

February Answers

- 1) [February 1] When Moses was about **40** years old, he “refused to be called the **son** of Pharaoh’s daughter,” (most likely Hatshepsut) and he chose to endure **ill-treatment** with his fellow Israelites. Hebrews says he did this “by **faith**,” for he considered “the **reproach** of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb 11:24–26). This took courage, humility, and **sacrifice**, for Moses had been destined for earthly greatness. Moses tried to bring relief to his people, thinking they would understand that God was using him to deliver them. But rather than trusting God and **waiting** for His timing, Moses took matters into his own hands and **murdered** an Egyptian. This stands in stark contrast to **Joseph**, who refused to put himself in God’s place and seek revenge on his brothers. How true the saying: ‘It’s never right to do **wrong**, even for a chance to do right.’ Moses fled to **Midian** and found refuge with a man called **Reuel** (Jethro). Moses stayed with him for the next **40** years. **Thutmose III** finally died, and God decided the time had come to rescue Israel. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and told him to go to the new Pharaoh, **Amenhotep II**, and bring Israel out of Egypt. God told Moses to tell the Israelites, “I **AM** has sent me to you” (Exod 3:14). How appropriate that in a polytheistic culture like Egypt, God announced Himself as the God who IS (cf. Ezek 20:5–8). Moses balked at God’s command and tried to wriggle out of it with all kinds of **excuses**. When he at last simply refused to obey, God became **angry** and told him that his brother Aaron would be his mouthpiece. This turned out to be a mixed blessing: Aaron became a testament to Moses’ lack of faith and would later lead the people astray by making them a golden calf.
- 2) [February 2] When Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt, his reaction was hostile and sarcastic: “Who is the **LORD** that I should obey his voice?” (Exod 5:2). To Pharaoh, such a request showed how **lazy** the Israelites were. Clearly they needed more **work**! He stopped giving them straw to make bricks, but demanded they continue to meet their brick quotas. The foremen berated Moses, and he complained bitterly to God: “Why did you ever send me?” Moses clearly expected **faster** results and **fewer** problems. This teaches us that we shouldn’t be surprised when God’s promise to bring about good in our lives leads to **suffering**, setbacks and **hardship**. God allow these problems because we need to learn to **endure** through difficulty and **trust** Him to do what’s best for us. Our responsibility is to **submit** to God’s will, **honor** Him in our present situation, **wait** on His timing, and **remember** that He will not abandon us. God sent Moses back to the Israelites with a message of encouragement: “I will also **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments” (Exod 6:6). God told them to put away their false **gods** and worship only Him, but they refused to obey (Ezek 20:5–9). God had brought them to the brink of the greatest miracles in human history, yet they wouldn’t budge because of a little hardship. What a sobering lesson for us! God bore with their sin for His name’s sake, and then He called Moses to renewed action. Moses and Aaron worked a **miracle** for Pharaoh, but his magicians did the same with their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart remained **hard** just as God said it would (Exod 7:13).
- 3) [February 3] God called the plagues: “**signs** and **wonders**” (Exod 7:3). The plagues were *not* the result of purely **natural** processes. They were truly **miraculous** events. God’s purpose in the plagues was to demonstrate His great **power** over the false gods of Egypt and to **proclaim** His name through all the earth (Exod 9:16; 12:12). In this way, the plagues became an **evangelistic** tool to draw people to God (Exod 9:20–21). How marvelous to think that even God’s judgments are a severe **mercy**, for they call sinners to repentance! Beginning with the fourth plague, God set apart the land of **Goshen** where the Israelites lived, “that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land” (Exod 8:22). This showed that God was able to **protect** His own, and no one could say the plagues were just freak events. Pharaoh refused to submit to God’s authority and **repeatedly** hardened his heart (Exod 8:15, 32; 9:34). God also hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Exod 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8), but

God was not keeping him from being able to repent. Rather, God was *enabling him to **persist** in his rebellion no matter the cost* (Exod 10:7). In this way the **destiny** of both Israel and Egypt was decided not by what Moses or Pharaoh willed, but by what God willed. Paul later cited this as evidence that salvation does not depend on **human** effort, “but on God, who has mercy” (Rom 9:16–18).

