

Leviticus

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Leviticus 1-4

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 1-4. We touched on offerings not too long ago in Exodus, but this book gives us more details about the different types of offerings and how they are performed.

Leviticus 1 starts with the LORD calling Moses to the tent of meeting. He told Moses what to say to the Israelites regarding instructions on the offerings. The LORD starts with the burnt offering and says it can be from a flock or herd, but is to be a male with no defects or flaws. God said they must not have any flaws because it was to represent being morally perfect or without sin. For a person to give this offering, he must bring this animal to the entrance of the tent of meeting and lay his hands on the animal (to represent transferring the sin to the animal) so that it will be accepted on the person's behalf for atonement. Meaning, the animal was to pay the price of sin instead of the person. The LORD gives Moses specific details regarding all the steps that should be taken to offer the animal. The burnt offering can also be a bird, but should be a dove or a young pigeon and the LORD tells of all the steps that would accompany a bird being used.

Chapter 2 discusses the grain offering. This was an offering to give thanks to God. The grain offering was flour mixed with oil and incense or baked cakes or wafers with oil and without yeast. No grain offering was to have yeast in it, since as we discussed earlier, yeast is a symbol for sin. All the grain offering was to be seasoned with salt as a reminder of the covenant between the people and the LORD. Salt is used as a symbol throughout the Bible, especially when describing God-like attributes, because it penetrates, preserves and can even be used to assist in healing. The priest also got to keep part of this offering to use as their food.

Chapter 3 talks about the fellowship offering. This offering was to give thanks to God but also for a way to have fellowship with God, which helps strengthen the relationship. The fellowship offering was also an animal from the herd or flock without any flaws, but it could be a male or female. We then learn of more details surrounding how this offering was to be made. In verse 16 it states, "All fat is the LORDs". That might actually be one of my most favorite verses in the Bible! I need a workout shirt that says that! Chapter 3 goes on to say that the people were not to eat anything that contained fat or blood.

Chapter 4 is about the sin offering. This offering is for when people unintentionally sin, meaning not on purpose. First the LORD discusses what is to occur if the priest unintentionally sin. In this case, the priest is to present a young bull and lay his hand on him prior to offering him. The chapter continues and details are given about how this

offering should occur. Part of it involves the priest dipping his fingers in blood seven times, which is the number for perfection.

Then the chapter discusses what they are to do if the whole Israelite community sins by unknowingly doing something that is forbidden. This time they are to offer a young bull, but all the community elders are to lay their hands on the bull's head prior to offering it. Next, we have when a leader of the community sins unintentionally. They are to bring a male goat without defect. If a member of the community sins unintentionally, he is to offer a female goat or lamb without defect for the offering. The chapter also explains how they are to carry out each sacrifice.

Do you see how with the sin offering, the animal value decreases depending on who is committing the sin? Sin is sin. The price for any sin is death and any sin separates us from God. And the fact that death is the only price accepted for sin shows us that God doesn't take sin lightly. However, the animal that God demands for the different situations tells us that those in a position of leadership and authority are held to a higher standard by God. As said in the spiderman movies, "With great power comes great responsibility."

Another thing to note, the biggest price to pay for sin was a male with no defect. And as stated earlier, the animal having no flaws was to represent being morally perfect, absolutely no sin. Now in these chapters, they are referring to animals. But this is also a prophecy, a foreshadowing at what was to come in the future. It was pointing to something. A perfect human man. A man who never sinned. Not even once. Can you imagine that?! I definitely don't even come close to that category! Have you ever heard of the morning prayer? It goes like this, "Dear LORD, so far I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, or selfish or overindulgent. I'm really glad about that. But in a few minutes God, I'm going to get out of bed and from there on, I'm going to need a lot more help!" That's what I identify with!! And that's on a good day! But then there's Jesus. God's Son. God the Son. 100% God, 100% human. And he lived a perfect life with no sin. Why would God send His only Son Jesus to live as a human on this broken planet? For us. He did it because He loves us. Which is the same reason Jesus agreed to do it. He was the perfect, blameless sacrifice, once and for all, to pay the price for our sin from now until eternity. Using animals could only pay the price for a short period of time. They were just used to buy time. But Jesus paid the price FOREVER. DEBT PAID IN FULL FOREVER! Wow! What an amazing God.

Leviticus 5-9

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 5-9

When we were last in Leviticus, we learned about four different types of offerings, the Burnt offering, the Fellowship offering, the Grain offering and the Sin offering. Chapter 5 tells us some different things that were considered a sin. This includes not speaking up when a person knows information regarding a public offense or charge. Like when someone has information that could cause someone to be found guilty or not guilty in the courts, but they don't tell what they know. Other offenses include when someone touches something unclean, like a dead animal, a person touches any human uncleanness or taking an oath and swearing to do something either good or bad. Side note, there are multiple verses throughout the Bible that instruct us not to swear, but just to state "yes" and "no". It especially states not to use the LORD's name when swearing. Continuing on...

When someone has done any of these things, they must confess their sin and then provide a sin offering. The chapter then tells of different types of sin offerings that would be accepted and how they should be offered.

We then learn of the Guilt Offering. This was to be given when a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally regarding any of the LORD's holy things. This includes sin which affects another person or people. Not only was the person required to give an offering, they were also required to make restitution to the person they harmed. Restitution means that you make things right with the person harmed. Typically, this was done by giving them money. On top of that, they had to pay another 20% of whatever the restitution price was to the priest.

Chapter 6 gives more examples of different types of sins which require a guilt offering. It states that if someone deceives their neighbor, or steals or cheats or finds lost property and lies about it or swears falsely (which we already learned we really aren't supposed to swear at all) or does "any such sin that people may do". Then the person is to give a Guilt offering, make restitution, and pay the priest 20% as stated above. In the rest of chapter 6 and into chapter 7, God gives instructions to relay to the priests about the regulations or rules surrounding each offering.

Chapter 7 then continues with the LORD giving the Israelites instructions that they are not to eat any fat or blood from any animal. And if a person eats the fat of an animal that was used as an offering, that's a big no-no and that person is to "be cut off from his people". Which we learned earlier may have been used as a phrase which means they

should be put to death. Blood is the symbol of life and all life comes from God, so the blood is His. The LORD then gives details about what portion of the Fellowship offering the priest were entitled to, to use as food, which happened to be the breast and right thigh.

Chapter 8 goes on to give instructions about ordaining or consecrating the priest, which we also heard about in Exodus. This was to get them ready to act in their role as mediators, or go between, for the LORD and the Israelites. Moses also anointed and dedicated everything in the Tabernacle to the LORD using oil. Also, like he was instructed to in Exodus.

