

Leviticus Chapter 24

Verses 1-23: The material in the chapter centers on two points:

- (1) Laws of the Holy Place in relation to the lampstand (verses 2-4), and the bread of the presence (verses 5-9); and
- (2) Laws concerning blasphemy, including the offense (verses 10-12), the judgment of God (verses 13-22), and the execution by the people (verse 23).

Verses 1-9: These are additional instructions for the tabernacle relating to the lamps (verses 1-4), and the bread (verses 5-9; see Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20-21; 37:17-24; and Exodus 25:23-30; 39:36; 40:23 respectively).

Verses 1-4: The “pure candlestick” provided light in the tabernacle, which had no openings for natural light. Hammered out of pure gold and made in one piece, this piece had a central shaft and six branches (Exodus 25:31-39; 30:7-8; 37:17-24; 40:24-25). The seven “lamps” were fueled by “pure oil olive” (Exodus 27:20-21), and were to burn “continually”.

Leviticus 24:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

After he had delivered to him the laws concerning the purity of the priests, and the perfection of the sacrifices they were to offer, and concerning the feasts the people were to keep, he spoke to Moses of some other things which concerned both people and priests.

"Saying": As follows.

Leviticus 24:2 "Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually."

Moses was the chief magistrate under God, and being clothed with authority from him, had power to command the children of Israel to do what the Lord required of them.

"That they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten, for the light": This was to be at the public expense, and it belonged to the community to supply the priests with oil for the light of the candlestick in the temple (Exodus 25:6). And this oil was not to be any sort of oil, as train oil, or oil of nuts, almonds, etc., but oil of olives. And not any sort of that, but the purest, which was the first that was taken from them. It seems there were three sorts, the first of which was pure, and this beaten in a mortar, and not ground in a mill (see notes on Exodus 27:20).

"To cause the lamps to burn continually": The lamps in the golden candlestick, which were seven (Exodus 25:37). Or "the lamp", in the singular number, as it is in the original text. The western lamp, which is said to be always kept lighted, from which the rest were lighted when out. Though the oil was undoubtedly for the supply of the lamps, that they might burn always, night and day. Or from night to night, as Jarchi. And both on Sabbath days and working days, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Olive oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God. This olive oil, could not be contaminated in any way, and thus was beaten instead of being pressed in the olive press. I have mentioned it before, but the olive press was called a gethsemane. This olive oil in the lamp was very important. Jesus is the Light of the world, and it would be very important for this to be pure oil. John the Baptist, baptized with water, but the baptism of Jesus was with the Holy Ghost and fire. This oil (Holy Spirit), was never to run low, because it was to fuel the light continuously. This light, which was symbolic of Jesus' Light, was never to go out. The candlestick in the temple was fueled by this pure olive oil and was to never go out. We know that the candlestick, and the light it produces, symbolize the Light of Jesus. When a person receives this Light of Jesus, it is very important to keep fueled with the Holy Spirit of God (pure olive oil). One of the most vivid descriptions in the Bible about letting the oil go out of your lamp, is the parable of the ten virgins.

2 Corinthians 11:2 "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ."

Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

Leviticus 24:3 "Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: [it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations."

That is, on the outside of the vail which divided between the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. And which was before the ark in which the testimony or law was.

"In the tabernacle of the congregation": Which the apostle calls the first, namely, the Holy Place in which the candlestick, with its lamps, stood (Heb. 9:2).

"Shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually": That is, the lamp or lamps, or candlestick, in which they were, or the light of them. His business was, and so every priest's that succeeded him, to supply the lamps with oil. To dress and snuff them, that they might burn clear, and burn always. And that before the Lord, in the presence of the Lord.

"It shall be a statute for ever in your generations": Until the Messiah should come. The true light, which would put out all such typical ones, and by his Gospel spread light in all his churches throughout the world (see notes on Exodus 27:20-21).

This candlestick, which was just outside the veil leading to the holy of holies, was made of pure Gold and had seven flutes on it. The candlestick and the light were both symbolic of the Light of Jesus. The olive oil, which fueled the light was symbolic of the Holy Spirit. To keep the Light of God burning in our churches, the Holy Spirit must reveal the Truth to the church. The Holy Spirit is Teacher and Guide. Without the Spirit of God in the church, it would be a dead church. It could not even be a church that knew the truth without the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is our Teacher. Knowing the Truth comes through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes the Word more understandable.

