

Levitical Regulations

Regulations Regarding the Priesthood

The High Priest: Only Aaron and his first-born son, in succession.

The Priesthood: Males twenty years and older from the tribe of Levi. No allotment of land was given them, but they were given thirteen cities in Israel in which to live when they were not serving before the Lord. They served three months out the year in rotation. Their income and food were from their portion of the offerings given to the Lord.

The High Priest's Garments: Every detail was prescribed by God (Ex. 28. See also Ex. 39). Consisted of a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban and a sash.

The Breastplate of Judgment: About ten inches square (a span by a span) made of gold (beaten into thin sheets and then cut into thin strips of thread), blue, purple, and scarlet thread and finely woven linen doubled over to form a square. It contained four rows of stone, three in each row. The first row was: sardius, topaz, and emerald. The second row: turquoise, sapphire, and diamond. The third row: jacinth, agate, and amethyst. And the fourth row: beryl, onyx, and jasper. Each stone had a name of one of the twelve tribes engraved into it. Braided gold chains were woven into its edges. It was held to the ephod by rings at the top and bottom with blue cords. Placed inside the breastplate were the Urim and Thummim (literally, "the lights and the perfections." The LXX translates it, "revelation and truth.") What exactly they were cannot be accurately determined from Scripture.

The Ephod: An ornamented vest made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet threads and of fine woven linen, like the breastplate. It was two pieces that were joined at the shoulders each bearing an onyx stone with the names of six of the tribes of Israel. It also had gold rings attached to it to receive the breastplate. The gothic chasubles were reminiscent of this.

The Robe: A robe made all of woven blue thread with an opening in the top that contained a woven binding. On its hem it had embroidered pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet thread, and gold bells alternating.

The Turban: Contained a plate of pure gold with the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD engraved into it. This was attached to the turban with a blue cord. The turban was made of finely woven linen.

The Tunic: It was made of finely woven linen. These were also made for Aaron's sons.

The Sash: Made of woven linen with blue, purple and scarlet threads. Aaron's sons were also given sashes.

Trousers: To cover their nakedness, Aaron and his sons were given linen trousers to wear under their priestly garments. They reached from the waist to the thighs.

Various Kinds of Offerings

Burnt Offerings: *What is offered?* Bulls (Lev. 1:3-9), Sheep or Goats (Lev. 1:10-13), Birds (Turtledoves or Young Pigeons) (Lev. 1:14-17) according to one's wealth. All animals were to be without blemish or spot. *Method?* The one offering laid his hands on the animal to signify that the animal was taking his place, the animal was killed at the door to the tabernacle of meeting, the blood was sprinkled around the altar, then the animal was cut into parts, or partially divided if it was a bird, its entrails washed, and then the entire animal was burned completely. *Purpose?* It was for atonement of general sins and to signify that the entire offering of that general sin was dedicated to God.

Grain Offerings: *What is offered?* Fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense (Lev. 2:1-3), or baked flour mixed with oil and without leaven, or honey, but seasoned with salt (Lev. 2:4-13), grain offering of firstfruits included

green heads of grain roasted on a fire, or the grain beaten from full heads (Lev. 2:14-16). *Method?* A handful of flour, or a “memorial portion,” was burned and the rest was food for the priests. *Purpose?* Thankfulness for the first fruits of the harvest.

The Aaronic priests also had a daily grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil and baked in a pan; half offered in the morning and half offered in the evening. It was completely burned (Lev. 6:19-23).

Peace Offerings: *What is offered?* Male or female from the cattle (Lev. 3:1-5), a male or female sheep (Lev. 3:6-11), or a male or female goat (Lev. 3:12-16) according to one’s wealth and all without blemish. *Method?* The one offering would lay his hands on the animal to signify the animal was taking his place, it would be killed at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, its blood sprinkled on the altar, and then the fat and kidneys were burned. The rest was eaten by both the priests and the one offering to signify fellowship and peace. *Purpose?* Offered as thanks for an unexpected blessing, when a vow was completed, and for general thankfulness.

Sin Offerings: *What is offered?* If a priest unintentionally sins, he would bring a young bull without blemish (Lev. 4:1-12). If the entire congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, they would offer a young bull without blemish (Lev. 4:13-21). If a ruler sins unintentionally, he would bring a male kid goat (Lev. 4:22-26) without blemish. If any individual who is not a priest sins unintentionally, he would bring a female kid goat (Lev. 4:27-31) without blemish, or a female lamb without blemish (Lev. 4:32-35). *Method?* The priest would lay his hands on the head of the bull at the tabernacle of meeting, kill the bull before the Lord. He would take some blood to the tabernacle of meeting, dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil before the sanctuary. Some of the blood would be put on the horns of the altar of incense, and pour the rest at the base of the altar of burnt offerings. The fat and the kidneys would then be removed from the animal and burned. The rest was taken outside the camp and burned completely. In the case of the whole people, the elders of the people, on behalf of the people, would lay their hands on the bull, it would be killed before the tabernacle of meeting, the priest would take the blood dip his finger in it and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord in front of the veil, some of the blood would be put on the horns of the altar of incense, and the rest of the blood was poured at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The fat and kidneys were burned on the altar, and the rest was completely burned outside the camp. The ruler shall lay his hands on the male goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offerings before the Lord. The priest would take some of the blood and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and the rest would be poured at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The rest of the sacrifice is handled like a peace offering (the fat burned and the rest eaten). In the case of the individual, the same is done as for the ruler, just with a female goat. *Purpose?* To provide atonement for the individual or group who sinned unintentionally.

