a covenant four hundred years earlier. David asked what reparations should be made to them, and they requested that seven of Saul's descendants be hanged in the presence of the Lord. Rizpah, the mother of two of those hanged, mourned and protected the bodies for many months until David gave the bodies of the men a proper burial. "After this God answered prayer for the land (v.14b)." The rest of the chapter tells the stories of the fights of David's men with Philistine giants. *What does this chapter say about the importance of keeping the covenants and promises we make, as well as the consequences of not keeping them?*

II Samuel 22— This song of thanksgiving is a reflection of God's faithfulness to deliver David from the hands of all his enemies. This chapter is also Psalm 18 in the book of Psalms. I Samuel begins with Hannah's song of triumph (I Samuel 2) in her life, and II Samuel ends with David's song of victory over all his enemies. I and II Samuel shows David as a shepherd, great warrior, a wise leader and king, a repentant sinner, an inattentive father, and finishes with this chapter showing David as a poet and musician. *After reading this chapter, what verse or verses spoke to you the most and why?*

Leviticus 6— The theme of restitution continues in chapter six with the emphasis of making full restitution with his neighbor (vv. 1-7). The rest of the chapter speaks about the **Burnt Offering, the Grain Offering, and the Sin Offering** which is a repeat of previous instruction, but this time from the perspective of the priest. The standout

command to the priests is that they are to keep the fire burning on the altar continually. *How did the fire initially start on the altar, and why is it necessary to keep the fire continuously burning? See Leviticus 9:22-24.*

Leviticus 7— In verses 1-10, the focus is now on the details about how the **Guilt/Restitution Offering** was administered by the priests. The **Peace/Fellowship Offering** was given for three different reasons. First, it was offered for those who were giving thanksgiving for something significant that had happened in their lives, such as recovering from an illness. The second offering was given after a fulfillment of a vow. Third, the freewill offering was given out of love for Yahweh but for no specific reason (vv. 11-21). During the sacrifice of an animal, the fat portions were reserved for God alone and not to be eaten, but the blood of any animal was never to be eaten at any time by anyone (vv. 22-27). The chapter finishes by stating that when people bring a **Peace/Fellowship Offering**, they must do it themselves and not have a substitute do it for them. The priests were to receive a portion of the offering to care for their own needs (vv. 28-38). *Where do we see the work of Jesus symbolized in the **Burnt offering, the Grain Offering, the Drink Offering, the Peace Offering, and the Guilt Offering**?*

Leviticus 8— The Lord commanded Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons to be ordained for the priesthood in order to prepare them to serve in holy things as they represent the whole nation of Israel. First, Aaron puts on his priestly clothes including the tunic, sash, robe, ephod, breastpiece, turban, and the gold medallion on the front of the turban. Then the whole tabernacle, all the furniture, and Aaron were anointed and consecrated with oil. Finally, Moses offered a **sin offering, a burnt offering, and an offering of ordination** which symbolized total consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly ministry. This ordination and preparation for the priesthood took seven days. In chapter nine the priestly ministry is inaugurated by Aaron. In chapter ten, Nadab and Abihu are struck dead by God for offering unauthorized fire before the Lord. We read Leviticus 9-10 on week #24 of last year. *In verse 23, what did Moses symbolize by putting blood on Aaron's right earlobe, on the thumb of his right hand, and on his big toe of his right foot?*

Leviticus 11— In chapters 11 to 15, God shows Israel a different way to live in the midst of paganism and idolatry. In this chapter God makes clear the distinction between clean and unclean land animals, aquatic animals, birds, and insects. Warren Wiersbe points out about the dietary laws that "God gave these laws only to the Jewish nation, and obeying them guaranteed ceremonial purity, but didn't automatically make a person holy in character.

The laws were temporary and ended on the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14).” #8 p. 185.
the reasons why God established dietary laws?

