

# Leviticus 24 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Leviticus 24:1](#)  
[Leviticus 24:2](#)  
[Leviticus 24:3](#)  
[Leviticus 24:4](#)  
[Leviticus 24:5](#)  
[Leviticus 24:6](#)  
[Leviticus 24:7](#)  
[Leviticus 24:8](#)  
[Leviticus 24:9](#)  
[Leviticus 24:10](#)  
[Leviticus 24:11](#)  
[Leviticus 24:12](#)  
[Leviticus 24:13](#)  
[Leviticus 24:14](#)  
[Leviticus 24:15](#)  
[Leviticus 24:16](#)  
[Leviticus 24:18](#)  
[Leviticus 24:18](#)  
[Leviticus 24:19](#)  
[Leviticus 24:20](#)  
[Leviticus 24:21](#)  
[Leviticus 24:22](#)  
[Leviticus 24:23](#)

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[A third Overview Chart of Leviticus](#)

## LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP

[Adapted and modified from C. Swindoll](#)

Leviticus 1-17	Leviticus 18-27
The Way to God Access	The Walk with God Lifestyle
The Approach: Offerings	Practical Guidelines
The Representative: Priest	Chronological Observances
The Laws: Cleansing Physically & Spiritually	Severe Consequences Verbal promises
Ritual for Worship Worshipping a Holy God	Practical for Walking Living a Holy Life
Location: Mt Sinai for one full year	
Theme: How sinful humanity can approach and worship a holy God	
Key Verses: Lev 17:11, 19:2, 20:7-8	
Christ in Leviticus: In every sacrifice, every ritual, every feast	
Time: about 1446BC	

## Key words:

**Holy** - 90x/76v (with forms of the root for holy 152x) more than in any OT book (Lev 2:3, 10; 5:15f; 6:16f, 25-27, 29f; 7:1, 6; 8:9; 10:3, 10, 12f, 17; 11:44-45; 14:13; 16:2-4, 16f, 20, 23f, 27, 32f; 19:2, 8, 24; 20:3, 7, 26; 21:6-8, 22; 22:2-4, 6f, 10, 14-16, 32; 23:2-4, 7f, 20f, 24, 27, 35-37; 24:9; 25:12; 27:9f, 14, 21, 23, 28, 30, 32f);

**Atonement** - 51x/45v - (Lev 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7, 30; 7:7; 8:15, 34; 9:7; 10:17; 12:7f; 14:18-21, 29, 31, 53; 15:15, 30; 16:6, 10f, 16-18, 24, 27, 30, 32-34; 17:11; 19:22; 23:27f; 25:9)

**Offering** - 326x/199v (Lev 1:2-4, 6, 9f, 13f, 17; 2:1-16; 3:1-3, 5-9, 11f, 14, 16; 4:3, 7f, 10, 14, 18, 20f, 23-26, 28-35; 5:6-8, 15f, 18f; 6:5f, 9f, 12, 14f, 17f, 20f, 23, 25, 30; 7:1f, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 20f, 25, 29f, 32-35, 37f; 8:2, 14, 18, 21, 27-29, 31; 9:2-4, 7f, 10, 12-18, 21f, 24; 10:12-17, 19; 12:6, 8; 14:10, 12-14, 17, 19-22, 24f, 28, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5f, 9, 11, 15, 24f, 27; 17:4f, 8; 19:5, 21f, 24; 21:6, 21; 22:12, 18, 21-23, 25, 27; 23:8, 12-14, 25, 27, 36-38; 24:7, 9; 27:9, 11)

**Tent of meeting** - 43x/41v (Lev 1:1, 3, 5; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4f, 7, 14, 16, 18; 6:16, 26, 30; 8:3f, 31, 33, 35; 9:5, 23; 10:7, 9; 12:6; 14:11, 23; 15:14, 29; 16:7, 16f, 20, 23, 33; 17:4ff, 9; 19:21; 24:3)

**Law** - 16x/16v; (Lev 6:9, 14, 25; 7:1, 7, 11, 37; 11:46; 12:7; 13:59; 14:2, 32, 54, 57; 15:32)

**Sacrifice** - 41x/34v; (Lev 3:1, 3, 6, 9; 4:10, 26, 31, 35; 7:11-13, 15-18, 20f, 29, 32, 34, 37; 9:4, 18; 10:14; 17:5, 7f; 19:5; 22:21, 24, 27, 29; 23:19, 37)

**Anoint** - 17x/15v; (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:20, 22; 7:36; 8:2, 10-12, 30; 10:7; 16:32; 21:10, 12)

**Sin** - 111x/90v (Lev 4:2f, 8, 14, 20-29, 32-35; 5:1, 5-13, 15-18; 6:2-4, 17, 25f, 30; 7:7, 37f; 8:2, 14; 9:2f, 7f, 10, 15, 22; 10:16-19; 12:6, 8; 14:13, 19, 22, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5f, 9, 11, 15f, 21, 25, 27, 30, 34; 19:17, 22; 20:20; 21:21; 22:9; 23:19; 24:15; 25:1, 27; 26:18, 21, 24, 28, 46; 27:34)

**Iniquity** - 10x/8v (Lev 7:18; 16:21f; 19:8; 26:39-41, 43)

**Death** - 17/16v (Lev 16:1; 19:20; 20:2, 4, 9-11, 15f, 27; 24:16f, 21; 27:29)

**Die** - 15x/15v (Lev 7:24; 8:35; 10:2, 6f, 9; 11:39; 15:31; 16:1f, 13; 17:15; 20:20; 22:8f)

**Blood** - 86x/65v (Lev 1:5, 11, 15; 3:2, 8, 13, 17; 4:5-7, 16-18, 25, 30, 34; 5:9; 6:27, 30; 7:2, 14, 26f, 33; 8:15, 19, 23f, 30; 9:9, 12, 18; 10:18; 12:4f, 7; 14:6, 14, 17, 25, 28, 51f; 15:19, 25; 16:14f, 18f, 27; 17:4, 6, 10-12; 18:6, 12f, 17; 19:26; 20:18f; 25:49)

**Sabbath** - 13x/10v (Lev 16:31; 23:3, 11, 15f, 32; 24:8; 25:2, 4, 6)

**The LORD spoke to Moses** - 28x/28v - (Lev 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8, 19, 24; 7:22, 28; 8:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1, 17, 26; 23:9, 23, 26, 33; 24:1, 13; 27:1)

**Jubilee** - 20x/18v (Lev 25:10-13, 15, 28, 30f, 33, 40, 50, 52, 54; 27:17-18, 21, 23-24)

**Consecrate** - 24x/23v - (Lev 6:18, 27; 7:35; 8:10-12, 15, 30; 11:44; 12:4; 16:19; 20:7; 21:8, 10; 25:10; 27:14-19, 22, 2)

**Covenant** - 10x/8v (Lev 2:13; 24:8; 26:9, 15, 25, 42, 44f)

**Fat** - 52x/33v (Lev 3:3f, 9f, 14-17; 4:8f, 19, 26, 31, 35; 6:12; 7:3f, 23-25, 30f, 33; 8:16, 25f; 9:10, 19f, 24; 10:15; 16:25; 17:6)

## Leviticus 24:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

- Lev 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8, 19, 24; 7:22, 28; 8:1; 11:1, 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1, 17, 26; 23:1, 23:9, 23, 26, 33; 24:1, 13; 27:1

## CARE OF THE TABERNACLE

### Leviticus 24:1-9

This introductory "formula" is found some 30 times in the book of Leviticus.

**R Laird Harris** - In a sense this section, like chapter 8, is a complement to the Book of Exodus. Exodus 25:31–40 has the directions

for making the seven-branched lampstand. Exodus 37:17–24 records Moses' having made the lampstand. Then Exodus 27:20–21 gives directions for the care of the light. Here in vv.1–4 these directions are to be carried out. The wording of this section (vv.2–4) is almost identical to that in Exodus 27:20–21. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

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**William MacDonald Notes on Leviticus 24** - In chapter 24 the yearly feasts were dealt with. Now the daily and weekly ministries before the Lord are taken up.

The oil to be burned in the golden lampstand (Lev 24:1-4). The twelve loaves to be placed on the table of showbread (Lev 24:5-9). The frankincense mentioned in verse 7 belonged to the Lord. It was offered to Jehovah when the old bread was removed and given to the priests for food. Then there is the abrupt account of a half-breed son who was stoned to death for cursing God (Lev 24:10-16, 23). The incident shows that the law was the same for anyone who lived in the camp of Israel, whether he was a full-blooded Jew or not (Lev 24:22). It shows that blasphemy, like murder, was punishable by death (Lev 24:14, 16, 17, 23). [Verse 16 was probably the law against blasphemy, which the Jews referred to when they said, "We have a law, and by our law He (the Lord Jesus) ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).] It shows that compensation could be made for some other crimes (Lev 24:18,21). Finally it shows that "retribution was a basic principle of law: wrongs had to be righted. Softness brought the law into disrepute. The law of retaliation is scoffed at today in the Western world, but thoughtful people will not dismiss it. (a) In ancient society, punishment was often out of all proportion with the wrong done. Retaliatory punishment was thus a great step toward true justice, (b) Furthermore, rehabilitative punishment—the alternative most frequently suggested—suffers from subjectivism. Who is to decide when a man is rehabilitated, ready to rejoin society? The terms may be lenient today, but what of tomorrow? True justice is an eye (and not more) for an eye."52

In Lev 24:1-9 we see a picture of Israel as God intended, in verses 10-16 the cursing man pictures Israel as it actually became, blaspheming the Name and cursing ("His blood be on us, and on our children").

**Leviticus 24:2 "Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light , to make a lamp burn continually.**

- that they. Ex. 27:20, 21; 39:37; 40:24, 25. Nu. 8:2–4. 1 Sa. 3:3, 4. the lamps. 2 Ch. 13:11. Ps. 119:105, 130. Pr. 6:23. Is. 8:20; 11:2. Mat. 4:16; 5:16; 25:1–8. Luke 1:79; 12:35. John 1:4, 9; 5:35; 8:12. Ac. 26:18. 2 Co. 4:6. Ep. 1:17, 18; 5:8–14. Phil 2:15, 16. burn continually. Heb. ascend.

**For the light** - The only source of light in the Tabernacle. Instruction had been given in Exodus 27:20-21

You shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. 21 "In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD; [it shall be] a perpetual statute throughout their generations for the sons of Israel. (See also Ex 25:31–40; Ex 37:17–24)

**Clear oil from beaten olives** - The commandment in Leviticus 24:1–4 emphasized two essentials: (1) the people of Israel had to provide the olive oil regularly, and (2) it had to be beaten and pure (Ex. 27:20–21). There was a method of extracting olive oil by heat, but beating or crushing the olives and straining out the impurities produced the best olive oil. And the God of Israel deserves the very best. (Wiersbe)

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**James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose**

#### **THE CANDLESTICK.**

Exodus 25:31-40; Leviticus 24:1 -4; Revelation 1:12-20.

The candlestick would be more properly called the "lampstand," as on the top of each branch a lamp stood. It is most suggestive to notice that a distinction is made between the lampstand and its branches. The central or upright part was the candlestick, the other parts were simply the branches of it. This is the same precious thought that we have in John 15, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." Notice the—

I. Formation. It was made of "pure gold of beaten work." There was no wood here; but still, like all the other vessels, it had a twofold character, "Its shaft and its branches." It is supposed that this candlestick was made out of one solid piece of gold, and that it was brought into the desired form by the process of beating. We are here brought within sight of some very deep New Testament truth in connection with Christ and His Church. All of one piece to begin with. In the purpose of God the Lamb was slain, and we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1 4). All of one piece, before the world began. Oh, the depths of the wisdom

of God! But the candlestick did not appear in reality till the beating had been accomplished. The beating is an emphatic symbol of suffering. It was through the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The candlestick was not made in the holy place. The hard, wearisome process of beating was done outside. Christ had to come out from His Father's presence and go outside the gate of Jerusalem. He only knows all the depth of meaning that lay in this word "beating." It was that we might become partakers of His divine nature. He suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

II. Size. The candlestick, like the laver—the type of the Holy Spirit—was given without measure. It is to be wondered at that those two vessels, which represent the two great mysteries of the Church and the Holy Ghost, should be mentioned without any definite measurement. The Church was a mystery hid in the ages of old. Who can measure the mystical body of Christ? Its presence cannot be understood by the carnally minded. It is a great mystery. There are three unions that are all alike mysterious:

1. The union between the Father, Son, and Spirit.
2. The union between the Son and man.
3. The union between the believer and Christ.

