

Leviticus 22

Vv. 1-16

This section speaks to Aaron, the priest, and his seed after him, continuing the laws of the priest's cleanliness. The next section, starting with v. 17, speaks to the whole congregation.

This first section applies to the ministers of God, that is, those who minister to God's people in the name of the Lord: It calls on ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ to be holy at all times--"They must be ever separated to the Lord." [Bonar]. It is carried over into the New Testament by Peter, 1 Pet 4:10,

As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [11] If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God: if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

OBSERVE:

1) *every man...* The context obviously is speaking to everyone, but we see from Lev 22, that it especially applies to ministers of the Word of God.

2) *gift...* "endowment of any kind, but especially that conferred by the Holy Spirit." [Barnes] Hence, it refers to that ability given by God's Spirit, equipping the Christian in God's service. Again, special application to ministers of God's Word.

3) *one to another...* The purpose of God-given abilities is to help others along the way. The Lord may well see fit to "prosper" us in material things, or He may not [seems to me like NOT fits best]. The purpose, however, is to *minister one to another*. [E.g., *Awake unto righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*] The primary purpose of the Christian's life is to glorify God here on this earth, that is, be a Godly ambassadors of Christ.

1 Cor 4:1, 2, Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

4) *manifold grace of God.* God's good Spirit has given each person a measure of grace [*manifold*--what He has given is FAR MORE than we deserve, and what He has provided is just the right amount of grace needed for each person to do **HIS WILL, EPH 1:11**].

Eph 4:7, But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [This passage continues by telling us that this grace was given when Christ ascended up far above all heavens...]

We are to do good unto all men as we have the opportunity, especially toward those of the household of faith.

Accountability is not the amount one does for the Kingdom; rather, it is according to the faithfulness in doing what one can do.

5) *If any man speak...* V. 11, the Spirit's instruction here moves primarily to ministers of the Word of God. The instructor in God's Word must realize he is speaking for the Lord God: He is speaking the Word of God for God, and it must not be taken lightly, Lev 22.

Obviously, however, it has a general application: Anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ represents Christ--**that is, speaks for Christ**--everywhere he might be.

6) *if any man minister...* This could refer to *deacons*, Acts 6:2, 3. It could, however, be a more general reference to include all people who have by grace been given abilities by the Spirit.

7) *as to the ability which God giveth...* "In regard to property, talent, strength, influence, &c. This is the limit of all obligation. No one is bound to *go beyond* his ability; every one is required to *come up* to it. Comp. Mark xiv. 8 [sic]; Luke xvii. 10." [Barnes]

God requires no one to go beyond his or her ability, but He certainly requires everyone to go to the limit of his or her ability.

Notice the next phrase:

8) *that God in all things may be glorified...* As each *ministers* according to the ability given to him by the Lord, whether big or very small and insignificant, *God in all things will be glorified.*

9) *through Jesus Christ...* The desire, ability and power to carry out one's responsibility before the Lord, whether big or very small, is from God *through Jesus Christ.*

10) *to whom be praise...* Every man ministering according to his unique God-given ability brings praise to the Lord Jesus Christ.

11) *dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* By the means of each doing his or her best, each one doing what little he or she can do, the dominion of Christ established world wide.

See Mat 25:14ff.; Luke 17:10... [don't forget to check the one where Christ mentioned rulers over cities.]

See my "FOR ME" file for February 7, 1996.

Maybe we have not much in ability nor in material possessions and finances, maybe just barely enough to get by. But our responsibilities are clear, do whatever there is to do according to the ability given by the Spirit. See 1/14/96 message from 1 Jn 5:14, 15.

In other words, a message I have preached "forever:" We are accountable each one for what he has and how he uses that little bit, not for that great amount he does not have and how he has used that.

As each person does his or her little bit [or big bit, as the case may be,

for both are equally responsible], then the Lord's work gets done. He does not expect anyone to do it all, but He certainly expects everyone to do his or her part, according to the grace given.

THE SPIRIT MADE IT CLEAR,

1 Cor 4:1, 2, *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

Some have been given more "abilities" to steward over than others, and each will be held accountable to their own Master. Those who have many and great abilities have a lot of accounting to do to the Father.

I should add the next two verses:

[12] Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

V. 12, follows v. 11, so could refer to the *fiery trial* of thinking that if we cannot do something great for God, we can not do anything that will amount for God.

Lev 22:1, 2

Vv. 1-6a, define uncleanness, telling the priests that they cannot partake of the holy things, which were given for their food, while they are unclean.

V. 2, the priests were to abstain from eating of the holy things as long as they were polluted, and the Lord defines pollution.

