

Come Follow Me May 2-8

Exodus 35–40; Leviticus 1; 16; 19

“Holiness to the Lord”

As you study the scriptures, pay attention to spiritual impressions you receive about ways you can become more like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Record Your Impressions

Leaving Egypt—as important and miraculous as that was—didn’t fully accomplish God’s purposes for the children of Israel. Even future prosperity in the promised land wasn’t God’s ultimate objective for them. These were only steps toward what God really wanted for His people: “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” ([Leviticus 19:2](#)). How did God seek to make His people holy when they had known nothing but captivity for generations? He commanded them to create a place of holiness to the Lord—a tabernacle in the wilderness. He gave them covenants and laws to guide their actions and, ultimately, to change their hearts. And when they fell short in their efforts to keep those laws, He commanded them to make animal sacrifices to symbolize atonement for their sins. All of this was meant to point their minds, their hearts, and their lives toward the Savior and the redemption He offers. He is the true path to holiness, for the Israelites and for us. We have all spent some time in the captivity of sin, and we are all invited to repent—to leave sin behind and follow Jesus Christ, who has promised, “I am able to make you holy” ([Doctrine and Covenants 60:7](#)).

For an overview of the book of Leviticus, see “[Leviticus](#)” in the Bible Dictionary.

(13-1) Introduction

Out of the thunders of Sinai the Lord revealed a glorious plan by which He could redeem the children of Israel. The Lord opened the heavens to Moses and through him extended to Israel the opportunity to come to a fulness of His glory, taste of His love, and truly become a Zion people (see [Exodus 25:8; 29:43; D&C 84:23–27](#)). During his forty-day fast upon the mount, Moses received every detail needed for the construction of a tabernacle, a house of the Lord, where Israel could come and receive the keys of salvation and exaltation.

The tie between this tabernacle and latter-day temples is unmistakable. Like modern temples, the tabernacle was to be a house wherein “every needful thing” could be found ([D&C 109:15](#)). It would be a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, so that “all the incomings of thy people, into this house, may be in the name of the Lord; that all their outgoings from this house may be in the name of the Lord” ([D&C 109:16–18](#); see also [Leviticus 9:23](#); [10:8–11](#)). Thus, through the power of revelation, Israel could be “taught words of wisdom” and “seek learning even by study, and also by faith” ([D&C 109:14](#)).

Deep meaning is associated with the physical dimensions and plan of the tabernacle. They were meant to reflect spiritual patterns that are also reflected in temples today. Prayerful study and meditation will help you to comprehend the importance of this ancient dwelling place of the Lord.

Ideas for Personal Scripture Study

[Exodus 35–40](#); [Leviticus 19](#)

The Lord wants me to become holy as He is.

[Exodus 25–31](#) records the Lord’s instructions to the Israelites about how to build a tabernacle, where sacred ordinances would help them become a holy people. [Exodus 35–40](#) describes the Israelites’ efforts to obey these instructions. As you read [chapters 35–40](#), look for the things the Lord asked His people to place in the tabernacle, and ponder what these items could represent and what they suggest to you about increasing in holiness. Especially consider how these items turn your thoughts toward the Savior. A table like this might help you:

What object did you find?	What can this represent?
Ark of the covenant (Exodus 37:1–9 ; 40:20–21)	God’s presence; His covenants and commandments
Altar of incense (Exodus 40:26–27 ; see also Exodus 30:1, 6–8)	Prayers rising to the Lord
Candlestick or lampstand (Exodus 37:17–24)	
Altar of sacrifice (Exodus 38:1–7 ; see also Exodus 27:1 ; 29:10–14)	
Laver (basin) of water (Exodus 30:17–21)	

If you have participated in temple ordinances, what do you learn about the tabernacle from [Exodus 35–40](#) that reminds you of your experience there? (see also “[Thoughts to Keep in Mind: The Tabernacle and Sacrifice](#)”). Ponder how temple covenants help you become more holy like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Of course, simply being in holy places doesn’t make us holy. [Leviticus 19](#) describes laws and commandments the Lord gave to help the Israelites increase in holiness. What do you find in these commandments that could help you become more holy? What do you feel impressed to do to more fully live these principles?

See also Carol F. McConkie, “[The Beauty of Holiness](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 9–12; “The Tabernacle” (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#); Bible Dictionary, “[Holiness](#)”; [temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#).

(13-2) [Exodus 25–30; 35–40](#). Why Are There Two Accounts in Exodus of the Tabernacle?

While on Mount Sinai, Moses received the revelation detailing the plans for the tabernacle (see [Exodus 25–30](#)). When he came down, Moses gathered Israel and they began the actual construction of the tabernacle (see [Exodus 35–40](#)). Since Moses used the revelation to guide the construction, there is a close parallel between the two descriptions in Exodus.

EXODUS CHAPTER 35

Israel is admonished to observe the Sabbath—Free gifts are offered for the tabernacle—The calls and inspiration of certain artisans are confirmed.

1 And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These *are* the words which the LORD hath commanded, that *ye* should do them.

2 ^aSix days shall ^bwork be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a ^csabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to ^ddeath.

3 Ye shall ^ekindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

4 ¶ And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the thing which the LORD ^fcommanded, saying,

5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever *is* of a ^gwilling heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,

6 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ *hair*,

7 And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and ^hshittim wood,

8 And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense,

9 And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.

10 And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded;

11 The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets,

12 The ark, and the staves thereof, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering,

13 The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread,

14 The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light,

15 And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle,

16 The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,

17 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court,

18 The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords,

19 The cloths of service, to do service in the holy *place*, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

20 ¶ And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses.

21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.

22 And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, *and* brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered *offered* an offering of gold unto the LORD.

23 And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought *them*.

24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought *it*.

25 And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, *both* of blue, and of purple, *and* of scarlet, and of fine linen.