III. Position. The laver stood in the centre of the holy place, the table of shewbread on the right side, and the candlestick on the left. All those vessels which stood in a straight line show the provision God has made for our coming near unto Himself. Those which stood by the way represent the privileges and responsibilities of the saved ones. The only light in the holy place was from the golden lampstand. There were no windows, no natural light. In this light only did the priest offer incense and renew the bread on the table. In the light of His presence must all holy work be done. "Thou art my lamp, O Lord" (2 Sam. 22:29). It is when we walk and work in the light of the sparks of our own kindling that we blunder and stumble and fail. The Church, like the candlestick, is in the purpose of God a separate thing. In the world, but not of it. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified in truth" (John. 17:19). The branches are not of the world, because the shaft is not of the world (John 17:16-18).

IV. Shaft and Branches. The shaft, or centre part, was called the candlestick. The shaft is Christ, the branches on either side are His people. Jesus in the midst. In all things He has the pre-eminence. The branches were beaten out of it. Eve, the type of the Church, was taken out of the side of Adam, "Members of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30). The shaft with its branches were all of pure gold. The branches were made partakers of the same nature as the candlestick. This we, as believers, have through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Observe further that the strength of the branch lay in the shaft. Apart from the shaft the branch had no power to stand. "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The beauty of the shaft was put upon each branch. The knobs, bowls, and flowers which adorn the centre lamp-stand were wrought upon each individual branch. Is not this beautiful? Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. It is the will of God that the same spirit which wrought in Jesus should work in us, changing us into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18). Let us "put on the new man, which is after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:10; John 17:22).

The same position and privileges which belonged to the shaft belonged also to the branches. Risen with Him and seated together with Him "in heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3). "Where I am there shall ye be also" (John 14:3). Perhaps the three branches on either side may also indicate the three great gifts in the Church—evangelists, pastors, teachers. This is the true order. The outside branch was the longest. The first duty of the Church is to evangelise. The second branch is the pastor, who gathers together the evangelised ones, and cares for them as a flock. The third branch is the teacher. This one dwelt nearest to the shaft. Nearness to Christ is indispensable to profitable teaching. They sit at His feet and learn of Him. Although the offices are different they all belong to, live by, and exalt the same Lord—"all one in Christ."

V. Light. The light of the candlestick was something different from the candlestick itself. You may have a lampstand without a lamp, or a lamp without a light, just as you may have the form of godliness without the power. But the candlestick was made for the very purpose of bearing the light. Its light was the gift of God. "The Life was the Light" (John 1:4). The light then is a beautiful type of life. The life we have in Christ is life from God, it is the life of God. Ere we can shine before God we must, like the candlestick, be lit with the holy fire of life from God. This light was never to go out. No. The life we get is "eternal life," it shall never go out. The secret of a steady, powerful testimony lies not in having abundance of knowledge, but in having abundance of life. Let us remember that the life is the light. Letting our light shine simply means letting the life of the Christ who dwells within us be seen. This light, like the fire on the altar, was to be used and kept, but not made. Eternal life is not the product of men, it is "the gift of God" (Rom. 6:23). "Ye must be born from above" (John 3:3).

Note further the great purpose of this light. It was to—

1. SHINE "BEFORE THE LORD." Our first great business as Christians is to live before God. "One is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8). Walk before Me, said God to Abraham. It is possible to shine in the eyes of men and yet not be shining before God. To this end we need the devoted heart and the single eye "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits which are His" (1 Cor. 6:20).

While the candlestick was shining "before the Lord" it was also—

2. SHINING UPON THE TABLE. When we are living only to please God, then are we revealing Christ as the bread of life to others. Men see in Christ the bread they need for their poor, perishing souls by the bright joyful light of the consecrated life. In shining before God we best commend the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no room here for men-pleasing.

In shining "before the Lord" it also—

3. SHONE UPON THE ALTAR. The power of prayer will be seen and felt through the life that's lived before God. The God that

answers prayer is the God that answers by the fire of a holy, God-glorifying life. It also—

4. SHONE UPON ITSELF. In shining before God we are manifesting to others the beauty the Lord our God hath put upon us. "They, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Only that which He hath wrought in us can be seen when we live and labour in the presence of "Jesus only."

VI. Oil. The power of the candlestick was in the light that it bore. But the light needed to be fed. The new life given us of God needs sustenance. Pure olive oil was provided for the light. Oil is a striking emblem of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the pouring in of the oil upon the flickering lives of the early disciples. We may have life, but we cannot have life abundantly unless we have a plentiful supply of the spirit of grace. A dry wick testimony is a poor one. How is this oil applied? The Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to us, so when these precious things are seen and accepted, faith is strengthened and the life made brighter. The holy oil is a prime necessity if the lamp of testimony is to be kept brightly burning. There is no escape from this. If our Christian life is dull, hazy, and fitful, that is evidence enough that we lack the oil of the spirit of liberty. Education and earnestness are no substitutes for the pure life-inspiring oil of the Holy Spirit. The oil cannot shine of itself, neither can it make a dead lamp shine. It can only manifest its mighty power through the fire of a living soul. It is said of the Spirit that "He shall not speak of Himself," but He can make the life which we have received through Christ shine so brightly that Christ our Lord shall be magnified in us. "He shall glorify Me," Jesus said. He does thus glorify Him in us. The priest supplied the oil for the lamps. He trimmed them with his own hands. How much more will He give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? To be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with faith, with love, with wisdom, and power, so that our lives will be Christ-like and honouring to God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:1-6).

VII. Tongs and Snuffers. These were small but indispensable things. The lamps needed trimming, the ashes must be removed from the wick. Oh, yes, there are ashes even here. There is something betimes in the best of men that could do better without. But note that the ashes which mar the testimony of the light do not come from the holy oil, but from the body of the wick. The hindrance is never in the Holy Spirit, but in ourselves. It may be a little rising of the self-will, some duty neglected, some sin unconfessed. But it is a blessed consolation that although our Great High Priest may need to use the snuffers of trial and affliction to purify, He never uses the extinguisher. When Peter denied Him He did not extinguish him, but applied the trimming tongs of gracious intercession. We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The snuffers were of pure gold. The fiery trials through which we may be brought will not be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless they work for us an eternal weight of glory. The trial of your faith is "more precious than gold" (1 Peter 1:7). The snuffers are not used for pain, but for profit, that the lamp should shine all the brighter. Golden trials in the hands of a merciful high priest who looks to the "afterwards." "Thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42). Work then in us both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure. Beloved fellow-believer, in the day of trouble consider the golden snuffers.

**Leviticus 24:3 "Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations."**

**Veil of testimony** - This is the same veil that "was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mk 15:38) and of which the writer of Hebrews declared "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a [hope] both sure and steadfast and one which **enters within the veil** where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Heb 6:19-20-[note](#)).

You shall make a **veil** of blue and purple and scarlet [material] and fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. "You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, their hooks [also being of] gold, on four sockets of silver. "You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies. (Ex 26:31-33)

**Veil** (06532)([paroket](#)) is the **Veil of the Temple** ([See diagram of Sanctuary](#)) which separated the **Holy Place** from the **Holy of Holies**, which was the very dwelling place of God (Ex 25:8), over which the **Shekinah glory cloud** was manifest.

**Testimony** - This refers to the tablets Moses brought down from Mt Sinai - "When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the **testimony**, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God." (Ex 31:18)

**NET NOTE** - The Hebrew term פֶּרֶקֶת ([parokhet](#)) is usually translated "veil" or "curtain," but it seems to have stretched not only in front of but also over the top of the ark of the covenant which stood behind and under it inside the most holy place

**Guzik** applies evening and morning - Jesus never stopped being the light of the world (John 8:12); He never took a break from it. As well, we are never to take a break from being the light of the world (Matthew 5:14), but we can only do this as we are continually

supplied with oil (the Holy Spirit) and have our wicks trimmed (undergo training through trials).

#### Leviticus 24:4 "He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure gold lampstand before the Lord continually

- the pure. Ex. 25:31–39; 31:8; 37:17–24; 39:37. Nu. 3:31; 4:9. 1 Ki. 7:49. 1 Ch. 28:15. Je. 52:19. Zec. 4:2, 3, 11–14. He. 9:2. Re. 1:20; 2:1, 5; 11:4.

**The golden lampstand** - (See [Menorah](#)) The lampstand was the seven-branched menorah that lit the Holy Place of the tabernacle (Ex 25:31-40).

**HCSB Study Bible** - The light represented the presence of God with His people. In the Bible, light also represents God or His Word (Ps 27:1; 36:9; 119:105). Jesus' affirmation that He was the light of the world was a polemic against those who put their faith in a menorah that was only the symbol of a greater reality...

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, **'I am the Light of the world;** he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." (Jn 8:12).

"While I am in the world, **I am the Light of the world."** (Jn 9:5).

**Mark Rooker on lamps...before the Lord continually** - This law for the perpetual kindling of lamps had been given to Moses earlier in Exod 27:20–21. Here the igniting of the lamps is actually being implemented. This practice was to be a *ḥuqqat 'ôlām*, "a lasting ordinance" or "perpetual statute" (24:3b). The phrase "lasting ordinance" refers to the unmitigating observance of this law in Israel's history until its typological fulfillment in Christ was realized. Later in Israel's history the lampstand was in fact captured by Titus. On the arch of Titus the Roman soldiers are displayed carrying the lampstand from Jerusalem. The lampstand came to be one of the best known symbols of Judaism, and its depiction has been found on a coin from the reign of Antigonus (40–37 B.C.). (New American Commentary)

**Wiersbe** comments on the significance of the oil for burning -

Bible students generally agree that oil for anointing is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God who anoints God's people for service (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:27), but this particular oil is for burning and not anointing. Zechariah 4:1–6 connects oil for burning with the Holy Spirit and identifies that lampstand as the two faithful servants of God. What does the tabernacle lampstand signify?

I personally think that the golden lampstand first of all symbolizes the Word of God, the light that God gives us in this dark world (Ps. 119:105, 130; 2 Peter 1:19). The unconverted can't see or understand the light of the Word of God because they lack the ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9–16). Nobody outside the holy place could see the light from the golden lampstand, but those within appreciated its light. Apart from the light of the Word, God's servants can't see where they are or what they're doing, nor can they serve God effectively. The lampstand gave light so the priest could burn the incense on the golden altar, and apart from the Scriptures, we can't pray effectively (Ps. 141:1–2; John 15:5; Acts 6:4). The light from the lampstand illuminated the beautiful hangings in the holy place and also revealed the bread on the golden table. The illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God makes the things of God real and clear to us. I'd like to suggest that the lampstand could also symbolize the nation of Israel, as did the twelve loaves of bread on the golden table, which we'll study next. God called Israel to be a shining light in a very dark world, but they had to shine first of all in His presence before they could witness to their pagan neighbors (see Isa. 58:8; 60:1–3). The tragedy is that the priesthood became wicked and failed to maintain the nation's light before the Lord (1 Sam. 3). Of course, Jesus is the light (Luke 2:32; John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5), and only through Him can we see and appreciate spiritual things. The Apostle John compared local churches to individual golden candlesticks that are supposed to shine and bear witness in their cities (Rev. 1:12, 20; see Matt. 5:16; Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15). If the people of Israel didn't bring the beaten olive oil, the lights couldn't be kept burning in the holy place. The people might say, "Well, we can't see the lampstand anyway, so what difference does it make?" The lamp wasn't there for the people to see but for God to see and for the priest to use as he carried on his ministry. What happened in the presence of God was far more important than what happened elsewhere in the camp! Sad to say, many a local church has had its light go out before both God and the world because of the unfaithfulness of the members. They failed to pray, give, and allow the Holy Spirit to use them. If the light is to be kept burning, somebody has to provide the oil. (Be Holy)

## F B Meyer - BEFORE THE LORD CONTINUALLY Leviticus 24:4-8

The light of the candlestick and the twelve cakes of fine flour were to be before the Lord continually, as symbols of the twofold office his people were to sustain, on the one hand to the world's darkness, on the other to God Himself.