Chapter 9 goes on to tell about how the priests begin their ministry. After all these chapters of instructions, we finally have a Tabernacle and the priests ready to act in their role. After ensuring the priests were right with the LORD and ready to serve, we finally see that the priests act on the people's behalf in this chapter and give offerings to the LORD for the people.

Then Moses and Aaron went to the Tent of Meeting and when they came out, they blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people and the fire came from the presence of the LORD and consumed, or burnt up, the offerings. And all the people rejoiced and fell face down.

This was HUGE for the Israelites! Moses spent a significant amount of time getting all these instructions from God on all the details surrounding the Tabernacle and the priest and their function and the offerings and on and on. Then the people had to build it, which I'm assuming also took a significant amount of time, especially since they didn't have power tools! And now it's here!! Finally! What a huge accomplishment! But the most important thing was that God was going to live among them and they had a way to be right with God and grow closer to Him! That's incredible! Our God chose to live among His people and make a way for sinful, stubborn people to be near Him! What love and patience!! And God's fire came down and started the flame! The priests were instructed to keep it burning, but God started it. Everything starts with God! He is the beginning of everything and He made a way for us to be near Him and be blessed by Him because He's an Amazing God!

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Leviticus 11

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we are back to Leviticus and breaking down Chapter 11.

In the last chapter we learned that because the priests were supposed to be set apart for God and because they were supposed to help the people maintain a relationship with God and tell them God's will, God did not take kindly to two of Aaron's sons doing things their way instead of God's way. In this chapter, God gives the Israelites more rules to live by.

God says the Israelites are allowed to eat any animal that has a split hoof that is completely divided and chews the cud. Chewing cud is a term that is used for the way some animals eat. It sounds a little gross, but it's when an animal chews food, swallows it, then throws it back up into its mouth and chews on it some more, and so on and so on till the food is really broken down and thoroughly absorbed. The animal has to have both qualities in order to be considered "clean" or okay to eat. So a camel, who chews cud but doesn't have a split hoof, is a no go. Just like a pig is not allowed on the menu because it has a split hoof but doesn't chew cud. This is another reason I am SO grateful we live in the post Jesus time. I love bacon.

Of all the creatures living in the water, they are only allowed to eat creatures that have fins and scales; so, most fish. But eels and octopus would be a no go. God goes on to list birds they are not to eat, which also includes bats, before moving on to what insects they are allowed to eat. Locust makes the "okay to eat" list. Good news for John the Baptist! We'll learn about him in the New Testament.

Anyone who touches the carcass, or dead body of one of the creatures that are on the "No" list, has to wash their clothes and they are considered unclean till the evening. Next on the unclean list is anything that walks on paws and a whole host of things that scurry along the ground like rats and different reptiles including lots of different lizards. Like before, touching the carcass of one of these animals made you unclean until the evening. But since these little critters get into everything, the LORD also states that when one of these creatures dies on something like a tool, or blanket, whatever it is, it should be placed in water and it is also considered unclean till evening. Which... if a rat dies on anything I own.. You better believe I'm going to consider it unclean and put some water and probably a little soap on it. If one of these creatures dies in something that is used to cook in or to hold something to drink, like a pot or a vessel, it is to be broken. But if one of these creatures dies on seeds that someone was going to plant, those are still considered clean and are still fine to plant.

God also states that of the animals they are allowed to eat, if one of them dies on their own, they are considered unclean and anyone who touches it or eats its meat is considered unclean till evening.

The LORD tells people not to make themselves unclean by eating anything that moves around on the ground like a centipede or a snake (no surprise there that a snake would be considered not acceptable). God also says that they are to be holy because He is holy and He is their God. One reason God gives the Israelites all the rules is to make sure that they live in a way that sets them apart from everyone else. They are God's chosen people and because of this, they should live differently than the rest of the world so that everyone who comes into contact with them knows that they are different and there is something special about them. And that something special, is God.

Also, did you notice there's a theme to some of these rules? Like when God says if an animal dies on its own, they aren't allowed to eat it, or if a rat dies on something that is used for food or drink, it's to be destroyed. Dead things are dirty. What we know today that they might not have known back then, is all these are safety hazards. Things that die immediately start decaying and house bacteria and rats carry all kinds of diseases and spread them! Although some of the rules are just to ensure the Israelites live differently than the rest of the world, some of the rules are to protect them from getting sick and to keep them healthy and safe.

One other thing stood out to me in this chapter. We could all stand to be a little bit more like cows with their cud. I mean, not with food. That would be gross. But with God's word. We should treat God's word like cud. We should ingest it, and bring it up in conversation and by reading it, and keep chewing on it and thinking it over and over, and praying on it, until we totally digest it and absorb it and it becomes part of us. God's word is never a "one and done". Even if you read and study all the way through the Bible, start over. because there is always something more that we can learn from and about our amazing God.

Leviticus 12 & 13

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 12 & 13.

The LORD continues to give rules to the Israelites to help them know how to be set apart for Him and how to live in a free society. Remember, many of these people have never known anything but slavery until the last few years.

Chapter 12 gives rules surrounding when a woman was considered unclean and for how long. This was mainly regarding after she gives birth to a baby. For a certain amount of time, she was considered unclean and not allowed to touch anything sacred. But after that time had passed, she was to bring a burnt offering and a sin offering to the priest at the tent of meeting and the priest would make an atonement for her and she would be considered clean.

In Chapter 13, the LORD gives them rules surrounding skin infections. If someone developed swelling or a rash on their skin, they were to be brought to the priest to be examined. If it had certain characteristics like being deeper than just the surface or the hairs in it were white, the priest would consider the person unclean because it appeared they had an infectious disease. If the spot looked only surface level and didn't have some of the other "infectious" characteristics, the priest would isolate the person for seven days. At the end of that time, if it got worse, they declared they had an infectious disease and they were considered unclean. If it was better, the person washed their clothes and was considered clean. If it hadn't changed, they would isolate for another seven days and so on.

If a disease covers a person from head to toe making their skin white but all their skin is intact, they are considered clean. Makes me think of individuals that have pigment issues, like albinos who have no coloring to their skin or hair. Just because they look different, doesn't mean they are infectious. Whereas if the person has white skin with raw flesh, well that's another story. Then the priest would consider him unclean.

The chapter goes on to talk about what should be done if a person is found to have boils, burns, white spots or sores. In some instances with the sores, if they are found on a hairy part of the body like a head or a man's chin (and maybe the chin of some women) the person was to shave and the priest would keep an eye on it. In all of these situations, the options typically boil down to "clean", "unclean" or isolate and wait it out. But good news for some guys! Verse 40 specifically states that a bald man who just lost

his hair with no other issues is considered clean! Maybe that's where they came up with the image for the Mr. Clean character!

Anyone who was unclean had to wear torn clothes, have their hair looking a mess and uncovered, cover the lower portion of their face and yell, "Unclean, unclean" as a warning to others. They also had to live alone outside of town. Seems harsh but given the hygiene situation out in the desert, with no plumbing, and the lack of advanced medicine, this saved lives.