26 And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' *hair*.

27 And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate;

28 And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.

29 The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

30 ¶ And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;
31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;
32 And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,
33 And in the cutting of stones, to set *them*, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work.
34 And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, *both* he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.
35 Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, *even* of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

EXODUS CHAPTER 36

Wise-hearted men are chosen to work on the tabernacle—Moses restrains the people from donating any more material.

1 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.
2 And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, *even* every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:
3 And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it *withal*. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning.
4 And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made;
5 ¶ And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.
6 And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.
7 For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Exodus 35:4–36:7

The Lord asks me to make my offerings with a willing heart.

In the year after leaving Egypt, the relationship of the children of Israel with Jehovah could be described as inconsistent. And yet, as you read [Exodus 35:4–36:7](#), notice how

the Israelites responded to the commandment to build the tabernacle. What do you learn from the Israelites that could help you better serve the Lord?

President Bonnie L. Oscarson taught: “Each member should know how much he or she is needed. Each person has something important to contribute and has unique talents and abilities that help move this important work along” (“[Young Women in the Work](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 37). As you read [Exodus 36:1–4](#), ponder what the Lord has “put” into you. Consider asking Heavenly Father what He has given you so that you can participate in His work.

8 ¶ And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with cherubims of cunning work made he them.*

9 The length of one curtain *was* twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains *were* all of one size.

10 And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and *the other* five curtains he coupled one unto another.

11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second.

12 Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which *was* in the coupling of the second: the loops held one *curtain* to another.

13 And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one tabernacle.

14 ¶ And he made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them.

15 The length of one curtain *was* thirty cubits, and four cubits *was* the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains *were* of one size.

16 And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves.

17 And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second.

18 And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one.

19 And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above *that*.

20 ¶ And he made boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up.

21 The length of a board *was* ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half.

22 One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

23 And he made boards for the tabernacle; twenty boards for the south side southward:

24 And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.

25 And for the other side of the tabernacle, *which is* toward the north corner, he made twenty boards,

26 And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

27 And for the sides of the tabernacle westward he made six boards.

28 And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides.

29 And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners.

30 And there were eight boards; and their sockets *were* sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets.

31 ¶ And he made bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle,

32 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the sides westward.

33 And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other.

34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings *of gold to be* places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 ¶ And he made a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: *with* cherubims made he it of cunning work.

36 And he made thereunto four pillars *of shittim wood*, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks *were of* gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver.

37 ¶ And he made an hanging for the tabernacle door of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needlework;

38 And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapters and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets *were of* brass.

(13-9) Exodus 26:1–14; 36:8–38. The Coverings for the Tabernacle

Because the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness at this time, the tabernacle had to be portable. The walls were formed of panels that could be joined together (see [Exodus 25:15–16](#)). Then the walls and open ceiling were covered with four different layers of fabric.

The inner fabric was made of fine-twined linen. The Hebrew word translated “linen” signifies not only the fabric but also “whiteness” (Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. “linen,” p. 255; see also Fallows, *Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. “linen,” 2:1068). Scholars believe it was either a fine cotton fabric or one made from flax. Because of the length of the tabernacle, ten curtains, or pieces of fabric, were needed to cover it. This inner layer

was to have cherubim (angels) embroidered upon it and was to incorporate, besides the whiteness, the colors blue, purple, and scarlet.

The selvage of these curtains was a special border at the edge of each woven piece that prevented raveling. This border was usually of different size threads and was sometimes of a different weave than the rest of the curtain.

By means of golden clasps or pins called taches, the selvages of adjacent curtain segments were joined together, creating the appearance of a single drape over the tabernacle.

The other three fabrics consisted of goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins (see [Exodus 26:7, 14](#)). The nature of the last kind of fabric is not clear; scholars seem to agree only that it was not the skin of badgers. The Hebrew word implies the color of, more than the kind of, fabric (see Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. "badger," p. 27). Some scholars believe it may have been the skins of porpoises or seals from the Red Sea which would have given the tabernacle a waterproof outer covering (see Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 1:2:163).

EXODUS CHAPTER 37

Bezaleel makes the ark, the mercy seat, and the cherubims—He makes the table, the vessels, the candlestick, the incense altar, the holy anointing oil, and the sweet incense.

1 And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half *was* the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it:

2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

3 And he cast for it four rings of gold, *to be set* by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it.

4 And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold.

5 And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

6 ¶ And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half *was* the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat;

8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the *other* end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

9 And the cherubims spread out *their* wings on high, *and* covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; *even* to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.

(13-5) Exodus 25:10–22; 37:1–9. The Ark of the Covenant

The ark of the covenant was a chest, or box, of shittim wood overlaid with gold. It was approximately three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide, and two feet three inches high. Staves, or poles, on both sides allowed the priests to carry it without actually touching the ark itself. Inside, the tablets of the law given to Moses on Mount Sinai were placed (see v. 16). Hence, it was called the ark of the testimony or ark of the covenant. Later, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod, which miraculously bloomed, were also placed inside the ark (see Hebrews 9:4). The ark was placed inside the inner room of the tabernacle known as the most holy place, or Holy of Holies. The ark was viewed with the greatest reverence by the Israelites, and prayers were recited before it was moved or placed in position (see Numbers 10:35–36).

The lid, or covering, for the ark is described in Exodus 25:17–22. The King James Version translates the Hebrew word *kapporeth* (which means "seat of atonement") as "mercy seat." The covering was made of solid gold and on it were formed two cherubim with wings which came up and overshadowed the lid or mercy seat. The word *cherubim* usually refers to guardians of sacred things. While the exact meaning of the word is not known, most scholars agree that these cherubim represented "redeemed and glorified manhood" or "glorified saints and angels" (Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. "cherubim," p. 75). Since Latter-day Saints do not believe that angels have wings, as they are often shown in religious art, the commandment to form wings on the cherubim may raise some questions. Another revelation indicates, however, that wings symbolically represent the power to move and to act (see D&C 77:4). Between these cherubim on the mercy seat, God told Moses, He would meet with him and commune with him. Latter-day revelations state that angels stand as sentinels guarding the presence of God (see D&C 132:19).