**We must shine as lights in the world.** — As a candle in the hand of the housewife, who sweeps her house diligently; as a lamp in the hand of the virgin expecting the bridegroom; or as the lighthouse on a rocky coast. We must dispel the darkness, and guide wanderers through the murky night. Light is soft and still, and is thus a fitting emblem of the influence of a holy life, which burns steadily on before the Lord continually, and is unaffected by the heed or comment of man. If no one seems the better for our consistent testimony, aim to satisfy the Lord. The lamps of the pure candlestick of a holy life are not for man only, but for Him. But they can only be maintained through the constant supply of the pure oil of the Holy Ghost, ministered by Him who walks amid the seven golden candlesticks. "Ye are the light of the world."

**We must be as bread to God.** — In a blessed sense we feed on God, but God also feeds on us. He finds satisfaction in beholding his people's unity and love, in receiving their sacrifices of praise, and in watching their growing conformity to his will. The two rows of six cakes foreshadow the unity and order of the Church; the fine flour, its holy, equable character; the pure frankincense, the fragrance of Christian love. There is a testimony in all these to the world; but we do not always realize the satisfaction afforded to the great God, who has made such costly sacrifices on behalf of his Church. (Our Daily Homily)

**Leviticus 24:5 "Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake."**

- Ex. 25:30; 40:23. 1 Ki. 18:31. 1 Sa. 21:4, 5. Mat. 12:4. Ac. 26:7. Jas. 1:1.

### INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE "SHOWBREAD"

Lev 24:5-9 is the only place where the details of the offering of the **bread of the Presence** (Ex 39:26) are given.

"You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long and one cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. 24" You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a gold border around it. 25" You shall make for it a rim of a handbreadth around [it;] and you shall make a gold border for the rim around it. 26" You shall make four gold rings for it and put rings on the four corners which are on its four feet. 27" The rings shall be close to the rim as holders for the poles to carry the table. 28" You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that with them the table may be carried. 29" You shall make its dishes and its pans and its jars and its bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. 30" You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times. (Exodus 25:23-30 - See also Ex 40:23)

The **bread of the Presence** was considered part of the priest's portion of the offerings. It is also the bread that David and his men ate while fleeing from King Saul (1 Sam 21:1-6; see Matt 12:1-8).

**Treasury of Scripture Knowledge** - The loaves of bread which the officiating priest placed every sabbath day upon the golden table in the Sanctum, before the Lord, were twelve in number, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves must have been large, since two tenth deals (about six pints) of flour were used for each, Le. 24:3, 6, 7. They were served up hot on the sabbath day in the Sanctum, when the stale ones, which had been exposed the whole week, were taken away, and none but the priests were allowed to eat them. In an extraordinary extremity, David and his men partook of the shew-bread, (see 1 Sa. 21:6,) the urgent necessity alone justifying the act. The Hebrew signifies bread of faces, or, of the face.

The "[showbread](#)" consisted of twelve loaves of bread representing the Twelve Tribes before the Lord. The loaves were replaced weekly, on the Sabbath. The Hebrew term for this bread meant literally "bread of face" or "bread of presence" because it was set before God, or perhaps represented His presence. He is the sustainer of life.

**Criswell** - The twelve cakes of [showbread](#) (Ex. 25:23, note) represented the twelve tribes of Israel and the fact that they were continually in the presence, i.e., under the watchful eye, of God. The bread was to be made from fine flour -- **no impurities, no unevenness whatsoever** -- as the bread foreshadowed the perfect humanity of our Lord (cf. John 6:30-59). The cakes were to be replenished each Sabbath, the old bread being eaten only by the priests (cf. 1 Sa 21:4-6; Mt. 12:3, 4; Mk 2:25, 26; Lk 6:3, 4).

**Guzik** - This bread of the tabernacle speaks of fellowship and communion with God—a symbolic "breaking bread" with God, and



speaks of the continual fellowship God wanted with Israel.. This bread is called showbread in Exodus 25:30, which literally means "bread of the face" in the sense of it being eaten in the presence or before the face of God.

**Bramer** on Loaves of bread (hallot)—The "bread of presence" was conceived of as a "grain offering" (cf. Lev. 2:1-16) and numbered 12 to represent all the tribes of Israel. Since this is so, this bread would have been unleavened bread (see Lev. 2:4), which would have been appropriate since these loaves would be eaten by the priests after an entire week in the tabernacle (Lev. 24:8-9). **By eating this bread the priests would signify their belief, based on the ritual they had performed that week, that the 12 tribes of Israel were in spiritual fellowship with the LORD.**" (Bible Knowledge Key Word Study)

**Leviticus 24:6 "You shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before the Lord.**

- two rows. 1 Co. 14:40. pure. Ex. 25:23, 24. 37:10–16; 39:36; 40:22, 28. 1 Ki. 7:48. 2 Ch. 4:19; 13:11. He. 9:2.

**Guzik** - This bread of the tabernacle speaks of fellowship and communion with God—a symbolic "breaking bread" with God, and speaks of the continual fellowship God wanted with Israel.

HCSB Study Bible - . They were a constant reminder of God's provision for the Israelites every day and especially during the wilderness period. The 12 loaves represented the 12 tribes of Israel, pointing to the totality of God's provision. Jesus affirmed that He was the Bread of Life (Jn 6:33,35,48,51), satisfying the spiritual hunger of humanity.

Jesus testified He was the Bread that gives eternal life...

"For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." (John 6:33)

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. (John 6:35)

"I am the bread of life. (John 6:48)

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which

"I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." (John 6:51)

Some do not see the Bread of the Presence (or Showbread) as a picture of Jesus because they say there were 12 loaves and not just one loaf. I personally think the Bread that was Before the Lord depicts Jesus Who today is "before" the Father continually interceding for us (Heb 7:25, Ro 8:34).

**Leviticus 24:7 "You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to the Lord.**

- pure. Lev 2:2. Ep. 1:6. He. 7:25. Re. 8:3, 4. the bread. John 6:35, 51. a memorial. Ge. 9:16. Ex. 12:14; 13:9; 17:14. Ac. 10:4, 31. 1 Co. 11:23–25.

Leviticus 2:2-note 'He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its **frankincense**. And the priest shall offer [it] up in smoke [as] its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

**Frankincense** ([wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankincense)) was placed either on the loaves, or possibly between the rows of bread, for later burning at the altar of incense.

Since a portion of this bread was to be burned as a representative offering (see Lev 2:2), it would have been unleavened or made without yeast. In chapter 2 Moses wrote "**No grain offering**, which you bring to the LORD, **shall be made with leaven**, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD. (Lev 2:11).

**Leviticus 24:8 "Every Sabbath day he shall set it in order before the Lord continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel.**



## AN EVERLASTING COVENANT

**Guzik** - Significantly, God wanted the fellowship fresh. He didn't want a stale communion with His people, but a fresh, new relationship.

The loaves memorialized Israel continually before the Lord.

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### F B Meyer - THE TABLE OF THE PRESENCE-BREAD

**Exodus 25:23-30; Lev 24:5-9**

The Table of Shew-bread: its Structure. The Table of Shew-bread, as we generally call it, stood on the right-hand side of the Holy Place, as the priests entered it. It was three feet long, a foot and a half broad, and two feet three inches high. It was thus quite a small table, narrow for its length, and rather below the ordinary height. It seems to have been regarded as of primary importance, because in this chapter its description follows immediately on that of the Ark. It was, like other articles, of acacia-wood, overlaid with pure gold; the surface was surrounded by an edging or border; and the legs were held together by a broad flat bar, which strengthened their framework. This is described as "the border of an hand-breadth round about." At the corners, or ends, of the legs, were rings, through which the staves were placed for its carrying, as is represented in the bas-reliefs on the Arch of Titus. The spoons, or incense-cups, the flagons and chalices were all of gold, and were employed for the libations and the burning of incense, which accompanied the weekly presentation of the twelve loaves, or cakes of bread.

The Shew-bread. These were renewed on each Sabbath-day, the stale ones being consumed by the priests in the Holy Place. The loaves were specially made of fine flour, and were known as "the bread of face," or "bread of presence," because they were set before the face or presence of God, who dwelt in the Holy Place, and the intention, so far as we can spell it out, was to suggest that, as man feeds upon the bread, which God gives in answer to his daily prayer, so man must provide the Divine Nature with food on which the Divine Spirit also may feed. Man cannot exist without the impartation of God's nature, and in turn must minister to Him what shall afford Him satisfaction. We are to walk worthy of God unto all pleasing. Our bodies are to be a living sacrifice acceptable to God. Probably the Lord's Supper was intended to convey this dual thought. Whilst we eat of the bread and drink of the wine, which God has given to us in Jesus Christ, He also draws near to commune with us. Our Lord is His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased; and our faith, love, obedience, and adoration provide Him with profoundest satisfaction.

Its Symbolism. The injunction was very precise: "Thou shalt set upon the table the Presence-bread before Me alway." In two passages it is described as "the continual bread" (Numbers 4:7, 2 Chronicles 2:4). When the trumpet gave the signal for the march, the loaves and vessels were left undisturbed in their accustomed places, and over them all three coverings were placed, of blue, of scarlet, and of sealskin. There was therefore no interruption of the continued symbolism of the Unity of the chosen people.

This thought pervades the Scriptures. If we go back to the days of the Judges, when the land was repeatedly swept by whirlwinds of judgment, when every man did as seemed right in his eyes, and there was no unity of government or authority, we find that the Presence bread was still offered with undeviating regularity. This is established by the incident told of David, when he sought the hospitality of the High-Priest at Nob, and "did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests" (Mark 2:25–26). Evidently, through those stormy centuries the twelve loaves still stood before God, an emblem of the essential unity of Israel. When, afterwards, schism came, and the ten tribes, under the leadership of Jeroboam, broke away from the house of David, still upon the holy table, in Solomon's temple, the twelve loaves were presented, representing an unimpaired oneness.

So when Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, that had been broken down by Jezebel's orders, he took twelve stones, "according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name." In the prophet's thought, as in God's, the sorrowful strife and alienation between the northern and southern groups were as though they were not, in view of the Eternal Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

A Witness to the Unity of the People. When the ten tribes were carried into captivity, and scattered far and wide through Babylonia, Persia, and Asia Minor, still each Sabbath the priests brought the twelve loaves, and placed them on the Table of Presence, as though God knew well where to find his scattered people, and in His

judgment they continued one. Then followed the captivity of the seventy years, and afterwards the return to the Temple of the priests, the people, and the holy bread. And in our Lord's time, though Israel was rent and scattered, and Simeon and Dan had long since disappeared, still the twelve loaves were presented; and in a remarkable sentence Paul, speaking before Agrippa of the promise made unto the fathers, expressed his belief in the unbroken number of the tribes, when he said: "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God, night and day, hope to attain." In the opening of his epistle, James sends greeting to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. Our Lord assured His Apostles, that in the regeneration they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. On the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Dan is indeed missed out of the enumeration of Rev. 7., but the sacred associations of twelve are still maintained by the dual representation of Joseph. Remember also Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy (Ezekiel 37:15, etc.).

The Unity of Christ's Church. Throughout this is one of those deep and subtle suggestions of the way in which the objective ideal of the Church, as an undivided and sacred unity, stands before God, upon the pure table of our Lord's nature, in which the gold of Deity and the shittim-wood of humanity blend. Amid all the storms that have swept the world since our Lord constituted His Church, throughout those disastrous periods of division and distraction, there have still been, in the Divine estimation, "one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." Always the twelve loaves, the wine of His blood, and the frankincense of His merit, for we are made "accepted in the Beloved."

Not Necessarily a Visible Unity. It need hardly be remarked that this unity was never intended to be organic, because Jesus prayed that His own might be one as the Father and He were one. "Holy Father," He said, "keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as we are." But the unity of the Godhead is clearly not physical, or visible, or organic. It is mystical and spiritual. It is therefore certain that those who suppose that the unity of the Church must be patent to the senses have wholly misconceived the Divine ideal. The members of the body of Christ were never intended to be gathered into one organisation, to repeat one formulary, or march in military array. Uniformity is far removed from unity; and you may have perfect unity apart from uniformity. A tree is a unity, though there is a vast diversity between the gnarled branches and the cones which it tosses on the forest-floor. A house is a unity, though there is no similarity between the gabled roof and the deep-laid foundations. A body is a unity, but the eyelash differs widely from the bones of the skeleton.