The priest is to act as priest at all times. He is to "*separate himself from the holy things;*" that is, to keep aloof from them, in the sense of never handling them familiarly in the sanctuary or out of it.

Ministers may learn from this law to act for God at all times and in every place. Ministers of God must beware of letting their spirituality be injured by domestic occurrences; they must not let domestic comforts unhinge their soul, so as to lead them to speak of holy things to familiarly. Ministers are specially under God's eye; He sees whether they walk in the steps of Jesus in their chambers and at their studies. They must be ever separated to the Lord. [Bonar]

V. 3, if the man insists on violating v. 2, the Lord will cut him off.

How solemn the warning to ministers of Christ! If we go forth to minister in an unholy spirit! if the frame of our souls be at the moment irreverent! if it be engrossed with earthly feelings!--surely we need very special grace at all times, and yet more than all when we stand in the Lord's name. [Bonar]

Those who minister God's Word, representing God to man through the "ministry," must be careful to represent God at all times, whether in the study, in the home or in the public's eye. There is never a time when they

can *let down their guard*, and allow "earthly feelings" to rule the heart when they should be representing the Lord God.

I believe this especially applies to trying to preach/teach God's Word when the minister's spirit is "unhinged:" that is, engrossed in worldly affairs and/or feelings.

Vv. 4, 5, give some common things that might make a man unclean. Things such as immorality had other penalties against them, e.g. death.

1) *leper, or running issue*... Both outward uncleanness, *leper*, and inward uncleanness, *running issue*, defiled the person; either or both prevented the person from eating of the holy things given to God by the people and then given to the family of Aaron for their food.

The person had to be clean at all times, in the privacy of the home among his family and in the privacy of his heart: He had to guard his heart against envy, jealousy and evil of all kinds. The person had to abstain from all appearance of evil. The priest had to be a type of Jesus, who would come and fulfill the office, at all times.

Also included here in the defilement was contact with *the dead* and sexual union within marriage.

A) *the dead*... God's people, especially the priest, represent life.

B) sexual union is interesting: The surrounding pagans and the pagans in Canaan where they were about to go worshiped their gods with fertility rites of all kinds. The practice was common in Paul's day, *i.e.*, the temple prostitutes, both male and female. Thus the Lord made it clear that He was not in any kind of "fertility rite," whether married or not. Though Hebrews points out that the marriage bed is undefiled, the Lord built a very high fence--*a man whose seed goeth from him* is unclean--to show that He has NOTHING to do with any kind of fertility rite.

A thought in passing: Today's emphasis on sex on just about every TV program--sitcoms--on the air is a special abomination to God.

2) *the holy things* had been given to Aaron's seed for his food: "They were pledges of God's fellowship and communion." Yet we see in this law that the Lord will now commune and fellowship with those who *regard iniquity in his heart*. See 1 John 1:6.

3) *creeping things*, "that is, arising from the smallest causes." The eyes of the Lord search not only the whole earth, but the very heart of every person. He is "Jealous of all sin, however small." Though the *creeping things* creep in, many times unnoticed, the Lord does not overlook them.

4) *unless he wash*. Though unclean and defiled, bared from the portion that is his in the Lord, he can be cleansed by washing in the *water* of the word.

5) *until even*. Though accepted through forgiveness of sin, he is to take time to meditate on his defilement and the Lord's cleansing. Paul said, *O wretched man that I am*. The minister, especially, must never forget from where the Lord brought him.

6) *it is his food. The Lord never leaves man, even the unclean man, without hope: He did not cut the person off from his food; provision was made for his life though he was defiled.* The defiled priest--any person for that matter--can be made clean: Cleanness was simply a matter of washing well with water and not eating of the holy things until that evening.

7) I believe it is worth mentioning that implied here is that if the person refused to do the simple thing as *wash his flesh with water* was unable to eat *his food*. The problem was easy to get into and become defiled, and the matter was simple to solve: *wash with water*.

This law is especially applicable to the "minister" when the people of God were not right with God. In such cases, the people failed to bring to God what was His, and when they did not, the "ministers" who depended on the faithful giving of God's people would not have what they would otherwise.

Remember, the tribe of Levi--Aaron's tribe--had no inheritance; rather, he was given the 10th of the other twelve--Joseph being split in two, and each one a tribe. Thus when the people were right with God as God meant it to be, Levi was one of the wealthiest tribes: He had 10% of 12 tribes. But when the people got prosperous, they forgot the Lord, and forgetting the Lord, they failed to give to the Lord what was His--what He had given to Levi. Therefore, the tribe of Levi would be "poorer" than the rest of the tribes most of the time. **Which brings us to this point:** Aaron's seed, as it tried to minister to the Lord, would have easily succumbed to envy, jealousy as they saw the prosperity around them of those who turned from the Lord. But the evil around them of God's people did not allow God's ministers who were polluted as a leper, or a running issue, &c., to eat of the holy things.

