1:2 *From the herd*- They were not to keep some animals specially for sacrifice; they were to take the sacrificial animals out of the herd. We are to be living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), not reserving just part of our lives for God. The Lord Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, and He was taken out of the common herd of humanity, not preserved specially for His work.

1:3 *Without blemish*- No animal actually is without blemish. God recognizes that we will not attain perfection in this life, but we are to do our best towards it. Only Christ was the sacrifice totally without moral blemish (1 Pet. 1:19).

1:4 Putting the hand on the animal’s head was to show that the animal represented the offerer. He showed thereby that he deserved to die, and wished to give his total life to God just as the animal would be totally offered to God. We see here God’s principle of accepting us on the basis of the representative sacrifice of Christ; the equivalent of our putting our hand on the head of the sacrifice is the act of baptism into Christ and abiding “in Christ”, He being our representative and we being His.

1:9 Every part of our lives, including our most inward parts, are to be offered to God. The process of splitting the offering into its parts speaks of our self-examination, defining each part of our lives and offering them to God consciously.

2:6 *In pieces*- see on 1:9.

2:9 *A pleasant aroma*- This is a very common phrase. It is applied to us in 2 Cor. 2:15- if we are in Christ, we are counted as a pleasant aroma to God. The offering of ourselves to Him is nothing of itself, but because we are in Christ and counted as Him, we are a delight to God. Hence the colossal importance of being “in Christ”.

2:11 Yeast represented sin (1 Cor. 5:8). Honey and yeast would’ve made the grain pleasing to men; but the lesson was that what pleases people isn’t what is necessarily pleasing to God. He wants a person as they are, from the heart.

2:13 The salt represents gracious speech (Col. 4:6) and peace with one another (Mk. 9:50); without these things, no matter how great our sacrifice, it cannot be accepted by God. Hence Jesus taught that we should not offer our sacrifices to God until we have done what we can to get at peace with our brother (Mt. 5:24).

3:6 *Without blemish*- Although peace offerings were completely voluntary, they were not to think that therefore they could not respect God’s holiness and give him that which was second best. Many of the sacrifices we make to God are likewise not compulsory, but the spirit of giving God the best which permeates the Law of Moses should remain with us.

3:11 *The food*- The metaphor invites us to see the altar as God’s table, at which He as it were ate the sacrifices. At the breaking of bread service, we come to the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:21); the offering we bring is ourselves. And yet God has placed on the altar, on the table before us, the sacrifice of His Son, and invites us to eat with Him there. Eating with someone was understood as a sign of religious fellowship. At the breaking of bread, we are therefore celebrating our living fellowship with God Himself.

3:16 The fat was understood as the best part of the animal, although today for health reasons we tend to consider the meat to be of more interest than the fat. They were to give to God that which they perceived to be the most valuable, within the frames of understanding and perception within which they then lived.

4:3 Sins of ignorance still needed to be atoned for. Sin is a felt offence against God, whether or not we were aware of it at the time. If we accidentally step on someone’s foot and they don’t tell us about it until tomorrow, it doesn’t mean that we didn’t hurt them at the time. The sins we committed before baptism, in ignorance, were still felt by God and need atonement- which is available freely through being “in Christ”. David asked to be forgiven for the sins he committed which he didn’t know about (Ps. 19:12 cp. Ps. 90:8). We should pray the same. But this means we are asking for forgiveness for sin which we haven’t specifically repented of. We should likewise forgive others for their sins which although *we* so clearly feel them, they themselves don’t realize they have committed them. We can, if we wish, insist that we shall only forgive those who repent to us of their sins. But the problem with that approach is that *as* we forgive others, the basis we choose upon which to relate to them, so we will be forgiven (Mt. 6:12). If we trust we are forgiven for sins we aren’t conscious of, even though they are very clear to God and felt by Him, then we ought to forgive others for their sins even when they don’t perceive (at this point in their spiritual journey) that they have sinned.

4:5 *Anointed*- ‘Christ’ means ‘The anointed one’, and so Jewish minds would have associated ‘Jesus Christ’ with the priest who saves [‘Jesus’ means ‘Yahweh’s salvation’].

4:7 *At the base of the altar*- We think of the blood of Christ trickling down the stake to the ground.

4:8 *Inward parts*- There is huge emphasis upon this in the regulations about sacrifices. Our inward parts and thoughts of the heart are laid open before God and should be offered to Him, not just the externalities which men see (Heb. 4:12). The sacrifice of Christ was so perfect because His innermost thoughts were offered to God.

4:15 *Before Yahweh*- Before the priests who represented God. God Himself is in Heaven, but His representatives on earth are functionally Him to other people. We must therefore watch our behaviour and who we are, because we who have been baptized into His Name are His representatives on earth.

4:29 The person had to personally kill the animal, not delegate it to a priest or someone else. It would’ve been an unpleasant experience, but designed to teach the seriousness of sin. ‘This animal has done nothing wrong; it’s *me* who ought to be dying for my sin’ would’ve been the thought of all sensitive, spiritually minded people who did this. And this is our thought as we survey the cross with the son of God dying upon it for our sins.

5:1 Sins of omission, of turning a blind eye, are just as culpable as sins of commission.

5:2 Haggai comments that it was easier to be made unclean than to be made clean; touching holy things didn’t impart holiness to a person, whereas touching unclean things made people unclean (Hag. 2:11-14). It’s easy to be made unspiritual by association with unspiritual things, the things which are dead, which have no spiritual life in them, which are going nowhere- hence Paul alludes to this by saying “Touch not the unclean thing” in the context of appealing for believers to quit worldly associations (2 Cor. 6:17). However, on the other hand, this is no proof for the wrong idea of ‘guilt by association’. The Lord Jesus touched lepers in order to heal them.

5:10 The sin offering always preceded the burnt offering, which represented dedication to God. Before we can acceptably dedicate ourselves to God in any enterprise or aspect of our lives, we must first be right with God, cleansed from our sins; for good works alone cannot compensate for the sin we have committed.

