

Under The Fig Tree



WEEK 6

Introduction

Before we begin to read the Book of Leviticus let us pause and consider how the principles of faith and obedience work together. Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. They were the descendants of Abraham's grandson Jacob. He had received his covenant name *Israel* directly from God. The Children of Israel were also the Children of Abraham. *Our father Abraham* is the way all members of the covenant family refer to him. He was appointed to be the father figure concerning how to live by faith, before any of his descendants were born, and before the law was given to Moses - we must learn that faith is the foundation on which law rests. Faith and obedience work together, but faith comes first.

The Israelites learned lessons about faith before they arrived at Sinai. They had spent 430 years in Egypt to establish foundations of faith in the God of Abraham. The most recent lessons were the most memorable. Faith was required when they killed the Passover Lambs and painted blood on their doorposts in Egypt. Faith was also exercised at the Red Sea crossing, at the defeat of Amalek, in the provision of daily Manna and in the Sabbath Day of rest. These are just a few examples. Israel was to live primarily through the principle of faith. We must be careful to note that the Law came in the context of faith, and that this principle is throughout the Bible. It is in both the New Testament and the Old Testament. How law and faith work together within the Covenant of God is to be considered carefully through all generations.

Through our reading of the Letter of James we considered how obedience follows faith in our walk with God. Abraham lived by faith and also learned obedience. When we study the details of the Laws of God we must not get so immersed in the details that we lose sight of the principle of faith. Likewise, when we consider our life of faith we must not neglect the principle of obedience. What was true for Israel is also true for us. It is the *means* of achieving God's purposes that changed between the New and Old Testaments. We learn our first lessons from Israel in the wilderness. We learn through their successes and failures. This then teaches us of our need for God's help through His Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This week we will begin to study the Book of Leviticus. There is precise detail in this book concerning the ministry of the Tabernacle through the Priesthood. The Priests were appointed from the Tribe of Levi and so are known as the Levitical Priesthood. At the end of Exodus we read how the Tabernacle was constructed and erected. Now we review what Moses taught the Priests in preparation for the ministry. The Priests had two functions. They were to minister to God on behalf of the people and they were to minister to the people on behalf of God. Theirs was an intermediary and intercessory ministry. They were both intercessors and teachers, within a prophetic calling.

Yeshua fulfilled all the types and shadows of the Levitical Priesthood – they pointed to Him. He was the end in view through all that was experienced in the wilderness. Therefore, this week we will also study the Book of Hebrews. We will study the Levitical Priesthood and then consider Yeshua’s fulfillment as High Priest of the New Covenant. This is what Abraham and Moses understood, but in a way that was not fully revealed to them. We have a great privilege, in that we can study in detail what they only saw in the distance as through a telescope. Nevertheless, let us not take a position of superiority. Abraham and Moses were the forerunners of our faith. Hebrews Chapter 11 will help us to remember this. First let us set some foundations from the early chapters of Leviticus.

Day 1

Notes on Today’s Readings

Leviticus Chapter 1. In Hebrew, *Vayikra* is the first word of the Book that is known as *Leviticus*. *Vayikra* is translated *and he called*. The book has been given the name *Leviticus*, but *Vayikra* is the name of the Book in Jewish tradition. Moses was called into God’s presence, and that is how the book begins. If we go back to the Jewish tradition we find an interesting fact based on the Hebrew. It is traditional to write the last letter of the word *vayikra*, a silent letter *aleph*, half the size of the rest of the letters. It is said that this has been the tradition since the time of Moses and signifies Moses’ humility. *Vayikra* is a gentle word of invitation. Moses was gently and lovingly invited into God’s presence. This is a wonderful thought as we begin to read a book that sometimes seems full of dry law and ancient traditions. God lovingly invited Moses to understand His ways and to teach them to His people.

Moses was told about the precise way sacrifice and offering were to be made. The first few chapters of Leviticus record the details. In some ways it is a pity that the Book is divided into chapters, because it takes away from the continuity of the instructions and the unity of their intent. There are several types of sacrifice and offering and they together point to Yeshua. Read the details carefully. This is what Yeshua has accomplished for all who live by faith in Him. As you read the details, remember the principle of the justice of the Law – *eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. When Adam and Eve sinned, banishment from the Garden of Eden resulted in separation from God for all who are born into this world. We all need to be restored into the fellowship that was lost in the Garden. We all fall into sin, and this sin keeps us separate from God. Ultimately, sin that is still counted against us leads to eternal separation from Him. Sin leads to death, so we all need to be reborn into a new life in the Spirit. For that, we need the help that only God can give.