- 4) [February 4] After the plague of locusts, Pharaoh’s **resolve** was beginning to weaken. He told Moses, “Please forgive my **sin** only this once” (Exod 10:17). Yet he still didn’t want to let Israel go, and so God **strengthened** his will according to the hardness of his own heart (Exod 10:20). Moses warned Pharaoh about the last, terrible plague, but he refused to listen. This teaches us that sin causes people to think and act **irrationally**. Humble obedience to God’s will is always the best course of action! God gave Israel instructions concerning the **Passover**, and they followed them to the letter. The Passover sacrifice and meal were intended to **commemorate** the night that God passed over the houses of Israel and killed only the sons of the Egyptians. God wanted this rite to be kept every year so the next **generation** would learn that He was the one, true God. This shows us the importance of **remembering** what God has done in our lives and **passing** that knowledge on to our children. The Passover also communicated the spiritual truth that we all need to be saved from the **wrath** of God. Jesus offered Himself as our sacrificial **lamb** (1 Cor 5:7), and His **blood** secured our redemption from spiritual death (Heb 9:12). Today, the Lord’s **Supper** (1 Cor 11:20–34) is our Passover remembrance of what it cost to purchase our freedom from the **slavery** of sin. After the death of all the firstborn of Egypt, Pharaoh **begged** the Israelites to leave. They left with great **wealth** and possessions, a witness to the fact that God had brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

- 5) [February 5] God began to **test** Israel the moment they left Egypt. Knowing they would turn back if they faced **war** with the Philistines, God deliberately led them to a place where they would be **trapped** between the Egyptian army and the sea. This teaches us that God may lead us into **desperate** situations in order to test our faith. The Israelites **panicked** at first, but Moses told them, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD” (Exod 14:13). Then “by **faith** the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land” (Heb 11:29). When the Egyptians tried to follow, God drowned the entire army. This teaches us that when we’re confronted by such circumstances, we should put our **trust** in God and **wait** for His deliverance. God delights to show Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him (2 Chr 16:9). The awesome miracle at the Red Sea should have shown the Israelites that God was trustworthy, but only **three** days later, they were grumbling about the bitter water of Marah. This teaches us that witnessing **miracles** does not produce great faith. Instead, great faith is forged in the furnace of **adversity**. It comes from a settled conviction that God can and will keep His word (Luke 7:1–10). Sadly, Israel had to learn from repeated experience that God was able to provide for them. God recorded these events so we can learn to trust Him the **first** time. By focusing on God’s **faithfulness** in the past, we can face crises with confidence rather than with doubt and fear.

- 6) [February 6] God chose Israel from among all the nations so they would be “a kingdom of **priests** and a **holy** nation” (Exod 19:6). Through Christ, we are privileged to be grafted into the olive **tree** of Israel as spiritual Jews (Rom 11:13–17). We, too, are part of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,” so that we may “**proclaim** the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). God came down on Mount Sinai in blazing fire, smoke, thunder, lightning and a thick cloud. He spoke the ten commandments **audibly** so all the people could hear His voice, a voice that shook the earth and made them tremble in fear (Heb 12:19, 26). God did this in order to **test** them, “and in order that the **fear** of Him may remain with you, so that you may not **sin**” (Exod 20:20). God graciously gave them His words, commands that helped them understand how to love God and love each other (Matt 22:37–40). The people recognized their need for a **mediator**, and God approved their request, signifying that Moses would

be a type of God's Son, the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5).

