

# Numbers 17-18

## Aaron's Staff and Provisions for Priests and Levites



Welcome!

בוקר טוב

Coffee is available via the Kurig machine

# Sacrifices: Review and Revision

- Previously: Leviticus 6:1-7 describes a sacrifice for intentional wrongdoing
- Revision: Lev. 6:1-7 describes the payment to undo the curse called down on the thief by the wronged party



wronged party invokes curse



repentant thief returns property



temporally punitive curses lifted

- If this is correct, then the sacrificial system does not even implicitly cover the intentional wrongdoing
- That reality is clear from scripture, regardless (e.g., Psalm 40:6-8; Daniel 9)
- May also imply that the “defiant sin” in Num. 15 parallels the “intentional sin” in Lev. 4-6
  - Both are deserving of death (cf. punishments for breaking the 10 commandments)

# Sacrificial Taxonomy: Who Eats the Sacrifice?

Burnt Offering  
(עֹלָה) from “to ascend”



- God eats the sacrifices
  - E.g., “the food of their God” (Lev. 21:6)
- Represents consecration

Peace Offering  
(שְׁלָמִים) from “shalom”



- Worshiper eats the sacrifice
  - Too much for one person; shared with community
- Represents communion

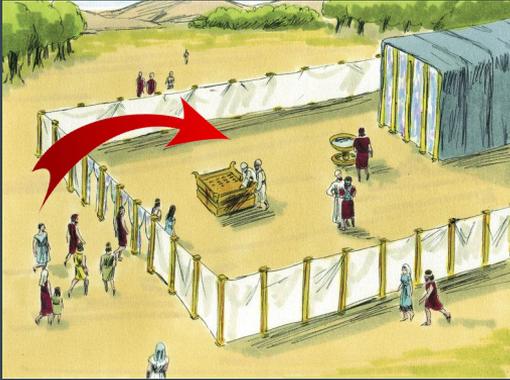
Sin/Guilt Offering  
(חַטָּאת/אֲשָׁמ)



- Priest eats the sacrifice
  - Transfer of sin  
Sinner → animal → priest
- Represents atonement

# The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur—fall)

Sins of defilement transferred from community to the priests throughout the entire year



Cumulative sins transferred from priest to sacrificial animal



The LORD takes that sins onto himself in the only “sin offering” offered up as a burnt offering



- The LORD takes the sin of His people upon Himself
- Additional symbolism factors with sending the “scapegoat” into the wilderness

# Penalty for Intentional Sins

## Idolatry

Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the Lord must be destroyed. (Exo. 22:20)

## Blasphemy

Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people. (Exo. 22:28)

The community stones the blasphemer (Lev. 24:10-23)

## Sabbath-breaking

The community stones the one found gathering firewood on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36)

# Penalty for Intentional Sins

## Dishonoring your parents

Anyone who attacks their father or mother is to be put to death. (Exo. 21:15)

Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. (Exo. 21:17)

Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. Because they have cursed their father or mother, their blood will be on their own head. (Lev. 20:9)

# Penalty for Intentional Sins

## Murder

This is to have the force of law for you throughout the generations to come, wherever you live. Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. They are to be put to death. (Num. 35:29-31)

## Adultery

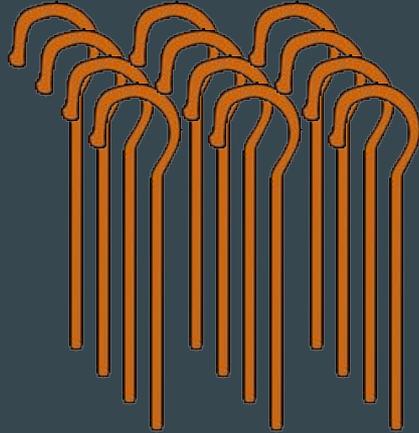
If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death. (Lev. 20:10)

# Numbers 17

# Re-confirmation of Aaron as Priest

- Korah Rebellion called Aaron's priesthood into question
- God re-confirms His choice of Aaron as priest