5:11 God thirsts for relationship with us, and doesn’t want human poverty to mean that we can’t get atonement. In Bible times, religion was the hobby of the wealthy; yet God wants relationship with all. Although it was a principle that shedding of blood was required for forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22), God was prepared to allow a non-blood sacrifice if this was all a person had to offer. Aware of this, Heb. 9:22 says that “*almost* all things” under the Law were cleansed by the shedding of blood- but not literally all, because the writer knew that there was this possibility of offering flour offerings instead of the required animal. The fact God is prepared to make concessions to human weakness shouldn’t lead us to any spirit of minimalism in how we consider sin or the standards of God’s holiness.

6:4 *Robbery*- This effectively was what the exaggeration, mind games, manipulation, white lies and deceitful dealing of v. 2 was reckoned as. These things creep in so easily into any business dealings between people; and God sees them as robbery.

6:5 *In the day*- Broken relationships were to be restored as quickly as possible, so the restoration was to be made immediately. In all human failure, reconciliation involves some level of restoration, be it verbal or material.

6:13 *It shall not go out*- There was fair emphasis on this, that always a bullock should be smouldering as a burnt offering to God. Our devotion to God, as a community of believers and as individuals, must be 24/7; it’s not a matter of occasional flashes of devotion, weekly attendance at meetings etc.

6:16 The priests had no inheritance amongst Israel, they survived by eating parts of the offerings. Their eating of them represented God’s ‘eating’ of the sacrifices, the altar being described as His table(Mal. 1:7,12), His acceptance of the offerer and fellowship with them- for eating what had been brought to you was a sign of acceptance and religious fellowship with the donor.

6:20 An ephah is about 22 litres.

6:22 *Wholly burnt*- The priests were not to eat parts of their own offering, as they usually did with the offerings of others. We as the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5) shouldn’t take any personal benefit from what we give to God, otherwise the concept of personal sacrifice to God is somewhat lacking in complete meaning. The priests were so used to dealing with the needs of others for atonement and acceptability with God- but they were not to forget that they too needed this, hence they too had to offer sacrifice. Our dealings with the unsaved world shouldn’t lead us to forget our own personal need for reconciliation with God.

6:29 When Jesus presented Himself as the sin offering and invited His people to eat the symbol of it in the breaking of bread meeting, He was inviting us to see ourselves as a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5,9), no longer assuming some group of specialists would look after the spiritual concerns of others, but everyone, male and female, taking responsibility. This was a radical, difficult idea to accept for 1st century Jewish Christians, and it is hard for us today too, accustomed as we are to assigning responsibility to others rather than taking it ourselves.

7:1 There’s a difference between the trespass offering and the sin offering, which is hard to define. It seems that the trespass offering was made when a specific sin had been done more consciously, whereas the sin offering was required when sin had been committed less consciously, or when a more general recognition of the fact we are sinners was required.

7:3,4 There is special emphasis upon the fat, which was perceived as the best part of the animal, and the most covered inward parts. After recognizing our sin, we must be prepared to offer these to God. David understood the spirit of the trespass offering when after his sin with Bathsheba he offered to God his inward parts (Ps. 51:6).

7:20 The peace offering was a voluntary sacrifice. But this didn’t mean that the offerer could be careless, or think that having made a special sacrifice to God somehow made his uncleanness of no significance. Taking the initiative in serving God is good, but it shouldn’t make us think that we are somehow above God’s principles and can be unclean in other aspects of our lives.

7:27 The blood represented the life (17:11). The lesson was that life- both our own and that of others- is God’s, and we shouldn’t assume that we are our own masters. It is not for us to do what we wish with life- it is God’s. Paradoxically, the person who thought they could eat blood, who thought that life was theirs, would lose their life. The only way to live eternally is to give our life back to God who gave it to us. In baptism, we die with Christ, giving our lives to God as He did, but this must be an ongoing principle in our daily living, as we live not to ourselves but to Him (2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 4:2).

7:30 *With his own hands*- We cannot get others to do our worship and devotion to God for us. In this lies the grave error of the orthodox idea of a human priesthood who as it were do everything for us. We are to have a deeply personal relationship with God, with Christ as our only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

*Waved*- The Hebrew word means to lift up, to shake, to move to and fro. This style of offering meant that the offerer lifted up the sacrifice to God. The wave offerings were typically eaten by the priests, but first they had to be lifted up to God in recognition that they were being given ultimately to Him and not to the priests personally. The physical lifting up of the sacrifice through the air towards God could represent the ascension of Jesus as the perfect sacrifice to God.

8:4 *Congregation*- The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint [LXX], uses the word *ekklesia*, which is used in the New Testament for the church. The body of believers in Christ today are the equivalent of the Old Testament people of God, Israel.

8:6 This washing with water looks ahead to baptism into Christ, by which we become the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5).

8:8 *Urim and thummim*- These seem to have been two stones, which at times flashed a sequence of yes / no answers to specific questions which arose amongst God’s people.

8:9 *As Yahweh commanded Moses*- The careful obedience of Moses is emphasized; by it he became a type of Christ who was totally obedient to God (Heb. 3:2,5). The early chapters of Exodus present Moses as not always obedient, often arguing back with God and trying to find ways around God’s commandments to him. In this we see his spiritual growth. This growing acceptance of God’s authority and eagerness to obey rather than find ways around His commandments should be a feature of our spiritual growth too.

8:10 ‘Christ’ means ‘the anointed one’. All these anointed things were therefore symbolic of Him. He fulfilled their meaning in reality within His person, character and work.

8:14 Whatever special work we embark upon for God, we should always be aware of our own weakness and need for forgiveness. Therefore the consecration of Aaron and his sons for their great work began with sin offerings.

8:15 The physical furniture of the tabernacle wasn’t sinful of itself. It was cleansed in order to demonstrate that whatever humanly beautiful and impressive work we make for God, it is still shadowed by our own sinfulness.

8:23 All our service to God is to be done with the awareness of the fact that Christ shed His blood for us- our way of hearing, all we do with our hands and where we go with our feet is to be influenced by our experience of His death for us.