- 7) [February 7] The “Book of the **Covenant**” (cf. Exod 24:4–8) contained the commandments, laws, rulings, and judgments God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod 20–23). These laws were intended to govern the **attitudes** and **actions** of Israel, showing them how to properly **worship** and **love** God and how to **love** each other. It began with a reminder of the first two commandments and instructions about altar construction. Both were indications of the **priority** of worship in the covenant. God then gave rules which protected those who were most often mistreated or exploited: **slaves** (Exod 21:1–11). God also emphasized the value of human **life** (Exod 21:12–32), sanctioned the **death** penalty for certain crimes (Exod 21:15–17), endorsed the right of private **property** (Exod 22:1), protected property owners by requiring **restitution** for theft and accidental property damage (Exod 21:33–22:17), and required **perversion** to be punished by death (Exod 22:19). God's covenant with Israel makes it clear that He requires us to take personal **responsibility** for our actions (Exod 21:29–36; 22:5–6). Do we remember to love our neighbor by considering how our decisions might **affect** them?
- 8) [February 8] The laws in the Book of the Covenant emphasized God's desire for the people to treat one another **fairly** and **justly**. Those who were less fortunate were never to be taken advantage of; instead, they were to be treated with **respect**. God was so concerned about this that He warned them He would **kill** anyone who afflicted an orphan or widow. This teaches us that we should always treat the poor and helpless with kindness and **compassion** (Exod 22:27). God went on to say that this responsibility to love others applied not only to those who were friends or family, but also to those who were **enemies**! The thought of being kind to an enemy was definitely counter-cultural for the Israelites. For them, **revenge** was a common form of justice. God made it clear that He expected them to do **good** to those who hated them, even to the point of inconveniencing themselves by returning an enemy's lost **property** (cf. Exod 23:4–5). Jesus later reminded the Jews of this requirement when He told them, “**Love** your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **bless** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27–28). He was *not* telling them something **new**; rather, He was calling them back to a **proper** understanding of God's law. These covenant laws teach us how to put the command, “Love your **neighbor**,” into practice. They show us that we need to be reaching out to others in kindness, especially those who dislike and resent us.
- 9) [February 9] For **485** years, the Tabernacle served as a place where God could live among His people and where the people could commune with God. This demonstrates how much God wants to have a **relationship** with us. Although the Tabernacle enabled God to live among the Israelites, it also **restricted** direct, **physical** access to God's presence (Heb 9:7–10). This taught the people that God is **holy**. Fellowship and communion with God can only take place through an **intermediary**. In the first covenant, the Levitical **priests** were the designated intermediaries between God and the people, but they were only a temporary surrogate for the true Mediator, Jesus Christ. Christ offered up His own **body** as a sacrifice for sin, and we have redemption through his **blood**. We have been united spiritually with him through the power of his **resurrection**, and we have direct access to the Most Holy Place, God's throne room in heaven! Every aspect of the Tabernacle—from the bronze altar, where sacrifices were offered for sin, to the mediating high priest, who offered the sacrificial blood on the mercy seat—pointed to God's **redemptive** plan. It symbolized the ministry of Jesus, who left the glory of heaven and “**tabernacled**” among his people (John 1:14). Christ is our High Priest, and his blood has redeemed us from the slavery of sin!
- 10) [February 10] The design of the priestly garments. The ephod (a kind of apron) and the breastpiece had the **names** of the twelve tribes on them, signifying that the priests **represented** the people to God. The robe was hemmed with golden **bells** and pomegranates. The bells provided a **joyful** sound

to accompany Aaron as he ministered in the Tabernacle, and the pomegranates represented **fruitfulness**, pointing to the fruitfulness of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (1 Cor 15:20). The golden diadem had two purposes: to "take away the **iniquity** of the holy things" and that the people "may be **accepted** before the LORD" (Exod 28:38). What a striking picture of Christ's priestly ministry! The breeches covered the **nakedness** of the high priest so he would not die, emphasizing how seriously God takes the issue of **modesty**. The instructions God gave Moses for the seven-day priestly ordination ceremony showed that Aaron and his sons needed to be **cleansed, clothed** and **consecrated** by blood sacrifice before they could minister before God. God's instructions for the priestly garments and the ordination ceremony underscore to us the importance He places on beauty, holiness and obedience. Do we remember that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit? Do we take our privileged status in Christ seriously? (1 Pet 2:5).

- 11) [February 11] The golden altar of incense was designed to hold a censer of burning coals which was sprinkled with a specially prepared incense. As the incense burned, a thick cloud of smoke would curl upward filling the Tabernacle with a sweet smell. The incense symbolized the **prayers** of God's people (cf. Rev 5:8; 8:3-4). This shows us how much God **enjoys** our prayers. They are like a fragrant aroma to Him. The bronze washbasin was designed to hold the water that the priests used to cleanse themselves before they entered the Tabernacle. It had the practical use of washing the **blood** and **dust** from their hands and feet, and it emphasized the need for cleansing before coming into God's presence. The washbasin symbolized the cleansing and sanctifying work of the Holy **Spirit**. This shows us how important it is to be **purified** from the corruption of sin and to be set apart for God's service. As believers of the new covenant, we have been cleansed by "the washing of **regeneration** and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Tit 3:5). The census tax was used to provide for the ministry of the priests and Levites as they served in the Tabernacle. Every man over the age of 20 had to give half a shekel, no **more** and no **less**. The payment was a sanctioned substitute for their lives. This procedure reminded the people that they **belonged** to God, and they could **ransom** or redeem themselves only by paying what God deemed appropriate. This teaches us that our lives are *not* our own. We **belong** to God, and we're obligated by love and duty to follow His commands.
- 12) [February 12] One of the greatest **tragedies** in human history. God rescued Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand, and He personally descended on Mount Sinai to enter into a **marriage** covenant with her (Ezekiel 16:8; Jer 2:1-3). Never before had the world seen such an act of divine love. But Israel **quickly** turned aside from God's commands and committed spiritual **adultery** by worshiping a golden calf. God's anger burned against them, and He wanted to destroy them, but Moses entreated God to have **mercy**, and He relented. Such is the spirit of a man who has spent forty days in God's glorious presence. Moses went down into the camp to confront the people, and he shattered the tablets of testimony God had inscribed with His own hand. What a picture of how sin destroys what is most precious: our **relationship** with God. Moses asked his fellow Levites to help bring the people back under control (Exod 32:25), and they **killed** some 3,000 of the ringleaders. This teaches us the importance of being **ruthless** with sin (Matt 18:17; 2 Thess 3:6; 1 Cor 5:11). After God punished Israel, He took the initiative in **restoring** His covenant with Israel. This reveals something beautiful about God's character: He is a God of **second** chances.
- 13) [February 13] The construction of the Tabernacle. When Moses called for contributions of raw materials, the people **gladly** gave their best. They were so **generous** that they brought more than enough, and Moses had to restrain them (Exod 36:5-6). This shows us how much God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7). **Bezalel, Oholiab** and the other craftsmen stayed true to God's design and carefully crafted each part to His specifications. This teaches us the importance of **obeying** God's commands, even when we think we know a **better** way of accomplishing His will. The amount of detail recorded about the construction demonstrates how important the people's obedience was to