Uniformity is impossible where there is life, as the most superficial consideration of the autumnal produce of orchard, field and garden proves. Wherever, therefore, Uniformity has been insisted on, death has ensued. Just before the Reformation of the sixteenth century, it seemed as though the Inquisition had extinguished every trace of nonconformity with the tenets and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, she might have almost literally adopted the proud boast of Babylon: "As one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, so have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped" (Isaiah 10:14, R.V.). But at this period it is incontestable that the religious life of Christendom was dead; except where the limited Piedmontese, in the high Alps, kept a spark burning amid the grey ashes.

External Uniformity Unattainable. The same mistake is perpetrated by those who demand uniformity of creed as by those who insist on uniformity of ritual. You cannot make all men climb alike, or express identical conceptions in identical words. A creed is, after all, an intellectual effort, whereas religion is not the creature of the mind or reason, but of the heart and spirit. It is a life, the importation and reception of the divine nature, the inauguration of that eternal condition of existence which will be still young when all human formularies and conceptions have been put away, as a man puts away the things of childhood. If your soul is united to the Head of the Church by a living faith, through which the life of Christ enters and pervades it, you must be reckoned a member of the Body, though you may have passed through none of those ecclesiastical systems which at the best are but broken lights, reflecting the sunlight at different angles.

Variety Within the Church of Christ. In the Church there is room, therefore, for an infinite variety. Each brings his own contribution; and we must gather with all saints, if we would comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. You cannot see the whole sky, the whole mountain, the whole broad ocean, nor can I; but I will tell you what I have seen, tasted, and handled of the Word of Life, and you shall tell me what you have experienced. Thus our spirits shall have fellowship one with another. There will be a mutual exchange in commodities, as we report our discoveries of the unsearchable riches of Christ. For none has exactly the same view-point as another has; and none exactly the same definition or formula. Be yourself! Make your own discoveries of the manifold grace of Christ. If you cannot bring grapes from Eschol, bring

pomegranates or figs. Bartimaeus and the man born blind had different stories to tell of the way in which they were healed, but they both saw, and owed the sight which revealed the world to the same voice and touch. Whether you swam to shore or floated on a broken piece of ship-furniture, or a spar; makes very little difference, so long as you have been saved from the storm, and stand there with the rest in the circle round the fire lighted because of the cold. You are probably right in what you affirm, but wrong in what you deny. You are justified in holding firmly to your special fragment of Truth, but be willing to admit that you have not everything, and that others may be as conscientious, as true to truth, and as eager for its maintenance and diffusion as yourself. Seek to gain from others whatever will perfect your religious life, rounding it to a more complete circle, and touching it to finer issues. "I long to see you," said the Apostle, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift . . . that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith" (Romans 1:11–12, R.V.).

Christ the Bond of Unity. Christ is the bond of unity to His Church--Christ in each individual, and each individual in Christ. Let us never forget that gracious reciprocity. The sponge must be in the ocean and the ocean in the sponge. Each believer is written in the Lamb's Book of Life by the same fingers. Each of us has been grafted into the true Vine, though in different places. Each of us has some function in the mystical body. We were in Him when He died, and rose, and entered the Father's presence. In Him we have access into this grace wherein we stand. We are in Him, as those twelve loaves stood on that pure table. The gift of Christ, on the other hand, has been made to each one of us, that He might realise Himself through all the experiences of all His members. As of old it required four Gospels to reveal to mankind what Jesus Christ was, so all believers are required to set forth and exemplify to the world all the excelling glories of our Emmanuel. It is for this reason that we are told that the Church is His Body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). It demands a great multitude, which no man can number, to reveal the full beauty of the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

One in Him. Was it not of this that our Lord spoke, when He said: "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and Thou in Me" (John 17:22–23). In such radiance the Church now stands before God. He sees her essential unity. Its denial does not disintegrate it. Its obscurity does not impair it. The very members of the Church that compose the Unity may be unaware of it, and may denounce each other; but, even so, the twelve stones are in the same breastplate and the twelve loaves stand side by side on the same table. The members of a large family of boys and girls may be scattered far and wide over the world, but to the mother, in her daily and nightly prayer, there is but one family, and to her they seem sheltered still under the wings of her brooding love.

When Savonarola was about to be burned, the Papal Legate, dressed in his scarlet robes, stood beside his scaffold, and cried: "I cut thee off from the Church triumphant and the Church militant." But the martyr replied truly: "You may cut me off from the Church militant, but over the Church triumphant thou hast no power." Only two things can cut a man off from the Holy Catholic Church, considered in her loftiest ideals, and these are unforgiveness to the brethren and departure from the living God.

But as surely as the Lord accounts us members of the same mystical Body, He bids us give diligence to keep the unity of that Body in the bonds of peace. We are not required to create the unity, but to manifest it. We are to recognise as one with us, those who may differ not only in their ritual, and credal expression, but in heart and spirit, giving no sign of recognition or fellowship; but, notwithstanding, we are to think of them as one with us. Without the other neither can be made perfect. Let us, therefore, in this way hasten the time when our Lord shall present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing.

**Leviticus 24:9 "It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the Lord's offerings by fire, his portion forever."**

- Aaron. Lev 8:31. 1 Sa. 21:6. Mal. 1:12. Mat. 12:4. Mark 2:26. Luke 6:4. they shall. Lev. 6:16; 8:3, 31; 10:17; 21:22. Ex. 29:32, 33.

**Wiersbe** - These loaves were treated like a "meal offering," complete with the frankincense (2:1–11). On the Sabbath, when the loaves were replaced, the priest would take a "memorial portion" from a loaf, add the frankincense, and burn it on the altar along with the daily burnt offering. The priests could then eat the old loaves, but they had to do it in the holy place (24:9).

**Ross** - The two aspects of the service of God's people can easily be joined in a single expository idea: *The devoted service (i.e., faithfully and rightly bringing offerings) of God's people (i.e., people with their offerings, leaders with their actions) ensures that the way to God is illuminated and that provisions from him will continue.* Because the LORD God was present among his people, they were required to use their income to ensure that the lamps lit the way into the holy place. Believers of every age have had the responsibility of lighting or showing the way to God. But what they could do only in part, Jesus the Messiah could do fully, for he is the true light of the world. The people were also required to present bread as a token of their thanksgiving for God's provision of food. Even today gifts of thanksgiving offered to the LORD, which may be used by ministers as part of their provision from God, are offered in gratitude for all his provisions, both physical and spiritual, but most of all for the provision of the bread of life, Jesus Christ. Every believer is duty bound to share in the work of the ministry by offering a token out of gratitude to God for his benefits to them. And then the believers, as a kingdom of priests, offer the bread of life to the world. (Holiness to the Lord)

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Leviticus 24:1-9 Daily Bread

By Mart De Haan

. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. —John 6:51

Bread has come to be regarded as something less than what it was in Bible times. We don't usually think of it as a symbol of life's necessities. In Jesus' day, however, bread represented nourishment in all its many forms.

This helps us understand why the Lord told Israel to put bread in the holy place of the Tabernacle—His "house of symbols." There in that first room, 12 loaves were to be displayed on a golden table "before the Lord" (Lev. 24:6). These loaves reminded Israel that God always provides for His own when they come to Him on His terms. The bread reflected God's promise to provide for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mt. 5:6; 6:31-34).

For the Christian today, bread may represent food, the Bible, Jesus Christ, fellowship, and the many provisions God has made for our spiritual and physical needs. He cares for us and He's ready to feed us. But His offer is not unconditional. He promised to provide daily "bread" for those who in obedience have separated themselves to live and to eat from the hand of God. Yes, the Lord cares for those who willingly receive their physical and spiritual food from Him—on His terms.

In You, O Lord, I take delight,  
My every need You will supply;  
I long to do what's true and right,  
So, Lord, on You I will rely. —DJD

Only Christ the Living Bread can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

**Leviticus 24:10 Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp.**

- Ex. 12:38. Nu. 11:4

## THE EGYPTIAN BLASPHEMER

### Leviticus 24:10-23

**Son of an Israelite woman...father was an Egyptian** - He was half Egyptian and half Hebrew and was part of the mixed multitude (Exodus 12:38) that went with Israel out of Egypt.

We read that when Israel came out of Egypt "A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock." (Ex 12:38). So there was a large body of non-Israelites.

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Leviticus 24:10-23

Anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. - Leviticus 24:16

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

When evangelist Franklin Graham prays "in the name of Jesus" at public events, he's not surprised to receive criticism. When he and Houston pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell both prayed in Jesus' name at the Presidential inauguration in 2001, it attracted a fair amount of media attention. Some commentators felt it violated "separation of church and state" and made people of other religious

persuasions feel uncomfortable.

Graham isn't worried about any of that. When he is invited to a public event, he feels it's his duty and privilege, and the duty and privilege of every Christian, to honor the name of Christ. He emphasizes this point in his recent book, *The Name*.

God's name should be spoken with honor—He is worthy of all worship. That's why we find that speaking His name blasphemously is such a serious crime in today's reading.

Why is this story placed in the section of Leviticus dealing with seasons and festivals? It may be to show the flip side of the importance of worship. That is, during the feasts the Israelites gathered to honor the name of the Lord. If they thought this practice was optional rather than essential, this narrative would have cured them of that delusion! Honoring His name is a duty and a privilege, and a person who actively did the opposite must be punished. It's literally a matter of life and death!

If the offender had been an Israelite, the nation would have stoned him immediately, since he had violated a key commandment (Ex. 20:7). But since he was of mixed race, they weren't sure how to apply the Law, and waited on the Lord for judgment. God answered that justice was the same for everyone (v. 22). It's important to note here that the "eye for an eye" principle did not validate revenge or a tit-for-tat mentality, as is sometimes thought. Rather, this describes precise, public justice. The punishment should fit the crime (Leviticus 24:19, 20, 21; cf. Matt. 5:38, 39, 40, 41, 42).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

On July 20 we encouraged you to research Christian perspectives and biblical teaching on capital punishment. Today we want to make justice and mercy a little more personal.

We've touched on these issues several times in the past year in *Today in the Word*. (For instance, see the May issue on the Sermon on the Mount.) How do these principles of justice and mercy affect your interactions with family, friends, coworkers, and others in your church? Pray for the wisdom to practice both justice and mercy.

**Leviticus 24:11 The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)**

- **blasphemed.** Lev 24:15, 16. Ex. 20:7. 2 Sa. 12:14. 1 Ki. 21:10, 13. 2 Ki. 18:30, 35, 37; 19:1–3, 6, 10, 22. 2 Ch. 32:14–17. Ps. 74:18, 22. Mat. 26:65. Ac. 6:11–13. Ro. 2:24. 1 Ti. 1:13. Re. 16:11, 21
- **brought him.** Ex. 18:22, 26. Nu. 15:33–35)

### BLASPHEMY OF THE NAME IS BLASPHEMY OF GOD HIMSELF

Exodus 20:7 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

Leviticus 10:3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

**The Name** (cp Ex 3:15; 22:28; Job 2:5, 9; Is 8:21) - Notice that Jehovah is referred to here as **"The Name."** And so to blaspheme and curse the Name was to do so to God Himself. (See Ross' comment on significance of "Name"). In Dt 28:58 the instruction was "to fear this honored and awesome NAME, the LORD your God." Jews stopped using the name of Yahweh because they thought it too sacred. When they referred to God, they called him the Name.

Have you watched much television lately (2016)? A slow but definitely irreverent drift is occurring on many shows that heretofore never would have taken the Lord's great NAME in vain. The incursion of such evil before our eyes and ears is another marker of the devolution of mankind as we approach the end of this age.

**NLT Study Bible** - In biblical times, a name was more than a means of identification; it represented a person's character, reputation, and origin. God is holy, and he was to be regarded as holy in all of Israel's life (see Lev 10:3). The Israelites had been instructed to treat God's name with reverence (Ex 20:7). Using his name in a curse reflected a sinful attitude toward God himself (Lev 24:15), and it deserved death (Lev 24:13–16). The wording in the Hebrew text is very strong: Two verbs meaning "curse" are used, one that indicated a more formal type of curse, the other a blasphemous or irreverent expression.