Next is regulations regarding mold on any fabric or leather. The priest was to isolate the item for seven days. If the mold spreads to the whole article then it is unclean and must be burnt. But if the mold didn't spread, it can be washed and if the moldy spot faded, that one spot could be cut out. If the spot didn't fade or the mold reappeared on the article after cutting out the moldy part, the article was found unclean and needs to be burnt. If the spot of mold completely disappeared after washing it, it can be washed a second time and then it is considered clean.

Since the chapter concerning women being unclean after childbirth is followed up with one about being unclean due to an infection, it kind of makes it seem like women are dirty or viewed in a negative light for the weeks following childbirth. But that's not what is going on here. In fact, that's not what's going on with any of these "unclean" people. The term "unclean" in this passage has a totally different meaning than what we typically believe it to mean. It does not mean a person is bad or sinful or even dirty. This is kind of a difficult concept to understand so let me try to explain it a little better.

Let's jump back to Genesis. When God created the world and mankind, what we are living in today is not what He had in mind. Not that He didn't know this was how things were going to wind up, but it isn't what He wanted. God created us so that we could have a perfect relationship with Him and He could lead us and bless us and we would follow Him and bring Him glory. But our God is not in the slave driving business. So He didn't force us to follow Him and love Him. He gave us a choice. And we chose poorly. When Adam and Eve chose to sin and not follow God, they introduced sin into the world and with it came a whole lot of bad consequences. They were forced to leave Eden. That perfect place where they were to have a perfect relationship with God. Now, there was pain in childbirth, and disease, and people die and a host of other earthly problems that we have to deal with. All evidence of the fall. Man's decision to turn our backs on our loving Creator.

But then God had His people build a Tabernacle where He could dwell among His people. And when the Israelites went to the Tabernacle and participated in these

ceremonies and actions, all of it was to paint a picture of what it was like in Eden before the fall. The people made atonement with God by having their sins forgiven through the use of an animal and because they were free from sin, they were able to again experience this perfect relationship with God there at the Tabernacle. For a moment, there was a beautiful snapshot of a perfect relationship between our God and Creator and His people who love and follow Him. That is what it was all about.

But someone could not be a part of that perfect symbol of the relationship man had with God in the garden of Eden prior to the fall, if they had evidence of the fall all over them! Think of it like this. Imagine you want people to start living healthy lifestyles so you want to make a commercial that shows people all the benefits of living that way. Would your commercial contain healthy looking people who are outside being active and eating fruits and vegetables? Or would it have an extremely overweight and sick looking individual sitting on the sofa with a box of donuts in one hand and a cigarette in the other? It's going to be healthy looking people, right?! Hands down! No question about it! Because you want to show people that's how they should be living and the benefit of living that way.

That's what the Tabernacle and these ceremonies with the LORD were supposed to be! A picture of how the people should be always pursuing a perfect relationship with God and the benefits of that. BUT... If a person is covered in a worldly disease, or experiencing the worldly issues that accompany childbirth, that does not accurately reflect what life was supposed to be like in Eden so they can't be in the picture. It's not because God doesn't love them. He still absolutely does! In fact, in the garden, God told them to be fruitful and multiply! So childbirth has always been a part of God's perfect plan. Now all the unpleasantness that accompany childbirth, not so much. People could not be part of God's symbol of perfection when they were in a less than perfect state. Luckily for us, God sent His only Son so that once and for all, we could have a way for our relationship to be restored with our amazing God.

Leviticus 14 & 15

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 14 & 15.

Leviticus 14 discusses more rules God set for the Israelites so that they would be set apart, and have a successful and healthy society. Since we found out in the last Leviticus episode how they were to handle individuals with skin issues, this chapter gives instructions on what is to be done once a person is no longer believed to be infectious.

The priests were to go outside of the camp to where the person was to inspect them. If the priest found them to be clean, they performed a ritual using two birds, some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and some hyssop. After this, the person was to wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and then bathe. Then the person was allowed back into the camp but had to wait another seven days before they were allowed back into their tent. And before they could enter their tent they had to shave and wash again. On the 8th day, the person was to bring a variety of offerings to the priest. The offerings that were to be presented depended on the person's financial situation. The priest was to perform another cleansing ritual which involved offering the sacrifices.

The chapter goes on to state what is to be done if a spreading mildew is found in a house. In verse 34, God tells Moses and Aaron, "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mildew in a house in that land..." showing us again that God is sovereign over everything! Even spreading mildew! God continues to say that the priest should have everyone vacate the house before going in to inspect the mildew. If the mildew had certain characteristics, they were to lock up the house for seven days to see if the mildew had spread, much like the mold. If the mildew did spread, any stones with the mildew had to be removed and replaced. Then the mildew stones were to be placed in a location outside of the city which was deemed unclean. Any plaster that was affected had to be scrapped down and replastered. Anyone who went into the house after it was closed up would be considered unclean till evening and would have to wash their clothes. But if the mildew didn't spread, then the house would be considered clean. The priest would purify the house with a ritual that again involved two birds, some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop.

Chapter 15 talks about bodily fluids and when people are considered to be unclean. Much like in other situations, once the person was believed to be good again, the

person was to wait seven days and then on the 8th day, they were to bring two birds to the priest so that one could be a sin offering and the other one a burnt offering.

I know I stated this before... but I find it amazingly loving that God gave His people rules to protect them, even though they didn't understand it at the time. It wasn't until much later that people learned of the health dangers that are associated with these things, but God knew. It makes me wonder if their limited knowledge about the situation led them to feel upset or mad about the rules that God had put in place, when all along, God was just protecting them. It also makes me wonder how many times in my life I have responded to a situation with irritation because my lack of knowledge kept me from realizing that God's hand was on the situation and He was protecting me. I can think of a few times where after everything unfolded, then I could see how God was at work the whole time and how the very thing that I thought was awful, was actually a blessing. But how great would it be to realize God's hand at work in the middle of the hardship instead of hindsight?! But this is where faith comes in. Sometimes God doesn't reveal His plan to us because He wants us to trust Him and to lean on His promises. And because He's so loving, He gave us the Bible, His word, to even warn us that we would face these times and how we should react to them so we could be prepared! And in His word, He also promises us that the plans He has for us are good. What an amazing God!

Leviticus 16 & 17

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 16 & 17.

Remember back in chapter 10 when Aaron's sons weren't doing things according to God's instruction so God sent a fire and burned them up? Well after that occurred, God told Moses to relay some instructions to his brother, Aaron, about how things should be done. For one thing, Aaron was not allowed to go into the Most Holy Place, which is where the Ark was located, whenever he wanted. He was only allowed to go at specific times and circumstances and only after he had prepared himself. Otherwise, Aaron (or whoever the high priest was after Aaron) would die. The chapter goes on to discuss everything the High Priest was to do in order to prepare to enter the Most Holy Place. This included bringing both a sin and burnt offering, bathing and then putting on the sacred garments we discussed in earlier chapters.