The blood of the lamb of Jehovah was sprinkled upon the mercy seat during the sacred day of Atonement. (For a complete discussion of the sacred significance of this event, see Reading 15-8.) Paul and John both spoke of Jesus as being "the propitiation" for our sins (see 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Romans 3:25). The Greek word *hilasterion*, translated "propitiation," was also used to translate the Hebrew *kapporeth* ("seat of atonement") in the Greek Old Testament. One scholar discussed the significance of the word *hilasterion*: "All Greek nouns which end in *-erion* mean *the place where something is done*. *Dikasterion* means the place where *dike*, justice is done, and therefore a law court. *Thusiasterion* means the place where *thusia*, sacrifice is done, and therefore the altar. Therefore *hilasterion* can certainly mean the place where *hilasmos*, expiation, is done and made. Because of that, both in the Old and New Testament, *hilasterion* has a regular and a technical meaning. It always means the lid of gold above the ark which was known as *the mercy-seat*. In Exodus 25:17 it is laid down of the furnishings of the tabernacle: 'Thou shalt make a mercy-seat (*hilasterion*) of pure gold.' In only one other

place in the New Testament is the word used, in *Hebrews* 9:5, and there the writer speaks of the cherubim who overshadow the mercy-seat. The word is used in that sense more than twenty times in the Greek Old Testament. ...

“If then we take *hilasterion* to mean the mercy-seat, and, if we call Jesus our *hilasterion* in that sense, it will mean, so to speak, that Jesus is the place where man and God meet, and that specially He is the place where man’s sin meets with the atoning love of God.” (Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul*, pp. 87–88.)

Clearly, then, the ark of the covenant was one of the most significant features of the tabernacle, both in its importance to ancient Israel and also in its symbolic significance.

10 ¶ And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits *was* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof:

11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about.

12 Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about.

13 And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that *were* in the four feet thereof.

14 Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table.

15 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table.

16 And he made the vessels which *were* upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.

(13-7) Exodus 25:23–30; 37:10–16. The Table of Shewbread and Its Instruments

The second article of furniture described by the Lord was the table of shewbread. Like the ark of the covenant, it too was to be made of shittim wood with a gold overlay (see vv. 23–24). It had a crown and border (probably a rim) of gold on the top, or surface, of the table and had rings and staves to provide for easy transport. It was about three feet long, eighteen inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high. Various vessels of gold, called the spoons, dishes, covers, or bowls in the King James Version of the Bible, were made for use with the table.

This table got its name from the twelve loaves of bread which were placed upon it. The Lord called it “shewbread” (v. 30), which translates literally the Hebrew word meaning “the bread of faces,” or “the bread of the presence,” signifying that this bread was placed before the face of the Lord or in His presence (Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. “shew, shew-bread,” p. 388; Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “shewbread,” p. 847). The bread was made of fine flour (that is, the wheat had been very finely ground and not left with the kernels partially intact) into twelve loaves of considerable size—two-tenths of a deal would be about a fifth of a bushel of flour

(see [Leviticus 24:5](#); Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. “shewbread,” p. 847). Thus, the cakes would likely have weighed over ten pounds each. The loaves were put into two stacks, and upon each pile was placed pure frankincense that was later burned on the altar of incense “an offering made by fire unto the Lord” ([Leviticus 24:7](#); see also [v. 6](#)). The bread was changed each Sabbath and the bread that was removed was eaten by the priests (see [Leviticus 24:8–9](#)). This was the bread given to David when he fled from King Saul (see [1 Samuel 21:1–6](#); [Matthew 12:4](#)).

Most scholars and old Jewish traditions agree that wine was also placed on the table along with the bread, although it is not mentioned specifically in the biblical account. The spoons were actually vessels or cups, rather than spoons as they are known today, and were probably the containers for the liquid. (See Fallows, Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. “shewbread,” 3:1576; Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. “shewbread,” p. 847.) Thus, the items placed on the table of shewbread have distinct parallels in the emblems of the sacrament.

17 ¶ And he made the *candlestick* of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and *his* branch, his bowls, *his knops*, and his flowers, were of the same:

18 And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof:

19 Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick.

20 And in the candlestick *were* four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers:

21 And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it.

22 Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it *was* one beaten work of pure gold.

23 And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold.

24 Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

(13-8) [Exodus 25:31–40](#); [37:17–24](#). The Golden Candlestick

The source of light for the tabernacle was the sacred candlestick. Called *menorah* in Hebrew, which means the “place of lights” (Fallows, Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. “candlestick,” 1:332), it held not candles but rather seven cup-shaped containers filled with pure olive oil into which a wick was inserted and lit. Made of solid gold, the *menorah* was supported by a base which rested upon three feet. Its shaft rose from the base which was decorated by knops (spherical ornamentations), bowls

(enlargements proportionate in size to the knops and upon which were almond blossoms), and flowers (disc-like enlargements representing the shape of an almond flower petal). Each of the branches of the *menorah* was crowned with a light which illuminated the holy place, or first room of the tabernacle.

The number seven has sacred significance in the Old Testament, connoting wholeness or perfection (see Smith, Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "seven," pp. 607–8; Douglas, New Bible Dictionary, s.v. "numbers," p. 898). Thus, the light provided in the house of the Lord symbolized the perfect light.