**Wiersbe** - Every Jew knew the third commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7, NKJV). So fearful were the Jews of breaking this commandment that they

substituted the name “Adonai” for “Jehovah” when they read the Scriptures, thus never speaking God’s name at all. To respect a name is to respect the person who bears that name, and our highest respect belongs to the Lord.

**Guzik** - He committed the crime of blasphemy, which is to attack someone—especially God—with your words. It is somewhat like the modern idea of “verbal abuse,” but usually directed at God. “In the Near East the name of a person was bound up intimately with his character, so that in the case of God, blasphemy was in effect an act of repudiation.” (Harrison) It seems that it was common for Egyptians to curse their many gods. The root of this man’s sin is he considers the LORD God of Israel on the same level as the petty Egyptian gods.

**Ross** comments on the importance of it was the **NAME** this man blasphemed - The **name** (haššēm) is crucial in biblical theology. God’s personal **name** is Yahweh (which modern versions represent by LORD). God revealed its meaning with the enigmatic ’ehyeh ’āšer ’ehyeh (“I AM who I AM”) and then told Moses to tell the people that Yahweh had sent him to them (Exod. 3:14). In Israel a **name** represents the whole person and thus becomes a powerful force, as powerful as the person named. A **name** could be blotted out, redeemed, praised, prayed to, preserved for an inheritance, made famous, win battles, or dwell among individuals. The “**name of the LORD**” is clearly a force to be reckoned with in the Old Testament because it represents the divine nature, all that God is known to be (Exod. 34:4–7; Isa. 9:6–7). To sanctify the name of the LORD does not simply mean to use the name carefully; it means to sanctify the LORD himself. And in this passage the improper use of the **name** was no mere utterance of a name, but the outward expression of contempt for the person of God.

**Blasphemed...and cursed** - These seem to be essentially synonymous verbs. The verb to **curse** (Heb - qalal - see below) means to treat lightly, treat with contempt, consider unimportant (cp Lev 20:9).

**NET NOTE** on **blasphemed** and **cursed** - The two verbs together may form a hendiadys, “he pronounced by cursing blasphemously” (B. A. Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 166), the idea being one of the following: (1) he pronounced the name “Yahweh” in a way or with words that amounted to “some sort of verbal aggression against Yahweh himself” (E. S. Gerstenberger, Leviticus [OTL], 362), (2) he pronounced a curse against the man using the name “Yahweh” (N. H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers [NCBC], 110; G. J. Wenham, Leviticus [NICOT], 311), or (3) he pronounced the name “Yahweh” and thereby blasphemed, since the “Name” was never to be pronounced (a standard Jewish explanation). In one way or another, the offense surely violated Exod 20:7, one of the ten commandments, and the same verb for cursing is used explicitly in Exod 22:28 (27 HT) prohibition against “cursing” God.

**Blasphemed** (05344)(**naqab**) means to utter a curse against. To speak in an irreverent and impious manner. To speak ill of another with slander and insults, with a focus on designating or marking one’s reputation and so doing harm to it.

**Gilbrant** - It is used of Balaam practicing divination to curse Israel (Num. 22:11, 17; 23:8, 11, 13, 25, 27; 24:10). It is used of Job who cursed the day of his birth (Job 3:8) and the habitation of fools (Job 5:3). Solomon indicated that people curse those who withhold grain from the hungry (Prov. 11:26) and those who declare the wicked righteous (Prov. 24:24). (Complete Biblical Library)

**Bramer** - Blasphemed (wayyiqqa)—Literally “and blasphemed and cursed the NAME” this phrase uses two parallel verbs, qbb (as in Lev. 24:16) (“blaspheme, curse”) and fill (“to curse”). For the latter see Lev. 19:14. The verb qbb (“curse, blaspheme”) “connotes the act of uttering a formula designed to undo its object” (L. Coppes, TWOT, 2:783). It is used most frequently in Nu. 22-24 in the incident of Balaam and Balak. It is difficult to tell, because of the limited context in the incident here in Leviticus, if the young man was using any sort of mystical formula to curse the LORD God. It appears, in light of the reference in the previous verse to his mixed parentage, that he may have sought to bring dishonor in some manner upon the God of the Israelites in a fit of rage. Here the LORD is referred to simply as “the NAME” (cf. Deut. 28:58, “this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God”). (For the concept of “profaning” the name of the LORD see Lev. 18:21; for the concept of “swearing falsely” by the name of the LORD see Lev. 19:12.) (The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study)

Note that **naqab** was classified by Strong listed under one number (05344) but is difficult to classify for it appears to have two major distinctions as summarized by Swanson in the Semantic Domains entry:

**MEANING I. נָקַב (nā-qāḇ):** v.; ≡ Str 5344; TWOT 1409—

1. (qal) bore, i.e., pierce an object and create relatively large opening (2Ki 12:9; 18:21; Job 40:24, 41:2; Isa 36:6; Hab 3:14+); (qal pass.) have a hole (Hag 1:6+);

2. (qal) name, designate, bestow, i.e., call out a designation giving correspondency between a name and a person or circumstance (Ge 30:28; Isa 62:2+); (qal pass.) be notable (Am 6:1+); (nif) be designated, be registered (Nu 1:17; 1Ch 12:31; 16:41; 2Ch 28:15; 31:19; Ezr 8:20)

**MEANING II. נָקַב (nā-qāḇ):** v.; ≡ Str 5344; TWOT 1409— (qal) blaspheme, i.e., speak ill of another with slander and insults, with a focus on designating or marking one’s reputation and so doing harm to it (Lev 24:11, 16)



The **TWOT** has this note - The basic physical sense of the verb *nāqab* is demonstrated in the context of Joash's temple repair project. The priest Jehoida bored a hole in the lid of a chest for contributions. Elsewhere, Haggai 1:6 speaks figuratively of the futility of work which fails to honor the Lord, saying that the wages earned have been placed into a bag with holes. The other senses attributed to this verb in passages which themselves indicate different usage constitute a striking demonstration of the semantic flexibility of Semitic languages. The ingenuity of modern lexicographers is indeed taxed. Does the verb "pierce" mean, secondarily, appoint, designate, name by way of the physical notion of ticking or marking an individual as distinctive (a cognate Arabic noun means 'leader, chief'), or is the select individual the one who 'scrutinizes' and thereby distinguishes himself.' The former explanation seems the more satisfactory. But this verb also translates curse, blaspheme. Is this so because one is thereby distinguishing another as bad (so Koehler), or is there not a closer tie with piercing, striking through? Some lexicographers (BDB) consider this last sense of *nāqab* to be a different root *naqab* II, a by-form of the root *qābab* "curse," found only in Num 22 and 23, but the reverse relationship could as likely be the Interestingly, this word is used in the Siloam inscription for "piercing through," i.e. digging the tunnel.

**Gesenius Definition** - properly to hollow out, to excavate

(1) to bore (a hole), 2 Kings 12:10, to perforate, Job 40:24, 26 Job 40:26 2 Kings 18:21; Haggai 1:6 = "a bag with holes in it." Also to thrust through (with a spear), Habakkuk 3:14 = "thou didst thrust through the heads of their leaders."

(2) to separate, to distinguish; and hence to declare distinctly, to specify, to call by name, Genesis 30:28 = "specify to me thy wages;" Isaiah 62:2. Part. pass. נִקְבִּים the named, i.e. the chiefs, nobles of the people, as if it were אֲנָשֵׁי שְׁמוֹת Amos 6:1, opp. to the common people, אֲנָשֵׁי נֶסֶם Job 30:8

(3) to curse (properly to pierce, like سَبَّ to cut, to bore; metaphorically to curse), e.g. the name of God, Leviticus 24:11, 16 Leviticus 24:16 = "he that curseth the name of Jehovah shall surely die" (from this place has arisen the superstitious idea of the Jews that it is forbidden to pronounce (No. 2) the name of Jehovah, see יְהוָה); Nu 23:8, 25 Nus 23:25; Job 3:8, 5:3 Prs 11:26.

Niphal, pass. of No. 2, to be called by name (compare Arab. لَقَّبَ to name, n and l being interchanged), Numbers 1:17, "these men נִקְבוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִקְבוּ who were called by their names;" 1 Chronicles 12:31, 16:41 2 Chronicles 28:15, 31:19.

**Naqab** - 14x in 13v in the **NAS** - Usage: blasphemed(1), curse(10), curse them at all(1), cursed(2).

Lev. 24:11; Num. 22:11; Num. 22:17; Num. 23:8; Num. 23:11; Num. 23:13; Num. 23:25; Num. 23:27; Num. 24:10; Job 3:8; Job 5:3; Prov. 11:26; Prov. 24:24

**Naqab** - 25x in 24v in the **KJV** - Usage: - curse 6, expressed 6, blaspheme 3, bore 2, name 2, pierce 2, Appoint 1, holes 1, pierce through 1, strike through 1; 25. The KJV meaning = 1) to pierce, perforate, bore, appoint 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to pierce, bore 1a2) to prick off, designate 1b) (Niphal) to be pricked off, be designated, be specified 2) (Qal) to curse, blaspheme. Here are the 25 uses in 24 verses in the KJV

Gen. 30:28; Lev. 24:11; Lev. 24:16; Num. 1:17; Num. 23:8; Num. 23:25; 2 Ki. 12:9; 2 Ki. 18:21; 1 Chr. 12:31; 1 Chr. 16:41; 2 Chr. 28:15; 2 Chr. 31:19; Ezr. 8:20; Job 3:8; Job 5:3; Job 40:24; Job 41:2; Prov. 11:26; Prov. 24:24; Isa. 36:6; Isa. 62:2; Amos 6:1; Hab. 3:14; Hag. 1:6

**Cursed** (07043) (**qalal**) means first of all to be slight, to be trivial, to be trifling, to be swift. There are a number of nuances of this verb but most reflect somehow upon the main idea of slightness or lightness and thus the first use of *galal* in Ge 8:8, 11 refer to the flood waters being **abated** (receding, becoming "slight" if you will). In Ge 8:21 in the third use of *galal* God promises to "never again **curse** the ground on account of man." Over 1/2 of the uses of *galal* are rendered as some variation of to curse. One of the more famous uses is in Ge 12:3 where Jehovah promises "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who **curse** (**qalal**) you I will curse (**arar** - 0779)." Sarah "**despised** (considered slight so to speak)" Hagar when the latter became pregnant with Abram's child Ishmael (Ge 16:4, 5). Moses would receive help judging the people so it would "be **easier** for" him (Ex 18:22).

**Gilbrant** summarizes the various nuances of **qalal** -

The verb *qālal* means "to be small," "**to be light,**" in weight or account. In the story of the Flood, Noah sent a dove from the ark and she returned with an olive branch. Then Noah knew that "the waters were abated [flowed away] from off the face of the ground" (Gen. 8:11).

The inhabitants of Nineveh were called vile by the prophet Nahum because of their idolatry (Nah. 1:14), and Job considered himself vile when he met God face-to-face and heard the explanation of creation (Job 40:4). Here the infinitive is used as a noun to mean "ignominy," "disgrace," as in Jeremiah's prophetic condemnation



of Samaria.

The similar concept of **"to be of no account in the eyes of"** appears in Hagar's attitude toward her mistress Sarah. Abraham's wife was despised by Hagar because Abraham had a son, Ishmael, by the Egyptian slave woman, yet Sarah remained barren (Gen. 16:5). When Eli's sons disobeyed the commands of God, a prophet came to condemn the priest. God promised in that prophecy that "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Perhaps the primary meaning of qālal is **"to be swift."** David eulogized Saul and Jonathan as "swifter than eagles" (2 Sam. 1:23); the Babylonian horses that carried the conquerors of Judah were called "swifter than the leopards" (Hab. 1:8); Job's journey into hopelessness evoked his cry that his days were "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6; cf. 9:25).

In the Niphal, qālal means **"to be light."** This meaning appears in the prophecies of Jeremiah when God condemns the false prophets and priests who try to heal "the hurt of the... people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). Clearly, false declarations have very little healing power, whereas the true word of the Lord brings complete healing. The people in Judah in Jeremiah's time hurt from fear and dread of the Babylonian attack, but their hurts could not be healed except by repentance from sin and turning to the Lord, which they would not do.