God. This teaches us that God *does* care about **externals**, and when He give instructions about things in the material realm, He expects to be obeyed. God also noticed and **honored** the sacrifices that were made in carrying out His will. It wouldn't have been an easy thing for a woman to part with her bronze **mirror** (Exod 38:8).

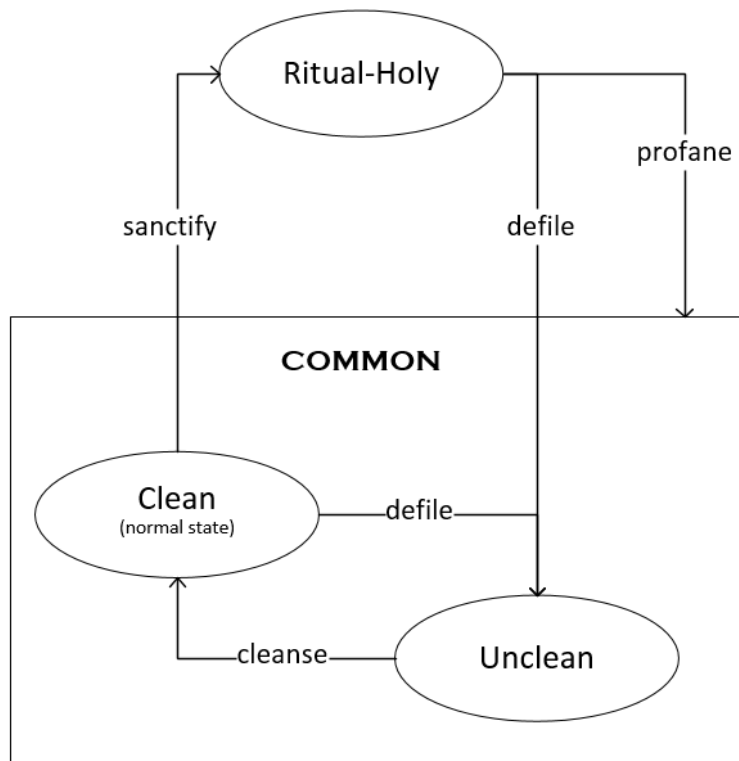
- 14) [February 14] The crafting of the priestly garments, and the setting up of the Tabernacle. The priestly garments were **bright** and **colorful**, and the robe had bells of pure gold along the hem. This shows that worshiping God is more than ceremony and solemnity—it is an occasion of **joy** and **gladness**. Once the garments were complete, the Tabernacle was finished. The people brought it to Moses, and he **examined** it carefully. Was it complete? Had they cut any corners? Did they do all that God commanded? “And behold, they had done it; as the Lord had commanded, so had they done it. Then Moses blessed them” (Exod 39:43; 35:1–3). What a beautiful reminder that at the end of **obedience** is the blessing of God! It also shows us that **partial** obedience to God is disobedience! God gave instructions for setting up the Tabernacle, and Moses followed them to the letter. When he was done, God's cloud **covered** the tent, and His glory **filled** the Tabernacle (James 4:8). Emmanuel—God is with us! Israel was privileged to have God's glorious presence in the midst of their camp, but through Jesus Christ, we are privileged to have His precious **Spirit** living inside our hearts!
- 15) [February 15] The first three offerings: the **burnt** offering, the **grain** offering and the **peace** (fellowship) offering. In the beginning, Adam and Eve enjoyed direct fellowship with God, not needing a sacrifice, but after their fall into sin, that fellowship was **broken**. Leviticus teaches us that **atonement** for sin and restoration of fellowship with God only comes by the shedding of **blood**. That's why God instituted the **animal** sacrifices. They were never meant to be **efficacious** in-and-of-themselves (they were **repeated**). Instead, they symbolized and **pointed** to the saving, atoning work of Christ (Heb 10:1–4). They showed the people that sin brings **death**, and blood must be shed in order to atone for sin. In this way they were a poignant picture of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. The burnt offering **atoned** for the individual and symbolized the complete **consecration** of their life to God (Rom 12:1). The grain offering, which usually accompanied the burnt offering, was a gift of **tribute** that honored God as the **source** of life and offered Him the best of the individual's **labor**. The peace offering served as a **celebration** of the covenant relationship the individual enjoyed with God and a **rededication** to covenant duties and loyalty. How wonderful that we experience all of these spiritual realities today through our **union** with Christ!
- 16) [February 16] The last two offerings: the **purification** (sin) offering and the **reparation** (guilt) offering. The purification offering dealt primarily with **unintentional** sin (the exception being an intentional sin of **omission**; Lev 5:1). Such sin brought **guilt** on the individual, and, in the case of the high priest or the congregation, brought guilt and its **consequences** on the entire nation. The blood of the offering was sprinkled to cleanse the impurity and atone for the sin. In cases of corporate guilt, the **Holy Place** itself had to be purified. This teaches us that sin not only defiles the individual who has sinned, but also defiles the place where God dwells (Heb 9:22–24). It also shows us that even unintentional sin has consequences—it incurs actual guilt and requires atonement. Today, **Jesus** is our purification offering. His blood is presently, actively cleansing and purifying us from all sin. When we become aware that we have committed a sin, we should **confess** and **forsake** that sin. Jesus is then faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7, 9). The reparation offering was made for sins that created a **debt** calling for **compensation** (e.g., improper use of God's “holy things” or mistreatment of a fellow Israelite). Its purpose was to provide for the return of property plus compensation of **20%** to the offended party. The sin could be unintentional (Lev 5:15) or **deliberate** (Lev 6:1–7). In the case of deliberate sin, forgiveness was only available to the one who **admitted** his guilt, repented of his sin and sought forgiveness and