The oil for the seven lamps had to be pure olive oil (see Exodus 27:20) that had been consecrated for that purpose. The Jewish festival of Hannukah, or the festival of lights, celebrates the time when Judas Maccabeus finally drove the Greeks from the temple in Jerusalem around 165 B.C. According to Jewish tradition, the Maccabees found only enough consecrated oil for the sacred lamps to last one day. The consecration of new oil took eight days; yet miraculously, the meager supply burned until a new supply could be properly prepared. (See Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, bk. 12, chap. 7, par. 6.) Other scriptures indicate that olive oil represents the Holy Spirit, probably because it provided fire, heat, and light when burned in the lamps (see D&C 45:56–57). Thus, the sacred *menorah* was a type or symbol of the true source of spiritual light, namely the Holy Ghost as He bears witness of the Father and the Son.

25 ¶ And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it *was* a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; *it was* foursquare; and two cubits *was* the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same.

26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, *both* the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about.

27 And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal.

28 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold.

29 ¶ And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.

EXODUS CHAPTER 38

Bezaleel and others make the altar of burnt offerings and all things pertaining to the tabernacle— Offerings are made by 603,550 men.

1 And he made the altar of burnt offering of shittim wood: five cubits *was* the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof; *it was* foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof.

2 And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass.

3 And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, *and* the fleshhooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he *of* brass.

4 And he made for the altar a brasen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it.

5 And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, *to be* places for the staves.

6 And he made the staves *of* shittim wood, and overlaid them with brass.

7 And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

8 ¶ And he made the laver *of* brass, and the foot of it *of* brass, of the lookingglasses of *the women* assembling, which assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

9 ¶ And he made the court: on the south side southward the hangings of the court *were of* fine twined linen, an hundred cubits:

10 Their pillars *were* twenty, and their brasen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *were of* silver.

11 And for the north side *the hangings were* an hundred cubits, their pillars *were* twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of* silver.

12 And for the west side *were* hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of* silver.

13 And for the east side eastward fifty cubits.

14 The hangings of the one side *of the gate were* fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three.

15 And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, *were* hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three.

16 All the hangings of the court round about *were of* fine twined linen.

17 And the sockets for the pillars *were of* brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of* silver; and the overlaying of their chapters *of* silver; and all the pillars of the court *were* filleted with silver.

18 And the hanging for the gate of the court *was* needlework, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits *was* the length, and the height in the breadth *was* five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court.

19 And their pillars *were* four, and their sockets *of* brass four; their hooks *of* silver, and the overlaying of their chapters and their fillets *of* silver.

20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, *were of* brass.

(13-12) Exodus 27:1–19; 30:17–21; 38:1–20. The Outer Courtyard and Its Furnishings

Surrounding the tabernacle itself was a large enclosed area protected by woven hangings attached to a movable wall. In this courtyard was located the altar of burnt offerings (altar of sacrifice) and the laver of water for the symbolic cleansing of hands

and feet. Into this courtyard anyone of Israel could bring sacrifices, but only the priests could enter the tabernacle itself. (Sometimes, however, the tabernacle referred to in the Old Testament means the whole complex, including the courtyard, and not just the tent itself.)

Each pillar of the court of the tabernacle was ringed horizontally by silver fillets, which were rectangular bands around each pillar to both protect the wood and beautify it. The hangings, or the fabric which formed the outer walls of the court, were attached to the top of each pillar and were secured at the bottom by ties to the brass pins which were firmly driven into the ground. The following were the furnishings of this outer court:

Altar of burnt offerings. All burnt offerings performed within the tabernacle took place on this altar. It was hollow, five cubits square and three cubits high, or about 7½ x 7½ x 5 feet in dimension. It was made of shittim wood overlaid with brass plates.

It had four horns on its corners. Upon these horns the blood of the sacrifice was to be smeared. By laying hold of these horns, a person could find asylum and safety (see 1 Kings 1:50; 2:28), although not if he was guilty of premeditated murder (see Exodus 21:14). Sometimes the horns were used to bind the animal or intended sacrifice.

Holy instruments of sacrifice. The pan was a large, brazen dish placed under the altar to receive the ashes as they fell through.

Brazen fire shovels were used for emptying the pans.

The basins were receptacles used to catch the blood from the sacrifice.

The fleshhook was a three-pronged hook that the priest used to dip into the sacrificial container. That which he brought up was to be kept for himself.

The firepan was the container in which was kept the continuously burning fire for sacrifice.

Laver. This, like the altar of sacrifice, was made of brass. It stood between the altar of sacrifice and the tabernacle. It was used by the priests for cleansing, preparatory to entering the tabernacle.

In Solomon's day, when a permanent temple was constructed, the laver was set on the backs of twelve oxen (see 1 Kings 7:23–26).

21 ¶ This is the sum of the tabernacle, *even* of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, *for* the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest.

22 And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses.

23 And with him *was* Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen.

24 All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy *place*, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

25 And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation *was* an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

26 A bekah for every man, *that is*, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty *men*.

27 And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

28 And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them.

29 And the brass of the offering *was* seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels.

30 And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar,

31 And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

EXODUS CHAPTER 39

Holy garments are made for Aaron and the priests — The breastplate is made — The tabernacle of the congregation is finished — Moses blesses the people.

1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.

2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires, to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with* cunning work.

4 They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple *it* together: by the two edges was it coupled together.

5 And the curious girdle of his ephod, that *was* upon it, *was* of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.

6 ¶ And they wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel.

7 And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, *that they should be* stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

8 ¶ And he made the breastplate *of cunning work*, like the work of the ephod; *of gold*, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span *was* the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, *being* doubled.

10 And they set in it four rows of stones: *the first row was* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the first row.

11 And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: *they were* inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings.

14 And the stones *were* according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

15 And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, *of* wreathen work of pure gold.

16 And they made two ouches *of gold*, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate.

17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate.

18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it.

19 And they made two rings of gold, and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which *was* on the side of the ephod inward.

20 And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

21 And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 ¶ And he made the robe of the ephod *of woven work*, all *of blue*.