8:34 They were insistently reminded of their own need for atonement as they commenced the work of securing the atonement of others. In all our efforts for others we must bear this in mind.

9:4 The appearing of Yahweh to His people required that they made themselves right with Him through a sequence of offerings which dealt with their sin and made them acceptable to Him. We in our day are to live in daily expectation of God’s appearing to us through the return of Christ; and we too must ensure we are right with Him and can go to meet Him acceptably (Mt. 25:6).

9:15 *The goat of the sin offering*- Jesus spoke of the righteous as sheep and the sinners as goats (Mt. 25:33). A goat rather than a sheep was required because the goat was the representative of the sinful people; it was killed as a recognition by them that their sin deserved death. In baptism we make the same recognition- that I should die, and I identify myself with the dead body of Christ, and come alive again in Him.

9:22 *Blessed them*- Blessing is often associated with forgiveness and acceptance with God. The blessings promised to Abraham and his seed likewise (Acts 3:25,26). If we are Abraham’s seed by baptism (Gal. 3:27-29) then we are to be a blessing to the world in that we offer them the way to God’s forgiveness and fellowship with Him.

When the offerings are spoken of together, they are always in this order- sin offering, then burnt offering and then peace offering. Firstly we must deal with our sin; then dedicate ourselves to God, as spoken of in the burnt offering. Only then can we have peace with God and fellowship freely with Him, as exemplified in the peace offering.

10:1 The implication of v. 9 could be that they were drunk when they did this.

10:2 Fire coming down from God has just occurred as a sign of His acceptance of sacrifice (9:24). We shall either be consumed by God’s fire, or we give ourselves to Him as living sacrifices and are accepted and consumed by Him. There’s a logic of devotion here- whether we live to the flesh or to the Spirit, we are to be consumed anyway. So we may as well be consumed by God’s acceptance of us rather than by His wrath.

10:3 God’s destruction of sinners is a constructive declaration of His holiness rather than an angry deity lashing out at people because they offended Him. Any disciplining of others which we may have to do, e.g. of our children or within the family of God, should be done in the same constructive spirit. This incident teaches that we cannot approach God on our own terms, in our own way, but must do so in the way He has defined in His word. The fact He doesn’t respond to human failure so visibly as He did in Moses’ time doesn’t mean that this is any less true for us today.

10:19 Aaron felt unable to eat with God because of his bad conscience about his sons’ behaviour, or maybe because he felt angry with God for killing his sons. Moses expected Aaron to just be obedient to the letter of the law for the sake of it, but Aaron is presented as having done the right thing, living with sensitivity to our conscience and feelings rather than in unthinking obedience to the letter of the law.

11:3 *Chews the cud*- The Hebrew means to bring the food up again, to ruminate. Perhaps this was to represent ruminating upon God’s word; and being cloven-footed perhaps speaks of being sure footed and walking stably in life. To chew the cud (ruminate on God’s word) but not walk the talk (not having a cloven foot) still makes us unclean (:4). However, it may be that there is little significance in the chewing of the cud of itself, because doing so didn’t make the animal unclean of itself- it was just an exercise for Israel to teach them the concept of discernment, self control and obedience to God even when this meant practical inconvenience for them (see on :6).

11:6 *Unclean to you*- Paul observes that there is nothing unclean of itself (Rom. 14:14). These animals were to be unclean “to *you*” because it was part of God’s method of teaching His people to make a moral choice in life, to recognize there is sin and righteousness, clean and unclean. There were hygienic reasons behind the prohibition of some animals, but the essential intention was to teach the concept of making a difference, of looking at something we could partake of and saying ‘No, that is not for me’. The fact God later withdrew the distinction between clean and unclean animals just confirms that they were not clean nor unclean of themselves; all had been created by God and declared “very good” in Genesis. The distinctions between them were there to simply educate Israel in practicing the concept of separation and discernment between acceptable and unacceptable things in life.

11:8 *You shall not touch*- The basis of the command to us in our age to “touch not the unclean thing” by being separate from sinful things (2 Cor. 6:17).

11:10 The parable of the drag net pictures fishermen sitting down with their catch, throwing away the “bad” fish. These would’ve been the unclean sea creatures, e.g. crabs, which had got caught up in the net. This represented the ‘sitting’ of the final judgment at the last day (Mt. 13:48,49). We are to make that same division between good and bad in the choices we make today.

11:13-16 These birds all hunt and eat other unclean animals, and many of them were totems of the idols believed in by the nations. Again the idea was to teach God’s people the need to keep away from association with things which resembled sin, which would put ideas in the mind which tended towards sin rather than righteousness. This principle is so relevant today in connection with what we watch or read, for by presenting ourselves continually with sinful associations we are the more likely to ourselves fall into sin.

11:25 The more conscious was the association with uncleanness, the greater was the effort which made to be made to achieve cleansing. Thus if someone knowingly carried a carcass, they had to was their clothes in addition to being unclean.

11:30 The animals listed were known in the land promised to Abraham. This is another proof that the Law of Moses was not intended for world-wide Gentile use but was the covenant between God and Israel during a specific time and in a specific location on the earth.

11:42 They were not associate themselves with animals which hugged the earth; just as we should not keep close to earthly things (Phil. 3:19) but seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1).

11:44 The Hebrew words for sanctification and holiness include the ideas of both being negatively separated *from* and positively being separated *unto*. The whole legislation about clean and unclean animals was to try to teach Israel this principle. As such there was limited significance in the actual division of animals into clean and unclean- it was merely a teaching device.

11:45 *Who brings you up out of the land of Egypt*- This didn’t just happen at the Red Sea, just as it wasn’t completed at our baptisms (1 Cor. 10:1,2). Our being brought out of Egypt and toward God is an ongoing process.

12:8 The poverty of Mary the mother of Jesus is indicated by the fact she offered doves and not a lamb (Lk. 2:24). He knew poverty.