What are some of

Leviticus 12— The Lord speaks to Moses about the purification of a woman after giving birth of a child. The woman is unclean (not sinful) due to the afterbirth (which is emissions of bodily fluid—see chapter 15) from 33 to 66 days, and then she is to bring an offering to sacrifice in order to make atonement for herself. *What happened when the woman came to the temple at the end of the days of her purification and was too poor to offer the year-old male lamb for a burnt offering? What does this tell us about God? See verses 8 and Luke 2:22-23.*

Leviticus 13— Although this chapter was not on listed the “chapter most read list” of the Old Testament, it was important so that priests and people would know how to deal with skin disorders and contamination of objects. This chapter covers a variety of skin diseases including infections, ulcers, boils, scabs, and forms of leprosy and allows the priest to decide if the person that is coming is clean or unclean. The priest then will prescribe the steps that must be taken. Not only persons, but objects such as fabric, leather, or buildings can be unclean due to mold or fungus. The object must go through a process to decide if it is clean or needed to be destroyed. *Why was this chapter about skin diseases important to the Jewish nation?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley’s Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 76, II Samuel 23-24, I Corinthians 1-4, Leviticus 14-19 (#56)

Psalm 76 — Commonly considered a psalm of gratitude for protection from Assyria, Psalm 76 praises God for His victory, magnificence, and sovereignty. *Consider 2 Kings 19:14-19 & 32-35. In their shoes, how would this victory make you feel?*

II Samuel 23— The sweet psalmist of Israel leaves his last literary words in the first seven verses of II Samuel 23, which is written in the style of a prophet (vv. 1-7). David was almost unparalleled by the loyalty his men had for him. Many of the exploits of the 37 men listed are described in this chapter. David had his 30 warriors, and then of that group, 3 extremely brave men were selected. The chapter ends in verse 39 by listing Uriah the Hittite, the man David had killed, as one of his 30 men (vv. 8-39). *Why wouldn't David drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem his men brought to him? See Verses 16-17. #7 p. 457*

II Samuel 24— Because of the sins of Israel, God stirred up David to ask Joab and his commanders to find out how many soldiers there were in Israel. After more than nine months, they had counted about 1,300,000 fighting men. When the census was finished, David realized he had sinned, and God sent Gad the prophet to give him a choice of which punishment he would receive. Choosing the 3 days of plague, the angel struck down 70,000 men. The plague stopped when David bought the threshing floor from Araunah and sacrificed a burnt offering on an altar that was erected on that property. *What was wrong in taking the census? #3 p.495. Who was the one who tempted David? See I Chronicles 21:1. Extra Question: What good came out of the evil of this deadly plague?*

I Corinthians— The apostle Paul founded the church of Corinth about 50 AD on his second missionary journey, and wrote this letter to them about 55 AD from Ephesus, addressing problems in the church, and answering questions of a committee that was sent from the church of Corinth (16:17). Corinth, a rich commercial city, was the capital of Achaia with a population of perhaps 500,000 located in southern Greece, famous for idolatry and immorality. In this letter the Apostle wrote about the disunity, immaturity, and immorality of the church. The major themes of this epistle are Christian unity, morality, women's roles, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection. The best known and most treasured part of this book is the "love" chapter (13).

I Corinthians 1— The letter begins with the usual greeting from Paul, giving thanks for the church, and for God's faithfulness to complete His work in them at Christ's return (vv. 1-9). Paul first addresses the problem of divisions in the church, urging its members to be in harmony, united in one mind and purpose (vv. 10-17). The powerful message of the cross seems foolish to the world. The Jews seek signs and miracles, and the Gentiles follow a rational philosophical approach. God's way is through the foolishness of the preaching of the cross of Christ which demonstrates God's power and wisdom. Our boasting must be in Christ alone because through faith in Him we

receive God's wisdom; that is, Christ's righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (vv. 18-31).

Disunity in the church is a sign of immaturity and carnality. What do we need to do to promote unity in the church? Extra Question: The superiority of God's wisdom is seen in the three benefits we receive from Christ. Explain and amplify the meaning of "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

I Corinthians 2— Although Paul was a brilliant scholar and could debate all of the philosophical ideas of the day, he simply preached the gospel of Christ and the cross in weakness and trembling, allowing the Spirit of God to powerfully work in the hearts of those who would believe. The temporal wisdom of this age is not what the Apostle declared, but the eternal wisdom and truth of God that was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. The unbeliever cannot understand spiritual truth since they don't have the Spirit of God in them. The spiritual person is able to evaluate and comprehend all of God's truth that is revealed to him because he has the mind of Christ. *How did the world's wisdom explain the meaning of the cross? Extra Question: What two things are necessary to find God's wisdom and viewpoint on any situation in which we find ourselves?*