23 And *there was* an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, *with a band* round about the hole, that it should not rend.

24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates *of blue*, and purple, and scarlet, *and twined linen*.

25 And they made bells *of pure gold*, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates;

26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister *in*; as the LORD commanded Moses.

27 ¶ And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons,
28 And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and
linen breeches of fine twined linen,
29 And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework; as
the LORD commanded Moses.
30 ¶ And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a
writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.
31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as
the LORD commanded Moses.
32 ¶ Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and
the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.
33 ¶ And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his
taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,
34 And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and
the veil of the covering,
35 The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat,
36 The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread,
37 The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order,
and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,
38 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and
the hanging for the tabernacle door,
39 The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver
and his foot,
40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court
gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the
tent of the congregation,
41 The cloths of service to do service in the holy *place*, and the holy garments for Aaron
the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office.
42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all
the work.
43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had
commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

(13-13) Exodus 28; 39. The Priesthood Garments and Their Significance

When the children of Israel forfeited their right to the higher priesthood and its associated blessings and responsibilities, the Lord established the Levitical Priesthood among them (see D&C 84:18–27). Through this order of the priesthood Israel enjoyed the principles of the preparatory gospel. They were reminded continually of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior, who was symbolically represented before them in the person

officiating as priest (see [Leviticus 8:5–10](#); [21:10](#); [Hebrews 5:4](#); [7:11–12, 21](#); [D&C 107:1, 13–20](#); JS—H, 1:68–72).

The pattern for the official clothing of the high priest, or presiding head of the Aaronic Priesthood (not the Melchizedek Priesthood office of high priest), was given by revelation and had symbolic as well as practical significance. It consisted of the following items:

Ephod. “The ephod [pronounced *ay’fode* in Hebrew] was an article of sacred clothing worn by the high priests of the Levitical Priesthood. The Lord directed that they were not to wear ordinary clothing during their service, but they were to have ‘holy garments’ made by those whom the Lord had ‘filled with the spirit of wisdom.’ ([Exod. 28:2–3](#).) These sacred garments were to be passed from father to son along with the high priestly office itself. ([Exod. 29:29](#).)

“The ephod, worn over a blue robe, was made of blue, purple, and scarlet material, with designs of gold thread skillfully woven into the fabric. This garment was fastened at each shoulder and had an intricately woven band with which it could be fastened around the waist. In gold settings on each shoulder were onyx stones engraved with the names of the 12 sons of Israel as a ‘memorial’ as the priest served before the Lord. (See [Exod. 28:6–14](#) and [39:2–7](#)). Fastened to the ephod was a breastplate into which the Urim and Thummin could be placed. ([Exod. 28:15–30](#).)

“The exact function of the ephod is not known. As President Joseph Fielding Smith observed, information concerning these ancient ordinances ‘was never recorded in any detail, because such ordinances are sacred and not for the world.’ (Improvement Era, November 1955, p. 794.)” (Richard O. Cowan, [“I Have a Question,”](#) Ensign, Dec. 1973, p. 33.)

This “apron,” as it is sometimes translated, signified a beautiful symbolic concept. With the two onyx stones, which fastened the ephod on the shoulders, the high priest (a type of Christ and also of His authorized representatives) entered the tabernacle (the house of the Lord, or God’s presence) carrying Israel on his shoulders (see [Exodus 28:12](#)).

The breastplate. Attached to the ephod with golden chains and ouches (sockets or fasteners) was the breastplate (see [vv. 13–29](#)). The breastplate worn by Aaron and subsequent high priests should not be confused with the one used by the Prophet Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon. Aaron’s breastplate was made of fabric rather than of metal and was woven of the same material that was used in making the ephod (see [v. 15](#)). It was twice as long as it was wide and when folded became a square pocket into which the Urim and Thummim was placed. Upon the exposed half of the breastplate were precious stones inscribed with the names of each of the tribes of Israel. Thus, the high priest bore “the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart ... for a memorial before the Lord continually” ([v. 29](#)).

The symbolism of the high priest carrying Israel next to his heart lends added meaning to the promise that the Lord will some day select His “jewels” ([D&C 60:4](#); [101:3](#)).

The Urim and Thummim. As noted above, the Urim and Thummim was carried in the pouch formed when the breastplate was folded over (see [Exodus 28:30](#)).

“A Urim and Thummim consists of two special stones called *seer stones* or *interpreters*. The Hebrew words *urim* and *thummim*, both plural, mean *lights* and *perfections*. Presumably one of the stones is called Urim and the other Thummim. Ordinarily they are carried in a breastplate over the heart. ([Ex. 28:30](#); [Lev. 8:8](#).) ...

“... Abraham had them in his day ([Abra. 3:1–4](#)), and Aaron and the priests in Israel had them from generation to generation. ([Ex. 28:30](#); [Lev. 8:8](#); [Num. 27:21](#); [Deut. 33:8](#), [1 Sam. 28:6](#); [Ezra 2:63](#); [Neh. 7:65](#).) ...

“... Ammon said of these ... stones: ‘The things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer.’ ([Mosiah 8:13](#); [28:13–16](#).)

“The existence and use of the Urim and Thummim as an instrument of revelation will continue among exalted beings in eternity.” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 818–19.)

The Urim and Thummim of Aaron was not the same as that used by Joseph Smith, for the Prophet received the Urim and Thummim used by the brother of Jared (see McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 819).