When the Niphal form is followed by a personal dative, the meaning becomes **"to be easy to anyone,"** such as the proverb, "Knowledge is easy unto him that understands" (Prov. 14:6); or when Hezekiah realized that, for a sign from God, having a sundial's shadow go down ten degrees would be too "light" (easy) a thing, he asked that "the shadow return backward ten degrees" (2 Ki. 20:10).

Another Niphal application means **"to be of little account"** and is followed by be'ênê (HED #904, 6084), as in David's attitude toward the possibility of marriage to King Saul's daughter: "Seem it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" (1 Sam. 18:23). Isaiah described the messianic Servant Who is raised up by God to restore Israel, "It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob" (Isa. 49:6), as well as in Ezekiel's visions when God shows him the abominations committed by Israel: "Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here?" (Ezek. 8:17).

When his wife Michal criticized his dancing before the Lord, David retorted that if she thought he was "vile" in this one event, he would be yet more lightly esteemed because God ruled Israel, not himself, and he would always praise and honor the Lord over his kingship (2 Sam. 6:22). Finally, another Niphal usage occurs in Isaiah's prophecies. Judah had claimed ability to escape the judgment of God by riding away on "swift" horses. Therefore, God would send conquerors whose horses were swifter and would overtake Judah to their destruction (Isa. 30:16).

The Piel forms mean "to consider to be light," thus, by extension, "to curse," "to execrate." When King David escaped from Jerusalem in the wake of Absalom's treachery, a man of Saul's family, Shimei, hurled stones and curses upon him. David kept his armed guards from executing Shimei for such indignity (2 Sam. 16:5-12). After the Flood, God declared that He would not curse the ground again because of humanity's evil, but would ensure the regular seasons, days and yearly cycles until the end of the earth (Gen. 8:21f). As well, God promised to curse anyone who cursed Abraham or his descendants, through whom all the world would be blessed with the oracles, prophets, laws and Messiah (Gen. 12:2f). Under the Law, anyone who cursed his father or mother was to incur the death penalty (Exo. 21:17). If someone cursed a deaf man, the action was considered a form of mockery toward a helpless person, that is, social cruelty (Lev. 19:14).

The verb can have the reflexive force of "to curse oneself" or "bring a curse upon oneself." Eli the priest received the prophetic condemnation of God because his sons were disobedient and adulterous priests. Eli did not restrain them though he knew their sins, but he was punished because he knew that his sons had brought a curse upon themselves (1 Sam. 3:13).

The Pual can mean "to be declared cursed," "to be cursed," "one who is cursed." Isaiah described the glorious new age, when God would create the new heaven and the new earth, by using a figure of speech: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20). This allusion refers to the vitality of the new life: people would no longer die young, but someone who lived so long in sin would suffer the effects of accursedness. The entire picture perhaps more precisely implies the eternal conditions of life after the resurrection of all humans: the righteous will live in eternal abundant life, but the

condemned, accursed unrighteous will suffer forever. Job adds further illumination to the picture of the life of a sinner. After describing some of their sinful activities, he presents the reality of the inner life of the sinner—one of terror, darkness and dishonor. The sinner's life and reputation are accursed even while he lives on the earth; his eternal condemnation and destitution await him as well: "For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.... their portion is cursed in the earth" (Job 24:17f).

David uses the participle of qālal in Ps. 37:22 to denote the one who is accursed: "They that be cursed of him shall be cut off."

In the Hiphil, qālal means "to make light," "to lighten," "to reckon lightly," "to despise," "to bring to contempt." The wiser, older men appealed to the young King Rehoboam to treat his subjects with kindness and generosity (1 Ki. 12:1-7). Instead, Rehoboam listened to his younger friends who encouraged him to treat the people more harshly even than Solomon, his father.

When the Philistines defeated Israel and made off with the Ark of the Covenant during the time of Samuel before Saul, God smote them with diseases, which they rightly attributed to their theft of Israel's seat of worship. As they counseled one another about solutions to their plagues, one of their priestly caste devised a remedy. Send the Ark back with gifts of golden images, he advised.

The Hiphil form sometimes means "lighten from off thee" burdens or business, "to make the situation lighter," as in the actions of the sailors in the Book of Jonah who lightened their ship by casting cargo into the sea (Jon. 1:5). However, until they cast a human cargo, Jonah himself, into the sea, the storm did not abate, which resulted in their worship of the God of Jonah, the only true God (Jon. 1:15f).

Another use of the Hiphil occurs in the story of David's reentry to Jerusalem as king after the successful conclusion to Absalom's rebellion. At least half of the ten tribes of Israel, who would later rebel against Solomon's son, had not participated in David's return. They argued with Judah, David's tribe, accusing them of despising the tribes who were not part of David's lineage. This fierce disagreement set the stage for Israel's rebellion against Rehoboam after Solomon's reign (2 Sam. 19:40-43). The inhabitants of Jerusalem were condemned by the prophecies of Ezekiel for many reasons, one of which was disrespect (Ezek. 22:7). Making light of, or considering unimportant, the laws and ways of God brings devastating punishment.

The Pilpel form means "to move to and fro," "to shake together," "to make smooth," "to polish," "to sharpen," "to whet the edges." To prophesy the coming of the Babylonian armies to conquer Judah, Ezekiel pictured the king of Babylon consulting the rites of his magicians and soothsayers, one of which is the shaking (moving back and forth) of a bunch of arrows, as an individual would shake dice or lots to cast as signs or portents on which to make decisions (Ezek. 21:21). The concept of sharpening occurs in Ecclesiastes, as a proverb of common wisdom exhorts a man to whet the edge of his ax if it is dull, lest he have to work harder to use it (Ecc. 10:10). The intent of this illustration is to recommend that a man plan ahead before he takes action.

Finally, the Hithpalpel stem means "to be shaken back and forth," "to be moved" or "shaken together" and occurs only once in the OT. Jeremiah saw the destruction that was to come on Jerusalem and lamented the disaster. One of the momentous events which God witnesses is the creation of the earth, part of which is the trembling of the mountains and the shaking back and forth of the hills under the power of his creative might (Jer. 4:24). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Qalal** - 83x in 79v - As noted above there is quite a variety of nuances with this Hebrew verb - abated(2), **accursed(1)**, **brought a curse(1)**, contempt(1), contemptible(1), **curse(15)**, **cursed(16)**, **curses(8)**, **cursing(2)**, despise(1), despised(2), ease(1), easier(1), easy(2), insignificant(1), light a thing(1), lighten(5), lightly esteemed(2), make it lighter(2), moved to and fro(1), shakes(1), sharpen(1), slight thing(1), small a thing(1), superficially(2), swift(1), swifter(5), treat us with contempt(1), treated(1), treated and lightly(1), trivial(1), trivial thing(1).

Gen. 8:8; Gen. 8:11; Gen. 8:21; Gen. 12:3; Gen. 16:4; Gen. 16:5; Exod. 18:22; Exod. 21:17; Exod. 22:28; Lev. 19:14; Lev. 20:9; Lev. 24:11; Lev. 24:14; Lev. 24:15; Lev. 24:23; Deut. 23:4; Jos. 24:9; Jdg. 9:27; 1 Sam. 2:30; 1 Sam. 3:13; 1 Sam. 6:5; 1 Sam. 17:43; 1 Sam. 18:23; 2 Sam. 1:23; 2 Sam. 6:22; 2 Sam. 16:5; 2 Sam. 16:7; 2 Sam. 16:9; 2 Sam. 16:10; 2 Sam. 16:11; 2 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 19:21; 2 Sam. 19:43; 1 Ki. 2:8; 1 Ki. 12:4; 1 Ki. 12:9; 1 Ki. 12:10; 1 Ki. 16:31; 2 Ki. 2:24; 2 Ki. 3:18; 2 Ki. 20:10; 2 Chr. 10:4; 2 Chr. 10:9; 2 Chr. 10:10; Neh. 13:2; Neh. 13:25; Job 3:1; Job 7:6; Job 9:25; Job 24:18; Job 40:4; Ps. 37:22; Ps. 62:4; Ps. 109:28; Prov. 14:6; Prov. 20:20; Prov. 30:10; Prov. 30:11; Eccl. 7:21; Eccl. 7:22; Eccl. 10:10; Eccl. 10:20; Isa. 8:21; Isa. 9:1; Isa. 23:9; Isa. 30:16; Isa. 49:6; Isa. 65:20; Jer. 4:13; Jer. 4:24; Jer. 6:14; Jer. 8:11; Jer. 15:10; Ezek. 8:17;

## Gesenius Definition of qalal - יָקַל, יִקְּלוּ fut. קָלַל

(1) **to be light** (light [not heavy]), see Hiphil. Figuratively

(2) **to be diminished** (Arab. قَلَّ), Genesis 8:11, "the waters were diminished (i.e. had flowed away) from off the earth;" verse.

(3) **to be despised, contemned**, Job 40:4; Nahum 1:14. Compare קָלַל No. II. Inf. used as a noun, קָל ignominy, disgrace, Jeremiah 3:9 (where קָל is regarded by others as the same as קוֹל).

(4) **to be swift, fleet** (if indeed this be not the primary signification, compare קָלַל to roll swiftly), 2 Samuel 1:23; Habakkuk 1:8; Job 7:6, 9:25.

Niphal קָלַל and קָלַל, fut. יִקְּלוּ Isaiah 30:16.

(1) **to be light**. קָלַל-עַל lightly (leichtin), Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11. Followed by a dat. of pers. to be easy to any one, Proverbs 14:6; 2 Kings 20:10.

(2) **to be of little account, little**, followed by בְּעֵינֵי 1 Samuel 18:23. Impers. מִן קָלַל is it a light thing that, Isaiah 49:6; Ezekiel 8:17.

(3) to be lightly esteemed, to be despised, 2 Samuel 6:22; Genesis 16:4, Genesis 16:5.

(4) to be swift, Isaiah 30:16.

Piel קָלַל **to curse, to execrate**, 2 Samuel 16:7 followed by an acc. Genesis 8:21, 12:3 Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 19:14, 20:9 once followed by בְּ Isaiah 8:21. לוֹ קָלַל reflex. to curse oneself, i.e. to bring a curse upon oneself, 1 Samuel 3:13, "because he knew בְּנֵי לָהֶם בָּנוּ that his sons had brought a curse upon themselves."

Pual, **to be cursed**, Isaiah 65:20; Job 24:18. Part. one who is accursed, Psalms 37:22.

Hiphil קָלַל, inf. קָלַל, fut. יִקְּלוּ.

(1) **to make light, to lighten**

(a) followed by an acc. of the thing and מֵעַל of pers. to lighten and cast away any thing from any one, 1 Kings 12:10; 1 Samuel 6:5.

(b) without the accusative, Exodus 18:22, הִקְלַל מֵעַלִּי, "lighten from off thee," sc. the burden, business, make thy business lighter; Jonah 1:5.

(c) followed by מֵעַל of the thing, 1 Kings 12:4, הִקְלַל מֵעֲבֹדַת אָבִיךָ, "lighten (somewhat) from the servitude of thy father," i.e. remit somewhat of the servitude which thy father imposed upon us; verse 1 Kings 12:9.

(2) **to reckon lightly, to despise**, 2 Sam. 19:44 Ezekiel 22:7 to bring to contempt, Isa. 8:23.

Pilpel קָלַלְקָלַל

(1) **to move to and fro, to shake together**, Ezekiel 21:26. Arabic قَلَقَ Ethiopic to be moved.

(2) **to make smooth, to polish; hence to sharpen**, Ecclesiastes 10:10. The notion of smoothness (which originally does not differ from that of lightness) is also found in the adj. קָלַל.

Hithpalpel, **to be moved, shaken together**, Jeremiah 4:24.

## Brown-Driver-Briggs Expanded Definition on qalal = verb be slight, swift, trifling —

**Qal Perfect** 2 masculine singular קָלַל Nahum 1:14; 1 singular קָלַלְתִּי Job 40:4; 3 plural קָלַלוּ Genesis 8:11 +; **Imperfect** 3 feminine singular תִּקְּלִי Genesis 16:4; 1 singular יִקְּלֶנִי Genesis 16:5; 3 masculine plural יִקְּלוּ 1 Samuel 2:30; —

1 *be slight*, of water, *be abated*, fr off (מֵעַל) earth Genesis 8:8, 11(J).