Some disputes that arise can be settled in our communities through the principle of *eye for eye and tooth for tooth*, but we can do nothing for ourselves concerning the ultimate sentence – *death for death*. How then can a death pay for our death? God wrote a principle into His Law that a substitute death *of His choosing* could be given. The substitutes were first sacrificial animals. They settled the matter on a day to day basis, but they did not settle the matter for all eternity. We establish the principles of substitutionary sacrifice through studying the Book of Leviticus. This establishes the foundation whereby we can then reach out in faith to Yeshua for eternal salvation from our death sentence.

The first offering that we read about is the Burnt Offering. Note carefully all the details: the choice of the animal, the way it is presented to the Priest, the way it is killed, the use of the blood, the way it is

totally consumed by fire and the purpose. In regard to the purpose we find in verse 4 the word *atonement*. In Hebrew this is *caphar*. It means *covering*, such as when something is covered with bitumen. Remember how Noah covered the Ark inside and outside with bitumen. God was teaching, through Noah, the first principles of how He covers our sins. Then, through God's appointed sacrifice, He showed Israel how He would cover their sins. They become hidden from Him through obedience and faith. The person offering the sacrifice placed his hand on the animal, symbolically transferring his sins to the animal. This anticipated Yeshua's sacrifice. All that we read was fulfilled fully in Him when the time came for the completion of the covenant plan through the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Priests and the Romans at that time did not know what Yeshua was allowing them to do as they laid hands on Him and crucified Him, but it was all according to a pattern established in the wilderness. At His death Yeshua interceded for all who would accept His sacrifice by faith, *forgive them Father for they do not know what they do*.

In the wilderness, as it is for us today, atonement was through faith in God, and through His appointed Sacrifice.

Chapter 2. It is interesting that a grain offering is included in the list of offerings. This reminds us of Cain and Abel. Cain offered God from the produce of the ground and Abel offered an animal. Sometimes we think that Cain's offering was rejected because it was not an animal like Abel's, but this is not so. A grain offering is among the acceptable offerings to God. Sacrifice and offering are heart principles. Cain's offering was not from his heart as Cain's was. That was the real difference. It is not the ritual that counts but the heart. God looks on the heart.

Not all of the offerings were for atonement for sin. Sometimes there was a freewill offering from the loving response for what God had done in someone's life. This was one of the reasons for the Grain Offering.

All offerings were to seasoned with salt, which is a purifying agent, and the Grain Offering was also sprinkled with oil and frankincense. These are symbols that recur in the Scriptures time and again. Bear them in mind for future study and association of ideas as you discover the threads of truth that weave themselves through the Bible.

The Priests were to offer a portion on the Altar and the rest was to be eaten as their portion. This reminds us of Yeshua. He is the Bread from Heaven. He is our offering to the Father. We must eat of Him. Picture the Priests eating their portion of the offerings. Transfer this thought to yourself as a priest of the New Covenant. When we gather in the Lord's Name He will eat with us and we with Him. Remember that He said unless we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood we have no life in us. These foundations were established first through the Levitical Priesthood.

Chapter 3. What was in the heart and mind of the people who came to the door of the Tabernacle? They entrusted their sacrifices and offerings to the Priests, placing their hands on them as an act of faith. In a way they gave something of themselves even though it was a substitute. They chose a perfect animal from their own flocks, or ripe grain from their fields, and took it to God.

If they were guilty of something they would be conscious of their need. They knew that only God could help them. They did what He expected through the sacrifices, but the result was in God's response alone. If their lives were in turmoil they knew full well their need and their helplessness. If, by contrast, they were thankful for something that God had already done they would be rejoicing in their heart and wanting God to receive their thanks. These are the same emotions that we bring to God today.

Our sacrifice and offering is through Yeshua. At the Altar before God, as in the days of Moses, true sacrifice and offering is a transaction of the heart between man and God. The sacrifices and offerings are substitutes for us, but they are also a part of us. He is part of us and we of Him as our heart responds to God at His Altar. The fire that consumed the sacrifice at the Altar points to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit within us. The more we meditate upon this, perceiving Yeshua in all our sacrifices and offerings, the more we realize that the effect is in us too. This is how we discover the truth that His death works in us and His life lives in us. We come to the understanding of Romans 12, that our bodies, thereby, are living sacrifices to God.