13:2 It’s doubtful whether the skin disease referred to in Leviticus is what we now call leprosy, i.e. Hansen’s disease.

13:3 Leprosy is symbolic of sin. But a person can appear to have leprosy when in fact it’s only a surface level appearance of it; but only the priest, representing Jesus, can declare this. We must of course be careful not to excuse our failings as merely surface level sin; but when it comes to judging others, we must accept that someone can appear sinful to us but it’s only a surface appearance; we must not ultimately judge whether a person will be saved or not, quite simply because we cannot do so. Only the priest, the Lord Jesus, can do so.

13:6 Our life spent in Christ is represented by these periods of seven days; at the end, Christ as the true priest and judge will decide whether the sin which there is in our lives has remained at a surface, appearance level- or whether it has spread. Yeast likewise represents sin, in that it spreads its influence. Sin either spreads in our flesh or doesn’t...

13:8 The temptation must have been to try to cover up the appearance of sin / leprosy rather than revealing oneself to the priest; just as we are tempted today.

13:9,10 God’s people were to avoid trying to judge the appearance of leprosy / sin in others.

13:13 If a person has indulged in sin and recognizes it, although they carry in their lives the evidence of it, yet the sin has as it were died and they are clean. At baptism into Christ we became “dead to sin” (Rom. 6:2).

13:20 There may be here a distinction being drawn between sin on a surface level and that sin which is deeper, which leads to exclusion from God’s family.

13:23 People carry the scars of their sins, but these don’t mean we should treat them as sinful.

13:37 *In his eyes*- The opinion, analysis and judgment of the priest, representing Christ, is all important. Many people in primitive societies consider they have a legitimate medical opinion, based on the kind of traditions and folk wisdom which abound in relation to skin diseases. Israel were to resist these, and leave the diagnosis and judgment solely in the hands of the priest. We have a serious tendency to judge others’ sin, and we really must leave this to Christ.

13:46 Christ died for us “outside the camp” (Heb. 13:11,13); he was unashamed to associate with lepers and as it were died with them and for them.

13:51 *Whatever use*- No matter how valuable the garment, this didn’t somehow mean that the leprosy [cp. Sin] was any less significant.

13:55 The tendency would’ve been to think that if the rot was only on the inside of the garment and not visible to anyone else, then this didn’t require attention or cleansing. Hence the emphasis- “whether the rot is inside or outside”. Sin is still sin, whether or not it is visible to others or not. Some peoples’ sins are more open to our view than others (1 Tim. 5:24).

13:56 *Pluck it out*- To stop the leprosy / sin spreading. Jesus uses the same phrase in teaching that we should ‘pluck out’ of our lives whatever is likely to lead us to stumble into sin (Mt. 5:29; 18:9). Repeatedly, the seriousness of the leprosy / sin is defined by whether it spreads, either in depth or distribution.

14:7 The two birds may foreshadow the death and resurrection of Jesus. The bird which flew away in joyful, thankful freedom symbolized Christ’s resurrection and the freedom from sin which is enabled for us who were spiritual lepers; thanks to the death of Christ, represented by the death of the first bird.

14:8 The cleansed leper was to become as a baby, and be washed in water. This looked ahead to baptism by full immersion into Christ as the new birth (Jn. 3:3-5).

14:14 The leper was to continually live under the impression of the fact he or she had been healed and cleansed, just as we should. The fact the blood of Christ was shed for us personally should affect how we hear (hence the blood was put on the ear), what we do with our hands (the right thumb) and where we go with our feet (the right big toe). The process was repeated with oil (:16), perhaps foreshadowing the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the lives of those in Christ.

14:30 *Such as he can lay his hand on*- Lepers had to live outside the camp of Israel and couldn’t work, so they would’ve typically been very poor. But the concept of sacrifice was important; they weren’t to assume ‘I’m a leper, of course I have nothing, I don’t have to sacrifice anything’. They had to lay their hand on at least some kind of animal- and the Hebrew could possibly carry the sense of ‘*whatever* he can lay his hand on’. It was important that they gave at least something in recognition of their need for cleansing, and their receipt of it by God’s grace. We shouldn’t consider our poverty, in whatever area, to mean that we don’t have to sacrifice anything to God.

14:34 *Which I give to you for a possession*- Constantly Israel were reminded that God would indeed give them the promised Kingdom, even though at that time as they wandered in the wilderness it must’ve seemed merely a nice idea. He encourages us likewise.

14:35 It would’ve been tempting for the owner to just cover up the signs of disease within his house, rather than ask the priest to inspect it. We are to be open before God, freely confessing our sins and possible sins or liabilities to sin, in open dialogue before Him in prayer. When David invites God to search his heart and see if there be any wicked way in him (Ps. 139:23), he was alluding to the language of the house owner inviting the priest to inspect his house for leprosy.

14:39 This looks forward to Christ as the ultimate priest coming again on the final [seventh] day and inspecting the degree to which sin has spread within us, or remained merely on the level of appearance. 1 Pet. 2:12 alludes here, by calling the day of Christ’s return “the day of inspection” (Gk.).

14:41 The removing and scraping of diseased stones is a figure alluded to later in the Bible. The stones of Tyre were to be removed and scraped (Ez. 26:4)- for it was a sinful city. Jesus makes the same allusion when He said that the stones of the temple were to be removed one by one, because the Jews refused to accept the day of Christ’s inspection (Lk. 19:44 Gk.). When He entered the temple, looked around it and then walked out, He was acting as a priest inspecting a leprous house (Mk. 11:11). But the Jews refused to accept Him as priest and insisted that their hypocrisy was in fact holiness. The new stones which were to be brought in (:42) refer to the Christian believers, who were to be built up into a new temple (1 Pet. 2:5). It was a radical thing indeed for Jesus to liken the temple, the very symbol of human piety and the very quintessence of the Jewish religion, to a leprous house which needed to be pulled down. Established religion today likely has the same judgment from Him.

14:47 There was greater culpability the more consciously a person did things which he or she knew were unclean. Thus to lie down in the unclean house required a washing of clothes, whereas just going into it merited a lesser requirement for cleansing.