This person's standard was always the Word of God, not other people around him. It would be so tempting to say, "I may be defiled, but not near as much as those folks are." There is never an excuse for sin, especially among those who have been set aside by God as His ministers.

The Lord knows the heart, and He judges accordingly.

Vv. 8-13, though clean, they were still forbidden to eat of that which died of itself, or was torn, &c.

The priests were given of the offerings and sacrifices that the people gave to the Lord. The people were forbidden to give what was torn and what died of itself anyway.

In his dwelling, the priest shall never set on his table anything that died a natural death, or was torn--that is, anything that spoke of death and violence. [Bonar]

True, but we must also remember that the people were also forbidden to eat such meat, for it was impossible to properly bleed any animal that died of itself. In this case, v. 8, the same standard applied to both the priest and the "common" people; neither were to eat meat not properly bled.

V. 9, I the LORD do sanctify them... The Lord sets people apart for Himself; therefore, He establishes the standard of separation. The Lord has the right to establish clean and uncleanness, holiness and profane, and who

can and cannot eat of the *holy thing*,

Vv. 10-13

This section defines who may and who may not *eat of the holy thing*: that which is offered to the Lord by the people of Israel. This section speaks of the unity of the household of faith, and would correspond closely with who can partake of the "Lord's Supper."

A) the stranger, that is, those who are passing through as maybe a friend would, nor the hired servant, that is, some one maybe hired by the priest to do some work for him, e.g. a builder building his house. These people, if not of the tribe of Levi, were forbidden to eat of the holy things. I suppose a good NT parallel would be **the hireling**, for the servant who could eat was a **voluntary servant**.

B) one who is bought with money. This was not a slave as we might think of slavery, for Israel was forbidden to do such things. But a man could sell himself or sell his daughters into servitude; at the end of six years, the bought person had to be released. But if the servant loved his master, he could willingly place himself into bondage and have his ear bored through. These persons could eat of the holy things, as could those born in the priest's house, *i.e.*, his children.

Evidently, the *hired servant*, who the priest might hire for a specific job, had to "brown bag" it, that is, provide his own meals.

C) A daughter of the priest who married outside of Levi was barred from the holy things.

D) On the other hand, if the daughter was on her own--divorced, widow--and had no children, and if she returned to her father's house, she is permitted to eat of the holy things. I would have to say that the divorced woman would need to be the victim in the divorce. **Moreover**, divorced also shows that divorce was an acceptable way to deal with sin here under a very strict law dealing with the family of the priest.

Note that stuck in v. 13 is, *and have no child...* This sure sounds like the NT qualification of the church taking care of widows who are widows indeed: They had to be childless.

This woman, divorced or widowed, if she had a child, had her own household, and could not eat of the holy things.

Vv. 14-16, Provision is made for those who unknowingly eat of the holy things. Not at all familiar with the situation, I do not know how this could happen, but evidently it was very possible for it to happen, or this law would not be given.

Now, some interesting points and applications:

First, only those under the immediate authority of the priest could eat of the holy things, the things that had been offered to God and was given to the priest for his personal use.

Second, Vv. 12, 13, the priest's daughter who married and was in another family relationship was out from under her father's authority; therefore, she could not eat of the holy things. But if she had no family or "on her own" with no children **and she was willing to place herself back under her father's**, who was the priest, authority, she could eat of the holy things again.

Strongly implied here is that all who LIVE in a man's house are under his authority: Though they might stay for a time, the hired servant or stranger did not live in his house.

Third, those who ate of the holy things *unwittingly*--through ignorance, error, ignorance, inadvertently--were considered thieves. He had to make restitution according to the law of restitution for theft.

The person was to add a fifth part to the amount he ate, and return the total to the priest: **Fifth part** was the "interest" to be paid for a tithe that had been withheld, and it was the amount of "interest" that was required to be added to what was stolen when the thief was caught, and restitution required.

The meat, or the holy thing, belonged to God, first of all, then it belonged to the priest; even mistakenly using it for personal use was considered theft.