Those of us who respond through faith to the Sacrifice of Yeshua receive all the fullness of what was being transacted at the Altar in Moses' day. It was the same for them as for us, but for them it was not the permanent inner transaction by the Holy Spirit, but more a daily, weekly, yearly necessity. However, if they stood before the Altar by faith their offering or sacrifice was accepted in just the same way, through Yeshua, the One through whom all covenants of God were made. If it was truly by faith then they would have walked away from the Altar free from the sins that took them there and full of thankfulness to God.

Chapter 4. Sin takes us unawares. We do what we should not do and don't do what we should do. We are slow learners. Our personal experience teaches us this. It was like this for the Children of Israel too through their day by day life in the community. God's laws reveal sin because they show us what we should have been and should have done. The laws are like a mirror to our inner being. This was how Israel discovered their sins and this is how we have our sins revealed. If they sinned unintentionally, as soon as they discovered their sin they took it straight to God through the ministry of the Priesthood. *Keep you accounts with God short* is a principle that echoes through the ages to all of us today. If we seek to walk with God we learn to obey His prompting through His Spirit. We are disciples and we are learning day by day. The principles of sin and forgiveness are the same as for Israel, but in our case with direct access to the Father through Yeshua's sacrifice and through prayer.

Day 2

Chapter 5. Here are some more of the Laws – the principles by which God’s people should live. Are these laws still relevant because of the new covenant – certainly! God is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Laws of God define holiness and His people must be holy. How then do we read the Laws? If we read them and try to apply them literally in some sort of religious way we will miss the point. In fact, it was never the intent that they be simply religious duties. They are, and were, a mirror to our inner being as we learn to live by faith. If we learn to live by faith and trust the promptings of the Holy Spirit we will have the teaching of God in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is working within us to make us holy and our lives will be evidence of this. The law was given to Israel on Tablets of Stone, intended to be obeyed. Through obedience they would have become inner realities but for the resistance of human nature. The law embodies heart principles. Through the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit starts at heart level in order to manifest the principles of God’s law in a multitude of ways in our lives.

The principles of the laws needed interpretation in Moses’ day just as today, but now we trust the Lord for the immediate application of the principles. In Moses’ day there was the need of the help of the Priesthood and the Elders. We still need Elders in a community – wise and experienced men who are God’s under-shepherds for the community as it grows together. We are individuals before God and a community moving together. Elders are still appointed for decisions on community matters and also to help those who are new to the faith. The foundations were laid by Moses, the fulfillment is in the Life of the Spirit, while the original intent of the laws in these chapters have not changed. Furthermore, even in our day, nations need laws that come from the Books of Moses. A society that pleases God must be built on these laws. Nations benefit greatly when they have believers in authority who can write biblical laws into the statutes of the nation, with the Lord’s help. Law still protects. Law is best when it is on the heart, but nations as a whole, full of both the saved and the unsaved, are protected through God’s laws.

Therefore, note each law carefully. In this chapter we have principles of honesty and of holiness. God wants us to be pure in word and deed and for our lives to be the results of inner purity. The external principles of holiness teach us of principles that should come from our inner being. God’s teaching is through practical issues. These practical issues are important of themselves, but even more so is the importance of the spiritual realities to which they point. Meditate upon the laws given to Moses, noting that they are included with the principles of sacrifice for sin. In this fallen world, our path of discipleship brings us gradually to perfection, step by step with God and through His path of teaching. Consciousness of sin should give us a heart of repentance and a heart to improve toward the holy standards that He shows us. Until God’s Kingdom fully comes we will, nevertheless, continue to struggle with sin.

Chapter 6. Continue to review the way the laws of God were given in the context of the ministry of the Priests. Imagine the day to day life of the Children of Israel. God was at the centre of the community in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. This was at the centre while all else took place in the day to day lives of the people. God demanded holiness – a people sanctified and set apart – because He is Holy. To dwell among His people required holiness from them. The way the Priests dealt with the sacrifices had special rules. They were to know the difference between what was holy and what was unholy. The blood of the sacrifices was especially important. They were always conscious of matters of life and death with teaching for a holy life uppermost in their minds and the substitutionary deaths of perfect

sacrificial animals central to all they did. The purpose of our meditating upon this is to establish foundations and for appreciating the ministries that have gone before us in the life of Israel. With these principles understood at a heart level, we will be more ready to live our own life before God, in our own believing community with Him at the centre.