2 *be swift*, with מִן compare, of warriors 2 Samuel 1:23, horses Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1:8; one's days Job 7:6; Job 9:25.

3 *trifling*, i.e. of little account., of person, Genesis 16:4, 5 (J; both with 1 בְּעֵינֵיךָ; 1 Samuel 2:30 (opposed to אֶבְרָחָם).

**Niph'al Perfect** 3 masculine singular נִקַּל (Ges §67t.) 2 Kings 20:30 +, וְנִקַּל consecutive 2 Kings 3:18; נִקַּח Proverbs 14:6; 1 singular consecutive וְנִקַּח Samuel 6:22; *Imperfect* 3 masculine plural יִקַּח Isaiah 30:16; *Participle* feminine עֹלֶה (נִקְלָה) Jeremiah 6:14: + 2 t; —

1 *shew oneself swift* Isaiah 30:16 (עֹלֶה לְנִקְבָּב "" ).

2 *appear trifling*, 1 Samuel 18:23 (בְּעֵינַיִם; Infinitive subject, compare Dr), with מִן compare *be too trifling* Isaiah 49:6, especially of sin 1 Kings 16:31 (Infinitive subject), and (with מִן compare) Ezekiel 8:17; *easy* 2 Kings 3:18 (2, בְּעֵינַיִם Kings 20:10 (c. Infinitive), Proverbs 14:6; *Participle* (as substantive) with עַל in adverb phrase נִקְלָה לְהַעֲלֵךְ *lightly* i.e. superficially, Jeremiah 6:14; Jeremiah 8:11.

3 *be lightly esteemed* 2 Samuel 6:22 (שָׁפָל; opposed to אֲנִכְנִיחַ).

**Pi'el**<sub>40</sub> *Perfect* 3 masculine singular קָלַל Samuel 19:22 +, etc.; *Imperfect* יִקְלַל Leviticus 20:9 +, etc. : *Imperative* masculine singular קָלַל Samuel 16:10; *Infinitive construct* קָלֵל Genesis 8:21: Joshua 24:9, etc.; *Participle* קָלֵל Exodus 21:17 +; suffix לולויני Jeremiah 15:10, read מְקַלְלִי (Baer); error for כָּלֵהם קָלֵלֹנִי JDMich Gf Gie Du and others, etc.; — *curse* (properly *make contemptible*):

1 with accusative of person homin. Exodus 21:27 (E), Genesis 12:3 (J), Leviticus 19:14 (H), Judges 9:27; 2 Samuel 16:9 16t.; 1 קָלַלְתָּ קָלְלִי Kings 2:8; object omitted 2 Samuel 16:5,7,10,11,13; Psalm 62:5; Psalm 109:28 (opposed to בִּרְךְ); acc person + ב of oath 1 Samuel 17:43; 2 Kings 2:24; with כ of oath alone Isaiah 8:21.

2 with accusative dei Exodus 22:27 (E), Leviticus 24:15 (H), 1 Samuel 3:13 (reading מְקַלְלֵי הָאֱלֹהִים for מְקַלְלֵי הָאֱלֹהִים 5 Comm.), + (object omitted) Leviticus 24:11,14,23

3 with accusative of thing Genesis 8:21 (י' subject), Job 3:1.

**Pu'al Imperfect** 3 masculine singular יִקְלַל Isaiah 65:20 *be cursed* by death; 3 feminine singular תִּקְלַל Job 24:18 *their portion is cursed*; *Participle* plural suffix מְקַלְלֵי Psalm 37:22= *those cursed by him* (opposed to מְבָרְכֵי).

**Hiph'il Perfect** 3 masculine singular הִקַּל Isaiah 8:23; 2 masculine singular suffix הִקְלִינִי Samuel 19:44 (van d. H. -3; ה plural הִקְלִינִי Ezekiel 22:7; *Imperfect* 3 masculine singular יִקְלֵל Samuel 6:5; *Imperative* masculine singular; הִקַּל Exodus 18:22+; *Infinitive construct* id., Isaiah 23:9; Jonah 1:5; —

1 *make light, lighten*, 1 יִקְלֵל אֶת־יָדוֹ מֵעַלְיָכֶם Samuel 6:5; *he will lighten his hand from upon you*, c., מַעַל person alone, *make light from upon* one, lighten one's burden Exodus 18:22 (E), Jonah 1:5; 1 Kings 12:10 2 Chronicles 10:10; + מִן partitive 1 Kings 12:4,9 2 Chronicles 10:4,9.

2 *treat with contempt*, accusative of person 2 Samuel 19:44; Isaiah 23:9; Ezekiel 22:7; direct causative *bring contempt, dishonour* Isaiah 8:23 (opposed to הִכְבִּיד).

**Pilpel Perfect** 3 masculine singular

1 *shake* מְקַלְלֵי בְּחֻצִּים Ezekiel 21:26 (in divination).

2 (peculiarly) *whet* Ecclesiastes 10:10 (properly move quickly to and fro).

**Hithpalpel reflexive** of

1 : *Perfect* 3 plural הִתְקַלְּלוּ הַהִלָּה Jeremiah 4:24 hills *shook themselves*, shook.

**Leviticus 24:12 They put him in custody so that the command of the Lord might be made clear to them**

- of the Lord Ex. 18:15, 16, 23 Nu. 27:5; 36:5, 6)

**Leviticus 24:13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,**

**Leviticus 24:14 "Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him.**

- **without.** Lev 13:46. Nu. 5:2–4; 15:35. all that. Dt 13:9; 17:7. let all the. Lev 20:2, 27. Nu. 15:35, 36. Dt 13:10; 21:21; 22:21. Jos. 7:25. John 8:59; 10:31–33. Ac. 7:58, 59)
- **Outside the camp** (this exact phrase 28x in 27v in NAS) - Ex 29:14; 33:7; Lev 4:12, 21-**note**; Lev 6:11-**note**.; Lev 8:17-**note**.; Lev 9:11; Lev 13:46-**note**.; Lev 16:27-**note** (**good note by Richard Phillips**).; Lev 17:3-**note**.; Lev 24:14, 23-**note**.; Nu 5:3-4; 12:14-15; 15:35-36; 19:3, 9; 31:13, 19; Dt 23:10, 12; Josh 6:23; Heb 13:11-**note** Heb 13:13-**note**. and "outside the gate" in Heb 13:12-**note**.

**Cursed** (07043)(qalal)

**Lay their hands on his head** - That is those who heard a blasphemer curse. As in Dt 17:6-7 (see below) there had to be at least two or three witnesses to assure that the accused was justly accused. It was as if the ones who laid their hands on his head were like the jurors in a modern jury box.

**NLT Study Note** on laying **their hands on his head** - This indicated their own innocence by symbolically transferring the guilt (see 16:21), as well as their willingness to accept responsibility for the blasphemer's death. A single witness was not enough to cause a man to die (see Nu 35:30; Dt 17:2–7; Mt 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Ti 5:19; Heb 10:28).

On the evidence of **two witnesses or three witnesses**, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Dt 17:6-7)

Stone him - It is interesting to note that the same penalty for worshiping Molech was given to those who blasphemed God.

"You shall also say to the sons of Israel: 'Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. (Lev 20:2)

**Leviticus 24:15 "You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin.**

- bear his sin. Lev 5:1; 20:16, 17. Nu. 9:13

**Anyone** - So the death sentence had nothing to do with the fact that the man was half Egyptian. Lev 24:16 emphasizes the non-partial nature of this death penalty which would be for "**The alien as well as the native.**"

**Leviticus 24:16 'Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.**

- Ex. 20:7. 1 Ki. 21:10–13. Ps. 74:10, 18; 139:20. Mat. 12:31. Mark 3:28, 29. John 8:58, 59; 10:33–36. Ac. 26:11. 1 Ti. 1:13. Jas. 2:7

## **STONING FOR BLASPHEMING THE NAME**

**When he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death**- Again "the NAME" stands for Jehovah and here the same penalty is given as when one curses their parents (Ex 21:17, Lev 20:9

Here is an response to the question about stoning one who committed blasphemy. Isn't this too harsh? Why not carry this out in the New Testament?

**Question:** "Didn't the Old Testament punish blasphemy with death? How is that different from radical Islam?"

**Answer:** Leviticus 24:16 says, "Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death." So, yes, the Mosaic Law did require the death penalty for those who blasphemed the name of God.

**First, we must remember that the Israelites in the time of Moses lived under a theocracy.** God's people in the Old Testament prior to the coming of Christ were identified externally through their adherence to the

Law. The theocracy encompassed everything from ceremonial religious rites to civic bylaws. The Law regulated dress code, diets, relationships, contracts, and even benevolence. **The Law provided harsh penalties for wrongdoing, including the sin of blasphemy. One of the purposes of the Law was to establish the conviction that God is holy. God's name, as an expression of His nature, is also holy** (Psalm 99:3; Luke 1:49).

**The coming of Christ signaled a transition in how God's people are identified.** They had been previously identified through the Jewish culture and a theocratic marriage of "church" and state. With Jesus came the New Covenant, and God's people were identified internally: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). In order to provide open access to God, Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Law (Matthew 5:17-[commentary-See also Got Questions?](#)). No longer were sacrifices necessary because He was the once-for-all sacrifice. No longer were specific dress requirements necessary. And no longer were God's people identified by a state under theocratic rule. Certainly, the spread of the gospel was aided by the fact that it didn't require an overhaul of the state governing authorities in other nations.

Christianity is not to be associated with revolution on a civil level. This is the problem with Islam. It can only be spread through conquest and forced submission. Faith is not required, only surrender. This is disingenuous and oppressive. Christians are instructed to submit to the governing authorities (Romans 13) and to work within the political system. The government was never intended to be a means of evangelism. The church is. And the church must be flexible enough to adapt to any culture. Christianity translates, whereas Islam dominates. Any religion that relies on the power of the state to ensure adherence obviously has no confidence in the power of its God to rule hearts.

Christians do not seek a theocracy nor should the church overly concern itself with civil/legal issues. We can speak on civil issues, but enforcing civil law is not our business. By the same token, respect for God, tithing, church attendance and other outward expressions of personal piety are not civil concerns. Jesus nullified the theocratic approach because it had served its purpose. He in turn established an ecclesiastical approach because only the local church can effectively reach local peoples within the context of their particular customs and circumstances. ([Didn't the Old Testament punish blasphemy with death- How is that different from radical Islam?](#))

**Leviticus 24:17 'If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death.**

- he. Ge. 9:5, 6. Ex. 21:12–14. Nu. 35:31. Dt. 19:11, 12

**NLT Study Bible** - Because human life was patterned after the life of God himself (Gen 1:26, 27), murder was a blasphemous act. It required the same penalty as oral blasphemy (Ge 9:6).

We a similar law and its qualifiers in Exodus 21

"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait [for him,] but God let [him] fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee. If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him [even] from My altar, that he may die. (Ex 21:12–14)

**Leviticus 24:18 'The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life.**

- Ex. 21:34–36

### **LIFE FOR LIFE**

This is repeated in Leviticus 24:21 'Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death.

**Leviticus 24:19 'If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him:**

- Dt. 19:21. Mat. 5:38; 7:2

**Leviticus 24:20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.**

- Ex. 21:23–25. Dt. 19:21. Mat. 5:38-39

## EYE FOR EYE LEX TALONIS

This law was designed to curb exaggerated revenge as in Ge 4:24 (If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.)

Lex Talonis means the law of talion. The English word talion (from the Latin talio) means a retaliation authorized by law, in which the punishment corresponds in kind and degree to the injury = "[law of retaliation \(Wikipedia\)](#)". It was the prerogative of the civil government to maintain order in the nation

"But if there is [any further] injury, then you shall appoint [as a penalty] life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, (Exodus 21:23-24)

"Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deuteronomy 19:21).