The robe. This robe was blue and was woven without seams with a hole for the head to go through (see [Exodus 28:31–32](#)). Jesus, the Great High Priest, was clothed in a similar seamless garment prior to His Crucifixion (see [John 19:23](#)). Along the hem of the robe were placed, alternately, bells and fringes woven to look like pomegranates. One scholar noted the significance of the robe and its ornaments:

“[The robe was] woven in one piece, which set forth the idea of wholeness or spiritual integrity; and the dark-blue colour indicated nothing more than the heavenly origin and character of the office with which the robe was associated. [The true significance of the robe] must be sought for, therefore, in the peculiar pendants, the meaning of which is to be gathered from the analogous instructions in [[Numbers 15:38–39](#)], where every Israelite is directed to make a fringe in the border of his garment, of dark-blue purple thread, and when he looks at the fringe to remember the commandments of God and do them. In accordance with this, we are also to seek for allusions to the word and testimony of God in the pendant of pomegranates and bells attached to the fringe of the high priest’s robe. The simile in [[Proverbs 25:11](#)], where the word is compared to an apple, suggests the idea that the pomegranates, with their pleasant odour, their sweet and refreshing juice, and the richness of their delicious kernel, were symbols of the

word and testimony of God as a sweet and pleasant spiritual food, that enlivens the soul and refreshes the heart [see [Psalms 19:8–11](#); [119:25, 43, 50](#); [Deuteronomy 8:3](#); [Proverbs 9:8](#); [Ecclesiastes 15:3](#)], and that the bells were symbols of the sounding of this word, or the revelation and proclamation of the word. Through the robe, with this pendant attached, Aaron was represented as the recipient and medium of the word and testimony which came down from heaven; and this was the reason why he was not to appear before the Lord without that sound, lest he should forfeit his life [see [Exodus 28:35](#)]. It was not because he would simply have appeared as a private person if he had gone without it, for he would always have the holy dress of a priest upon him, even when he was not clothed in the official decorations of the high priest; but because no mere priest was allowed to enter the immediate presence of the Lord. This privilege was restricted to the representative of the whole congregation, viz. the high priest; and even he could only do so when wearing the robe of the word of God, as the bearer of the divine testimony, upon which the covenant fellowship with the Lord was founded.” (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:2:202–3.)

The golden diadem and the mitre. The mitre (or hat) was made of fine linen (see [Exodus 28:39](#)), and each priest wore one. In addition, the high priest wore a golden band on the front of his mitre on the forehead. Engraved on the band were the words “Holiness to the Lord” (v. 36; see also [vv. 37–38](#)), signifying first that the high priest should be characterized by this attribute, and second that Christ, the Great High Priest, would be perfectly holy before God.

EXODUS CHAPTER 40

The tabernacle is reared—Aaron and his sons are washed and anointed and given an everlasting priesthood—The glory of the Lord fills the tabernacle—A cloud covers the tabernacle by day, and fire rests on it by night.

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the veil.

4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

6 And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate.

9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that *is* therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy.

10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.

11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.

12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

17 ¶ And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

20 ¶ And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 ¶ And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.

23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24 ¶ And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

26 ¶ And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil:

27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses.

28 ¶ And he set up the hanging *at* the door of the tabernacle.

29 And he put the altar of burnt offering *by* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 ¶ And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal.

31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.

33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

34 ¶ Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of the LORD *was* upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

LEVITICUS CHAPTER 1

Animals without blemish are sacrificed as an atonement for sins—Burnt offerings are a sweet savor unto the Lord.

1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

(14-2) Leviticus 1:1. What Is the Major Importance of the Book of Leviticus?

The book of Leviticus contains direct revelation from God through Moses to Israel. It was the priesthood handbook of that generation. This fact makes the book of great interest, for whenever God speaks to man He reveals Himself. Through the pages of Leviticus one can come to understand Him and His purpose better. The modern reader may feel the contents of the book are outdated, especially those that deal with blood sacrifice, yet all were designed, as Amulek said, to point to the infinite Atonement of Christ (see Alma 34:14). One scholar noted the following about the various sacrifices and offerings:

“The first point, then, which requires our notice is this:—In each offering there are at least *three distinct objects* presented to us. There is the *offering*, the *priest*, the *offerer*. A

definite knowledge of the precise import of each of these is absolutely requisite if we would understand the offerings.

“What, then, is *the offering*? what *the priest*? what *the offerer*? Christ is the offering, Christ is the priest, Christ is the offerer. Such and so manifold are the relations in which Christ has stood for man and to man, that no one type or set of types can adequately represent the fulness of them. Thus we have many distinct classes of types, and further variations in these distinct classes, each of which gives us one particular view of Christ, either in His character, or in His work, or person. But see Him as we may for sinners, He fills more than one relation. This causes the necessity of many emblems. First He comes as offerer, but we cannot see the offerer without the offering, and the offerer is Himself the offering, and He who is both offerer and offering is also the priest. As man under the law, our substitute, Christ, stood for us towards God as offerer. He took ‘the body prepared for Him’ as His offering, that in it and by it He might reconcile us to God. Thus, when sacrifice and offering had wholly failed,—when at man’s hand God would no more accept them,—‘then said He, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O God: yea, Thy law is within my heart.’ Thus His body was His offering: He willingly offered it; and then as priest He took the blood into the holiest. As *offerer*, we see Him *man under the law*, standing our substitute, for us to fulfil all righteousness. As *priest*, we have Him presented as *the mediator*, God’s messenger between Himself and Israel. While as *the offering* He is seen *the innocent victim*, a sweet savour to God, yet bearing the sin and dying for it.

“Thus in the selfsame type *the offerer* sets forth Christ *in His person*, as the One who became man to meet God’s requirements: *the offering* presents Him *in His character and work*, as the victim by which the atonement was ratified; while the *priest* gives us a third picture of Him, *in His official relation*, as the appointed mediator and intercessor. Accordingly, when we have a type in which the *offering* is most prominent, the leading thought will be Christ the victim. On the other hand, when the *offerer* or *priest* predominates, it will respectively be Christ as man or Christ as mediator.” (Jukes, *Law of the Offerings*, pp. 44–45.)

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.