14:51 Wood, hyssop and scarlet clothing all featured in the final suffering and crucifixion of Christ. This is the basis for our cleansing from the leprosy of sin.

15:2 These laws were to teach that in essence, it is what comes from within a person which makes them unclean, more than what enters us from outside (Mk. 7:15-23). The idea that demons, evil spirits or Satan can enter us and make us unclean must be rejected; Jesus emphasizes that sin comes from *within*, therefore it is totally our fault, and we must take responsibility rather than blaming it on cosmic forces outside of us.

15:3 *If his body has stopped excreting his discharge*- Even if we are no longer sinning, we must remember that we still stand guilty for past sins unless we have received cleansing for them. The passage of time and the fading of human memory works only a pseudo-atonement for sin; it is the blood of Christ and our conscious identity with it which alone can eternally cleanse our conscience from sins both past and present.

15:10 There was greater culpability the more consciously a person did things which he or she knew were unclean. Thus to purposefully carry something unclean required a washing of clothes, whereas just touching them merited a lesser requirement for cleansing.

15:13 *Running water*- In the dry wilderness, this would have been from the river of spring water which followed them from the smitten rock, which represented Christ who was smitten so that we might have the means of being cleansed (1 Cor. 10:4).

15:16 Like many of the commandments, there was a large element of personal choice in whether to obey this or not; intimate matters such as personal discharges were unknown to others. Under the new covenant, this is even more the case; attitudes of mind which make us unclean before God are known only to ourselves. The Law of Moses was the only legal code which had so many clauses which concerned matters which could never be publically demonstrated. God’s intention even under the old covenant was to teach and inculcate personal relationship between God and His people. He did this by giving commandments whose keeping only He and the individual knew about.

15:18,19 The whole family would have known that ‘mum and dad’ or just mum was unclean. Personal matters like sex and menstruation thereby became part of normal family awareness, rather than being hived off in quasi-secrecy and invested with an aura of mystery as they are in many modern cultures.

15:28 This two stage cleansing process is common in the Mosaic rituals. She was clean, but in another sense not fully cleansed until the end of the seven days. We likewise are now cleansed in Christ, but in a full sense we will only be fully cleansed when He returns and our bodies are made like His, and the flesh no longer is a part of our condition of being.

16:2 This is one of a number of examples where the Law God gave Moses was changed by Him in consideration of human weakness. This shows that God’s law isn’t set in stone; those who argue that we must keep the Sabbath today must face the fact that God *can* change and abrogate His own laws. The wonderful thing in this case is that God meditated upon the sin of Aaron’s sons, and didn’t wish to put Aaron in the way of temptation which might be too much for him; because God never allows us to be tempted beyond our capabilities (1 Cor. 10:13). The way God here recognizes the extent of His own holiness and as it were seeks to protect humanity from being harmed by it is similar to how He warned Israel not to come too near to the burning mountain (Ex. 19:21), and how He urged Moses not to come too near to the burning bush (Ex. 3:5). This isn’t God distancing Himself from us, but His seeking to establish understanding of His holiness whereby we can ultimately draw near to Him in Christ (Heb. 10:22). When we struggle with God’s distance from us we must bear this in mind.

16:10 The two goats represent the death and resurrection of Christ. The scapegoat bounding away in relieved, joyful freedom symbolizes the genuine freedom and joy of forgiven sin which we can experience in Christ. It’s clear that human beings are eager for a scapegoat, we seem wired with a psychological need for one, someone upon whom we can place our sins and thereby feel free from them personally. The scapegoat has been provided for us in Christ, and therefore we shouldn’t seek to scapegoat others.

16:12 Incense represents prayer offered by Christ (Rev. 8:3,4); the way it was taken beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place reflected how prayer, be it the ‘mere’ words of a woman waiting at a bus stop, enters into Heaven itself.

16:18 The New Testament observes that the blood of this bull and goat could not take away sins- even though the live goat apparently carried the sins away into the wilderness. If sin had really been carried away, there would have been no need for this annual day of atonement ceremony (Heb. 10:3,4). The conclusion is therefore drawn that God only operated this system of atonement on the basis that the blood of the sacrifices pointed forward to the blood of Christ, and on the basis of His faith and knowledge that Christ would make the perfect sacrifice, God accepted the animal blood on the basis that it was symbolic of Christ’s blood.

16:29 *Do no kind of work*- Because this was the day of atonement (:30). The point was that *God* was providing atonement by His grace and on account of the blood which represented Christ’s blood- and not on the basis of our works.

17:9 Sacrifice couldn’t be offered anywhere. It wasn’t the case that the fact someone had a desire to do something for God thereby made them acceptable to Him. He had to be approached in the way He stipulated; and Jesus said “I am the door” (Jn. 10:9). It’s not therefore true that all spiritual roads lead to the same place. We can only come to God in His way.

17:10 Blood represents life; to take life to ourselves rather than recognize it is God’s results in us losing our lives (:14). Just as simply as the blood was to be given to God, so we are to give our lives to God. To take the blood to themselves is in fact spoken of as being as bad as murder (:4). This seems extreme language, but it underlines how important to God is this principle- that life is His and we are to give it to Him rather than live or take it to ourselves.

17:13 *Cover it with dust*- Burying the life, as it were. In baptism, we give our lives to God and figuratively die and are buried with Christ (Rom. 6:1-10).

18:5 *If a man does, he shall live in them*- Quoted in Gal. 3:12 to prove that life with God was possible by complete obedience to the Law of Moses. The Law could not give life in practice only in that people broke it (Gal. 3:21). Paul’s point in Galatians is that eternal life therefore cannot be given on the basis of doing the Law- because we all break it. But Jesus completely kept the Law, and therefore deserved to have eternal life; but He died for us. Because of His perfect obedience to it, it wasn’t therefore possible for Him to remain dead, He had to be raised from the dead (Acts 2:24). The principle that life was possible for those who lived in perfect obedience to the Law would have driven every humble, sensitive, Godly minded person to wonder how he or she could attain to eternal life; they would’ve so wished to find a person who was completely obedient to the Law whose righteousness could as it were be counted to them. In this sense, the Law was a household servant which led people to perceive their need for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

18:6 *I am Yahweh*- Who God is becomes the motive for obedience; our core desire to be like Him, rather than a legalistic, literalistic desire to keep commandments, is what will help us in practice to be like Him.