I Corinthians 3— Paul exposes the immaturity of the Corinthian church because of the way each one would pick and exalt a certain leader as his or her favorite, when the truth is that Paul, Apollos, and Peter were just servants performing the tasks God had assigned them (vv. 1-9). Some day Christ, the only foundation, will judge every believer for the type of materials he has used to build his spiritual house. On that day the fire of Christ's judgment will test the quality of his work, and rewards will be given (10-15). Paul gives a warning about anyone who destroys God's temple (the local church). Paul circles back to the theme of boasting in human leaders and reminds them that everything they have is a gift from God (including leaders), and they are in union with Christ and Christ is in union with God (16-23). *What tests should we ask ourselves so that we build our lives on gold, silver, and precious stones and not wood, hay, and straw?*

II Corinthians 4— The Apostle sees himself as a servant of Christ and a manager of mysteries, and knows that he is required to be faithful to this calling. We must be careful not to judge others, but let the Lord evaluate them on "that day." God's evaluation is perfect since He is omniscient and even knows the motives behind our deeds (vv. 1-5). Paul uses some sanctified sarcasm in comparing Apollos and himself with the Corinthian believers. While they are rich and reign as kings, Paul and Apollos are fools for Christ, a spectacle to the world, and treated as the world's garbage (vv. 6-13). As a godly, spiritual father to the church in Corinth, Paul encouraged them to imitate the ways he lived his life through the transforming power of Christ Jesus. The acid test of spiritual reality is not eloquent words, but a Spirit-empowered life. *Explain the meaning of verse 5. How should you apply this to your own life?*

Leviticus 14— Chapter 13 tells about the process of exclusion of a person with a skin disease while chapter 14 explains how a person that is healed of a skin disease can be declared clean, and thus readmitted to live in community with others. Verses 1 to 32 of this chapter give detailed instructions to the priest on how to handle those healed of skin disease. It involves verifying their healing outside the camp, and then offering various blood sacrifices and washings so that the diseased person can be declared clean by the priest and ready to return to their family. Verses 33 to 57 describe the cleansing of houses that are contaminated with mildew, mold, or fungi, and the various steps that must be taken to either to declare the house clean or to destroy it. *What was the meaning of the ritual done by the priest that involved two live birds that are brought by the cleansed person in verses 4-7?*

Leviticus 15— In this chapter the Lord spoke to Moses about discharges from both male and female organs. “Unnatural male discharges could be anything from diarrhea to discharges caused by a venereal disease such as gonorrhea. Anything the afflicted man touched or spat upon was unclean.” #8 p. 193. If healed, he would wait seven days, and then bring to the priest two turtledoves or pigeons for a sin and burnt offerings (vv. 1-15). This chapter also speaks of the release of semen (vv. 16-18), female menstruation (vv. 19-24), and other kinds of female discharge of blood (vv. 25-33). It must be noted that uncleanness does not necessarily mean sinfulness but is speaking of being ceremonially unclean. Nobody ceremonially unclean was able to enter into the tabernacle area where the most stringent purity was demanded. *How were these laws applied in David’s situation? I Samuel 21:1-5. See also Matthew 9:20-22 as an application of verses 25 to 30.*

Leviticus 16— The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons about instituting the Day of Atonement to make sure that Aaron completely followed the procedures given in this chapter so that he would not die. The Day of Atonement happened on the 10th day of the 7th month each year when the high priest alone would enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of the bull, and then the blood of the goat, and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat for all the sins of all the people. There were two goats chosen with one to be a sin offering for the people and the other as a scapegoat. The priest would lay his hands on the goat’s head to symbolically put all of the sins of the people on the goat and send it away into the wilderness. *After all the other sacrifices that were done during the year, why was a Day of Atonement needed? #7 p. 166.*

Leviticus 17— This chapter was addressed not only to Aaron and his sons, but to all of the Israelites. No animal was to be slaughtered as a sacrifice offering outside the tent of meeting (or many years later in the temple area), although they could eat slaughtered animals in any of their own towns if they properly drained the blood