Chapter 7. Among the lessons, that we learn from this chapter, is that we cannot decide for ourselves what pleases God for a sacrifice. Over all history people have imagined what might please their god. The God of Israel was very clear and precise, as to His nature and His requirements. There were commands about what not to do as well as what to do. We have already read the instruction not to boil a kid in its mother's milk. There is evidence that some of the nations did this as an oblation to their god. Our God says we should not be like those nations. This is only one of many ways that other nations served their gods.

In Chapter 15 of the Book of Acts there is a meeting of the Elders of the Church in Jerusalem shortly after the Gospel first went out among the Gentiles. This Council sent instructions concerning the way believers from the Gentile world were to be encouraged to trust the Holy Spirit. They were not to come under bondage of man's interpretation of the Laws of God. Nevertheless, there were foundational principles taken from the Laws of Moses to be passed on, two of which are included in this chapter. In the New Testament believers were to be entrusted to the Holy Spirit but warned not to eat meat sacrificed to idols, or meat from strangled animals, to refrain from sexual immorality, and not to eat blood. God had already taught these things to Israel in the wilderness for a purpose - to separate them from practices of the nations around who served false gods. Therefore, even for believers who seek to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit there is a warning that Satan will set traps to seduce them to follow false gods. We must be careful of what Satan will try to do and discipline ourselves in holy living as a guard against his wiles. Once God defined holiness in the wilderness, a battle to deceive and destroy was also mounted by the spiritual adversary, to trap and spoil God's people. Therefore, continue to read what God taught His people through Moses. It is still the teaching of God in whatever way He will use it in our lives.

Chapter 8. Aaron's life was no longer his own. He was set aside and commissioned for his ministry. His clothing signified his office. He was to be the High Priest and intercessor for the people. Day by day he was to perform the ministry of the Tabernacle exactly to the pattern established through Moses and defined by God. Without the High Priest there was to be no atonement because no other way was prescribed for the people other than what God ordained. God would prove to be faithful to His promise, but this also required Israel to fulfill what God required of them. Read and note the details. Ensure that you understand that there is no other way than the way that God says, and then we will turn to the Book of Hebrews for the rest of this week.

Day 3

Hebrews Chapter 1. Pause before you begin to read this chapter. Recall as much as you can of the picture of Israel camped in the wilderness. The Tabernacle is set up at the centre of the camp and the tents of each of the twelve tribes are all in their appointed sections. Smoke comes up from the Altar of Sacrifice at the entrance to the outer court of the Tabernacle. The Priests are ministering before the Brazen Altar, dressed as God instructed them to be. There is a sense of God's presence and a pillar of smoke hangs above the Holy of Holies as a constant reminder. Here and there in the camp people are gathering their daily manna. Elsewhere, small groups of people are discussing a question from the laws of God. Others are setting about their daily work. Perhaps there are groups of elders discussing matters of interpretation of Torah. In one group a man is perhaps standing before the elders - he was caught in sin and the sin is being judged. Day after day this is the scene, except on the Sabbath Day or on a Feast Day, when an extra special peace descends on the camp. At the Feast Days there are great throngs around the Tabernacle, sometimes solemn, sometimes joyful. Always there is the stench of blood and burning of sacrificed animals.

This was the picture of the wilderness encampment. Later, when Israel entered the Promised Land the nation was reorganized into its more permanent dwellings. A Temple was built to replace the Tabernacle. God ordained the Children of Israel to be a holy people. He made covenant with them through Moses. Because the Children of Israel needed a heart change, as well as the Law, the history of Israel is one of both privilege and of failure – they were not able to come up to God's perfect standards, and neither would we. A New Covenant was promised through Jeremiah so that a change of heart could come and this required a new Priesthood. This new Priesthood fulfils all that the Levitical Priesthood fulfilled, but in a more permanent way. All of the types and shadows are fulfilled in One Man and that Man is Yeshua HaMashiach. He came as the High Priest and calls all of His followers into the Priesthood of the New Covenant. The failure of Israel is redeemed through Him. So having studied some of the foundational principles taught through Moses, let us consider the fulfillment through Yeshua. In future you will turn back and forth between the Torah and the New Testament to study even more fully how all this fits together.