restoration. This teaches us that the way back into fellowship with God involves not only sincere repentance but also **restitution**. Today, although Jesus is our reparation offering, we are still responsible to confess our sin and make full restitution to those whom we have wronged.

- 17) [February 17] The ordination of Aaron and his sons, the first Levitical priests. Unlike the secret rites of the pagan religions surrounding Israel, Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons in full **view** of the people (Lev 8:3–5). The ceremony began with washing, signifying spiritual **cleansing** in preparation for the duties of the priesthood. Aaron was then clothed with the high priestly garments, setting him **apart** as leader of the priests and showing that God **equips** those He calls for service. Moses then anointed the Tabernacle and Aaron with holy oil, a symbol of the **sanctifying** and **enabling** power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38). Next, Moses clothed Aaron's sons with priestly garments, setting them apart from the other Levites as God's designated **mediators**. Finally, three animals were sacrificed: a bull for the purification (sin) offering, a ram for the burnt offering and a ram of ordination. These sacrifices spoke of the need for **atonement** for sin and the complete **consecration** of their lives in service to God. The ordination period lasted **seven** days, the number of perfection. During those seven days, and for five days after, each tribe presented an offering to God. They all gave the same offering so that all would share **equally** in the support of the Tabernacle and priesthood. In this way all the tribes were represented and no tribe had preeminence.
- 18) [February 18] After Moses, Aaron and his sons carried out God's commands, His **glory** appeared to all the people. Fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and pieces of fat on the altar. This spectacular display of God's presence showed that He **approved** of the priesthood and **accepted** the people's worship. God was now pleased to dwell with His people in the midst of the camp. This teaches us that God is **holy**, and He must be worshiped in the manner He decides. Through Christ, we can come boldly to God's throne, but we are still called to holiness and **careful** living. Sadly, this wonderful day was marred with tragedy. God killed Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's eldest sons, for offering "**strange** fire" which He had not commanded. The wording of Leviticus 16:1–2 suggests that their sin may have been twofold: (1) they tried to come into God's presence at a **time** which He had not authorized (Aaron was warned not to "come at **any** time"), and (2) they tried to enter a **place** which God had not authorized (Aaron was warned not to go "into the Holy Place **inside** the veil" except under *special* circumstances). Also, Leviticus 10:9 hints that Nadab and Abihu may have been **drinking** and so their judgment and sense of caution would have been impaired. In short, Aaron's sons likely tried to present an incense offering at an unauthorized time (one of their own **choosing**) in an unauthorized place (they **barge**d into the most Holy Place). God told Aaron, "Through those who are near me I will show myself holy, and before all the people I will be **glorified**" (Lev 10:3 NRSV). This teaches us that if we will not **sanctify** God by our actions as the One who is worthy of fear and reverence, then He may use our death as an opportunity to **remind** those around us that He is indeed the God who is to be honored and **feared** above all.
- 19) [February 19] The laws regarding clean and unclean animals. These laws were related to the three **ritual** states which God instituted for Israel: the **unclean**, the **clean**, and the **ritual-holy**. They are called 'ritual states' because they set the boundaries for which ritual **actions** a person could do (or not do) and which ritual **places** a person could go (or not go). The normal ritual state for an Israelite was **clean**. They could become ritual-holy by being **sanctified**, and they could become unclean by being **defiled**. It wasn't wrong to become unclean, for the ritual states were **not moral** states. Indeed, it was possible to be moral-holy and unclean at the same time. However, it was not possible to be unclean and ritual-holy, and it was **dangerous** for someone who was unclean to come in contact with the ritual-holy (Lev 7:20–21; 22:3). This system of ritual states served several purposes: (1) *It **reinforced** the people's understanding of God's holiness.* God's presence dwelt in the most ritual-holy section of a ritual-holy tent, and He was served by ritual-holy priests offering ritual-holy

