Leviticus 24:10-23 | Sunday September 14

Most of the book of Leviticus has been God instructing His people as He calls out from the tabernacle. During the short month or two that the entire message of Leviticus is communicated; two issues arose in the camp that interrupted God’s instructions. The first was when Nadab and Abihu offered strange unauthorized fire in Leviticus 10 and were immediately judged and killed with fire from God. Today we are going to look at the second interruption.

Leviticus 24:10-23 ESV

> (10) Now an **Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian**, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, (11) and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. (12) And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them. (13) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (14) “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. (15) And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. (16) Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. (17) “Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. (18) Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. (19) If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, (20) fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. (21) Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. (22) You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the LORD your God.” (23) So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Isreal prospered during its time in Egypt and grew numerically into a nation. Over time the Egyptians and Israelites started to intermarry. This story is about a man whose father was an Egyptian and mother was an Israelite from the tribe of Dan. When Israel was called out of Egypt by God this relationship was challenged. The assumption is that the father chose to stay in Egypt while the mother, Shelomith followed God out of Egypt. This was not the only family dealing with this.

Exodus 12:38 ESV

> (38) **A mixed multitude** also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

When Isreal left Egypt a mixed multitude decided to come along. This would have been made up of Egyptians, and partial Egyptians partial Jews. It was made up of those who had intermarried, were somehow connected to Isreal, or wanted to be. For some Egyptians the God of Isreal had proven Himself through the plagues and they wanted to follow Him. **This group would struggle because returning home to Egypt was always alluring.** It was this group that complained and sinned.

Numbers 11:4-5 ESV

(4) **Now the rabble** that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, “Oh that we had meat to eat!
(5) **We remember the fish we ate in Egypt** that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.

This group were not slaves in Egypt and going back was appealing when the wilderness was not what they expected. **God’s people can intermix with the world only to a certain point and then a separation comes**. Shelomith’s family had to decide who they would follow, their own passions, and comfort or listen to the one true God. God’s truth is life thus it also defines what is death.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 ESV

(14) But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us **spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere.**
(15) **For we are the aroma of Christ** to God **among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,**
(16) **to one a fragrance from death** to death, **to the other a fragrance from life** to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

The kings and generals would have great parades as the came back to their home nation. The parade would show off what the king had conquered and taken in victory. Perfumes were released in the air to add to the celebration. How it smelled all depended on what side you were on. If your king was the one celebrating it was a great parade. If your nation was defeated, it was a humiliating, terrible parade. **Jesus is our triumphant King and He is leading us in a victor’s parade.** The truth of the cross has two different scents. To believers it is a smell of life, to the world it is a smell of death. **We are called for the truth of Jesus to smell in our lives.** Our lives are to reflect our King and what He has accomplished. We can try to fool ourselves and blend into the world and yet a separation will have to come eventually. This is what happens for Shelomith’s son.

Leviticus 24:10-11 ESV

(10) Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. **And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp,**
(11) and the Israelite woman's son **blasphemed the Name, and cursed**. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.

Shelomith’s son gets in a fight with an Israelite. We are not told what they fought about, but **violence escalates and led to a greater sin**. Shelomith’s son blasphemed the name of God and cursed God during this fight. God does not take lightly using His name in vain.

Exodus 20:7 NAS95

(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.**

Taking the Lord’s name in vain is to use God’s name in a **trivial, worthless, inconsequential way** or to have **unrestrained speech.** It is to talk about God in a flippant way that does not honor Him with the respect He deserves. As believers we should not be so careless with God’s name or even with little replacements of it. **God deserves more honor than this.** The Jews would

eventually become superstitious of the name Yahweh, in part due to this story. They refused to even say the name. Yet respecting God is much more than avoiding saying His name. It goes beyond words to how our lives reflect Him. Vain also means to **lie about**. **Do our lives lie about who God is?** This man though went a step farther.

Exodus 22:28 NAS95

> (28) "You shall not **curse** God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

He had enough of Isreal and enough of the God of Israel, Yahweh and He blasphemed God and declared a curse against God. **He saw himself or his god as being more powerful then Yahweh**. This was not just a casual slip of the tongue but revealed what was going on in his heart.

Matthew 12:34 ESV

> (34) You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**

Jesus is referring to the Pharisees. Their words were not matching their hearts. Eventually, our hearts will overflow into our words and reveal where our hearts are. The sin that began in his heart was now on display through his words. This curse will lead to his death. Our tongues are very dangerous.