Moses was the Prophet called to lead Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. Later there would be other Prophets sent to Israel. All the biblical Prophets prepared the way for Yeshua. They reminded the people about the principles of Torah. All of Torah pointed to Yeshua. They spoke prophetically of His coming. Israel had ordinances to deal with sin but no remedy for sinfulness. The Prophets spoke to Israel about their sin. They also prophesied concerning how God would one day bring the permanent remedy for their sinfulness. The prophetic ministry is still given to the Church, because God speaks to His people in every generation. Prophecy in the Church no longer points forward to Yeshua's coming into the world as a Man, however, because now He has been revealed to us. The writer to the Hebrews begins by telling us that God has now spoken fully through His Son. The rabbis of the first century knew and understood how God had spoken in the past. They would have known of the ministry of angels as well as the ministry of prophets, but now God had sent His own Son, of whom the Scriptures speak. Various passages of Scripture are referenced to point out that this was what should have been expected. The letter is written to the Hebrews to whom the revelation of Messiah first came and who had the Scriptural background to prepare the way for Him.

Chapter 2. It is of the utmost importance that we understand that the Father has now appointed His Son as the only means of salvation. To look elsewhere is to miss out on eternal life. The Israelites knew full well, from their long hard history, that God was true to His Word. He had told them the consequences of disobedience and lack of faith and they had suffered those consequences through their failure. All manner of woe had followed disobedience, including exile from their Land. At the time of the writing of this Epistle the nation was under the rule of Rome. If God was true to His Word in terms of the Old Covenant then He would also be true to His Word in the New. Therefore, it is of the highest importance to pay attention to what He has done through His Son.

Aaron the High Priest was taken from among his people to be their representative before God. In the same way Yeshua the High Priest of the New Covenant was selected from among His people. The Son of God became a man in order to experience all that human beings experience and be equipped as their intercessor and High Priest.

Chapter 3. We must learn from the failure of Israel in the Wilderness. When we return to the Books of Moses we will read about how the generation who left Egypt were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. They were to obey what God taught through Moses but they lacked faith and rebelled. This is important teaching to all of us. We must learn about our human tendencies to sin and to unbelief through these biblical accounts, and not miss the opportunity offered to let Yeshua take us into the eternal Kingdom by faith. This is the day of salvation – the period of time when the Hand of grace is held out to the entire world to walk with Yeshua, trusting in the promise for eternal life.

Chapter 4. The Sabbath Day was inaugurated at Creation. It is a day of rest on this earth and a way of preparing for rest in Yeshua. The Promised Land was offered to Israel as a Land in which to live in security and peace, secure from their enemies. This is another picture pointing to eternal rest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Just as the High Priest went into the Holiest Place in the Tabernacle, so Yeshua has gone to the Highest Heaven to make a way for us. He is our intercessor and He is preparing the way for us. He is the means of our atonement with God. He is our peace and our eternal rest. Learning from God's dealing with Israel, we ought to be full of assurance that this is true. Israel held back in fear of the giants, and a generation could not enter the Promised Land. We must be bold in our faith to take hold of all that God has promised through Yeshua.

Day 4

Chapter 5. Yeshua, the Son of Man, was conceived in Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the full manifestation of God in man and the Father spoke from Heaven to confirm that He is His Son and that we must believe in Him. He was appointed as Prophet, Priest and King. Yeshua came from the Tribe of Judah, according to prophetic fulfillment. He was not of the Tribe of Levi. He is likened to Melchizedek, who was High Priest at the time of Abraham. He, like Melchizedek, is not a High Priest because of birth-right like the sons of Aaron, but by direct appointment of God. He came from the Father to be with us, suffered the pain that this world brings on human beings, including the temptations of satan. He withstood all the temptations and bore the pains of this world in all righteousness and without sin. In perfect time, and through the perfect and necessary experience of His life on earth, He suffered on the Cross, bearing our sin, so that we might be forgiven. He is the perfect High Priest for those whose hope and trust are founded in Him. This is to be understood from the teaching of all Scripture.

Chapter 6. The Bible is the full record of the way God prepared the way for our High Priest, Yeshua HaMashiach. The Children of Israel were taught through their experiences and through the patterns of the Tabernacle as a preparation for His coming. The teaching, that they had, is passed on to us through the pages of the Bible and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. These are the preparations that lead to our first commitment through faith and through baptism. This is the foundation of our faith containing elementary teaching from which we should grow to maturity. The writer to the Hebrews has argued the case for Yeshua being revealed as the High Priest of the New Covenant. Now he tells us to be sure to move on to maturity of the life of faith in Him, and not to leave any room for doubts and slipping back while we are still at the early point of our faith. He confirms strongly that Yeshua HaMashaich, Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed Son of God, is the end point of the Covenant made with Abraham and which God swore on oath to fulfill. Yeshua HaMashiach is now our eternal High Priest. Once a year, Aaron entered the Holiest Place in the Tabernacle through the curtain (veil) that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Now, through His death on the Cross and Resurrection by the Power of the Holy Spirit, Yeshua HaMashiach has entered into the highest Heaven and is our High Priest forever. Aaron died as did all the other Priests, but Yeshua lives forever!