offerings. Nothing **unclean** was to come near God's presence. (2) *It encouraged the people to **protect** that which was ritual-holy.* As they made careful distinctions in the realm of ritual states, they respected and **guarded** what was sanctified to God. (3) *It taught the people that God wanted them to **reflect** His holiness.* The ritual states caused everyone to be acutely aware of what state they were in and what could make them unclean. As the people carefully chose between the clean and unclean in the **ritual** realm, they were reminded to choose between right and wrong in the **moral** realm. The laws of clean and unclean animals supported this system. At every meal, Israel was reminded that God had set them apart as His people, and they got **practice** in making proper distinctions. What a beautiful and effective way to teach holy living!

“You are to distinguish between the holy and the common,
and between the unclean and the clean” (Lev 10:10)



20) [February 20] The laws regarding skin diseases and fungal infections. These laws were very important to the physical **health** of the community, for such infections could easily **spread** throughout the camp. Because of their contagious nature, God required **priestly** involvement in the diagnosis, treatment, cleansing and restoration of those affected by these ailments. As we meditate on these laws, several things stand out: (1) Skin diseases and fungal infections signified **sin** and its **defiling** effects. Just as a skin disease can spread across the body and then contaminate others, so a small sin can spread across the soul and then corrupt others. This perspective should radically change our **attitude** toward sin! (2) Each person was responsible to **notice** their ailment and take immediate **action**. This meant that personal hygiene was the **duty** of each Israelite. In the same way, spiritual hygiene is our duty. We must be on guard for areas of weakness or compromise and take immediate action. (3) The **priest** was to be involved in dealing with the infection or disease. The individual was *not* to try to handle the problem on their own. This teaches us that we should seek out our spiritual **leaders** when we're struggling with sin. They should be involved in helping us to

resist temptation and to stand strong against the enemy. (4) The rituals associated with cleansing and restoration were **complicated** and **costly**. They testified to the individual and the community that wellness and wholeness had returned. This speaks to us of the obedient **life** and costly sacrifice of Jesus. These laws help us appreciate all the more what Christ did for us on the cross. (5) As the people carefully followed these laws, they gained **practice** in recognizing physical defects and making sure that uncleanness didn't affect the ritual holiness of the camp or the Tabernacle. This **skill** in the physical, ritual realm was meant to carry over into the spiritual, moral realm. God wanted Israel to be as sensitive to sin and its corrupting effects as they were to infections and diseases. What a beautiful and effective way to teach holy living!

