

LEVITICUS

Chapter 24

The Lamps

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning regularly. 3 Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall arrange it from evening to morning before the LORD regularly. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. 4 He shall arrange the lamps on the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD regularly.

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

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

arrange it. So that they would burn all night. (CSB)

from evening to morning. 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)

Bread for the Tabernacle

5 “You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. 6 And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. 7 And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the LORD. 8 Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the LORD regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. 9 And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD’s food offerings, a perpetual due.”

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.* 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 frankincense.* 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)

The bread. Often called the “bread of the Presence.” 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)

24:8 *a covenant forever.* God’s covenant with the Israelites (Ex 24) obligated them to bring Him bread. (TLSB)

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)

Punishment for Blasphemy

10 Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, **11** and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. **12** And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them. **13** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **14** “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. **15** And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. **16** Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

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

father was Egyptian. 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.* 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. (CSB)

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)

An Eye for an Eye

17 “Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. **18** Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. **19** If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, **20** fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. **21** Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. **22** You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am

the LORD your God.” 23 So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

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)

24:20 *eye for eye, tooth for tooth*. 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)

24:17–23 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)