Chapter 7. The Tabernacle was a representation of Heavenly reality. Moses was shown the pattern on the mountain. The Heavenly reality existed before Moses. The Levitical Priesthood's ministry was limited to the earthly representation of the Heavenly reality. Their Priesthood was more limited than that which was appointed by God in the order of Melchizedek. Abraham had given tithes to God through this Priesthood even before the Tribe of Levi was born. For a period of history, in a limited way, the Levitical Priesthood ministered to God on behalf of Israel. Finally the time came for the perfect Priesthood to replace it. The perfect Priesthood was of the type of Melchizedek. Abraham tithed to God through a better way, and the time had to come when all believers would have direct access to God through the better Priesthood. The Levitical priests had human weaknesses and the offerings and sacrifices were not ministered to God perfectly. Now we have a perfect High Priest whose perfect sacrifice for us has been accepted. The perfect offering is Yeshua Himself – He is both the *offerer* and the *offering*!

Chapter 8. The Covenant that God made through Moses was within the Covenant that God made with Abraham, but it was temporary in that it involved representations of the Heavenly reality rather than the reality itself. It was temporary as a means of preparation for the coming of Yeshua the Messiah. The Covenant and Oath made to Abraham required better promises and perfection. The Prophet Jeremiah was God's mouthpiece for the better promises (Jeremiah 31). The New Covenant was through the sacrifice of God's own Son, and replaces the Covenant based on the ministry of the Levitical Priesthood and the Tabernacle.

Day 5

Chapter 9. In this chapter we have a detailed comparison between the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. The details of the Tabernacle will be clear to you from your reading of Leviticus. Remember that both the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem, which was modeled on the Tabernacle, had been the means of atonement for Israel for many centuries. This letter is written to the Hebrews, who were very familiar with the offerings, sacrifices and priestly service. It was central to their life and their traditions. The writer to the Hebrews argued step by step to show them that the New Covenant is now fully established through Yeshua. The Cross was the Altar where He made His sacrifice for sin once and for all. Once the Priests of the Old Covenant interceded at the Altar of Incense: now He is the High Priest who intercedes for His people. Every type and shadow of the Tabernacle ministry is fulfilled through Him

Several times in these chapters we read about the cleansing of the conscience of God's people. The sacrifices of the Tabernacle provided atonement but not a permanent change of heart and mind. Day after day blood of animals would be poured out. At some Feasts there were hundreds, if not thousands, of animals slaughtered to atone for sin. This is the sin that began at the Fall of Adam and Eve and was inherited by every human being. Sin caused separation from God who created us. The lesson of sin leading to death was learned thousands of times over at the sight of innocent animals having their blood poured out on the Altar. Yet, with all this, the need still remained for permanent cleansing of sin, cleansing of conscience and atonement with God – and this happened through the death and resurrection of Yeshua. All that went before was now declared as dead works. Read the words of the Bible as they are written in clear explanation of what Yeshua did, first for the Children of Israel and then, through this same New Covenant, for Gentiles also.

Chapter 10. We do not know who the writer to the Hebrews was. It could have been Paul who was taught by the best rabbis of his day before having the clear revelation of Yeshua. He was certainly equipped to argue the case with the most devout Jew. It could have been James, the leader of the Jerusalem congregations. It could have been someone who we do not know. What we do know is that this man, inspired through the Holy Spirit, understood clearly how all the teaching of the Tanakh (Old Testament) pointed to Yeshua. In Chapter 10 we have a number of references to support the teaching of this letter. Following the discussion is the great exhortation to boldly enter into God's presence on account of the great salvation offered to us through Yeshua.