The Israelite community was also to supply two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for the burnt offering. Then one of the goats would be a sacrifice to the LORD and the other one would be a scapegoat. The chapter goes on to give details about how Aaron is to perform the sacrifices in order to make atonement for himself and the Israelites. Most of this involved taking the animal's blood and placing it on certain objects and places. As for the scapegoat, Aaron was to lay his hands on the head of the live goat and confess all the wickedness, rebellion and sins of the Israelites. I have a feeling Aaron was talking for a long time. When he was done, someone took the goat to a remote part of the wilderness and released it.

This was to be done every year on the 10th day of the seventh month. During this special day, no one was to work. Not even the non-Israelites that lived among them. It was a sabbath day because it was the Day of Atonement. The day God set aside for the Israelites to be cleansed of their sins.

In Chapter 17, God gave Moses more rules for the Israelites. All sacrifices to the LORD were to be brought to the Tent of Meeting at the tabernacle. They were not to offer any sacrifices away from the tabernacle. People were also not to offer sacrifices to "goat idols". Which were objects of worship back in those days that clearly fall into the category of false gods. If someone offered a sacrifice that was not brought to the Tent of Meeting, those individuals were to be "cut off from their people".

The people were also not to eat any blood. God said the blood of a creature is its life and that He gave them it to cleanse them from their sin. So if someone was to eat

blood, God said He would turn His face against him and cut him off from his people. Now, I don't want God's face to turn away from me, but I also don't want Him to turn it against me! That sounds terrifying! Anyone that hunted, was to drain the blood from the animal or bird and cover it with dirt.

This chapter finishes by saying anyone who ate something found dead or torn by animals was to wash his clothes and bathe and he would be considered unclean until evening; which we also heard back in Chapter 11. Anyone who did not wash his clothes and bath was to be held responsible.

I don't find Leviticus to be really attention grabbing. Typically, my thought and prayer when reading this section of the Bible is not, "YAY! I get to study Leviticus!" It's more like, "OK Lord, here we are at Leviticus. Please help me find You in these pages instead of just trying to get through them." And the crazy thing is, there are so many times when reading this chapter that I'm amazed by something, like little glimpses of God's character! His compassion and love for his people (and us) is astounding. We have talked before about how the penalty for sin is death and how sin puts a grand canyon between God and His people. But God allowed the Israelites to atone for their sin through the use of animals. He did this in two different ways which was demonstrated with the two goats. The blood of the first goat covered their sin so that God forgave their sin. Through the second goat, the scapegoat, God removed their guilt. Of course, using animals was only a temporary reprieve. God had a much bigger and permanent plan. That, of course, was sending The Lamb of God, His Son, to die on the cross so that His blood covered our sin and removed our guilt once and for all.

In Chapter 17, God was very clear that they were not to drink or eat the blood of any animal. Many pagan religions back then believed drinking the blood of an animal, its life force, gave you the characteristics of that creature. Like drinking the blood of a cheetah would give you speed. But God's people were to rely on God. Not by trying to steal the characteristics of other creatures. Also, the blood was the symbol of life that was given to clear the debt that sin had created, so preserving that symbolism was important. Later, Jesus shook things up by telling others, "This wine is My blood that is shed for you, drink it." We'll talk more about that later, but if you did take on the characteristics of something by drinking its blood, I would be chugging that drink, because I want to grow more and more like our loving and amazing God.

Leviticus 18 & 19

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 18 & 19.

This shouldn't be a surprise by now, but in Chapter 18, God continues to give the Israelites rules they are to live by in order for them to live in a way that sets them apart from others. The LORD starts by telling Moses to relay to the Israelites these words, "I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they did in Egypt (where they came from) or as they do in Canaan where I am bringing you (which is where they are going, otherwise known as the Promised Land). You must obey My laws and follow My decrees. I am the LORD your God."

Do you remember way back in Genesis where we talked about who Cain's wife could have been? Or more recently how Abram and Sarai were husband and wife, but also half-brother and sister? We discussed how it was possible that maybe God made the original humans so perfectly, that marrying and having babies with family members may not have been dangerous or caused genetic problems (like physical or mental problems) like it can now. And how only God could know when this practice was no longer safe. Now that is just a theory, being something people think may be possible, but either way, in this chapter, God puts the kibosh on marrying or being with family members in a way that husbands and wives are together. And once again, He goes into detail about all the family members that are now off limits when looking for a spouse. He also lists out different places a person should not look for companionship, like your neighbor's spouse for instance. They are already married! So in a not so rhyming format, God says, "Leave them alone and get your own!"

God finishes off this chapter by telling the Israelites not to offer their children as sacrifices to other gods, and that His plan is for a relationship to be between man and a woman. God said they were not to do any of these things and these actions are what caused the people the LORD was going to drive out of the land to become defiled, which kind of means to be destroyed by sin. God warns them that anyone who does any of these things are to be cut off from their people. And He finishes it all by reminding them that He has full authority to make these commands because, "I am the LORD your God."

Chapter 19 starts off much the same way Chapter 18 did with the LORD telling Moses what he is to tell the Israelites. The LORD starts with, "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy". Then God does a little recap of some rules we've heard before, starting with, respect your mother and father, keep the sabbath day holy, and don't

make any other gods for yourself. Next, we learn when they give a fellowship offering, they should prepare it in a way that it will be accepted by the LORD. Then, they have that day and the next day to eat it, but everything that remains on the third day is to be burnt up. Probably a pretty good call since there were no refrigerators and the dessert has a tendency to be kind of hot at times. Sounds like a food poisoning nightmare in the making. But even worse than food poisoning is the fact that anyone who eats of the offering on the third day instead of burning it has desecrated, meaning tainted, ruined or made unholy what was holy to the LORD, so now they are to be “cut off from their people”.

Then God puts a plan into place to take care of travelers and the poor. He says when they harvest their field, they are to leave the very edges in place and when they gather the grapes in the vineyard, it's a one time deal. They are not to go through a second time and they weren't to pick up anything that fell either in the field or in the vineyard. Instead, all that was to be left for the poor and traveling.

Right behind that, He says, “Do not steal, do not lie and do not deceive (or trick) one another, and don't swear by my name. I am the LORD.” God states, “I am the LORD” multiple times, but I really love that He said it after telling people not to use His name for swearing or in vain. He's not some punchline or some term to be used when something is unbelievable. He's the LORD, the maker of everything and His name has power and meaning.

