LEVITICUS

Chapter 24

*Oil and Bread Set Before the Lord*

**The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. 3 Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the Lord from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. 4 The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the Lord must be tended continually. 5 “Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah for each loaf. 6 Set them in two rows, six in each row, on the table of pure gold before the Lord. 7 Along each row put some pure incense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be an offering made to the Lord by fire. 8 This bread is to be set out before the Lord regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. 9 It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in a holy place, because it is a most holy part of their regular share of the offerings made to the Lord by fire.”**

**24:1–4** The first of three ordinances regarding God’s holy things. Cf Ex 25:31–40. (TLSB)

**24:2–4** See Ex 27:20–21. (CSB)

**24:3** *Outside the veil of the testimony*. The Holy Place was located outside the curtain before the ark. (TLSB)

*Testimony.* See note on Ex 16:34. (TLSB)

 *tend the lamps.* So that they would burn all night. (CSB)

 *continually.* Every night without interruption, but not throughout the day. See 1Sa 3:3 and note. (CSB)

**24:1–4** Aaron or his sons attend the lamps twice daily to maintain light in the Holy Place. As you serve the Lord daily, rejoice and attend the light of His Word, which enlightens the sanctuary of the heart. Jesus is the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 9:5). • Shine Your light on us, O Lord, that others might see the light of Christ through us. Amen. (TLSB)

**24:5–9** Second of three ordinances regarding God’s holy things. Cf Ex 25:23–30. (TLSB)

**24:5** *two-tenths of an ephah.* See NIV text note. Either the loaves were quite large or a smaller unit of measurement is intended (the Hebrew word *ephah* is not expressed). (CSB)

**24:7** *pure incense.* Not used as a condiment for the bread, but burned either in piles on the table or in small receptacles alongside the rows of bread. (CSB)

**24:8** *This bread.* Often called the “bread of the Presence” (see Ex 25:30 and note). It represented a gift from the 12 tribes and signified the fact that God sustained his people. It was eaten by the priests (24:9). (CSB)

*a covenant forever*. God’s covenant with the Israelites (Ex 24) obligated them to bring Him bread. (TLSB)

**24:9** See 1Sa 21:4–6. (CSB)

**24:5–9** The second ordinance involves the bread of the Presence. Each Sabbath, the high priest sets 12 new loaves before the Lord (v 8). As you thank God for daily bread, remember that Jesus is the bread of life (Jn 6:35, 48). He gives His flesh as bread for all believers (Jn 6:51) and grants life (Jn 6:53–55). • Lord, Your precious body provides bread for our souls in a lasting covenant. We thank and praise You, O Lord. Amen. (TLSB)

*A Blasphemer Stoned*

**10 Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out among the Israelites, and a fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. 11 The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so they brought him to Moses. (His mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri the Danite.) 12 They put him in custody until the will of the Lord should be made clear to them. 13 Then the Lord said to Moses: 14 “Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. 15 Say to the Israelites: ‘If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible; 16 anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death. 17 “ ‘If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death. 18 Anyone who takes the life of someone’s animal must make restitution—life for life. 19 If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured. 21 Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a man must be put to death. 22 You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born. I am the Lord your God.’ ” 23 Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him. The Israelites did as the Lord commanded Moses.**

**24:10** *Now*. Apparently this incident interrupted Moses’ work on compiling Lv. (TLSB)

*Egyptian father.* An alien. The laws, at least in the judicial sphere, applied equally to both the alien and the native-born Israelite (v. 22; see Ex 12:49). (CSB)

Technically an alien among the Israelites. (TLSB)

**24:11** *blasphemed.* See Ex 20:7 and note. (CSB)

Forbidden (Ex 20:7). Punishing someone severely for their words seems harsh by our free-speech standards. However, cursing involved more than cussing or a slip of the tongue. (TLSB)

 *tribe of Dan*. Descendant of Jacob’s fourth son, Dan. (TLSB)

**24:12** *till the will of the Lord* *should be clear*. No specific punishment was provided in God’s Law, so the Israelites waited for God’s decision.

**24:14** *lay their hands on his head*. Those who heard the cursing transferred the pollution they heard back to the blasphemer. (TLSB)

 *stone him*. Mode of execution to purge the blasphemer from their midst. (TLSB)

 **24:10–16** The third ordinance (see note, vv 1–4) deals with God’s holy name. God equates this blasphemy with the sin of idolatry because it undermined true worship. Blasphemers were cursed by God (cf Mt 25:41). The Lord bids us to hallow God’s name (Mt 6:9), to call on His name (1Co 1:2), and to do everything in His name (Col 3:17). God’s name is “a treasure greater and nobler than heaven and earth” (LC IV 16). • Lord, may we at all times remember Your name and keep it holy. Amen. (TLSB)

**24:17–23** The cursing of God’s name (v 16) leads Moses to recite the guiding principle of punishment, which applied to all inhabitants. Today we say the punishment should fit the crime. (TLSB)

**24:17–18** *life for life*. Restatement of God’s Law given in Gn 9:6. (TLSB)

**24:17, 21** See Ge 9:6 and note. (CSB)

**24:20** *eye for eye, tooth for tooth.* See note on Ex 21:23–25. This represents a statement of principle: The penalty is to fit the crime, not exceed it. An actual eye or tooth was not to be required, nor is there evidence that such a penalty was ever exacted. A similar law of retaliation is found in the Code of Hammurapi, which also seems not to have been literally applied. Christ, like the middle-of-the-road Pharisees (school of Hillel), objected to an extremist use of this judicial principle to excuse private vengeance, such as by the strict Pharisees (school of Shammai); see Mt 5:38–42. (CSB)

God seeks to prevent exaggerated revenge. (TLSB)

**24:22** See note on v. 10. (CSB)

**24:17–23** God establishes a system for administering justice based on equity and compensation for loss. However, no human compensation could give back to the Lord the honor due His saving name. Thanks be to God, Christ’s atoning death brings forgiveness of blasphemy and teaches us to call on His mercy. • O Lord, guide our lips, that every word we say may give glory and honor to Your precious name. Amen. (TLSB)