(Deuteronomy 12:15-16, 20-28). This regulation of only sacrificing animals as an offering at the tent of meeting kept the Israelites from sliding into idolatry and prostituting themselves before other gods (vv 1-7). A second prohibition given by God was not to ever drink blood or eat animals that had not been properly drained of their blood (vv. 8-16). *Why was the blood so sacred that they couldn't eat animals that still had blood in them or drink blood? See verse 11.*

Leviticus 18— God created men and women as sexual creatures, and He desires that they have full enjoyment of sex but only in the context of a lifetime commitment of a marriage between a man and a woman. This chapter details what incestuous relationships are forbidden, as well as detestable and perverted forms of sexuality including adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality. *What did God say would be the judgment of the nations who practice such perversions? See verses 24-28. What does this say about our nation and our world?*

Leviticus 19— This chapter emphasizes the holiness of God which is His one moral attribute that governs all the rest. Leviticus 19 is very important because of the prominence it has in the New Testament. Verse two says, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” Verse 18b says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” As you read this chapter you will see the Ten Commandments interwoven in the 37 verses with the constant repetition of the phrase, “I am the LORD (Yahweh) your God.” These words are repeated more than forty times in chapters 18 to 26. The commandments in these verses touch a variety of issues including our relationship with God, family, neighbors (along with the poor and foreigners), and give us a way to practice everyday holiness in order to reflect our holy God and love our neighbor. *How are these laws relevant to us today? #7 p. 170*

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Psalm 77, I Corinthians 5-11, Leviticus 20-22, 24-26 (#57)

Psalm 77 — In the midst of national tragedy, Asaph remembers God's omnipotence. *Asaph describes his struggles to maintain his faith in God. How does he resolve this?*

I Corinthians 5 & 6— Chapter five deals with immorality in the church, and chapter six speaks of Christians taking other Christians to court. The church was proud of their allowing a man in their church to have a sexual relationship with his father's wife. Paul commanded that this man be excluded from the church and turned over to Satan's territory. Allowing sin in the church will cause sin to spread over the whole congregation (5:1-13). Paul states that legal disputes among Christians should be settled by wise people in the church and not taken to a heathen court. He talks of the previous immoral lifestyle of the Corinthians, but now they are washed, sanctified, and justified. Although we have freedom in Christ, we are not free to sin sexually since the Holy Spirit indwells in our bodies which were bought with the previous blood of Christ (6:1-20). *Explain what Paul meant by "you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (5:5)."*

I Corinthians 7— Living in a city known throughout the world for its gross immorality, Paul discusses the important topic of sex and Christian marriage. After giving general principles on the obligations of marriage, he then addresses the unmarried and widows (vv. 1-9). The topics of separation and divorce are covered, giving the Lord's commands in the case of believing couples, as well as those who are married to an unbelieving spouse (vv. 10-16). Paul then addresses various situations in life including being Jew or Gentile, slave or free, married or single, and encourages them to remain in the situation they were in when God called them to be his children (vv. 17-24). The Apostle then states that there are advantages of remaining single since the single person can fully serve and please the Lord, where the married person is distracted because of the need of pleasing their mate. Finally, Paul declares that married couples are bound to each other until death. At death, the living partner is free to remarry, but only to another believer (vv. 25-40). *What are the Biblical grounds for a divorced Christian to remarry? See Verses 10-16, Matthew 19:9-10.*

I Corinthians 8— This chapter touches the subject of eating meat sacrificed to idols which has no relevance to western culture today. The principle taught here that can be applied to all cultures at all times is that we must always walk in love towards others, and not allow our knowledge and participation of permissible things destroy a weaker brother or cause him to stumble. *What would be a relevant situation in which we can apply this principle today?*

I Corinthians 9— Paul shows in his own life how he was putting into practice what he was teaching in chapter eight. As an apostle, he had many rights, but he did not exercise those rights for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. He had the right of receiving hospitality and financial support, of marrying and taking a wife with him like some of the other apostles, but he chose rather to make himself a slave to everyone in order to win more people. For Paul to do this, it required strict self-control and discipline. He did this in order to win a crown that will never fade away, not like those runners who received a perishable wreath for all their grueling hours of effort. *In order to win our race for God, what areas in our lives do we need to practice self-discipline?*