- 21) [February 21] The Day of Atonement was established to **cleanse** the Tabernacle of the ritual pollution caused by the sin and uncleanness of the people (Lev 16:16–19) and to **atone** for the people's sins: "You shall be clean before the LORD from **all** your sins" (Lev 16:30). The Day of Atonement prefigured the **crucifixion**. Christ's death on the cross accomplished what the blood of animals could not, and the effectiveness of His atonement was demonstrated by the **veil** of the temple being torn in two (Matt 27:51). Through Him, we now have the right to come into God's presence at any time (Heb 10:19ff.). Christ's **supremacy** to the Levitical high priests is seen in the ceremony of the Day of Atonement: (1) they entered an earthly tabernacle; He entered the **heavenly** "holy places," (2) they entered by means of the blood of animals; He entered by means of His **own** blood, (3) their entrance into the Most Holy Place was repeated and brief; Christ entered **once** for all and remains seated at the right hand of the Father, (4) the result of their offering was temporary (it was repeated each year); His offering secured our **eternal** redemption, (5) the blood of their offerings only cleansed externally; Christ's blood cleanses and perfects our **conscience**. We have a better covenant, a better sacrifice and a better hope! Hallelujah!
- 22) [February 22] The nations of Egypt and Canaan practiced many sexual **perversions**: homosexuality, bestiality, etc. Their fertility cults also made immorality a **religious** obligation. In contrast, God's laws governing sexual behavior put **boundaries** in place to honor and protect marriage. Further, the laws prohibited the marriage of close **relatives**, a restriction which became necessary because of the genetic **defects** that arose due to the fall. This shows us how much God cares about preserving and protecting the **family** unit and how important it is to instill a proper understanding of appropriate sexual behavior in our **children**. God's laws concerning holiness were **practical** and directly related to everyday living. Indeed, Leviticus **19** is one of the most important chapters in the Bible when it comes to understanding what it means to be holy. Being holy means: obeying God's ritual requirements, leaving fruit for the needy, not stealing from your neighbor, caring for the deaf and blind, keeping sex within God's boundaries, shunning pagan practices, honoring God's ownership of all things, and respecting the elderly. This teaches us that holiness is all about loving **God** and loving **others**. God wants us to be separate from sin and the world and set apart to Him alone (Lev 20:26).
- 23) [February 23] Regulations for the priests and Israel's annual feasts. God placed **greater** restrictions on the priests because of their special ministry. The high priest had the strictest rules of all due to his unique role. These restrictions were a reminder to the priests of the **privilege** they had to serve in God's holy Tabernacle. Their role required greater ritual holiness not only so they could draw near to God, but also so they could **communicate** to the people how much God valued **holiness**. The holiness of the priest's lives—both ritually and morally—was to be a symbol of God's own holiness. God gave a physical illustration of this by prohibiting any priest with a **deformity** from offering sacrifices. This was not meant as an insult; rather, it showed the necessity of **perfection** for those who would enter God's presence. Such perfection is fully realized in the person of **Jesus**, and through Him, we have access today into God's glorious presence! Annual festivals played a major role in Israel's culture, for God established **seven** national holidays for remembrance, celebration,

fellowship and worship. These holidays differed greatly from the surrounding nations in that they were times of honoring God, not occasions of moral **depravity**. This teaches us that the way we rest, refresh and entertain ourselves should **reflect** God's holiness and **witness** to our love for Him. It also shows us that although God encourages reflection and confession, He seems to favor **celebration** (five joyous feasts to two solemn ones). God encourages us to be joyful!

Appointed Feasts/ Holy Convocations	Purpose	Takeaway
Passover	Remember Israel's deliverance from God's wrath	Jesus died in my place so I would not have to suffer the wrath of God
Unleavened Bread	Remember Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt	Jesus died so I might live a pure and holy life, separated from all sin
First Fruits	Celebrate God's harvest blessing	Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection, and I am raised with Him to newness of life
Pentecost (Weeks)	Celebrate God's harvest blessing	Jesus gives me the Holy Spirit, who leads me to fulfill all the Law requires
Trumpets	Solemn time of preparation for Day of Atonement. A call to introspection and repentance	Jesus knows my works and calls me to faithfulness and obedience
Day of Atonement	Cleanse all the people of their sins. Cleanse the Tabernacle of ritual impurity.	Jesus has atoned for all my sin with His once-for-all sacrifice
Tabernacles (Booths)	Commemorate journey from Egypt to Canaan. Celebrate God's harvest blessing.	Jesus tabernacled with men so that He might redeem me from sin