18:9 These laws teach that nakedness should only be uncovered before your wife or husband. Uncovering nakedness is an idiom for the sexual act. The allusion is to Adam and Eve having their nakedness uncovered; we have to accept the situation we are in as a result of the curse, rather than having sexual relations with who we like, as if uncovering nakedness is nothing shameful. Our hope is for the curse put on us in Eden to be lifted at Christ’s return; we can’t lift it in this life, as our own ever insistent mortality reminds us.

18:18 Jacob broke this principle by taking Rachel and Leah, and his sad family life afterwards was recorded as a testimony to how if we break God’s principles, we may remain His people as Jacob did, but we will suffer the consequences. David likewise took the wives of Saul and also Saul’s daughter- and likewise his breaking of the Law in this didn’t lead to happiness, even though he remained God’s man. There seems another allusion to David in :20- for Bathsheba lived in the house next door to David’s, and his taking of his neighbour’s wife resulted in the destruction of his own family and, ultimately, his kingdom.

18:21 *Profane the name*- We carry God’s Name too, in that we are baptized into the Name. Our behaviour must therefore be appropriate to the Name we bear (James 2:7).

18:22 God found homosexuality “detestable”; although the Law of Moses has been abrogated, His basic moral principles remain unchanged. When Christ died on the cross, God didn’t suddenly change His mind and decide that homosexuality was now OK.

19:5 Freewill offerings such as the peace offering must really be of our free will. We mustn’t feel any sense of obligation to others, doing voluntary things to be seen of them, but any act of freewill devotion must be genuine, motivated by our personal desire to devote our time or resources to God.

19:7 *An abomination*- If we think our freewill devotions to be God can be done as we wish without regard for His principles, then what we do is obnoxious to Him. The Hebrew word translated “abomination” is often used about idol worship; we will not be worshipping Him, but the idols of our own image and standing in the eyes of people.

19:10 *For the poor*- If all Israel were obedient to the Law of Moses, there wouldn’t have been any poor in Israelite society (Dt. 15:4). But the same Law of Moses repeatedly instructed Israel to be generous and sensitive to the poor; it tacitly recognized, as did Jesus, that there would always be poor within Israel, for the Law would never be fully kept (Mt. 26:11). We see in the structure of the Law the recognition of human failure in a way which no other law has ever equalled. There’s a tendency to assume that the poor are poor because of their own poor decision making and therefore we have no responsibility to help them- although we are all poor decision makers in various ways, especially in spiritual matters. The Law taught a principle we need to learn also- that even if folk have dug a whole and fallen into it, we are still to assist them and be sensitive to their situation.

19:11 The command not to steal is associated with not deceiving others nor lying to them. Dishonesty, even if it’s unrelated to material gain at another’s expense, is a form of theft; we are taking from another wrongfully.

19:14 *Fear your God*- As if God is especially sensitive to our abusing others’ disadvantages in whatever form, and His wrath about this is to be feared.

19:15 We are not to judge in the sense of condemn others, but it’s inevitable in daily life that we have to form opinions. But we must always remember that the person we are judging is in fact our neighbour, our brother, our equal; our judgment shouldn’t be rooted in any sense of feeling inherently superior over him or her, spiritually or otherwise.

19:17 By not rebuking our brother, by saying nothing and not engaging with the issues when we need to, we are likely to breed anger in our hearts against him or her.

19:18 One reason we fail to love others as ourselves is because we may in fact not love ourselves in the sense of perceiving our own value before God.

19:23 Forbidden fruit naturally recalls the forbidden fruit on the tree in Eden. To grab as much as we can immediately without working for it nor recognizing that the firstfruits of all human endeavour must be given to the Lord- is all very human and common. But to do so is painted as bad as taking the forbidden fruit of Eden, with all the long term suffering which came as a result of short-termism.

19:29 *Lest the land fall to prostitution*- Sexual misbehaviour sets an example which spreads so easily.

20:3 *To profane My holy name* – Our attitude to our children is our attitude to God’s Name. We need to ask ourselves how in our context we might be giving our children to Molech? ‘Giving’ children to Molech may not only have referred to child sacrifices but also dedicating children to the service of Molech. Our children are to be dedicated to God and nobody and nothing else.

20:4 Acting as if we didn’t notice something is a sin of omission just as bad as a sin of commission.

20:5 *All who play the prostitute after him*- The seriousness of sin is partly in the influence it has upon others. To give children to Molech encouraged others to sin by the example set. The power of our example upon others is far greater than we realize. Verse 14 likewise teaches that sexual perversion in one case could easily lead to wickedness being practiced amongst the whole congregation.

20:10 *Another man’s wife, even... his neighbour’s wife*- This definition suggests that every man in the community was to be treated as one’s neighbour. Hence in the New Testament, loving our neighbour is interpreted as meaning loving all others within the community of God’s people (Gal. 5:13,14). We shouldn’t think that because someone is unknown to us or distant from us in whatever sense, that we can act differently to them than we would to the one living next door to us.

20:25 You shall therefore make a distinction – The fact God had separated His people from this world (:24) was the reason for the commandments about them making a distinction between clean and unclean. There is nothing unclean of itself, the commands were given as a mechanism for teaching and reminding Israel in their daily lives of their separation from uncleanness. Those animals designated by God as “unclean” were “unclean *for you*”- not that they were in themselves.

21:6 *Food of their God*- God invited Israel to eat with Him at the altar, which became His table. The equivalent for us is eating with God at the Lord’s table, the breaking of bread (1 Cor. 10:21). Eating together was understood in Semitic culture as a sign of religious acceptance and fellowship.