I Corinthians 10— Continuing the theme of Christian liberty and the surrendering of our rights (chapters 8-10), Paul gives the example of the children of Israel in the wilderness who had great spiritual privileges like the church at Corinth, but still committed the sins of idolatry, immorality, complaining, and testing God. Each believer must understand that the punishment of the dying of the Israelites in the wilderness is a warning to each of us. On the encouraging side, we have the promise of God's faithfulness not to allow us to succumb to temptation, but to provide for us a morally right solution in every situation which provides for us a way of escape (vv. 1-13). Paul is stating that the new believers at Corinth must understand that when they are participating in the pagan idolatrous feasts, they are sacrificing to demons. They are provoking the Lord to jealousy when they drink both the cup of Lord (at Lord's Supper) and the cup of demons (vv. 14-22). Following Paul's example, we must set aside our own personal freedom and rights, and seek the good of other people (vv. 23-33, 11:1). *Reading verses 23 to 33, what are some questions we need to ask ourselves in making choices on sensitive issues that might offend a weaker brother or sister? #3 p. 1053*

I Corinthians 11— At this point the Apostle gives instructions about head coverings that properly distinguish the women from the men as they pray and prophesy in the church. Although fully equal in worth and value, Paul speaks of the different roles women have in the church and in marriage (vv. 2-16). The next issue that Paul addresses was the disunity in the church because of the gluttony, discrimination, and even the drunkenness of some believers at the Love feast and the Lord's Supper. He calls for the self-examination of each believer as to whether he or she is eating and drinking in an unworthy manner, and thus be guilty of sin against the body and blood of Christ (17-34). *Although most of today's Evangelical churches do not require a head covering for women, what biblical principles are seen in verses 2 to 16? Extra Question: There are three "looks" a believer should take while participating in the Lord's Supper: the look back (vv. 23-26a), the look up (vv. 26b), and the look within (vv. 27-28, 31-32). After reading the scripture that pertains to each, please explain the meaning of the three "looks." #8, p. 1941.*

Leviticus 20— The Lord through Moses continues to detail wicked behavior that must not be tolerated in Israel since Yahweh is holy, and Israel has been set apart from the other nations to be His unique holy nation. This chapter is similar to chapter 18, but gives, in most cases, the punishment by the death penalty for violating these commands. He begins by describing the wickedness of child sacrifice to Molech, the god of the Ammonites, as well as consulting with mediums or spiritists. In the rest of the chapter the Lord gives the punishment for those who commit the sin of cursing parents and various sexual sins. *What is wrong with consulting mediums or spiritists?*

Leviticus 21— In chapters 18 to 20 God speaks to the Israelites in general, but in this chapter He specifically addresses Aaron and his descendents about the higher standard of holiness required by them since they work directly with the holy objects in the tabernacle/temple and live in the presence of Yahweh. The High Priest and his family were regulated in areas such as of what burial services he could attend (only immediate family), how he kept his beard, hair, and clothes, the type of woman he and his sons could marry, and additionally the requirement that he would have no physical defect of any kind. The High Priest served in the presence of a holy and perfect God who he represents, and so he must not desecrate the sanctuary in any way. *Why couldn't handicapped men serve as High Priest?*

Leviticus 22— The Lord continues speaking to Moses about the importance of a consecrated priesthood to be ceremonially clean when offering and eating the sacrifices. He then describes the different scenarios of what it means to be unclean, and what needed to be done to be ceremonially clean. A complete list of those family members who qualify to eat of the holy offerings is given (vv. 1-16). Lastly, the animal sacrifices that would be acceptable to a Holy God must be perfect and without any blemish (vv. 17-27). *Ultimately, what was the reason that God demanded a physically perfect priesthood and perfect sacrifice?*