Psalm 40. Let us include this Psalm in our readings today. We must learn to use the entire Bible just as the writer to the Hebrews could. He referred to this Psalm in Chapter 10 of the letter. When Yeshua rose from the grave, and before He ascended to be with the Father, He appeared to His disciples. He walked with two of them on the Road to Emmaus. They were confused when they witnessed His Crucifixion at Passover in Jerusalem, so He explained to them clearly how He fulfilled all that was written about Him in the Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms. It was not easy for them to understand this and it will also take us time for us to understand all that was accomplished. That is why we must read the entire Scriptures over and over. In Psalm 40 we read of a man who was taken out of the miry clay and placed on a rock. That sounds like us. Indeed, if we have faith in Yeshua He is the Rock on which we stand. Yet, this Psalm is about Him, because He went down to Hell for us. Hell is the place

where we would go without His taking the penalty for our sins, and in His resurrection is our resurrection. Read this Psalm and consider what Yeshua suffered for us. He went down to the miry pit and God raised Him up so that through His sacrifice we might live.

Habakkuk Chapter 1. Let us also read from the Prophets before we complete the Letter to the Hebrews. When Israel settled in their Land, they still had much to learn from God. Their lessons became our lessons. These were not lessons taught in the classroom: they were lessons taught through life. Indeed, these lessons, learned through much travail, were lessons for *eternal life* in all its fullness. The writer to the Hebrews was inspired to explain this out of the Scriptural accounts of Israel. Among the Scriptures are the Prophets, including Habakkuk. Habakkuk prophesied to Judah within a generation of the exile to Babylon. His people descended from those who had entered the Promised Land hundreds of years earlier. They were God's chosen people. Yet the nation had fallen away from the Covenant made through Moses in the wilderness. They had not kept the laws of God as they had promised. But they were still God's chosen people, so the sufferings in the nation were a paradox to Habakkuk. It seemed that evil nations were more blessed than the Chosen People, so Habakkuk cried out to God. The answer simply increased the paradox. God was indeed raising up the terrible and ruthless Babylonians, and they would soon be camped around the cities of Israel and Judah! Sinful though the Babylonians were, they were God's instrument of judgement on Judah, before they, themselves, would be judged!

Day 6

Habakkuk Chapter 2. God's ways are not our ways. Yet, if we read the Scriptures carefully, we will find that He has revealed what He will do. The Prophet trusted in God despite all the signs of disaster around him and the threat of impending judgement on Judah. He knew that righteousness would in the end prevail and would not delay. He knew that whatever came upon his own people God was just and in the end the whole world would be filled with the knowledge of God's glory. He knew that God's laws were fixed and His Covenant was firm, so he was prepared to wait to see what God would do. This is the prophetic task throughout the ages, to listen to God, however hard the circumstances are, however hard they are to understand, and to proclaim God's Word to the world. Unless we understand the prophetic word of God we, too, might devise ideas of our own and invent gods of our own design. This is the contrast between the Children of God and the children of the evil one. We learn this by studying the history of God's people, especially relating to the contrasts drawn with the powerful nation of Babylon. The writer to the Hebrews quotes directly from Habakkuk 2:4 in his teaching about Yeshua. The call of Israel was to live by faith and that faith pointed ultimately, through all the paradoxes and trials, to Yeshua.

Chapter 3. Habakkuk had gone through a kind of wrestling process in his mind, which brought him to reach out to God afresh in faith on behalf of Israel and Judah. We can liken this to the wrestling that Jacob went through at Peniel when he was about to confront his brother Esau, and to all the struggles for understanding that have ever taken place among the people of God. Sometimes we have valley experiences. We often bring them on ourselves through disobedience as Israel did, and through them we look upwards for the light of God's truth. Through victories borne out of struggles we grow in faith and through them we deepen our understanding of our need of Yeshua. Through our need we can reach out for understanding of what He did for us. At the time of Habakkuk, the time had not come for the Son of God to be come to earth in human form to be our High Priest and Saviour. Yet Habakkuk's faith pointed to him. Exile was soon to come to Judah - 70 years in Babylon. Yet, with this in view like a dark cloud on the horizon, Habakkuk ends his book with a song of praise and faith, knowing that the future is in God's hands.