Fifth, IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE PEOPLES' WITHHOLDING OR MISS USING OF THE TITHE--THE OFFERINGS, THE HOLY THINGS--IS CONSIDERED STEALING FROM THE PRIESTS, *i.e.* the tribe of Levi, WHO LIVED FROM THE HOLY THINGS. I have been kind of surprised at the Lord's firmness of who the holy things belonged to, and the laws He gave to enforce that ownership.

But on the other hand, God's law clearly commanded that the *holy things*, the tithes and offerings, belonged to His service and to the Levites--those who served God in the temple and in training God's people in God's law:

Nu 18:20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. Nu 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. Nu 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer [as] an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. Nu 26:62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel. De 18:2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD [is] their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.*

God establishes this law of theft several times, so it is not an unimportant point. See my notes in Lev 5:14-16 [Geneva: As touching the first fruits or tithes, due to the Priests and Levites.] Compare 5:6 with 6:6. See the short note I used in bulletin, AGAINST THEFT, at end of this chapter.

Sixth, Paul made a special point of bringing this law concerning the support of the tribe of Levi forward into the NT Church, and he applied it to those whose occupation is in the work and Word of God, 1 Cor 9:13.

According to Paul's words, therefore, those who do not give the Lord His portion not only steal from the Lord, but they steal from those who have been given--by God's Word, we must say--that portion for their livelihood.

Seventh, the Lord concludes this section with a warning not to take the above requirements lightly: **for I the LORD do sanctify them...** Sanctify... the holy things? the priests?

Regardless, the Lord is the One who establishes the standards, and sets the penalty for violating His standards.

Eight, note there is no civil power given against those who violate the above instructions of the Lord. The Lord keeps score. Mal 3 and Heb 10 are good accounts of how the Lord responds.

Bonar makes an excellent point from vv. 14-14, *i.e.*, God's ministers must watch that they do not lead others into sin:

Ministers of Christ may be guilty of leading others into sin, if they do aught to create levity in the people's minds, or aught that may lessen the holy feeling of reverence toward God. If by levity at home, in handling what in the pulpit was treated very solemnly, they destroy any one's godly dread of prying into the ark, then are they exposing "holy things" to the unconscious profanation of those at their table.

Clearly presented here are the dangers of "Christian entertainers" in the pulpit. They draw crowds, but do they incite the people to more holy reverence toward God?

Vv. 17-33

This section contains various laws concerning **the freewill offering**. This offering was made of one's own freewill as he rejoiced in the goodness of the Lord, Deut 16:10.

1) *the strangers in Israel* could also take part in the *freewill offering*.

2) though the offerer was not required to bring this offering, it was a *freewill offering*, the offerer had to abide by the laws established by the Lord. No one forced the offerer to make the offering, but if the offering was made, it had to be according to the Word of the Lord.

A) Bonar makes this note at v. 20, *it shall not be acceptable for you*.

Or perhaps rather, "It shall not seem to you fit for being offered to me," is the sense; for it may be rendered literally, "It shall not be acceptable to you;" it shall find no favour in your eyes.

The above is an interesting observation:

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH US WHEN WE FEEL THAT SOMETHING LESS THAN PERFECT IS SUITABLE FOR THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH? How can we feel that

second best is fine for the living God Whom we claim to love? What kind of God is He in our eyes? What is wrong with His people that they believe *blemished* offerings are suitable to the Lord?

If we who claim to be the people of the Lord God would get our hearts right, the Lord would not have to worry about things broken, sick, imperfect being offered to Him: We just would not do it.

I can just see a young man now: He is madly in love with a fine young lady, so he gives her a broken neckless or a wore out chair, or a ripped dress. How foolish we are, believing that the God we profess to love is worthy of less than the best, and that those offerings that are less than the best please Him.

3) the offering, if of the beeves or sheep, had to be *unblemished* and a *male* to be accepted.

A) clearly spoke of Christ, the "holy, harmless, undefiled one." The Father never tires of the sight of the Holy One, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, nor should sinners. No one will approach the Holy Heavenly Father without that *unblemished, perfect* offering. We cannot imagine a blind, broken, maimed, scabbed offering picturing Christ, the perfect Lamb of God. [*wen*, pimples that disfigured its form; *scurvy*, disagreeable to the eye; *scabbed*, dry scab making its touch polluting.]

B) the offerer's motives alone did not make the offering accepted: It still had to correspond to the written instructions of God's Word.

A holy God will hold no fellowship with man but in a blameless way; no peace or reconciliation except through an unblemished sacrifice. But see chap. I.3. [Bonar]

4) *the freewill offering* was used the first time to build the tabernacle; from then on, it was for the upkeep of the tabernacle. Thus the tabernacle did not come from the tithes given by the people. The temple was rebuilt under Ezra with *the freewill offering* of the people, e.g. Ezr 1:4; 3:5; 7:16, &c.