Leviticus 24— The Lord explains the importance for Aaron and his descendents to be faithful in fulfilling the daily and weekly responsibilities in the Holy Place by keeping the flame of the lampstand continually burning, and by preparing and setting out the new bread every Sabbath day. The son of an Israelite mother and Egyptian father cursed and blasphemed the name of Yahweh during a fight. After seeking the Lord's direction while holding him in custody, Yahweh declared that he should be put to death. The blasphemer was stoned outside the camp by the Israelite community. Verses 17 to 22 speak of other issues and indicate that the punishment received must fit the crime committed. *Why was blasphemy such a serious offence that the person was stoned to death?*

Leviticus 25— Chapter 23 deals with the Hebrew festival calendar year and chapter 25 continues with two celebrations based on the Sabbath principle, the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee. Every seventh year the ground was to lie fallow and nothing would be planted on it so that the land could be rejuvenated and the nutrients in the soil could be replenished. God would send such a large harvest the sixth year that their needs would be taken care of until the end of the harvest time of the eighth year. After seven such cycles or 49 years, Israel would celebrate the year of Jubilee, the 50th year, to give the land, the people, and the animals an additional year of rest. During the year of Jubilee all land was to revert back to the original owner, and the indentured servants would be released to go back to their own land and families. *Who really owned the land of Canaan and the people of Israel? See verses 23 and 55. How does that also apply to us? See I Corinthians 6:19-20.*

Leviticus 26— This whole book of Leviticus was given by God to Moses while he was on Mount Sinai. The Lord and Creator of the world and the universe chose one nation out of all the people of the earth in which to dwell and to be their God, and they would be His people. Verses one and two make clear a summary of the obligations that Israel had to obey in order to fulfill their part of this covenant made at Mount Sinai. Israel is to allow no idolatry but worship Yahweh only, keep His Sabbaths, and revere His Sanctuary. Then the Lord gives the blessings (vv. 3-13) or discipline and punishment (vv. 14-39) that will come by either obeying or disobeying God's commands. Yahweh then promises that whatever suffering they would receive because of disobedience, He would give them His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, and to remember the covenant He made with their fathers, if they would repent and return (vv. 40-46). *In verses 34-35 the Lord said if Israel did not keep the Sabbath years, the land would lay desolate and lie fallow while they were in the land of their enemies. When did Israel suffer the consequence of not keeping the Sabbath Years? See II Chronicles 36:21 and Daniel 9:2.*

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Psalm 78:1-36, I Corinthians 12-16, Isaiah 1, Leviticus 27, Numbers 1-5 (#58)

Psalm 78 — This is a psalm about God's glorious deeds, both great in His deliverance from bondage, and terrifying in His discipline of sin. *In what ways does God provide for the needs of His people?*

I Corinthians 12— Paul continues to address problems in the church. In this chapter he speaks about spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit has given to each member of the body for the building up and unification of the church, but here in Corinth the use of the spiritual gifts had the opposite effect. The Holy Spirit distributes the various gifts as He sees best for the benefit of the whole body. With the different gifts, the Holy Spirit gives unique spheres of ministry to serve the body through the Spirit's various expressions of power. The emphasis in this passage is the unity of the body expressed in a variety of individual parts all working in unison for the building up of the body. Each part of the body is interdependent, and what it contributes is necessary so that no one should feel inferior to the more spectacular parts (gifts). *What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and when does it take place in the life of the believer (v. 13)?*

I Corinthians 13— Love is tossed about today in songs and speech, but in verses 4 to 8 Paul reveals a clear definition of what real love is. The most spectacular gifts or actions that are not truly motivated by love are worthless, and sound like a noisy gong or clanging symbol. The object of our faith and hope will be completely realized when we see Christ in heaven, but love is greatest because it will endure for all eternity. *Read verses 4 to 8a out loud and insert your name instead of the word "love." How true is that to the way you live? Now read it again inserting the name "Jesus."*

I Corinthians 14— This chapter begins with the words, "Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and above all that you may prophesy (HCSB)." The church body was divided and not functioning correctly because of the improper exercise of the gifts of tongues. Because of its impressive nature, the gift of tongues was sought after by the church instead of the gift of prophecy, which was the one most needed in order to build up and mature the local church body. Paul gives specific guidelines for the church to follow in its gatherings. The guidelines that are included in this passage are that everything must be done for the building up of the body (v. 26), that only tongues that have an interpreter could be uttered (v.27), and that everything must be done decently and in order (v. 40). *After your reading of chapters 12 to 14, discuss Paul's statements about the gift of tongues (or languages), speaking of its participation, purpose, and prohibitions. See 12:30b, 13:1, 13:8b, 14:2, 4, 12, 27, 39, and 40.*