Guilt or Trespass Offerings: *What is offered?* A female lamb or kid without blemish (Lev. 5:6), or two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 5:7-10), or an ephah of fine flour (Lev. 5:11-13) depending on the person’s wealth. If the person he sins in regard to property a ram is offered without blemish, and the full amount plus one-fifth shall be restored to the person wronged (Lev. 6:5-7) *Method?* Handled the same as a sin offering for an individual who is not a priest (fat and kidneys burned and the rest eaten by the priests). *Purpose?* Lev. 5:1-5 and Lev. 6:1-5 list different examples where this is necessary. It was to provide atonement for the sin that was committed unintentionally, after it was made known.

Other Offerings

Drink Offerings: Ex. 29:40-41. Consisted of wine (Num. 15:5; Hos. 9:4) poured around the altar (Ex. 30:9). It was added to the meat offerings (Num. 6:15, 17; 2 Kings 16:13; Joel 1:9, 13; 2:14), it was presented daily (Ex. 29:40), on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9), and on feast days (28:14). One-fourth of an hin of wine was required for one lamb, one-third for a ram, and one-half for a bull (Num. 15:5; 28:7, 14).

Wave Offerings: Lev. 7:30, 34. In the wave offering the priest laid the object to be waved upon the hands of the offerer, and then placed his own hands underneath, and moved the hands of the offerer backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction, to indicate by the movement forwards, the direction towards the altar, of the symbolical transference of it to God, and by the movement backwards, the reception of it back again, as a present which God

handed over to His servants the priests. In the peace offerings the waving was performed with the breast-piece, which was called the “wave-breast” (v. 34, Lev. 10:14, 15; Num. 6:20; 18:18; Ex. 29:27). At the consecration of the priests it was performed with the fat portions, the right leg, and with some cakes of bread, as well as with the breast of the fill offering (Lev. 8:25-29; Ex. 29:22-26). The ceremony of waving was also carried out with the sheaf of first-fruits at the feast of Passover; with the loaves of the first-fruits, and thank offering lambs, at the feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:11, 20); with the shoulder and meat offering of the Nazarite (Num. 6:20); with the trespass offering of the leper (Lev. 14:12, 24); with the jealousy offering (Num. 5:25); and lastly with the Levites, at their consecration (Num. 8:11ff.). In the case of all these sacrifices, the object waved, after it had been offered symbolically to the Lord by means of the waving, became the property of the priests. But of the lambs, which were waved at the feast of Pentecost before they were slaughtered, and of the lamb which was brought as a trespass offering by the leper, the fat was burned up on the altar.

Heave Offerings: Lev. 7:14, 32, 34. In the heave offering the upper part of hind-leg is often called “the heave-leg” (v. 34, Lev. 10:14, 15; Num. 6:20; Ex. 29:27), because it was lifted or heaved off from the sacrificial animal, as a gift of honor for the priest. Some attach to the word the meaning of elevation, which consisted in presenting the offering by a motion up and down, signifying the Lord as ruler of Heaven. The first fruits offered in harvest-time (Num. 15:20, 21) were heave offerings.

Daily, Weekly and Yearly Sacrifices and Rites

Anointing Oil: Made of 500 shekels of liquid myrrh; 250 shekels of cinnamon; 250 shekels of cane from the balsam shrub, 500 shekels of cassia buds, and a hin of olive oil. Used to consecrate all of the articles made for worship, the garments of the high priest and his sons’ garments, and the high priest and his sons, too. This was done only once (Ex. 30:34-38).

Altar of Incense: The high priest burned sweet incense (made of a mixture of equal amounts of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense) on it twice a day. In the morning when he tends the lamps, and at twilight when he lights the lamps (Ex. 30:22-30).

Lampstand: Filled with pure olive oil each morning and lit at twilight each evening. Tended to by the high priest from evening until morning (Lev. 24:1-4).

Altar of Burnt Offering: The burnt offering was to be burned upon the hearth all night until morning and the fire kept going. In the morning the priest put on his linen garment and trousers and removed the ashes, then he put on other garments and took the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. The fire on the altar was not to go out. The priest burned wood on it every morning (Lev. 6:8-13). Also offered daily a grain offering of 1/10 of an ephah of fine flour; half in the morning and half in the evening. It was to be made in a pan with oil and wholly burned.

Table of the Showbread: New bread placed on it every Sabbath. Twelve loaves made of 2/10 of an ephah of fine flour each and unleavened. Placed in two rows with six in each row. This bread was covered with pure frankincense and was only eaten by the high priest and his sons in a holy place (Lev. 24:5-9).