Psalms 119:105 "Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

We can easily see that it is almost impossible to separate the Word, the Truth, and the Spirit. They are all three involved in the life of a real believer in Jesus Christ. The Word brings Life. The Truth brings Life. The Spirit brings Life. You can easily see the connection.

Leviticus 24:4 "He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually."

“Pure candlestick”: Actually, it was a “lampstand” (Exodus 27:20-21), that was put in the Holy Place, which otherwise would have been completely dark. Some have seen the lampstand as typical of Israel, which, in God’s purpose, was meant to be a light to the ancient Near Eastern nations. But the true light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to His people Israel, is Jesus Christ (Luke 2:32; compare Matt. 5:16; Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15).

The word (order), in the Scripture above means to arrange. There were seven flutes on this candlestick, remember. It was the high priest's job to see that all of this was done properly, and was not forgotten. The fueling with pure olive oil must be done once in the morning and once in the evening. The Light was never to go out. Notice the word (pure), in the verse above. It was pure gold, which showed the Godhead of Jesus.

Verses 5-9: Display of the showbread (bread of the Presence), was a perpetual sign of worship, along with the fire on the altar (6:12), and the incense the priest burned morning and night in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:8). The “bread”, signifying Jesus as the Bread of Life, was replaced on each Sabbath. “Pure frankincense”, one of the gifts given to young Jesus by the wise men from the East (Isa. 60:6; Matt. 2:11), was poured over the loaves as a “memorial”.

Leviticus 24:5 "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake."

“Twelve cakes”: These represented the 12 tribes of Israel, in the same way as the two onyx stones, each engraved with six names, served as “stones of memorial for the sons of Israel” (Exodus 28:9-12). Like circumcision (Gen. 17:13, 19), and the Sabbath (Exodus 31:16), the bread of the presence symbolized the “everlasting covenant” (verse 8), between God and Israel (Psalm 105:10); Rom. 11:26-29).

Each loaf was made with 4 quarts of flour.

Each of these loaves of bread had at least 6 pounds of flour in them. This would make the twelve loaves weigh over 70 pounds. This must be fine flour, because these loaves of bread symbolized the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only the eternal Light, but is the eternal Bread as well. We must feed upon the Word, which is our Bread.

John 6:35 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

There were twelve loaves, indicating there was Bread for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Leviticus 24:6 "And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD."

The twelve cakes.

"Six on a row": Not by the side of each other, but six upon one another.

"Upon the pure table": The showbread table, so called because overlaid with pure gold, and kept clean and bright (Exodus 25:24).

"Before the Lord": For this stood in the holy place, in the same place as the candlestick did, which has the same position (Lev. 24:4). Of the mystical and typical sense of these cakes (see notes on Exodus 25:30).

Notice that with God, not only is it important to bake twelve cakes, but the order that they were set on the Table was important as well. Notice the word (pure), again here. This Table symbolizes Jesus, as well as the Bread did. It is a golden table, which indicates God, in this case God the Word. This Table and the Bread on it both symbolize Jesus. He is before God in heaven always representing you and me.

Leviticus 24:7 "And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, [even] an offering made by fire unto the LORD."

Two cups of frankincense, in each of which was a handful of it, and which were set by each row of the cakes, as Jarchi observes.

"That it may be on the bread for a memorial": Or "for the bread", instead of it, for a memorial of it. That being to be eaten by the priests, and this to be burned on the altar to the Lord, as follows.

"Even an offering made by fire unto the Lord": Not the bread that was after a time taken away, and eaten by the priests, but the frankincense.

Frankincense always accompanied the meat offering. This is why one of the gifts that was brought to Jesus at His birth was frankincense. The frankincense recognized Jesus as the meat offering. This Bread, as we have said so many times, represents the flesh of Jesus.

John 6:51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The memorial spoken of here, is the remembrance of Jesus' great sacrifice for all of us. The communion we take in church is the remembrance. Jesus explains it clearly in:

1 Corinthians 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Some of the bread covered in frankincense was burned unto the LORD, the other part of the bread was eaten in the temple by the priest and his sons. The fact that this bread was offered each week, shows us clearly that we should be consistent in our giving as well. We should not give just now and then, but regularly. May I also state, that it is no good at all to give, unless it is given freely from the heart. God would be very pleased with this offering made by fire. This type offering was for Him alone. Since it was burned up, no one except God would benefit by it. The other bread, eaten by the priests, shows that ministers' needs must be taken from the offerings.