I Corinthians 15— Paul now takes the church back to the two pillars of Christianity, the clear explanation of the gospel, and the declaration of the bodily resurrection of Christ and believers. The widespread belief of the dualistic worldview, that looked at the physical world as evil and the spiritual world as good, had also influenced some of the Corinthian believers. Paul forcefully proves the reality of the physical resurrection of Christ as well as our own physical resurrection in the future. He shows that the resurrection of Jesus was well attested by a multitude of witnesses, including 500 who saw Him in His resurrected body at one time. Christ's resurrection was the firstfruits

of the harvest and gave us the guarantee that one day all those who believe in Christ will also be resurrected, and death will be the last enemy to be abolished. Paul describes the wonderful transformation of the resurrected body which will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. What an awesome moment it will be when our mortal bodies will take on immortality, and we will be transformed into the likeness of the Heavenly Man, Jesus Christ, who gives us the victory! *Using verses 1-11 from this chapter and other places, what proofs do we have of the resurrection of Christ?*

I Corinthians 16— Paul finishes his letter with a plea to set aside money each first day of the week for the poor and needy Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Nearly a year later, he and messengers from all the supporting churches will take this gift for the purpose of helping the believers in famine, but will also be used to unite Jew and Gentile Christians. Paul speaks of his desire to stay in Ephesus because of the wide open door of ministry and plans soon to send Timothy to Corinth but also has a desire to come to Corinth later. In a final exhortation, he encourages the believers to be on guard against the enemy, stay firm in holding to the apostolic faith, be courageous and strong, and be motivated by love in all they do. He closes his letter with customary greetings and final personal benediction. *Who were Aquila and Priscilla mentioned in verse 19?*

Isaiah— This truly is an amazing book written by a prophet who mainly served between 740 to 700 BC. The first half has 39 chapters that thunder judgment upon Israel for their idolatry and wickedness. The last 27 chapters are filled with comfort and hope because of the Lord's Servant who suffers and pays for the sins of the transgressors (53:1-12). Like Revelation 21 and 22, the book of Isaiah ends with the announcement of the new heavens and the new earth. Twenty-six times Yahweh is the "Holy One of Israel" who Isaiah sees high and lifted up (6:1-6). He predicted incredible prophecies about the coming Messiah such as the virgin birth (7:14), the various names and descriptions of the Messiah (9:6-7), the branch and root of Jesse (11:1-16), the coming of the Messiah to rule with Israel on the earth (40:1-31), and His substitutionary death for our sins (53:5-6). Non-biblical sources suggest that the writer of Hebrews was talking about Isaiah's martyrdom when it says he was "sawed in two (Hebrews 11:37b)."

Isaiah 1— This chapter is a courtroom scene where Judah is on trial for departing from the Holy One of Israel and going after other gods. Although they went through all the rituals, sacrifices, and prayers, their hands were covered with the blood of victims. Isaiah says, "Your rulers are rebels, friends of thieves. They all love graft and chase after bribes. They do not defend the rights of the fatherless, and the widow's case never comes before them (v. 23, HCSB)." If they continue in their sin and wickedness, God will send judgment and Israel will be devoured by the sword. If they come back to their God, repent, and return to their Covenant commitment, then Yahweh will restore them, and they will be called the Righteous City, a Faithful City (v. 26). *Read verses 11 to 19. What was wrong with Judah's worship, and what needed to be done to correct it?*