21:7 *A woman who is a prostitute*- Another tacit recognition within the Law that it would not be fully kept; for prostitution was outlawed. Thus in the very structure of the Law we see God’s sensitive recognition of the fact it would not be fully kept. His sensitivity to and provision for our failures in advance, both individually and collectively, shouldn’t lead us to think that therefore we needn’t take His principles seriously; His foreknowledge of our weakness shouldn’t be perceived by us as a safety net for our sinfulness.

21:10 *Not let the hair of his head hang loose*- This is not to say that long hair is wrong in itself for a male. The pagan priests of Egypt, from where Israel had just been brought out, were noted for their long hair, which stood out from the rest of the male population in Egypt who generally had shaved heads at that time. The principle is that we shouldn’t perceive our religion as merely just one of many other religions; there is something utterly unique about our way to God through Christ, who is our only mediator, the only way, “the truth”. Whilst on one hand God doesn’t judge the outward appearance but the heart, we should also be careful not to have externalities which make us appear to be ‘pagan’ and not the unique people of God.

21:22 Whatever blemish the man had, he could still personally fellowship with God, but he was not to publically offer the offerings of others. The priests at that moment were to be consciously representative of the sacrifices, which are the only other things which have the language of ‘blemish’ and ‘unblemished’ applied to them (e.g. 22:20).

22:6 As we as the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5) read of these requirements not to eat the holy things whilst unclean, we may wonder how we as sinners can ever eat the bread and drink the wine as required to remember Christ’s death. But the fact is, we have been washed and sanctified for service by baptism into the Name of Christ (1 Cor. 6:11 alludes here). This is a status we are continually in- for this is the wonder of the concept of our being “in Christ”.

22:10 *A foreigner living with the priests*- The Law has a lot to say about welcoming foreigners and being hospitable to them. We as the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) should likewise be open rather than closed to the people of the world around us, even though we are in another sense separated *from* them and *unto* the things of our God.

22:11 Gentiles who had been bought for a price by a priest to be his servants were treated as Israelites. This looked forward to Christ, the final Priest, buying us with His own blood that we might be His servants, and thereby we are fully part of His family and the people of God (1 Cor. 7:23).

22:13 *No stranger shall eat*- But if the stranger had been bought by the Priest, he or she was no longer a stranger (:11). Paul has this passage in mind when he rejoices that those baptized into Christ are no longer strangers and foreigners but members of God’s family and fellow citizens with “the saints”, a term which he may well have understood in this context as referring to the community of Israel (Eph. 2:19).

 22:24 *Neither shall you do thus in your land*- Animals weren’t to be castrated. We see in this not only a reflection of the huge value God places upon life in general, but also His sensitivity to animals. Verses 27 and 28 may reflect the same.

22:32 *I will be made holy... I am Yahweh who makes you holy*- They as us were to live out in practice the status which God had given them. He had made them holy and acceptable in His sight, and they were therefore to live in a holy manner.

23:4 *You shall proclaim*- Paul alludes here when he says that the breaking of bread meeting- the only ‘feast’ we have under the New Covenant- is a proclaiming of the Lord’s death (1 Cor. 11:26).

23:17 *Baked with yeast*- Yeast represents human sin (1 Cor. 5:8), and was often banned from being offered. But here it was required- to remind the people that they were sinners, and yet God still accepts the offerings of sinners.

23:20 The two lambs offered for a burnt offering at the end of harvest contrast with the single lamb offered at the start of it (:12). This was to underline that the receipt of blessing from God must be responded to in dedication to Him- which is what the burnt offering represented.

23:22 The Israelites were reminded of this principle at this point in the legislation lest they become so caught up with realizing their own material blessings that they forgot that others were not so blessed. Whenever we reflect upon our material blessings we are to immediately remind ourselves that others somewhere are not so blessed, and we have a duty towards them.

23:30 *That person I will destroy from among his people* – Whilst work was forbidden during the other feasts, this threat is added only here concerning the Day of Atonement. This was how important it was for them to realize that atonement for our sins is in the end by God’s grace through the sacrifice of the animals who represented Christ; and not according to our works.

23:38 The repeated use of the word “besides” emphasized that times of special commitment to God shouldn’t lead us to forget the regular sacrifices and devotions which we are to make. An example of this would be that if one spends some days away at a church gathering, we are not to forget our own personal quiet time with God, prayer and Bible reading.

23:43 It’s not recorded in the record of the Exodus that God made Israel dwell in booths. Often later Scripture gives us extra information about what happened at a historical event. This is why we need to use the entire Bible in order to get the correct picture about what happened in the historical sections.

24:2 The whole congregation of Israel were to bring a small amount of oil and flour for the bread each week. The constantly burning oil and presence of the small loaves was a symbol of how Israel were continually before Him. Yet the amount of oil and flour required each week was miniscule in comparison to the size of all Israel- there were probably three million of them at the time this law was given (Ex. 12:37). But God is the God of small things. In the very small things we offer Him, we are remembered before Him. Israel were taught that this tiny offering of oil and flour each week was so highly significant; offering even very small things shouldn’t be seen by us as unnecessary or insignificant before God. The way Jesus noticed the widow offering two tiny coins and commented upon it is proof of this (Lk. 21:2).

24:6 The bread on the table connects with the breaking of bread at the table of the Lord under the New Covenant. The bread was replaced- as it were eaten by God- each week (:8). Whilst there is no specific command as to how frequently we should break bread, it would seem from Acts 20:7 that some of the early Christians did it weekly, and this is no bad example for us to follow.

24:11 If we marry out of the family of faith, our children may well not have the reverence towards the true God which they should have.

24:22 *For the foreigner as well as the native-born*- If we have unbelievers into our homes or any situation where we are in charge of the social situation, we are to ensure that God’s principles are upheld. Again translating this into modern terms- if parents have unbelieving children in their home to play with their own children, God’s principles are still to be upheld by the visitors.