5) an imperfect animal that could not be used for other offerings could be used *for a freewill offering*, v. 23. Bonar presents a point here I had never considered. The vow represented Christ, so it had to be perfect, but the *free-will* was a different matter:

If given as a *free-will offering*, it shewed the offerer's view of the case, and not the Lord's view, nor yet the priest's. Hence, his presenting from his herd or flock an animal that wanted an eye, or an ear, or the like, shewed, indeed, his low sense of what was due to the lord, and what was proper as a type; but inasmuch as it was done of his own free-will, to express the present state of his feelings, it might be taken with that understanding... Oh, how different is the *free-will offering* of such an Israelite as this from God's own *free-will offering* of His Son! The Lord has measured the narrowness of man's soul; who has ever measured the unlimited fulness of the mind of God? [See Job 11:8, 9; Eph 3:18, 19, ed.]

Surely the *free-will gifts* of men discover their fallen, narrow souls! and placed before such a God, they make us feel, "His ways are not as

our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts!" And what *bondage to self* shines through these narrow gifts of men--in amazing contrast with the full-souled liberty of Him who for our sake emptied His own bosom of His beloved Son!

Mercy! he certainly placed his finger on the thought of this verse: The quality of the *free-will offering* given to the Lord clearly revealed the quality of the person's love for the Lord.

But we should not overlook the fact that the *blemished* gift was allowed: The Lord would rather have something, even *blemished*, than nothing at all.

6) notice the "defect" was a birth "defect" beyond one's control, not something that developed after birth. Comp vv. 22, 23 & 24. This verse prohibited anything in any offering made to the Lord that might hint that the male animal was anything less than a male, e.g., castrated. Christ was truly man, made in every sense as a man, except in sin. There was no trace of **sodomy** in Him as the Devil's disciples would have us believe.

7) the Lord placed age restrictions upon the offering, v. 27. The six days of creation are here represented, the seventh representing maturity. Christ was allowed to mature before He was slain by wicked hands.

8) the Lord prohibited killing both the mother and her young in the same day. Again, Bonar makes a point I have never considered, nor have I seen it elsewhere:

The *Father* was to *give up* His Son; and the *Son* was to be, as it were, torn from the *Father's* care by the hands of wicked men. How could this be represented if *both* the ewe and her young were offered together? This part of the truth must never be obscured, that "*God so loved the world, that He gave His Son.*" And the bleatings of the tender lamb in its parent's ears, as it was taken from the fold, filling the air with sadness, represented the bleatings of "the Lamb led to the slaughter," who so sadly wailed, "Eli! Eli! lama Sabachthani?"

My! what a point to consider. No one who has heard a lamb bleating for its mother and a mother bleating for her child could fail to recognize the "great truth, '*God spared not his own Son, but delivered Him for us all.*'"

9) evidently, there were at least two *freewill offerings*: for the upkeep of the tabernacle and simply for rejoicing in the Lord's goodness, v. 30. V. 29 opens with, **And when...**, implying that this is another, separate, distance offering from the one just described.

10) Vv. 29-33, the offering of thanksgiving, *freewill offering*, had to be eaten at one setting. It represented reconciliation and communion with God; therefore, it was to be enjoyed as a feast--the Lord forbid "holding out" for another meal. If it was not all eaten, it was to be destroyed.

Bonar makes this point:

Five motives are strewn on their path to constrain them to close obedience. 1. "*I am the Lord.*" This is authority. [4 times in 4 verses, 30-33, the Lord makes this point, ed.] 2. "*I will be hallowed among the children of Israel.*" This is His holiness, and His desire to diffuse awe

of His holy name. 3. *"I am the Lord which hallow you."* Here is an appeal to their privileges as Israelites. Do you not feel that you actually are set apart for me? 4. *"I am the Lord which brought you out of Egypt."* Here is His claim as Redeemer, who paid the price and set free the captives. Is there gratitude in your souls? 5. *"Your God"*--as well as your Lord: His claim as Father, Shepherd, King, and whatever else there is that is tender in relationship, or beneficial in office, or sweet in character--all is summed up in "YOUR GOD!" Who is like "our God?" "Who *Would not fear Thee?*" (Jer. x.6).

Conclusion of this section is that the Lord, He is the God of our redemption, the One Who paid the price for His people's deliverance from death and bondage. He, therefore, has the right to define every action, and failure to do it His way, in spite of one's motives, is to *profane--defile, pollute, desecrate, &c.--His holy name.*