3 If his offering *be* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

(14-3) Leviticus 1:2–3. What Made an Animal Acceptable for an Offering to God?

The Hebrew word translated “without blemish” means to be sound or whole. In addition to this requirement, all sacrificial animals had to meet two other requirements.

They had to be of the category that the Lord declared clean (see [Leviticus 11](#)), and they also had to be from domesticated herds and flocks (see [Leviticus 1:2](#)).

“In the clean animals, which he had obtained by his own training and care, and which constituted his ordinary live-stock, and in the produce obtained through the labour of his hands in the field and vineyard, from which he derived his ordinary support, the Israelite offered ... the food which he procured in the exercise of his God-appointed calling, as a symbol of the spiritual food which endureth unto everlasting life [see [John 6:27](#); [4:34](#)], and which nourishes both soul and body for imperishable life in fellowship with God. ... In this way the sacrificial gifts acquire a representative character, and denote the self-surrender of a man, with all his labour and productions, to God.” (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:2:275–76.)


This offering was to be “voluntary” ([Leviticus 1:3](#)). It was not forced, but served as a free expression of gratitude on the part of the individual. Anything less would violate a basic principle of free will offerings (see [Moroni 7:6–10](#)).


(14-4) [Leviticus 1:3](#). Was the Burnt Offering Actually Slain at the Door of the Tabernacle?



To assist Israel in overcoming idolatry, the Lord specified that offerings be sacrificed in one place, “at the door of the tabernacle” ([v. 3](#)). This place was specified because it was here (technically, a few yards in front of the door of the tabernacle or temple) that the altar stood on which the sacrifice or a portion of it would be burned. (Note: This verse and the following verses describe the burnt offerings. Other offerings had different requirements. For a complete description of all the various offerings, see the accompanying chart, which was adapted from Edward J. Brandt, “[Sacrifices and Offerings of the Mosaic Law](#),” *Ensign*, Dec. 1973, pp. 50–51.)

Sacrifices and Offerings of the Mosaic Law

Name of the Ordinance and Type of Offering	Emblematic Objects Used for the Ordinance	Purpose of the Ordinance	When Administered
Burnt Offering (Lev. 1 ; 6:9–13) This is another name for the ordinance of sacrifice practiced by the patriarchs from Adam down to Israel.	Male animal without blemish (Exod. 12:5 ; Lev. 1:3 ; 22:18–25 ; Num. 28:3–4 ; Deut. 15:21 ; 17:1). Originally the animal was to be a firstborn (Gen. 4:4 ; Exod. 13:12 ; Lev. 27:26 ; Num.	“This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7 ; see also Lev. 1:4 , 9 ; 14:20 ; Heb. 9:14 ; 1 Pet. 1:19 ; 2 Ne. 11:4 ; 25:24–27 ; Jac. 4:5 ; Jar. 1 ; Mosiah 3:15).	Public Offerings Regularly appointed times: Daily—morning and evening (Exod. 29:38–42 ; Num. 28:3–4).

Name of the Ordinance and Type of Offering	Emblematic Objects Used for the Ordinance	Purpose of the Ordinance	When Administered
	<p>3:41; 18:17; Deut. 12:6; 15:19–21). The animal used varied according to the position and personal possessions of the individual, as well as the occasion of the sacrifice: bull, ram, he-goat, turtledoves, or young pigeons (Lev. 1:5, 10, 14; 5:7; Gen. 15:9).</p> 		<p>Sabbath—double portion given (Num. 28:9–10). New Moon—monthly (Num. 28:11–15). Seasonally appointed times:</p> <p>Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Feast of the Harvest, Feast of the Tabernacles, New Year, and the Day of Atonement</p> <p>Private Offerings Given for family events—birth, marriage, reunions, etc., and at times of personal need. Most often, private or individual offerings were given during the times of appointed feasts.</p>
<p>Peace Offering (Lev. 3; 7:11–38)</p>	<p>Male or female animal without blemish (Lev. 3:1, 12) and cattle, sheep, or goats, but no fowl or other substitutes (Lev. 22:27). The animal</p>	<p>The threefold purpose of peace offerings is suggested in the following titles or descriptions given.</p>	<p>These were private offerings or a personal sacrifice for family or individuals</p>

Name of the Ordinance and Type of Offering	Emblematic Objects Used for the Ordinance	Purpose of the Ordinance	When Administered
	<p>was to be meat for a sacrificial meal. The fat and inward portions were burned upon the altar (<u>Lev. 3:3–5</u>), a specified part was given to the priests (see Heave and Wave Offerings), and the remainder was used for meat in the special dinner (<u>Lev. 7:16</u>).</p> 	<p>Thank Offering is given to thank God for all blessings (<u>Lev. 7:12–13, 15; 22:29</u>). Vow Offering (<u>Lev. 7:16; 22:18, 21, 23; Num. 15:3, 8; 29:39; Deut. 12:6</u>) signifies the taking or renewing of a vow or covenant. Free-Will Offering (<u>Lev. 7:16; 22:18, 21, 23; Num. 15:3; 29:39; Deut. 12:6, 17; 16:10; 23:23</u>) suggests voluntary receiving of covenants with attendant responsibilities and consequences. An individual could seemingly give the offering for any of the above declared purposes separately or together.</p>	<p>(see Private Offerings).</p>
<p>Sin Offering (<u>Lev. 4; 5:1–13; 6:25–30</u>)</p>	<p>Male or female animal or fowl without blemish. The offering varied according to the position and circumstances of the offerer: the priest offered a bull (<u>Lev. 4:3; Num. 8:8</u>), the ruler among the people a he-goat (<u>Lev. 4:22–23</u>), the people in general a she-goat (<u>Lev. 4:27–28</u>), the poor two turtledoves or two young pigeons (<u>Lev. 5:7</u>),</p>	<p>Sin offerings were given for sins committed in ignorance (<u>Lev. 4:2, 22, 27</u>), sins not generally known about by the people (<u>Num. 15:24</u>), sins in violation of oaths and covenants (<u>Lev. 5:1, 4–5</u>), and ceremonial sins of defilement or uncleanness under the law of carnal commandments (<u>Lev. 5:2–3; 12:1–8; 15:28–30</u>). The purpose of sin offerings, after true</p>	<p>A special sin-offering for all the people was offered on the Day of Atonement (<u>Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:3, 6, 11, 15–19</u>). All other sin offerings were private and personal offerings, most often given at the times of the</p>