Leviticus 24:8 "Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant."

That is, the priest or priests then ministering, who should bring new cakes and place them in the above order. Having removed the old ones, which was done in this manner. Four priests went in, two had in their hands the two rows (of bread), and two had in their hands two cups (of frankincense). Four went before these, two to take away the two rows (of the old bread), and two to take away the two cups (of frankincense). And they that carried in stood in the north, and their faces to the south and they that brought out stood in the south, and their faces to the north. These drew away (the old bread) and they put them (the new). And the hand of the one was over against the hand of the other, as it is said, "before me continually" (Exodus 25:30). That is, at the same time the hands of the one were employed in taking away, the hands of the other were employed in setting on. So that there was always bread upon the table.

"Being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant": God requiring it of them, and they agreeing to give it, as they did, either in meal or in money. For this was at the expense of the community.

We can see that the giving of their share of the offering, was not an option with them. They must bring their share of the offering to God, to remain in covenant relationship with God. If they broke their side of the covenant, God was no longer in covenant with them.

Leviticus 24:9 "And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it [is] most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute."

"They shall eat it in the holy place": Normally only the priests in actual service at the time could eat of the twelve loaves of bread from the table of showbread in the ancient Tabernacle. Jesus, citing how David and his men, hungry and weary, ate the sacred bread on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-4), answered His Pharisaical critics. They had questioned His disciples' plucking "ears of corn" on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger, thus "working". Jesus enunciated a higher law when He announced, "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5).

We went into great detail about exactly how this meat offering was to be handled in an earlier lesson. We will not go into that in detail here, but will just remind ourselves of a few important aspects. Aaron's and his sons'; just means that whoever is high priest at the time of the offering and his sons are to eat their part of the bread. This bread being presented before the LORD made it holy. It was not to be taken out of the Holy Place. This bread is for the minister (High Priest), and all believers in Christ (the sons of the High Priest). The world has rejected their opportunity to eat of this bread, when they rejected Jesus as Savior. Not only is the bread holy, but those who eat of it are made righteous in the sight of God. Have you eaten this Bread (accepted Jesus as your Savior)? If not, I recommend that you not delay.

Leviticus Chapter 24 Questions

1. What type of oil were the children of Israel to bring for the light?
2. When was the light to burn?
3. Who is olive oil symbolic of?
4. Why were these olives beaten instead of being pressed out to make the oil?
5. What is the name for an olive press in Israel?
6. Who is the Light of the world?
7. What was the difference in the way John the Baptist baptized and the way Jesus baptized?
8. What is one of the most vivid illustrations in the Bible of someone letting their oil run out?
9. Where do we find the Scripture that tells us to be filled with the Spirit?
10. Where was this candlestick located?
11. How long was this statute to last?
12. How many flutes were on the candlestick?
13. What metal was it made of?
14. What must be done to keep the Light of Jesus in our churches?
15. What are two of the things the Holy Spirit does for the believer?
16. What kind of a church would you have without the Spirit?
17. Knowing the truth comes through what?
18. Where do we find the Scripture that says "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet"?

19. In John 17:17, we see the Word is _____.
20. What three things are almost impossible to separate, because they all bring Life?
21. What does the word “order” mean in verse 4?
22. Who was in charge of seeing that the candlestick was properly cared for?
23. How often was the candlestick filled with olive oil?
24. What does the word pure mean in verse 4?
25. How many cakes were baked for the table?
26. Approximately how much did each of these cakes weigh?
27. Why did this have to be made with fine flour?
28. How was the bread to be placed on the table?
29. What did the fact that this was a golden table show us?
30. What, besides the bread, was to be put on the table?
31. What type of an offering was this offering?
32. Why did the wise men bring frankincense to Jesus at His birth?
33. Who is the Living Bread?
34. What is the communion that we take in church?
35. What shows us that we should be consistent in our giving?
36. What must they do to stay in covenant with God?
37. Where was Aaron and his sons to eat the offering?
38. Who is the Bread for in our day?
39. Have you eaten of the Bread of Life?