Place 12 staffes, with names of leaders inscribed on them, before the LORD



Aaron's staff blossoms overnight



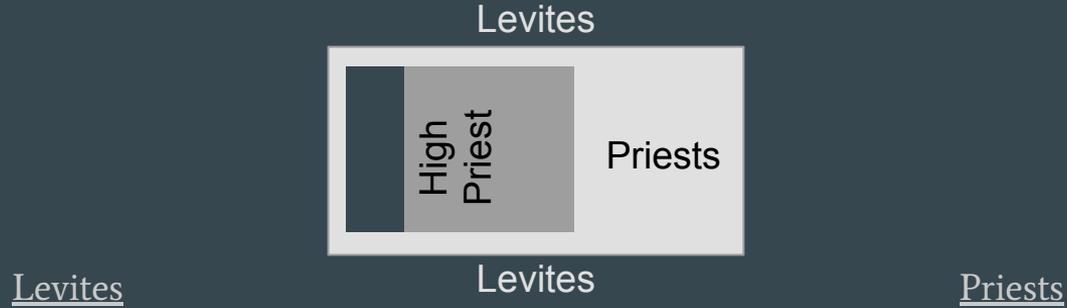
Leave the blossomed staff before the ark as an eternal reminder that God chose Aaron as priest



- Now the Israelites respond in fear
  - The should have been more afraid in Numbers 16
  - Is this Godly fear?

# Duties of the Levites and Priests

- Rarticulation of the boundaries between Levites and priests



- Responsible to “perform all the duties of the tent” (outside of the curtain)
- They are not to take liberties to “go near the furnishings of the sanctuary”
  - Kohathite clan allowed to move (carefully) these items but not to otherwise interact with them
- Other Israelites are not allowed to “come near” the tent
- Responsible for “the care of the sanctuary and the altar” (inside of curtain)
- Levites are made available to help the priests
- Only Aaron and his sons may serve as priests (i.e., serve inside the curtain)
  - This is a gift to Aaron and his sons (not a reward for good behavior)
- You may approach God exactly as close as He permits: no closer

# The Priests' Portion of Offerings

- All priests are Levites and thus have no land inheritance
- With no land for crops/animals, how will they eat?

Sacrifices



- Mostly burnt
- Unburned part is given to the priests to eat
  - Still treated as “most holy”

Wave Offerings



First Fruits



Includes humans, which are to be redeemed back  
(Exo. 22:29, Num. 18:15-16)



Firstborn

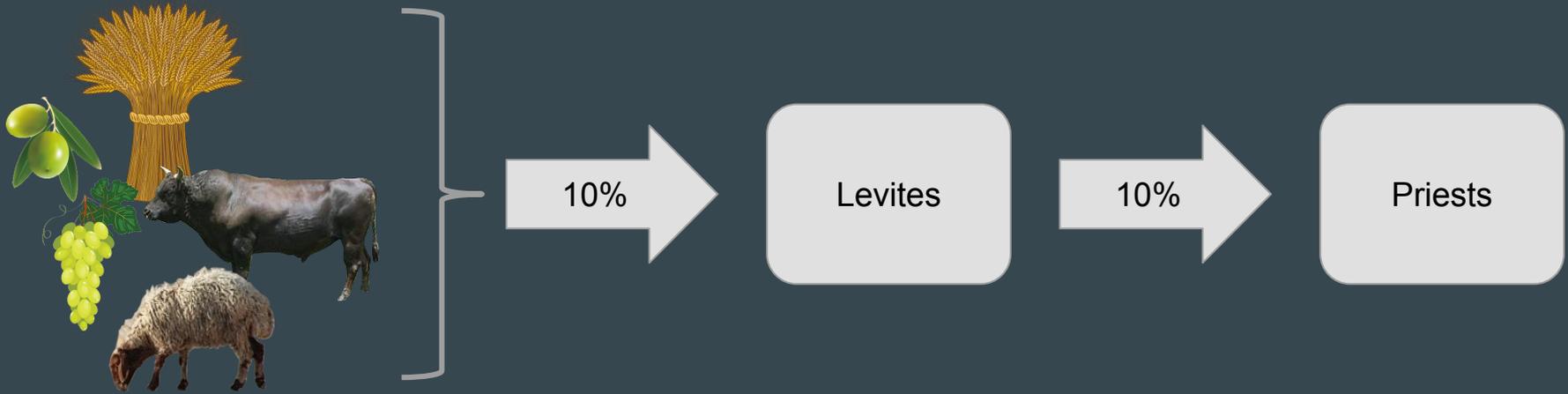


- “You will have no inheritance in the land... I am your share”
  - Intimate dependance on God for provision

# Tithes for the Levites

- The other Levites also have no land inheritance
- The Levites are not to assist in offerings, so they also do not get any portion of those

“Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD”



- Randomly selected and rounded down as 10% of yield (Lev. 17:30-33)
  - E.g., 9 animals born: 0 animals tithed; 109 bushels of wheat: 10 bushels tithed
- For the poor & needy (this includes the Levites)

# Summary

- Old testament sacrifices were never meant to truly cover sin
- Our sins deserve death
- We do not get to set the terms on which we approach the LORD
- The LORD provides for those who have no means to provide for themselves
- His people are part of that provision