LEVITICUS

Chapter 22

**The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will not profane my holy name. I am the Lord. 3 “Say to them: ‘For the generations to come, if any of your descendants is ceremonially unclean and yet comes near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the Lord, that person must be cut off from my presence. I am the Lord. 4 “ ‘If a descendant of Aaron has an infectious skin disease or a bodily discharge, he may not eat the sacred offerings until he is cleansed. He will also be unclean if he touches something defiled by a corpse or by anyone who has an emission of semen, 5 or if he touches any crawling thing that makes him unclean, or any person who makes him unclean, whatever the uncleanness may be. 6 The one who touches any such thing will be unclean till evening. He must not eat any of the sacred offerings unless he has bathed himself with water. 7 When the sun goes down, he will be clean, and after that he may eat the sacred offerings, for they are his food. 8 He must not eat anything found dead or torn by wild animals, and so become unclean through it. I am the Lord. 9 “ ‘The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt. I am the Lord, who makes them holy. 10 “ ‘No one outside a priest’s family may eat the sacred offering, nor may the guest of a priest or his hired worker eat it. 11 But if a priest buys a slave with money, or if a slave is born in his household, that slave may eat his food. 12 If a priest’s daughter marries anyone other than a priest, she may not eat any of the sacred contributions. 13 But if a priest’s daughter becomes a widow or is divorced, yet has no children, and she returns to live in her father’s house as in her youth, she may eat of her father’s food. No unauthorized person, however, may eat any of it. 14 “ ‘If anyone eats a sacred offering by mistake, he must make restitution to the priest for the offering and add a fifth of the value to it. 15 The priests must not desecrate the sacred offerings the Israelites present to the Lord 16 by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment. I am the Lord, who makes them holy.’ ”**

**22:1–9** Relates to earlier laws (chs 11–15). (TLSB)

**22:2** *holy things* … *they dedicate to Me*. Personal offerings donated and dedicated to the Lord by the Israelites. Priests were given a portion of the offering as compensation for their service. God required that His priests deal respectfully with all sacred objects; unclean priests were not to handle these objects at all. (TLSB)

**22:3** *cut off from my presence.* Excluded from the worshiping community. (CSB)

Not permitted into the Lord’s sanctuary. (TLSB)

**22:4** See 13:1–46 and note on 13:45–46; 15:1–18 and notes; 21:11. (CSB)

**22:5** See 11:29–31. (CSB)

**22:8** See 17:15 and note. (CSB)

**22:9** *die for treating them with contempt.* The laws of cleanness were the same for priests and people, but the penalties were far more severe for the priests, who had greater responsibility. Cf. Nadab and Abihu (10:1–3) and the faithless priests of Malachi’s day (Mal 1:6–2:9). (CSB)

*holy.* See note on 11:44. (CSB)

**22:14** *make restitution … add a fifth.* Cf. 5:16. (CSB)

**22:16** *holy.* See note on 11:44. (CSB)

**22:4–16** God establishes parameters for those eating His sacred meal. Those excluded were unclean family members (vv 4–8), laypeople (vv 10a, 13b), indentured servants and employees (v 10b), and daughters married to laymen (v 12). Those included were slaves of the priests and their children (v 11b), widowed or divorced daughters who had no sons to support them (v 13a), as well as the priests and their immediate families. The Lord sanctified them through the holy bread and meat that He provided (v 9). (TLSB)

**21:1–22:16** God sets His priests apart. They determine what is holy and what is common (10:10). Such an important responsibility requires rules to protect their consecration before God so that they would not die as did Nadab and Abihu. All the people are responsible for helping priests maintain their sacred status before God. Today, Christ’s atoning death makes us members of God’s royal priesthood (1Pt 2:9). As members of His royal priesthood, God separates us from every defilement (2Co 7:1) and calls us to care for one another. • Lord, as You have set us apart for Yourself, lead us to set our hearts on You and our feet on the way of Your statutes, to the honor of Your name. Amen. (TLSB)

***Unacceptable Sacrifices***

**17 The Lord said to Moses, 18 “Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘If any of you—either an Israelite or an alien living in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the Lord, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, 19 you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. 20 Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. 21 When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the Lord to fulfill a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. 22 Do not offer to the Lord the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as an offering made to the Lord by fire. 23 You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, but it will not be accepted in fulfillment of a vow. 24 You must not offer to the Lord an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn or cut. You must not do this in your own land, 25 and you must not accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects.’ ” 26 The Lord said to Moses, 27 “When a calf, a lamb or a goat is born, it is to remain with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as an offering made to the Lord by fire. 28 Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day. 29 “When you sacrifice a thank offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 30 It must be eaten that same day; leave none of it till morning. I am the Lord. 31 “Keep my commands and follow them. I am the Lord. 32 Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the Lord, who makes you holy 33 and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.”**

**22:17–25** Ordinances governing the animals that may be offered to God by the Israelites and the aliens living among them. (TLSB)

**22:18** *burnt offering.* See note on 1:3. (CSB)

*freewill offerings*. Voluntary, personal burnt offering or peace offering. (TLSB)

**22:20–22** See Mal 1:8. (CSB)

**22:21** *fellowship offering.* See note on 3:1. (CSB)

**22:23** *vow offering*. Presented to God at the completion of a promise sworn in His name. (TLSB)

**22:24** *bruised, crushed, torn or cut.* Castrated animals were not acceptable offerings. (CSB)

**22:25** *bread of your God*. Israelites must not treat the sacrifices of holy meat as common food. (TLSB)

*their mutilation*. Through His priests, God declared an animal suitable or unsuitable for sacrifice. Any disfigurement made the animal unsuitable. (TLSB)

**22:28** Perhaps the prohibition was humanitarian (see v. 27), or possibly it was practical: The mother was to be saved to build up the flock (see Dt 22:6–7). Or it may have been a law to avoid an otherwise unknown pagan custom (see note on Ex 23:19). (CSB)

**22:29** God established these regulations so the Israelites would know for certain that their sacrifices were acceptable to Him. (TLSB)

**22:30** *that same day.* The rule applied also to the Passover (Ex 34:25); however, the fellowship offering could be saved and eaten on the following day (7:16). (CSB)

**22:31–33** The summary reminded the Israelites that keeping God’s commands was a response to His great love for them. (TLSB)

**22:17–33** Our God is a holy God who shares His holiness with His people. By keeping God’s ordinances, the Israelites reflect God’s love back to Him and to one another. Failure to keep God’s commands destroys any assurance of God’s acceptance of their sacrifice and of them. Today, God brings His people into His holy presence through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph 2:17–22). By His Word, God sanctifies us and makes us holy (Jn 17:17; cf Eph 5:26), that we may present ourselves unblemished to God as a “living sacrifice” (Rm 12:1). • “Lord Jesus, my salvation, My light, my life divine, My only consolation, O make me wholly Thine! For Thou has dearly bought me With blood and bitter pain. Let me, since Thou hast sought me, Eternal life obtain.” Amen. (*LSB* 689:2) (TLSB)