Moving on to a whole list of don'ts:

Don't rob or cheat your neighbor

Don't hold back payment from someone you hired

Don't curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind. (I feel like this is more metaphorical than actually tripping someone who can't see, but either way.. Not a good thing to do!)

Don't be unfair just because you like or dislike someone more.

Don't spread bad talk about others (otherwise known as gossip)

Don't do anything to threaten your neighbor's life.

Don't hate a fellow Israelite in your heart, but just tell them straight out if you have an issue.

Don't seek revenge or hold a grudge, but love your neighbor as yourself. (I'm sure we've all heard that before).

And then there are some rules about not mating two different types of animals, not planting two different types of seeds in a field and not wearing two different types of materials together. Followed up with rules to ensure men did not mistreat their female

servants. It also talks about when they can eat fruit from a newly planted tree, what hair is allowed to be cut, how not to treat a daughter, and again don't eat meat with blood in it, don't cut or tattoo yourself, don't seek answers from sources that use spirits other than God,

We also hear of some things the people should do like observe the sabbath, stand up in the presence of elders to show respect, treat foreigners well and love them as yourself and be honest. And it is once again finished off with: Keep all My decrease and all My laws and follow them. I am the Lord. Which as we said, is also said multiple times throughout this whole chapter. I believe God kept saying it over and over to 1) remind them who He is and 2) remind them that He has full authority to set the rules and enforce them if need be. He is the LORD! Creator of everything. Full power. Full authority. Holy and to be respected.

But that's a lot of rules. And some of them seem pretty crazy, like not wearing two different kinds of materials together. What's that about? A lot of these rules spoke to the culture of that day and many of them have to do with many things that pagans did, who are people that do not worship God. So many of these rules don't really apply anymore. How do we know which rules still apply? The ones Christians are still supposed to follow are addressed again by Jesus in the New Testament.

And I'm glad not all of them still apply because every time I see a long list of rules, I immediately feel defeated because although some of the rules are easy to follow, there is no way I'm not going to break a rule at some point. But let's focus on what this long list of do's and don'ts tell us about God. God is compassionate. He puts laws into place to protect the poor and the foreigners, people that aren't even considered His chosen people. And how about putting rules into place to respect the elderly? The poor, foreigners, and the elderly, all groups of people who are at risk of being overlooked, tossed aside and taken advantage of. But God sees them and loves them. And praise God that He is compassionate and merciful because none of us can ever be enough or do enough to reach His holy standards. We are all at risk because of sin. But just like He had a plan to take care of vulnerable people, He had a plan to take care of all of us by sending His Son to pay the price for our sin! What an amazing God!

Leviticus 20 & 21

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 20 & 21.

God continues to give instructions to Moses to relay to the Israelites about how they are to live. Much of this we have heard before, but the fact that God is repeating it shows He really knows His people and what they struggle with and He really wants to make sure they get the message. God starts off again by saying that no one should sacrifice their children to pagan gods. This includes any Israelites or foreigners living among them. If someone does sacrifice their child, they are to be put to death. And God really shows His heart on the situation by saying that anyone who turns a blind eye to a man who has sacrificed his child instead of putting him to death as instructed, well then God will turn his face against that man and he will be cut off from his people. God states He will do the same thing to anyone who looks to sources other than God for answers as to what they should do or what will take place in the future.

God goes on to give rules on how people should treat their parents along with who people were allowed to have relationships with and when. God then reminds them that they are to keep all His decrees and laws so that the land where they are going won't vomit them out. Pretty descriptive. He warns them not to live like other nations, who the LORD was driving out of the land so He could give it to His people, a land flowing with milk and honey. The Lord again reminds them that they are to live differently and eat differently to set them apart from everyone else. They were to be holy because He is holy and He is their God.

In Chapter 21, The LORD gives rules for the priest such as not touching a dead body unless it's one of the relatives specifically stated, not shaving their heads or edges of their beards, who they are allowed to marry and even some rules on how they should react to their daughters if they choose to behave in an ungodly way. God said, "Consider the priest holy because I am holy- I who make you holy."

The LORD also has additional rules specifically for the high priest. Since this priest has been anointed by God for a specific role, he is held to a higher standard than the other priest and has more strict rules. For instance, he can't even enter a place where there's a dead body or he would be considered unclean. He also has rules on who he can marry and one of them is that the woman must be from the Israelite nation. Again, the Lord says, "I am the LORD who makes him holy."

The LORD continues to say that any descendent of Aaron who has any kind of defect, like being blind or having a deformed hand or foot, that person was not allowed to present an offering to the LORD, go near the curtain that separates the Most Holy Place from the rest of the tabernacle or approach the altar. However, they were allowed to eat the most holy food from God and the holy food. The LORD again states, “I am the LORD, who makes them holy.”

This may sound harsh, but it’s the same thing we talked about in prior chapters when people had skin issues or some other worldly issue that they were dealing with. God doesn’t love these people less. But the whole tabernacle and sacrifices to God were to paint a picture that represents a perfect relationship with God. However, because of “the fall” and man’s decision to disobey God and sin, we now have to face worldly consequences like being born crippled. So despite God’s love for these people, they have very visible consequences of the fall on them so they can’t be part of the perfect picture that represents the time before the fall. Just like if you were taking a picture that represents what our society looks like today, you wouldn’t take a picture of people living in tents and riding horses for transportation. That would not be an accurate reflection of today’s technology loaded world.

Also, we talked previously about the fact that many of these rules don’t apply anymore and even back then, not everyone had to follow the same set of rules. To help understand that better, it helps to know that God gave the people three different types of rules. There were civil laws that helped the Israelites know how to act as a society and these had specific consequences to them, like paying back money or putting someone to death. Laws that dealt with morality where God told the people what is right and wrong. And Ceremony laws regarding the different rules for sacrifices and being clean and so that the Israelites lived differently and set themselves apart from other nations. We heard a lot of these rules today regarding the priest, like not shaving their heads and who can offer the sacrifice.

When Jesus came and died on the cross, He made the ceremonial laws obsolete, meaning, they don’t apply to us anymore because His death on the cross was the final sacrifice. Now we should live our lives differently in a way that reflects God’s love and character, but men can now cut their hair and we can get crazy by wearing two different types of material at once if we want (if you all remember that one from a few chapters ago!). And since we aren’t the nation of Israel from back in that day and society, the civil rules and their penalties no longer apply. However, many of the civil rules overlap with the rules on morality. And the rules on morality aren’t going away because they reflect the character of God which doesn’t change. So although God still clearly does not approve of someone trying to steal their neighbor’s wife, because that behavior is

morally wrong, the civil action of putting that person to death no longer applies. And again, when Jesus comes, He talks about this more, which we will read about in the New Testament.