Leviticus 27— In this last chapter of Leviticus, the Lord speaks in a systematic way of the regulations for those who wish to vow or dedicate certain things to the Lord. These vows involve the dedication of people (vv. 1-8), animals brought as offerings (vv. 9-13), and the consecration of houses or lands (vv. 14-25). The Lord gives a reminder that the first born male of people or animals already belong to Him. Yahweh in His grace and mercy makes provision for

those who wish to go back on their vows, and also those who wish to vow but are poor and unable to pay the standard price of making the vows. Finally, the Lord reminds Israel that 10 percent of all produce and animals belong to Him and ought to be brought into the Sanctuary. This finishes the commands given by the Lord at Mount Sinai. *What lesson can we learn from this chapter about making vows, commitments, and promises to the Lord? See Psalms 50:14, Psalm 116:18, Ecclesiastes 5:2, Proverbs 20:25*

Numbers— This fourth book of the Law is named for the two numberings (censuses) taken in chapters 1 and 26 of all adult men. The history of Numbers begins the 20th day of the second year as the Israelites leave Mount Sinai and head toward the Promised Land. What should have taken two years actually ends up taking forty years because of the lack of faith and trust in Yahweh. It was easier to get Israel out of Egypt than to get Egypt out of the people of Israel. This book gives many lessons on (1) trust, (2) the wrath, goodness and power of God, (3) rebellion and Biblical authority, and (4) God's discipline.

Numbers 1— Fourteen months after leaving Egypt, the Lord tells Moses to do a census (registration) of the men above 20 years of age who were able to fight in the future battles against the people in Canaan. The total number of men, excluding the tribe of Levi who was in charge of the tabernacle and sacred things, was 603,550. The total number of all Israelites at that time had to be above 2,000,000, which included wives and children. Moses chose a leader from each tribe to do the census. Because of their disobedience and unbelief at Kadesh, the whole army of 603,550 died in the wilderness one by one during the next 38 years except for Joshua and Caleb. Camped by the Jordan River 38 years later, another census was taken and the number of soldiers was 601,730 (Numbers 26:51). *Why wasn't the tribe of Levi counted in the census (vv. 47-51)? #7 p. 189*

Numbers 2— In this chapter Yahweh organized the camp of Israelites under their respective banners of each tribe. The courtyard and the Tabernacle were to be in the center of the camp with the various tribes camped in an organized fashion around the Tabernacle in more of a square design. On the east side of the courtyard where the entrance was located, the tribe of Judah was camped with Issachar and Zebulun on each side of Judah. Reuben led Simeon and Gad on the south side. Ephraim led Manasseh and Benjamin on the west side of the courtyard with Dan leading Asher and Naphtali on the north side. *Why was the nation of Israel organized according to tribes?*

Numbers 3— God chose the tribe of Levi to serve Him in the sacred things of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his two sons that were left, Eleazar and Ithamar, were to be priests to Israel, and the tribe of Levi would assist them in their duties. The descendents of the three sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and each group had specific duties. "The Gershonites were responsible for the curtains, drapes, and coverings of the tabernacle (3:21-26; 4:21-28); the Kohathites, for its furnishings (3:27-32; 4:1-20); and the Merarites, for its supporting structure (3:33-37; 4:29-33)." #12 p. 164. Yahweh claimed for Himself all of the firstborn sons who were saved from

death during the 10th plague when the death angel passed over Egypt. *Explain the process by which the Lord claimed the tribe of Levi for Himself (vv. 39-51).*

Numbers 4— The Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites are assigned their duties as listed in the previous paragraph. From these families of Levi, Moses took a census of all the men that were from the ages of 30 to 50 and found the number of men to be 8,580. The Kohathites had the special privilege of carrying all the holy objects which were in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place when they broke camp and traveled from place to place. Aaron and his sons were to place blue cloth covering over the holy furniture before Kohathites could come into the Tabernacle and take them for the journey, but if they were to touch them directly or look at them they would die. *Why would God kill a person who would look at or touch the holy furniture? See also I Samuel 6:19-20.*

Numbers 5— Since Yahweh's desire was that His people would live pure lives, He instructs Moses in three areas. First, He addresses those who have defiled themselves with uncleanness that must go outside the camp. The second area of impurity is a person who commits a sin against another person. That person must confess the sin, pay full compensation, add an additional twenty percent, and bring a ram as a sacrifice. The third issue of impurity was a test for marital faithfulness. When a man has a feeling of jealousy that his wife has been unfaithful, the priest administers a test to see if his jealousy can be validated or not. *Why wasn't there a test for the men who may have committed adultery?*

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