Day of Atonement: The high priest would lay his hands on the head of the sacrificial goat (called the “scapegoat”) and would confess the sins of the whole people of Israel once a year on the 10th day of the seventh month. The goat would then be led away into a solitary land bearing away the sins of the people of Israel (Lev. 16:1-34).

Two Silver Trumpets: Used to call the Israelites to the tabernacle of meeting when both were sounded or when one was sounded the elders of the people were to gather to Moses. They were also used to indicate the time when the camp was to advance, or as a warning and preparation for war. Aaron and his sons were to blow the trumpets (Num. 10:1-10).

Purification Rites

Mother's After Childbirth: When a mother conceives and gives birth to a boy, she would be considered unclean for seven days. The boy would be circumcised on the eighth day, and she would remain unclean for thirty-three more days. Forty days in total. When she gave birth to a girl, she would be unclean for two weeks and then remain in the "blood of her purification" for sixty-six more days. Eighty days in total. When the time of her purification was over, she was to bring a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or turtle dove as a sin offering. If she was poor, she was allowed to bring two young pigeons or two turtledoves, one as a burnt offering the other as a sin offering. (Lev. 12:1-8)

Leprosy and General Uncleanness: The priests were to examine the potential leprous sore and determine if it was leprosy or not. If it was leprosy the person was considered unclean. If it did not appear to be leprosy, the individual was separated from the rest of the people for seven days, and then reexamined. If his sore was healing, he was pronounced clean, if not he was pronounced unclean. (Lev. 13:1-59)

Purification of Leprosy and Uncleanness: When an individual no longer has leprosy or no longer has a sore that would render him unclean, he was to be brought to the priest to examine him.

If he was indeed clean then he would be instructed to take two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. He would kill one bird—by wringing its neck—in an earthen vessel over running water. The living bird with the cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop would be dipped in the blood of the first bird over running water. The priest would sprinkle some of the blood on the individual seven times and the living bird would then be set free in the wilderness.

The individual would then wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water. He would then be allowed to come inside the camp, but had to remain outside his tent for seven days, then he would shave off all his hair again, and wash his clothes and body, then he would be clean.

Then on the eighth day he would take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. One male lamb would be offered as a trespass offering, and the log of oil as a wave offering, then the lamb would be sacrificed where they would sacrifice sin offerings. Then some of the blood would be placed on the tip of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of his right foot (Atoned for from head to foot). Then the priest would dip his right finger in the oil log, held in his left hand, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord (the entrance to the tabernacle of meeting). With the rest of the oil the priest would put some on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot on top of the blood from the trespass offering. The rest of the oil would be poured on the head of the individual. With the other two animals a sin offering and a burnt offering would be made.

If he was poor, he would be allowed to bring a male lamb as a trespass offering to be waved before the Lord, a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one a sin offering the other a burnt offering (Lev. 14:1-32).

A Woman Whose Flow of Blood Lasts Many Days: She would be considered unclean until her flow of blood stopped. Anything she touched would be considered unclean. Whoever touched anything she laid or sat upon would be considered unclean. They would have to wash their clothes and body and be unclean until evening. When her flow of blood stopped, she would count seven days, and then she would be clean. On the eighth day, she would take two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest who would offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering (Lev. 15:25-30).

Festivals and Holy Days

Passover (Pesach): *When?* 14th of Nisan. *Reason?* Celebration to commemorate the deliverance from Egyptian Slavery (Ex. 12).

Pentecost (Shavuoth): *When?* 6th of Sivan. *Reason?* Celebration of the first fruits of the harvest (Lev. 23:9-22; Deut. 16:9-12).

Feast of Trumpets: *When?* 1st of Tishri. *Reason?* A Sabbath rest on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:23-25).

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): *When?* 10th of Tishri. *Reason?* Annual sacrifice for the sins of the whole people of Israel (Lev. 16; 23:26-32).

Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth): *When?* 15-21 of Tishri. *Reason?* Celebration of the last fruits of harvest and commemoration of the wanderings in the wilderness (Lev. 23:33-36; Neh. 8).

Clean and Unclean Animals

Mammals: *Clean*—Must have cloven hooves and chew the cud. *Unclean*—Carnivores and all other mammals that do not meet the requirements of clean animals (Lev. 11:3-7; Deut. 14:6-8).

Birds: *Clean*—Any bird not specifically listed as unclean. *Unclean*—Scavenger birds and birds of prey (Lev. 11:13-19; Deut. 14:11-20).

Reptiles: *Clean*—None. *Unclean*—All (Lev. 11:29-30).

Water Animals: *Clean*—Must have fins and scales. *Unclean*—Those that do not have both fins and scales (Lev. 11:9-12; Deut. 14:9-10).

Insects: *Clean*—Insects of the grasshopper family. *Unclean*—Any four-footed winged insect (Lev. 11:20-23).

Sabbath Regulations

Every seventh day was a sabbath rest for the people and animals. Every seventh year was a sabbath rest for the land (Lev. 25:1-7). Year of Jubilee (fiftieth year) was a year of liberation of all slaves and a return of land to original owners (Lev. 25:8-17).