Another thing to pay attention to in this chapter is how the LORD states multiple times, "I am the LORD who makes you/he/them holy." God gives them these rules to follow but reminds them over and over that following the rules is not what makes a person holy. Only God can make a person holy. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves holy, it's a gift from God. We just need to accept that gift by dedicating ourselves to Him and making Him the LORD of our lives. Our amazing God.

Leviticus 22 & 23

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapters 22 and 23.

In Chapter 22, God continues to give the priests instructions and starts by telling them to treat the offerings for the LORD with respect. If any of the priests were considered unclean, they were not to come near the offering or to eat any of the portion of the offering that was given to the priests as food. The LORD stated that the priests were to keep His requirements so that they would not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt, which means thinking that something is worthless or despicable.

The LORD continues by telling them who is allowed to eat the priests' portion of the offering. These people mainly consist of the priests and their dependents. However, no guests of the priests were allowed to eat it. If anyone did eat the sacred offering by mistake, they had to pay it back plus an extra one-fifth of its worth back to the priests. Throughout all these instructions, God reminds them, "I am the LORD who makes them holy."

Next, the priests are given instructions on what sacrifices are acceptable. Which basically is an animal without any defects. The only time an animal with defects was accepted was when it was a freewill offering, which was just a gift to the LORD. Animals with any defects were not allowed to be an offering used to make atonement or for a vow. God also stated they were to allow a calf to stay with its mother for at least seven days before it could be offered and they were not to offer a calf and its parent on the same day. The LORD finishes this chapter by reminding them, "Keep My commandments and follow them; do not profane My name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites; I am the LORD who makes you holy and brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

In Chapter 23 we learn what feasts the LORD proclaimed as sacred and instructed the people to have. Of course, there was the Sabbath Day, which was the seventh day of the week we heard about earlier. On this day they were to rest and think on God.

The Passover festival, which included the feast of Unleavened Bread, was to celebrate what God did for them when He freed them from Egypt. During this time, they were to eat bread with no yeast and they were to present an offering to the LORD every day for a week. On the 1st and 7th day of the festival, they were not to do any regular work and they were to hold an assembly, which is when they all gather to honor God.

Next was the firstfruits. When the Israelites finally got to the promised land, when they reaped the harvest every year, they were to take part of the first grain that was harvested and give it to the priest. The priests were to present the grain to the LORD, along with other offerings, on the day after the Sabbath day. The people were not to eat any of the harvest until this took place. This was to thank God for blessing them by providing food. Seven weeks after this took place, they were to have the Feast of Weeks in which they were to offer more sacrifices to the LORD, do no regular work and hold a sacred assembly. They were to do this no matter where they moved to. God also reminded them again that they were not to harvest all the way to the edge of the field but to leave that portion for the poor and the traveling.

The next feast was the Feast of Trumpets. This was kind of like the opening ceremony for a very eventful month. This feast was to take place on the 1st day of the 7th month. They were to have a sacred assembly, do a big trumpet blast, do no regular work and make an offering to the LORD.

On the 10th day of the 7th month, they were to have the Day of Atonement. On this day, they were to hold a sacred assembly and not do any work, or anything else really, except focus on God and making things right with Him. They were to also give an offering to the LORD. The LORD said He would destroy anyone who did any work on that day.

On the 15th day of the 7th month, after they had harvested the crops, they were to begin the Feast of Tabernacles and it was to last for seven days. Much like the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were to hold a sacred assembly and do no work on the 1st day. They were to live in booths and give offerings to the LORD and celebrate for seven days. They were to do this as a lasting command, even when they had a house, so that they would remember when God brought them out of Egypt. To close out the celebration, on the 8th day they were to hold another sacred assembly, making an offering to the LORD and rest. The offerings for these feasts were to be in addition to any they were to give for the Sabbath or for an oath, etc.

I find it incredible how many times in the Old Testament, God shows us glimpses of how He was going to send Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. God would only accept perfect animals for an atonement sacrifice. Just like His perfect, flawless Son. But I LOVE the fact that God is willing to accept flawed animals for a freewill offering, because we are flawed... and all we have to offer Him is a flawed human and a grateful heart.

Also, the all-powerful, creator of all, could demand that we sit around miserable and reflect on how unworthy we are. But instead of doing this, He commanded that the people have festivals and celebrate and focus on how great He is! He is such a gracious God! And... He's an amazing God!

Leviticus 24

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapter 24.

In this chapter, the LORD continues to give instruction. He instructed the Israelites to bring olive oil to the priest so that they could keep the lamps right outside of the Most Holy Place burning at all times, even throughout the night. They were never allowed to let the flame burn out. Also, every Sabbath they were to set out 12 loaves of bread, in two stacks, on the gold table as an offering to the LORD on behalf of the Israelites. The LORD said this was to be a lasting ordinance.

The chapter goes on to show us just how serious it is to dishonor God. Especially when the Israelites were called out to be God's people and live for Him. So, a son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out to the camp and got into a fight with one of the Israelites. During all this, the man cursed the name of God. The people took the man into custody until they heard God's instruction on what should be done with him. God instructed that the man was to be taken outside of the camp and stoned to death. God stated that anyone who blasphemed God's name was to be put to death.

This chapter also gives direction on how to handle certain crimes. Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal has to make restitution (meaning they have to make up for the person's loss in some way). However, any person that takes the life of another person is to be put to death. If a person injures their neighbor, they are to be injured in the same way. This is where the phrase, "eye for an eye" and a "tooth for a tooth" comes from.

This chapter seems pretty brutal. We see God instruct a man to be stoned to death for blaspheming His name. That may seem kind of harsh, but 1) God's name is not to be taken lightly. It has power and meaning. The name of God shouldn't just roll off our tongue mindlessly, or be used as a phrase when we find something surprising. It should be said with thoughtful consideration. God was setting a precedent for the expectation of when and how His name should be used. And 2), like in many other situations, we might not fully understand why God does what He does. But in situations like this, we need to remember that we are all sinful and the penalty for sin is death. So really, God choosing not to kill all of us is merciful, because it is what we all deserve. Also, God has an abundance of knowledge we fail to possess and we know He is a just God. So He is 100% aware of someone's past, future and heart, and He judges accordingly. But Jesus shows us God's merciful nature in the New Testament. The people brought a woman to Jesus that committed an act where the punishment was to be stoned to death. The people asked Jesus what they were to do and Jesus said, the one of you

that is without sin should throw the first stone. Of course, they all had sin, so the woman was spared. Which also leads to the next topic about the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. People like to use this as a revenge statement. As in, someone did this to me so I'm going to do it back to them. But there is a difference between justice in a society and revenge. People are assigned punishments because there are consequences to actions and that help keep law and order in society. Revenge is when someone is doing something because they are mad and it makes them feel better to hurt another person. That is a sin.