- 24) [February 24] The story of the man who blasphemed God's name and cursed. He was half Egyptian and half Israelite, and the people weren't sure what to do with him. God commanded them to **stone** him, indicating how seriously God takes the misuse of His name (cf. Matt 6:9). The penalty also made it clear that justice applied **equally** to all within Israel's legal borders (Lev 24:10b). God's statements concerning murder and violence (Lev 24:17–21) teach us that physical assault is analogous to **blasphemy**, for it is an attack on God's **image** in man (animals were not made in God's image; Lev 24:21). Leviticus 25 is an overview of God's commands for the year of **Jubilee**. This year (which occurred every **fiftieth** year) ensured the return of all **land** and village **homes** to their original tribal owners and the return of **indentured Israelites** to their land. It emphasized that all things, especially the land, belong to God, and that we are to treat the land and others as He has commanded.
- 25) [February 25] God set two paths before Israel. The path of **obedience** led to health, prosperity and blessing, while the path of **rebellion** led to disease, poverty and death. At first glance, the curses may seem like the threats of a jealous lover, but we must recognize that they were meant to show the people how **high** the stakes were. God had chosen Israel to be a kingdom of **priests**, and He

wanted them to draw the rest of the **world** to Him. If they rebelled, they would not only be rejecting Him, they would also be frustrating His desire to reach the nations. No wonder the **discipline** was so severe! Indeed, it should come as no surprise that God disciplines us today, for the **church** is now His chosen instrument to reach the world for Christ. We need to heed God's voice and **rejoice** that He is treating us as His children (Heb 12:5–11). At the end of the curses, it is comforting to see that even in the midst of ruin, there is hope. God is a God of **forgiveness** and **restoration**, and He provided Israel a way back from apostasy. If they humbled themselves, confessed their sins and turned from evil, "Then I will remember my covenant with Jacob" (Lev 26:42). How wonderful to serve a God who welcomes back the wayward child!

- 26) [February 26] When Israel left Egypt, God sanctified all the **firstborn** of man and beast for Himself (Num 8:17–18; cf. Exod 13:2). Now, instead of requiring the sacrifice of the firstborn, God commanded Israel to offer up the **Levites** in their place. The Levites in turn offered up a bull and a goat to redeem themselves, and they became "**living sacrifices**" to God (Num 8:12–14). This is a beautiful picture of what Paul told the Romans: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). In the same way that Moses and Aaron dedicated the Levites to the service of the Tabernacle, we must dedicate ourselves to God's service. He redeemed us from the slave market of sin, and we belong exclusively to Him. This means that everything we do is done in God's name and is therefore sacred.
- 27) [February 27] The Israelites carefully obeyed God's command to number the people for **war** and His instructions concerning the encampment and **marching** order of each tribe (Num 1–2). This reminds us that faithful obedience is necessary no matter **what** God's directive may be. God intended the **men**—not the women, the children, or the Levites—to wage war against the Canaanites, personally putting them to death with the **sword**. This meant that each individual's commitment and faith in God would be put to the **test**. Would they be willing to put their lives on the line and go up against professional armies whose equipment and experience outmatched their own? At this point the exodus generation seemed ready to follow Moses into battle. Indeed, some of them had fought the Amalekites almost a year ago (Exod 17:8–16). But what would happen when they faced the Canaanites? Would they remain faithful in the face of such a fearsome foe? God promised Israel the land of Canaan, but their possession of the land came through war. In the same way, we must claim God's promised victory over the world by waging spiritual war (Eph 6:10–13). Are we being faithful to strap on our swords and do battle with the enemy in God's name?
- 28) [February 28] The Levite census. The Levites had been excluded from the military census because God had taken them instead of the firstborn of Israel, and they belonged to Him as living sacrifices. God then gave the Levites to Aaron so they could help the priests and guard the Tabernacle. After the Levites had been counted, the total was compared to the number of firstborn males from the other tribes, and the difference was ransomed with money. God then assigned a specific duty to each Levite family. Kohath carried all the holy objects and furnishings, Gershon carried the curtains and coverings, and Merari carried the remaining support pieces of the Tabernacle. Lessons from the Levite census: (1) The Levites had a **serious** ministry, for they had the authority to **execute** those who tried to violate the Tabernacle (Num 3:10). This reminds us how important spiritual service is in the **church**. Those in leadership are responsible for the wellbeing of the **flock**, and they watch over our **souls**. We need to obey and submit to them (Heb 13:17). (2) When God set someone apart for Himself, they could not be released unless He gave permission and allowed redemption. This emphasizes the principle of **substitution**, which is such a wonderful part of the gospel. (3) The excess 273 firstborn were not **ignored** (Num 3:46–48). God knew each one who belonged to Him, and not one was missed or forgotten. This reminds us of Jesus' comforting words: "Indeed, the very

hairs of your head are all numbered” (Luke 12:7). (4) No duty in God’s service was **unimportant**. All the menial labor involved in moving and maintaining the Tabernacle was **honorable** and **valuable** because it was done for God and in obedience to His will.