Keeping in mind all of the introductory material, we begin this exciting study of Leviticus.

Leviticus 1:1-2 JPS  The LORD called unto Moses, and spoke unto him out of the tent of meeting, saying:  (2)  Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: When any man of you bringeth an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd or of the flock.

Some translations vary in the opening words of Leviticus. Some say “Now The LORD called” and others just say “the LORD called.” It may seem minor, but Leviticus is a continuation of Exodus and should flow naturally from Exodus. Using “now” or “and” appears to be indicated by the text.

  ויקרא אל־משׁה וידבר יהוה אליו מאהל מועד לאמר׃

Although this is not some major theological point, it does help us understand this section of Torah is connected to and flows from our Book of Exodus. So, take a quick review of what has just happened in Exodus.

Exodus 40:17 TLV  Now it happened during the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the Tabernacle was raised up.

God directed Moses to set up the Tabernacle. Chapter 40 is almost expected, anticipated, common, and taken for granted. However, the completion of the Tabernacle is a major marker in God’s timeline. Think about how important this step is.

1. God calls Israel to be His people

2. God redeems His people from Egypt

3. God delivers the people to Mt. Sinai

4. God and Israel agree to the Sinai Covenant

5. God orders a place of worship to be built for His People

Now, we have a Tabernacle, we have a Covenant…so how does this all fit together. One we have a Tabernacle, we need a way to use it. God’s timeline continues.

6. A sacrificial system will be given

7. God will appoint a priesthood

8. God will appoint a High Priest

9. God will give civil law to govern routine living

10. God will give religious law for man’s worship of the YHVH

This Tabernacle is a vital part of God’s long ranging plan for His people. The Priesthood, sacrificial system, and even the rules of society and worship connect to the Tabernacle. Now, we are about to see the Tabernacle has a connection to all of the instructions in Leviticus.

Exodus 40:34-35 TLV  Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Adonai filled the Tabernacle.  (35)  Moses was unable to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud resided there and the glory of Adonai filled the Tabernacle.

This is God’s ultimate seal of approval. Israel must have followed the directions perfectly. God’s glory fills up not only the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, but the whole Tabernacle proper, which is called the Tent of Meeting. In other words, God is making it well know that this Tabernacle is His place on earth.

God’s glory inhabits all of it and Moses cannot go into the Tabernacle because God’s glory—later to be called “Shekinah” or “Shekinah glory.” Shekinah is associated with light so what we see here is the entire Tabernacle illuminated with God’s intensive light. We will see this repeated again in our future.

Revelation 21:23 TLV  And the city has no need for the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God lights it up, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Revelation 22:5 TLV  Night shall be no more, and people will have no need for lamplight or sunlight—for Adonai Elohim will shine on them. And they shall reign forever and ever!

We do not need to be jealous of Israel. God will give us the same picture of His glory in the world to come.

Shekinah is an interesting word. Associated with the Glory of God, it means to dwell, live among, or reside temporarily or permanently. Usually, when we use “Shekinah Glory” we tend to think of brilliance, making the association with light. There is another association, that of the dwelling or the residing of the Glory of God. With that is the idea that the dwelling can be permanent or temporary.

Moses could not go into the Tabernacle property at all while the Shekinah Glory of God filled it curtain to curtain. Later Moses, Aaron and the other priests could walk on the Holy ground because God withdrew to the Holy of Holies. Now, however, Moses is standing outside the Tabernacle looking in. This is the beginning of fulfilling the promise of Exodus 25:22.

God speaks, “Now, after filling the Tabernacle with His Glory, God spoke to Moses, from the Glory inside the Tabernacle, saying…” It would stand to reason that those standing outside with Moses would hear this very audible voice, but the directive is to Moses. It is possible the people have withdrawn, similar to their actions at Sinai, to avoid contact with The Most Holy. Moses, the intercessor, is to deliver the Words of God to the people.

God begins by saying,

When anyone of you brings an offering to Adonai, you may present your offering of livestock, from the herd or from the flock.

That thought is immediately followed by these words.

Leviticus 1:3 TLV  “If his sacrifice is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to present a male without blemish. He is to offer it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, so that he may be accepted before Adonai.

And later we read,

Leviticus 1:10 TLV  “If his sacrifice is from the flock, from the sheep or from the goats, for a burnt offering, he should bring a male without blemish.

Verses 3 and 10 begin with “if” indicating an option of sacrifices. If a man raises sheep, God expects the best of the flock. Likewise, for a cattleman, God expects the best of the herd. The principle here is that a sacrificial system extends to every person, and every person has the ability to sacrifice. This is an example of grace.

However, verse 2 says,

“When any man of you bringeth an offering unto the LORD.”

The “when” anticipates man will bring offerings. It is not a matter of if a man transgresses, it is when man transgresses. God knows man. He knows man because He created man and God, being God, knows man will eventually need a sacrificial system. There is no perfection short of Heaven.

The concept of the man-ness of man is often lost to us. We often stand amazed in shock when a fellow Believer falls short and sins. There is an artificial expectation that a Believer will not sin when we should anticipate exactly that. Someone has said the church is the only army that shoots their wounded. Transgress the sacred doctrine of the group and responses will range from no one caring to excommunication.

There is a fine line in how congregations or groups deal with the issue of sin. There are biblical concepts that require certain results and those must be carefully sought out and applied with care—and love. We should never rejoice when a Believer falls, but neither should be stand open-mouthed in paralyzing awe. We must remember, in many cases the purpose of discipline is to restore. God gave the sacrificial system to restore man with God, and ultimately man restored to society.

The stream of grace does not give us license to sin at will. Paul clearly stated we should not continue sinning to demonstrate the depth of grace. The ancient Hebrew would understand that concept, and we should grasp it as well. The sacrificial system aimed at unintentional sin. To sin on purpose, intentional sin, is outside the realms of the sacrificial system of grace.

The principle of man’s sinfulness continues, even for the redeemed man. It becomes an issue of how we deal with that sinfulness. In a sense, the sacrificial system was incomplete because it only dealt with unintentional sin. Now comes man’s need for a redeemer, even a redeemer for intentional sin.

Matthew 5:17 TLV  “Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

To “fulfill” is to complete, to cram full to overflowing. Messiah made complete the sacrificial system, even to include those times of intentional sin.

1 John 2:1 TLV  My children, I am writing these things to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Intercessor with the Father—the righteous Messiah Yeshua.

Although these words of John shows grace, it is not license. Here sin is presented in a tense that indicates a singular act. There is redemption for the erroring Believer, even when the error is intentional. However, we cannot continue living in that sin without some negative result. Here is where compassion and reinstatement comes in. Here is where restoration is needed. Here is where confession of sin is imperative and loving return to the community is active.

How many congregations have fired a leader when they failed? How many congregational leaders have quit caring and disciplined their followers because of sin? Clergy is often disappointed when their congregants sin to the point of resignation. Congregations hold their leaders to an unattainable level of accountability expecting perfection. Friendships are broken because we do not understand or accept the conditions of the sacrificial system. Even homes are broken apart over expectations of perfection.

The sacrificial system serves as an example and a warning to us about sinfulness. God’s sacrificial system expects man to repent, why should we be different? To love one another is to understand our fellow man as God understands mankind. To love one another is to admit we all need a second chance…maybe a third or fourth chance.