The scripture above about an eye for an eye, is stating that the punishment for a crime should fit the crime, but not exceed it. And typically, this is talking about when a person chooses to do harmful actions on purpose, not an accident. So if a neighbor accidentally trips you and you lose a tooth, running over and ripping a tooth out of his mouth is not ok. Likewise, if a neighbor trips you on purpose and you lose a tooth, shooting him is in no way equal to him tripping you! That's what this scripture is trying to say. Yes, there should be consequences for actions, but it should be just and equal to the act that was committed. However, we should always remember that God showed mercy to us when we didn't deserve it and our goal is to become more and more like our amazing God.

Leviticus 25

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapter 25.

This chapter starts with God giving some rules for the land. The LORD says, "When you enter the land I will give you, the land itself must observe the sabbath to the LORD."

The people were allowed to work the land for six years, but the seventh year was called the "Sabbath Year". The people were not to sow the fields or prune the vines to help them grow. They were to let the land rest. Anything that grew on its own could be eaten by the people, their servants and any hired help, as well as their animals. But they were not allowed to collect all the food, or harvest it, as they typically did.

Then we learn about "The Year of Jubilee". This year was a big deal! The Lord said that the people were to track seven "Sabbath Years". So if you're doing the math, that's 49 years since a Sabbath year came every seven years. Then, on the 10th day of the 7th month of the 49th year, which we learned was "The Day of Atonement", they were to sound trumpets through all the land and announce the coming of the Year of Jubilee, the 50th year. The Year of Jubilee was kind of like a reset. God told the people that when they reached the promised land, God would give them the land divided up into sections by the tribes of Israel. But ultimately, both the people and the land belong to God and He uses the Year of Jubilee to remind them of this. In this year, the people were to return to their family's land. The reason they could do this is because the land was never to be sold because it belonged to God. So they were only allowed to put the land up for rent. Basically, if someone purchased land, they were actually only purchasing the number of crops they were able to harvest before the Year of Jubilee, knowing full well that they had to give the land back to the original family at that time. Because of this, the LORD told the people that when they sold the land, they were to make the price fair based on how many harvest years were left before The Year of Jubilee. If a man sold his land because he was poor and had no relatives to help him, he still had the ability to go back and redeem his property at any point, if he had the money to do so. Meaning, If a man sold his land to another man for the five years left before Jubilee, but then regained his wealth three years later, the man was able to go back to the man he sold his land to and reclaim his property, but he had to give the buyer money to make up for the last two years.

Also, they were not to work the land during the Jubilee year. And if you remember, they also were not allowed to work the land during the Sabbath year, which was the year before that. So that's two years of not being able to plant or harvest food! How were these people going to eat and survive? Well, their God is in control of everything, including the land and its crops. God told them that in the sixth-year crops would

produce so much that they would still be eating the food from that harvest when they were harvesting the crops three years later. This is another way God tested His people. They had to trust that God would provide what they needed to survive during the two years God commanded them and the land to rest!

God also gives them rules on their housing. If the house is outside the city walls, it follows the same rules as the land and is to be returned in the Year of Jubilee. However, if the house is within the city walls, once the owner sells their house, they only have a year to change their mind and buy the house back. If they fail to buy back the house within a year, it becomes the permanent property of the buyer. The only exception to this is a house belonging to a Levite. The Levites, which were the priests, were able to redeem their house at any time and if the house wasn't redeemed prior, it would be returned to them in the Year of Jubilee.

God continues by telling the Israelites that they are to help any of their fellow Israelites who became poor so that they could continue to live among them. They were not to take advantage of the situation by loaning them money with interest, which means to make someone pay back more money than they originally borrowed or by selling them food.

If their countrymen became poor and must sell themselves, the Israelites were to treat the man as a hired worker and not a slave. Slaves were considered property and were integrated into the family at times, whereas all the Israelites already belong to God. And just like the land, the person who sold himself and their family were to be released in the Year of Jubilee, to return to their family's land. If an alien or foreigner in the land purchases the Israelite, they were also to treat the man like a hired worker and release the man and his family in the Year of Jubilee. However, a relative of the man or the man himself if he acquires wealth could redeem him by paying for the remaining years of service so the man can be released earlier.

I love that God makes provisions for the poor. We learn in earlier chapters that He told the people to leave the edges of the field for those in need so they could reap it and have food. God also told the people that they were to give the poor and hungry food when they were in need and that they were to loan them money without charging them interest. But I also find it interesting that God expects the poor to act, to put forth effort in making their situation better and to act honorably as well. They had to reap the fields to get food, meaning they didn't have someone give them a handout, they still had to work for it. They also had to pay back the money they borrowed. They were not allowed to take advantage of other people's kindness. God still held them accountable for acting responsible and treating others fairly. While we are on this earth, we are gifted God's

forgiveness of sin through His Son's death on the cross. We just have to accept it, but we are not entitled to anything. We deserve nothing but death due to our sin. But praise God that He continues to show us grace by blessing us beyond what we deserve and by placing people in our lives that are willing to help us in our time of need. What an amazing God!

Leviticus 26

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapter 26.

The Lord again reminds the Israelites not to make any other idols for themselves and to observe the Sabbath days as He instructed. The LORD then goes on to tell the people the reward they will receive if they follow His commands and laws. This reward consists of rain and a crop that will give them a bounty of food. The LORD also says that the people will live safely in the land and they will be at peace. He even says that He will remove the wild beast from the land and that they will be able to chase after their enemies without fear. God says that five Israelites could chase after a hundred enemies and a hundred Israelites could chase after 10,000 enemies and despite being outnumbered, the enemies would fall to the sword right in front of the Israelites..

If the people follow God and keep His commandments and laws, then He will look on them with favor and increase their numbers and remember the covenant (or promise) that He made with them. He will bless them so much that they will have to clear out what's left of the last harvest to make room for the next harvest. And God will live among them and be their God and they will be His people. God then reminds them again that He is able to do all these things because He is the LORD and He has already freed them from being slaves in Egypt and has allowed them to walk with their heads held high.

Then, in contrast with this wonderful life described above, God tells them what will happen if they disobey God's direction. It's slightly terrifying. God says if they choose to disobey Him, He will bring sudden terror on them, along with wasting disease and fever that will destroy their sight and drain them of strength. On top of that, they will work the land in vain because their enemies will come and eat all the food. And not only will their enemies eat their food, God will set His face against them so that their enemies will conquer them and rule over them. And the Israelites will be so full of fear, that they will flee in fear when no one is even chasing them.

But this is just Phase 1. If the Israelites still do not turn back to God and repent, or ask for forgiveness, then God will punish them for their sins, seven times over. The LORD says He will break their pride by making the sky like iron and the ground like bronze, and the land will not be fruitful. If the people still refuse to listen to God, then God will multiply their suffering and send wild animals against them to rob them of their family, destroy their cattle and make them so few in number that the roads will appear deserted.