Hebrews Chapter 11. We are now ready to complete our reading of the Letter to the Hebrews. We have read some additional Bible passages that were referenced in the letter. The writer was illustrating from the Tanakh that all Scripture points to Yeshua. All Israel's travails were for the purpose of showing them (and us) of our need of His great gift of salvation. Yes, Israel suffered in their trials, but Yeshua suffered more, so that there would be redemption for us all. So Hebrews 11 is the main objective of all that went before in the letter. We are reminded of the multitudes who went before us and stood by faith despite the trials of this life. God created a wonderful world and we only need to look around to begin the journey of faith. Then, when we study all of the history of God's people and the promises they were given, we find that God is faithful to people who put their trust in Him. They did not see the fulfillment of the promises which were finally manifest in Yeshua, but learned to look into the future in faith. If we do not make an effort to remember we soon forget. Time and again we must read the entire Bible and remind ourselves of the forerunners to the same faith in Yeshua that we have. They looked forward as through a telescope at an indistinct but certain goal. We learn from them and from their lessons so that

in looking back at the account of Yeshua HaMashiach we might reach out in faith and receive the same salvation for which they waited. It is only through faith that we please God.

Chapter 12. Here then is the conclusion of the writer's letter. Take hold of what God has done for us in all its fullness and live lives worthy of our call. All the wisdom that is taught by Solomon in Proverbs is for us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice that the writer reminds us that we too will have trials of faith. Israel had trials from which we can learn and through which we reach out for the full and final gift of salvation. As we wait for our full salvation, the process of sanctification requires discipline. We have a fallen nature that wars against us while we remain in our natural bodies. Let us grow in faith on account of this. Moses and the Children of Israel received the Laws of God on a physical mountain. It was an awesome day when smoke came, thunder was heard and God spoke. It was an awesome experience to live with God in the centre of the camp where the Tabernacle stood. It is a more awesome experience to move on from the shadows into the full light of New Covenant in the Blood of Yeshua. It is not all over yet for this earth and there are still mighty shakings of both heaven and earth to occur. One day, like when Moses returned from the mountain, Yeshua will come a second time from Heaven. Even greater shaking will occur in the heavens and on the earth than at the time of Moses, or at any other time in all history.

Chapter 13. So then, how should we live as we wait for His coming? The call to be a holy community has not changed since the time of Moses. Now we have the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us. We are to help one another as we wait for the Lord's coming. Just as those who went before us who are listed in Hebrews 11 were to wait in faith for Yeshua, so we are to continue to wait for His coming. He has been once and is coming again. As it says in Hebrews 9:28, *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Day 7

A Day for Rest and Further Reflection

The Book of Haggai, Chapters 1 and 2. This week we began in Leviticus and ended in Hebrews. We looked at the types and shadows of the Tabernacle and went on to consider their fulfillment in and through Yeshua. This is the most important lesson that God wants to teach us so that we can understand fully what He has done and enter into the covenant promise by faith. Our further Bible studies will add to our understanding step by step. Nothing else in all of our lives is as important as this. In the Book of Hebrews we discovered that we must also *look forward*. The types and shadows of the past are still to be finalized at the return of Yeshua. The biblical Prophets all had messages for the people in their day. They reminded the people of what God required of them. The teaching began at creation, was given to the fathers of our faith, including Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and detailed revelation was given through Moses. The Prophets also pointed to the coming of Yeshua, the end purpose of God's Covenant plan. When we read the Prophets we read shades of these two things. The Prophets can be interpreted directly to the people of their day and also as pointing to the future.

The Prophet Haggai spoke to the exiles who returned to their Land after 70 years in Babylon. It was time to re-establish the nation and the Temple had to be rebuilt from its ruins. The people had first built their own houses, but now needed to be reminded to build the Temple. Read the words of the Prophet for yourself today in the context of what we have studied this week. Haggai is just two short chapters. He brought words of correction and of encouragement for the Jews. God would be with them as they re-established the nation according to the pattern given through Moses, centred on the Temple, which replaced the Tabernacle. You will discover principles that God also applies in our lives. We are to be the Temple of God, not made from stone but from God's people. Yeshua is our High Priest and the Corner Stone of the living Temple. Have this in mind, too, as you read this historical account of Judah from the Book of Haggai.

Also consider what the writer to the Hebrews said about the return of Yeshua. Zerubbabel was appointed to govern Judah. He was from the line of Kings of Judah. It was promised that he would be like God's signet ring. This promise was fulfilled through Yeshua who descended from the kingly line of the Tribe of Judah through Zerubbabel. Yeshua was the seal of God who, by His Spirit, would mark for salvation those who live by faith in Him. Furthermore, Haggai clearly pointed to a greater fulfillment of the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. It was he who spoke of the shakings that would come once again prior to the Lord's return to establish the Kingdom. This was referenced at the end of Hebrews. As you read through this Book, pray and see how God speaks to you about the layer upon layer of truth that we considered this week through the Torah, Prophets, Psalms and New Covenant writings.