James 3:6-10 ESV

> (6) And **the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness**. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.
> (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,
> (8) **but no human being can tame the tongue**. **It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**
> (9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and **with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.**
> (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. **My brothers, these things ought not to be so.**

Too often we forget that **our tongue is a world of unrighteousness, a restless evil that is full of deadly poison**. It is not fitting for believers to praise God on Sunday, then the next day curse people made in the image of God. Our tongues are to reflect the overflow of our hearts. As we walk with Christ then our speech should reflect it. The nation was not sure what to do, because he was partly Egyptian.

Leviticus 24:12 ESV

> (12) And they put him in custody, **till the will of the LORD should be clear to them.**

The Israelites did a great thing, they were unsure of what to do, so they stopped and prayed. **Often when they are unsure they would act, and we do the same**. Instead, when we are unsure we should stop and pray for God's guidance.

Leviticus 24:13-16 ESV

> (13) Then **the LORD** spoke to Moses, saying,
> (14) "Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and **let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.**

> (15) And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.
> (16) Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, **when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.**

God answers quickly and gives the punishment of the death penalty. Anyone who heard the curse was to be involved in stoning the man. This was not Moses interpretation or the people going beyond what God wanted. The timeless God whose character does not change (Mal 3:6), gave a holy judgment. **This part of His character also lead to Jesus death on the cross.** God values human life and values the image of Him within a person. He is also a holy God who must enact a just punishment for sin. God then defines how punishments should match the crime.

Leviticus 24:17-21 ESV

> (17) "**Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death.**
> (18) **Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life.**
> (19) If anyone injures his neighbor, **as he has done it shall be done to him,**
> (20) fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him.
> (21) Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death.

This is called the *lex talionis* (law of the talon). It is interesting that in our culture the idea of doing the same thing to the criminal that they did to the victim is viewed as extreme, cruel, or unusual. This passage can seem brutal to us and yet **for the culture God was restraining vengeance**. They could not inflict more damage or pain than what the crime was.

The Code of Hammurabi was written about 300 years prior to these commands and shows us how the laws of the area would have functioned. Famously it includes an eye for an eye yet there are many differences. Material goods were elevated as having the same worth as human life **"if the thief has nothing with which to pay he shall be put to death."** God valued life and humanity was never viewed as equal to material goods or animals. There were also a different set of rules depending on your social status "**If any one strike the body of a man higher in rank than he, he shall receive…"** Your social status dictated the punishment. God's standard did not shift based on who you were.

Leviticus 24:22-23 ESV

> (22) **You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native**, for I am the LORD your God." (23) So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and **they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones.** Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

God did not have multiple sets of laws based on who you were like Hammurabi did. **God's standard is consistent and indiscriminate**. Nothing changed because the man was half Egyptian.

Romans 2:11 KJV

> (11) For there is **no respect** of persons with God.

It is hard to comprehend how equal and just God is. We are so prone to play favorites, bend rules, and show partiality. God is impartial and so is the law. Jesus takes this truth and elevates it to its

highest form.

Matthew 5:38-39; 43-45 ESV

> (38) "**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 the one who is evil. **But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.**
> (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
> (44) But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**
> (45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. **For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

If someone slaps you under the law you have the right to slap them back, but under grace you have the freedom to love them. Jesus shows that the law is just but love is greater. God shows this love as He sustains and provides for the evil person as well as the good person. We see the greatest expression of God's justice and His love on the cross. The God who is so holy that a man who blasphemed Him needed to be stoned, **was willing to be blasphemed.**

Luke 22:63-65 ESV

> (63) Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him as they beat Him.
> (64) They also blindfolded Him and kept asking Him, "Prophesy! Who is it that struck You?"
> (65) And they said many other things against Him**, blaspheming Him.**

1 Peter 2:23 ESV

> (23) **When He was reviled, He did not revile in return**; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued **entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.**

Jesus was willing to be blasphemed, reviled, mocked, and beaten. **He trusted that God the Father would be just**. His sacrifice enables us to experience grace and be able to show it to others in response. We have been so loved and experienced so much grace that we are to extend it to others. **Since Jesus was willing to be blasphemed, He will be exalted.**

Philippians 2:5-11 ESV

> (5) **Have this mind** among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
> (6) who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
> (9) Therefore God has highly exalted Him **and bestowed on Him the Name that is above every Name,**
> **(10) so that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**
> (11) **and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