If they still refuse to accept God's correction and continue to be hostile towards God, God says, "I myself will be hostile towards you and will afflict you for your sin seven times over." Not the words I ever want to hear spoken to me by our all-powerful God.

God says He will bring the sword against them for breaking their covenant with Him. God said He would also send a plague to them, will give them into enemy hands and would cut off their food supply so that they had so little food, that ten women could bake all their loaves of bread in one oven at the same time. They would have to portion out the little food they had and it wouldn't be enough to satisfy them.

If the people still would not repent, things would just keep getting worse for them. They would become so hungry, that they would start looking at their family members as a source of food. God said He would destroy the places that they made to honor other gods and He would pile the dead on top of the idols they made for themselves. He would destroy their cities and land to the point that even their enemies would be appalled. Then God would chase them out of the land so that the land itself could have the rest to make up for the sabbath rest that the people did not give it.

For the Israelites that are left, the LORD said that He would make them so fearful in the lands of their enemies, that even a leaf being blown by the wind would strike so much fear in them that they would stumble over each other while attempting to run away even though no one is chasing them and they would die in the lands of their enemies.

But...While they are in the lands of their enemies, if the people confess their sin and humble themselves, then the LORD said He will remember His covenant with Abraham and He will not reject or destroy them completely because, as God states, "I am the LORD their God." The chapter ends with saying, "These are the laws and regulations that the LORD established at Mount Sinai between Himself and the Israelites through Moses."

Parts of this chapter seem pretty harsh, but God is not doing this to be mean. He's not a mean God. He is a gracious and forgiving God. But...He is also a just God and there are consequences for sin and defiance. And despite how vicious parts of this chapter seem, this chapter actually shows God's love for His people. "How?" you ask... God told His people exactly what was expected from them and He even made a way for them to be forgiven when they messed up, so they could be right with Him again. He promised to bless the nation of Israel and watch after them if they kept the promises they made to Him. And, as any loving parent would, He warned them of the consequences they would face if His people, the ones He brought out of Egypt to enter

into a special, committed, loving relationship with, turned their backs on Him and treated Him with contempt.

This kind of makes me think of something my mom would remind me of when my boys were going through their toddler years. Some were a little more stubborn and defiant than others, but all of them wanted to express their independent will and desires. And they all wanted to test the boundaries that I had set in place. Mom would say, "Carefully choose which battles you are going to fight and be sure to win the battles you do." This is good advice from an amazing and loving mother. What she meant by this was, kids are going to be kids. They have to be able to make mistakes, practice independence and ask questions. But when one of my children, who I love with all my heart, acted downright defiance or spiteful, that could not be tolerated. Those are the times when this momma went to battle. And I was not about to lose that battle even if I had to spend the next three hours picking up my child and sitting him back on the step till he was finally willing to apologize and act kind. Because I knew if I lost that battle, if I let that behavior go without repercussions... Well, that little toddler will become an entitled, selfish, nightmare of a teenager and adult.

That is kind of what God was doing here with His people. Out of love, He was telling them that certain behaviors and attitudes, like treating Him with spite, would not be tolerated. If they chose to act in this manner, He would go to battle with them until they changed their behavior and attitude. And it was a battle He was not going to lose. This was a loving warning that was given to the people by their, and our, amazing God.

Leviticus 27

On this episode of Kids Bible Breakdown, we're breaking down Leviticus Chapter 27. The last chapter of the book!

Once more, the chapter begins with the LORD telling Moses instructions to pass on to the Israelites. The LORD then gives details regarding making a special vow to dedicate someone or something to the LORD. Dedicating something to the LORD was completely voluntary. It was a gift to the LORD beyond the mandatory tithing that we learned about earlier.

The way it typically worked was a person would vow to dedicate themselves, someone or something to the LORD. That someone or something was assigned a value. The person or thing would then be used to serve the temple or priest. Then, if that person who made the dedication wanted to redeem what they had dedicated so that it was no longer utilized for that purpose, they were to pay a price to the priest based on the assigned value or the rules given below.

It should come as no surprise that in a culture that survived on manual labor, a man in his prime was set at the highest price, with the next highest price being a woman in her prime. If a poor person wanted to make a dedication but could not afford to pay the set prices, the priest would adjust the values based on what the person could afford.

If a person dedicates an animal to the LORD that is worthy of being used as a sacrifice, then that animal becomes holy to the LORD and cannot be exchanged for another animal. If the animal is not an animal that could be used as a sacrifice, then the priest will set the value of its worth. If the owner decides they want to keep the animal, or redeem it, they are to pay the value that was set for the animal plus one-fifth to the priest. The same thing basically applies if someone dedicated their house or their land. Of course, there were additional considerations with land because of the land returning to the original family in the year of Jubilee.

The LORD says the first born cannot be dedicated to Him because the first born already belongs to Him, as we learned in earlier chapters. The LORD also says anything that is devoted (which means to give to Him permanently), becomes holy and cannot be redeemed like the other things that were dedicated to Him could.

Also, since the people were already instructed to tithe one tenth of their crop, this already belongs to the LORD. So if a person wanted to redeem it, they were to pay the priest the value of the crop they wanted to redeem, plus one-fifth. Also, every tenth

animal of the shepherds belonged to the LORD and was considered holy, regardless if the animal was good quality or bad. Because of this, the animal was not to be substituted or both the original animal and the substitute would both become holy and cannot be redeemed. So it sounds like if the person tried to substitute an animal, they would really just be giving a second animal. The chapter ends with saying, "These are the commands the LORD gave to Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites."

And with that... we close out the book of Leviticus.

At first, I thought that ending on this chapter instead of Chapter 26 was odd. Why wouldn't you end a book that basically is all about rules and instructions, with the reward of following the rules or the negative consequences of not following the rules? Adding on a chapter about dedicating and devoting things to the LORD seemed an odd way to wrap things up. Plus, why would a person dedicate something to the LORD anyways when they would just have to pay money to redeem it? But then I thought, the Bible is an instruction manual and a love story. Even though many of the decrees and rules given in the book of Leviticus no longer apply, when reading the book, it seems to weigh in more on the instruction manual side. And even though these last two chapters still give instructions they actually focus more on love.

The last chapter focused on the LORD's love for His people and how He would bless them or discipline them to turn them back to Him. This chapter is about the Israelites showing their love to God and recognizing what He had done for them and was still doing for them. Just like a parent buys gifts for their children for no other reason than because they love them, dedicating something to the LORD was a way for people to show their love and appreciation to God. Many people still dedicate their service to the church today. They greet people or teach Sunday school or do any number of jobs to help the church grow and spread the word of God. However, anyone who accepts the gift of forgiveness from sin through Jesus dying on the cross has already been redeemed through His blood, so we don't have a redemption cost. But all of us should still dedicate ourselves every day to following the will of our loving and amazing God.