**Reformation Study Bible Note** - Much argument has revolved about this verse. Some contend it is brutal and opposed to New Testament ideas of love and mercy. The phrase "eye for eye" occurs twice more in the Pentateuch (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20). In each case, the verse is in a legal context; it is a principle of public justice—the penalty must fit the crime. There are indications that the term was not taken literally (Ex. 21:18, 26, 27). The only physical penalty mentioned in the law is flogging, and that limited to forty strokes (Deut. 25:3). Christ opposed those who used this verse as an excuse for personal vengeance (Matt. 5:38 note). See notes Ex. 21:24 and Lev. 24:20.

In modern governmental actions, the ancient version of **Lex Talonis** has largely been replaced by monetary damages.

**HCSB Study Bible** - The eye for eye, tooth for tooth principle was a figurative way of pointing to God's justice to show that the punishment should fit the crime.

See **F B Meyer's** related comments on ([Matt. 5:38-42](#)) in his discourse entitled [The Second Mile](#)

**MacArthur** - This law of retaliation established the principle that the punishment should fit the crime, but not go beyond it.

Jesus "raised the bar" on the OT principle when He quoted this passage in the Sermon on the Mount charging His audience to turn the other cheek, in essence offering of forgiveness instead of retribution! Of course as with much of the Sermon on the Mount this was not the expected natural reaction and was meant to show His hearers that they needed a supernatural power to enable such an unnatural reaction. In short they needed to be born again and receive the Holy Spirit to carry out Jesus' holy instruction!

"You have heard that it was said, '**AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH**.' 39 "**But I say** to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. his disciples to return good for evil 40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 "Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. (Matthew 5:38-41-[note](#)).

**Spurgeon** comments that...

The law of an eye for an eye, as administered in the proper courts of law was founded in justice, and worked far more equitably than the more modern system of fines; for that method allows rich men to offend with comparative impunity, But when the lex talionis came to be the rule of daily life, it fostered revenge, and our Savior would not tolerate it as a principle carried out by individuals. Good law in court may be very bad custom in common society. He spoke against what had become a proverb and was heard and said among the people, "Ye have heard that it hath been said." Our loving King would have private dealings ruled by the spirit of love and not by the rule of law.

**Charles Simeon** writes...

IF Christianity be worthy of admiration on account of the sublime mysteries it reveals, it is no less so on account of the pure morality it inculcates. Its precepts are as far above the wisdom of fallen man, as its



doctrines. Search all the systems of ethics that ever were written, and where shall we find such directions as these? In vain shall we look for them in the productions of Greece and Rome: in vain shall we consult the sages and philosophers of any other nation: such precepts as these are found no where but in the inspired volume. The law of retaliation has in all nations been deemed equitable and right: but in the Christian code it is expressly forbidden. (**Read the entire sermon - [Matthew 5:38-41 Retaliation Forbidden](#)**)

**John MacArthur** explains that the rabbinic tradition had perverted *lex talionis*, an "eye for an eye", which in the OT

did not allow an individual to take the law into his own hands and apply it personally. Yet that is exactly what rabbinic tradition had done. Each man was permitted, in effect, to become his own judge, jury, and executioner. God's law was turned to individual license (permit to act, freedom to take a specific course of action), and civil justice was perverted to personal vengeance. Instead of properly acknowledging the law of an **eye for an eye**, and a **tooth for a tooth** as a limit on punishment, they conveniently used it as a mandate for vengeance-as it has often been wrongly viewed throughout history. What God gave as a **restriction on civil courts**, Jewish tradition had turned into **personal license for revenge**. In still another way, the self-centered and self-asserted "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees had made a shambles of God's holy law. (MacArthur, J: [Matthew 1-7 Macarthur New Testament Commentary Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Freeman in **Manners and Customs of the Bible** comments that...

This is the principle of justice that requires punishment equal in kind to the offense (not greater than the offense, as was frequently given in ancient times). Thus, if someone puts out another person's eye, one of the offender's eyes should be put out. The principle is stated in the Book of Exodus as "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." This saying is often quoted today by those who wish to extract equal revenge for something done against them. ([Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. Manners & Customs of the Bible. 1996. Whitaker House](#))

**Got questions answers the Question - : "What does the Bible mean by 'an eye for an eye'?"**

**Answer:** The concept of "an eye for eye," sometimes called *jus talionis* or *lex talionis*, is part of the Mosaic Law used in the Israelites' justice system. The principle is that the punishment must fit the crime and there should be a just penalty for evil actions: "If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise" (Exodus 21:23–25). Justice should be equitable; excessive harshness and excessive leniency should be avoided. We have no indication that the law of "an eye for an eye" was followed literally; there is never a biblical account of an Israelite being maimed as a result of this law. Also, before this particular law was given, God had already established a judicial system to hear cases and determine penalties (Exodus 18:13–26)—a system that would be unnecessary if God had intended a literal "eye for an eye" penalty. Although capital crimes were repaid with execution in ancient Israel, on the basis of multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6), most other crimes were repaid with payment in goods—if you injured a man's hand so that he could not work, you compensated that man for his lost wages. Besides Exodus 21, the law of "an eye for an eye" is mentioned twice in the Old Testament (Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21). Each time, the phrase is used in the context of a case being judged before a civil authority such as a judge. "An eye for an eye" was thus intended to be a guiding principle for lawgivers and judges; it was never to be used to justify vigilantism or settling grievances personally. In the New Testament, it seems the Pharisees and scribes had taken the "eye for an eye" principle and applied it to everyday personal relationships. They taught that seeking personal revenge was acceptable. If someone punched you, you could punch him back; if someone insulted you, he was fair game for your insults. The religious leaders of Jesus' day ignored the judicial basis of the giving of that law. In the [Sermon on the Mount](#), Jesus counters the common teaching of personal retaliation: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you . . ." (Matthew 5:38–39). Jesus then proceeds to reveal God's heart concerning interpersonal relationships: "Do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:39–42). In giving this "new" command, Jesus is not nullifying the Old Testament law (Matthew 5:17). Rather, He is separating the responsibility of the government (to punish evildoers justly) from the responsibility we all have on a personal level before God to love our enemies. We should not seek retribution for personal slights. We are to ignore personal insults (the meaning of "[turn the other cheek](#)"). Christians are to be willing to give more of their material goods, time, and labor than required, even if the demands upon us are unjust. We should loan to those who want to borrow, love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us (verses 43–48). Enforcing "an eye for an eye" is the

magistrate's job; forgiving our enemies is ours. We see this played out today every time a victim stands up in court to publicly forgive a convicted criminal—the forgiveness is personal and real, but the judge still justly demands that the sentence be carried out. Jesus' limiting of the "eye for an eye" principle in no way prohibits [self-defense](#) or the forceful protection of the innocent from harm. The actions of duly appointed agents of the government, such as police officers and the military, to protect citizens and preserve the peace are not in question. Jesus' command to turn the other cheek applies to personal relationships, not judicial policy. The principle of "an eye for an eye" is meant as a judicial policy, not as a rule for interpersonal relationships. The believer in Christ is guided by Jesus' words to forgive. The Christian is radically different from those who follow the natural inclination to respond in kind. [The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology by Jason Meyer \(Gotquestions\)](#)

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#### Leviticus 24:20 Eye for an Eye

Two tugboat captains, pals for years, passed each other every morning in the channel. If all was well, each man would wave, yell "Aye!" and blow his whistle in a friendly salute. One day a neophyte crewman asked the mate, "Why do they do that?" "You mean," replied the startled mate, "you've never heard of an aye for an aye and a toot for a toot?" Source unknown

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#### Leviticus 24

##### "Lex Talionis:" The Principle of Retribution

The principle of lex talionis, or the law of retaliation, was an important part of Old Testament Law. Rather than legislating violent action, it was actually intended to mitigate vengeance. The penalty for a crime could be no more severe than the crime itself.

Our passage today is not all law: it first opens with further instructions concerning the duties of the priests. They tended to the nightly lighting of the golden lampstand, and weekly, they prepared the twelve sacred loaves of bread. Both are symbolic of God's good work of creation and covenant, themes we've already traced in Leviticus. The light of the lampstand calls to mind God's first words of creation: "Let there be light." And by the pillar of cloud and fire, God illuminated the path of the Israelites as they left Egypt. Bread is the symbol of God's provision, reminding us of the table God set for Adam and Eve. They were permitted to nourish themselves from the goodness of God's creation. And in the wilderness, it was of course the bread that fell from heaven, which kept alive the wandering Israelites. These items also point forward to Christ, who declared "I am the light of the world," and "I am the bread of life" (John 8:12; John 6:35).

The passage abruptly turns from instructions for the priests to a narrative retelling. It's only the second story told in Leviticus. (The first was about Nadab and Abihu.) This narrative is another portrait of sin: a man of mixed heritage is heard blaspheming God's holy name. He is put to death by the command of God at the hands of the community. This is not an act of murder, for a distinction is clearly drawn in this passage between capital punishment and murder.

According to the principle of lex talionis, or an eye for an eye, all crimes should be punished swiftly but justly.

Apply the Word - In debates over appropriate criminal penalties, Christians should support principles outlined in Scripture. God favors justice, with penalties in proportion to the crime. They are not to be applied out of vengeance or pleasure. Vulnerable members of society must not be exploited. God's justice is mingled with His mercy, and ours should be as well.

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**A Misunderstood Command** - Geoffrey, a dedicated believer, took seriously our Lord's command about turning the other cheek, yet he misunderstood the meaning of what Christ taught. When a man struck him, for example, he turned the other side of his face to his assailant and allowed him to hit it again. He said, "I have now fulfilled the Lord's command." Then he proceeded to pound his foe into submission. That's quite obviously not what Jesus had in mind.

The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy also misinterpreted this command. He said that we should be completely nonresistant when people steal from us or hurt us. His theory was that the wicked would soon be so ashamed that they would correct their ways. But his logic was wrong. Society doesn't operate that way. Without the restraining force of the police, the wicked would completely overpower decent, law-abiding citizens.

What then did Jesus mean when He told us that we should turn the other cheek? He was saying we should not let the desire to get even dominate our lives. Instead, we should be governed by the principles of giving and forgiving. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, we can do exactly what Jesus commanded. --H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let me turn the other cheek

As You so often did;  
Let me feel the joy of love  
When saying, "I forgive." --Monroe

The best way to get even is to forgive as you have been forgiven.

**Leviticus 24:21 'Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death.'**

- animal Lev 24:18. Ex. 21:33.

**Leviticus 24:22 'There shall be one standard for you; it shall be for the stranger as well as the native, for I am the Lord your God.'**

- Lev 17:10; 19:34. Ex. 12:49. Nu. 9:14; 15:15, 16, 29

**One standard** - God does not play favorites. When justice is to be carried out it is without divine bias. We should be the same!

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - Lev. 24:22**

Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for the homeborn.—Lev. 24:22.

This is an interesting chapter, in that it seems to break in on the continuity of the Book. In the first section some laws are repeated. Then follows a fragment of history. It is the story of a blasphemer upon whom punishment fell. This man was the son of an Egyptian father and an Israelitish mother. Seeing that he was not of pure Hebrew blood, the people were not sure as to how to deal with him when he committed the heinous offence of blaspheming the Name. It was under these circumstances that the principle was laid down that there should be one manner of law for the stranger and for the home-born. It was a principle of justice and of mercy. Its first emphasis is upon the fact that those who enter the Kingdom of God, and enjoy its privileges, must be governed by its laws. No man within that Kingdom can claim the rights of other citizenship as giving him freedom to break its laws. To enter that Kingdom is to renounce all other lordships, and to accept its laws. The principle has another value, in that it protects the stranger from the possible in-justice of the home-born. Those, who for any reason have birth-rights in the Kingdom of God, are not permitted to impose upon the strangers who desire to enter any other obligations than such as are binding upon themselves. To-day there are no "home-born" members of that Kingdom. All are "strangers," who enter by a New Birth. Yet the principle needs remembering, for it is not always easy for those who have had the privileges of the Kingdom longest, to be just and impartial to those newly entering. (Life Applications)

**Leviticus 24:23 Then Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and they brought the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.**

- Nu. 15:35, 36. Heb. 2:2, 3; 10:28, 29

### **CULMINATION OF CURSING: STONED TO DEATH!**

**Thus the sons of Israel did** - Imagine the impact this had on the nation. The cost of sin is high.

If it was this bad for those in the OT who spurned God by cursing Him, little wonder that the writer of Hebrews would give an even more stern, severe warning in the NT...

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Heb 10:28, 29)