25:10 *You shall* ***proclaim*** *liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants*- This is alluded to in Lk. 4:19 where we read that the Lord Jesus proclaimed “the **acceptable year** of the Lord”. We are to make the same proclamation in preaching the good news to all people- “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached **[proclaimed**, s.w. 4:19] in his name among all nations” (Lk. 24:47). The year of Jubilee began with the day of Atonement, which is understood in the New Testament as foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our sins. We are now to live in a permanent state of Jubilee, announcing it to all people. The Hebrew word translated “jubilee” carries the idea of forgiveness, release, freedom. This is our message to all the people of the world.

25:15 The ultimate time of Jubilee will be at the return of Christ. We are to perceive the value of all things we buy relative to this. Effectively, the Jubilee was a time of release from debt. “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Mt. 6:12) is probably another allusion to the jubilee. We release / forgive men their debt to us, as God does to us. If we chose not to participate in this Jubilee by not releasing others, then we cannot expect to receive it ourselves.

25:20 The Lord Jesus implied that we are in a permanent Jubilee year situation when He said that we should “**take no thought what you shall eat… Sow not nor gather into barns” and not think “What shall we eat?” (Mt. 6:26,31 = Lev. 25:20). If we put God’s principles first, somehow materially everything works out. We shall not starve.**

25:23 The principles of the Jubilee taught that all land and persons belong to God; we are only temporarily using them, and nothing ultimately belongs to us personally; all is God’s. This helps us cope better with ‘loss’ of possessions, and should keep us from the manic materialism which has been bred by capitalism, whereby all seek personal ownership of land and resources.

25:28 Eph. 1:13 speaks of our place in God’s Kingdom as our possession which has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and which we will receive as an inheritance at His return. This is all Jubilee language. The eternal time of Jubilee will be when the Kingdom is established upon earth, and we will each receive both literally and more abstractly an eternal inheritance in that Kingdom on earth, each with a varying number of towns to rule over (Lk. 19:17). Whether we are rich or poor in this life, whether or not we purchase our ‘own’ homes (:29), we are assured that our very own personal possession is assured, and we will return to it eternally in the Kingdom of God at Christ’s return. The Israelite who became “poor”, either by his own failures, others’ manipulations or his own poor decision making, would have continually looked forward to the year of Jubilee- when finally he and his family would be free, no longer in servitude, and could return to their very own land and inheritance as their eternal possession (:34). We look forward to Christ’s return with the same spirit.

25:53 *With harshness*- Any social superiority we may have over others is temporary, and must be seen in the context of the year of Jubilee which has been announced in Christ. The whole concept was designed to teach humility and gentleness in relationships.

25:55 Those who had servants were to remember that they themselves were servants. Maybe Paul had this in mind when he reminded us that all our brothers and sisters are servants of Christ and not of us, and we therefore have no right to judge another man’s servant (Rom. 14:4). As Israel were to be a nation of servants, so should the Christian community be today.

26:9 That God can “respect” mere humans indicates not only His humility but also His extreme sensitivity to us and His delight in our feeble attempts to please Him; rather like a parent may be thrilled by the responses of a baby, totally insignificant as they are in themselves.

26:17 *Flee when no one pursues you*- A spirit of fear, nervousness and negativity can be given by God as a result of wilful disobedience to His ways. He can give a spirit (mental attitude) of fear (2 Tim. 1:7).

26:23 *If by these things*- It seems that the curses mentioned in this chapter aren’t just a general list, but there is an intended chronological sequence. God had planned from the start that if Israel were disobedient, then He would bring various judgments, in order to help them be obedient; and if they failed, He would bring more, again with the intention that they responded to them. The curses for disobedience weren’t therefore merely an offended deity lashing out at a people who had irritated him; God has purpose and positive spiritual intention even in the judgments He brings into peoples’ lives. He is constantly seeking our return to Him, just as the shepherd searched for the lost sheep until He found it (Lk. 15:4).

26:24 *Even I*- To have God against you is a terrible thing.

26:26 *Not be satisfied*- So many of the judgments are mental attitudes (especially :16,36). God gives people attitudes of mind, positive and negative.

26:43 If we hate or despise God’s word, He will hate us (:30). Our attitude to God’s word is related to His attitude to us. The very least we can do is to read His word daily and love it, through all our weakness.

27:1 This chapter is as it were an appendix to the Law because it concerns vows which were freewill decisions to give something to God and weren’t part of the legal demands which God made upon His people in the previous chapters. It’s good for us to at times make a special commitment to God from a joyful heart. The values attached to people in the next verses seem to speak of the price that should be paid if a person wished to cancel the dedication of themselves or even of others which they had made. It seems Jephthah may have been ignorant of these provisions and therefore suffered immensely from not paying attention to all God’s law (Jud. 11:31-40).

27:8 This provision seems to foresee the possibility that a totally poor person would dedicate themselves to God’s service (e.g. doing some work related to the maintenance of the sanctuary) and yet need to change that commitment (perhaps to care for a sick and dying relative), and yet have nothing to pay for his own redemption. This freewill dedication of oneself to God’s service is alluded to when Paul praises some of the Macedonian believers for devoting their own selves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5), and the family of Stephanas for having ‘ceremonially consecrated’ themselves to serving their fellow believers (1 Cor. 16:15 Gk.). What could we devote ourselves to do, remembering that wealth is no barrier to making this kind of devotion?

27:10 Changing what we have given to God according to new circumstances isn’t encouraged; we should give and assume that what we gave is now not ours any longer. Giving should be frank and final, with no thought of regret afterwards or considering what might have been if we had not given it- e.g. letting our mind wander around the possibilities of what we could have used money for if we’d not given it to God.

27:23 The value of all things is relative to the Year of Jubilee, which speaks of the return of Christ (see on 25:10,15,20).

27:26 We should avoid the temptation to give what we owe to God anyway as if it is a gift of special freewill devotion.

27:33 *Not analyze whether it is good or bad*- We should not be carefully calculating in our giving to God, trying to do so at minimal cost to ourselves.

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