Name of the Ordinance and Type of Offering	Emblematic Objects Used for the Ordinance	Purpose of the Ordinance	When Administered
	<p>and those of extreme poverty an offering of fowl or meal (<u>Lev. 5:11</u>; <u>Num. 15:20–21</u>). The offering is not consumed by fire, but is used by the Levitical priesthood as a sacrificial meal. The meat and hide are for their sustenance and use. (<u>Lev. 6:25–30</u>; <u>7:7–8</u>; <u>14:13</u>.)</p> 	<p>repentance on the part of the parties involved, was to prepare them to receive forgiveness as a part of the renewal of their covenants. (<u>Lev. 4:26</u>, <u>35</u>; <u>5:10</u>; <u>10:17</u>; <u>Num. 15:24–29</u>.) This same blessing is possible by partaking of the sacrament today. (<u>JST, Matt. 26:24</u>.)</p>	<p>appointed feasts.</p>
<p>Trespass Offering (<u>Lev. 5:15–19</u>; <u>6:1–7</u>; <u>7:1–10</u>)</p>	<p>Ram without blemish (<u>Lev. 5:15</u>, <u>18</u>; <u>6:6</u>; <u>19:21</u>). A leper was to offer a lamb (<u>Lev. 14:12</u>), and a Nazarite was also to give a lamb (<u>Num. 6:12</u>).</p> 	<p>Trespass offerings were given for offenses committed against others: i.e., false testimony (<u>Lev. 6:2–3</u>), forceful and unlawful possession of property (<u>Lev. 6:4</u>), disrespect for sacred things (<u>Lev. 5:16–17</u>), acts of passion (<u>Lev. 19:20–22</u>). The purpose of the trespass offering was to bring forgiveness. (<u>Lev. 6:7</u>.) This was possible after repentance (<u>Lev. 26:40–45</u>) and after fulfilling the law of restitution that required, where possible, that the guilty individual restore completely the wrong and an additional 20 percent (<u>Lev. 5:16</u>; <u>6:5–17</u>; <u>27:13</u>, <u>15</u>, <u>19</u>, <u>27</u>, <u>31</u>; <u>Num. 5:6–10</u>).</p>	<p>All trespass offerings were private and personal offerings, most commonly given at the times of the appointed feasts.</p>

Name of the Ordinance and Type of Offering	Emblematic Objects Used for the Ordinance	Purpose of the Ordinance	When Administered
<p>Meal or Meat Offering Gifts (<u>Exod. 29:40–41</u>; <u>Lev. 2</u>; <u>6:14–23</u>; <u>7:9–10</u>; <u>Num. 15:4–24</u>; <u>28</u>; <u>29</u>)</p>	<p>An unleavened bread. Few ingredients were permitted with the basic flour: salt (<u>Lev. 2:13</u>), oil (<u>Lev. 2:5</u>), even incense (<u>Lev. 2:15</u>), but no leavening or honey (<u>Lev. 2:11</u>). However, it could be baked or fried in various ways.</p>	<p>This offering completed the sacrificial meal of the burnt and peace offerings. It was then given to the priests for their service and sustenance. (<u>Lev. 7:8–10</u>.)</p>	<p>This offering was always given with the burnt offerings and peace offerings and could even substitute for a sin offering in the stress of poverty. (<u>Num. 15:28–29</u>.)</p>
<p>Heave Offering (<u>Exod. 29:26–27</u>; <u>Lev. 7:14</u>, <u>32–34</u>; <u>Num. 18:19</u>)</p>	<p>The heave offering is the right shoulder and the wave offering the breast of the peace offering animal given in payment by the offerer for the services of the priest.</p> <p>Whatever the Levites received for their priesthood service—heave or wave offering, meat offering, or tithe (<u>Num. 18</u>)—they were required to offer to the Lord in sacrifice a portion as a memorial offering (<u>Lev. 2:2</u>, <u>9</u>, <u>16</u>; <u>5:12</u>; <u>6:15</u>; <u>Num. 5:26</u>; <u>18:26–29</u>). “Heave” and “wave” refer to gestures of lifting the offerings up and extending them toward the priest who received them on behalf of the Lord.</p>	<p>This is the priest’s portion. (<u>Lev. 7:35–36</u>; <u>Deut. 18:1–8</u>.) This memorial offering was a type of peace or thank offering to the Lord, as well as a remembrance of God and service to Him.</p> <p>The Levites also received the hides of all the animals sacrificed for their labors and services. (<u>Lev. 7:8</u>.)</p>	<p>These were given at the times of burnt offerings and peace offerings.</p>

(Adapted from Edward J. Brandt, “The Priesthood Ordinance of Sacrifice,” Ensign, Dec. 1973, pp. 50–51.)

4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

(14-5) Leviticus 1:4. Why Did the Offerer Place His Hands on the Offering, and How Did This Offering Make Atonement for Him?

The laying on of hands was an important part of every sacrifice. “This meant transmission and delegation, and implied representation; so that it really pointed to the substitution of the sacrifice for the sacrificer. Hence it was always accompanied by confession of sin and prayer. It was thus done. The sacrifice was so turned that the person confessing looked towards the west, while he laid his hands between the horns of the sacrifice, and if the sacrifice was brought by more than one, each had to lay on his hands. It is not quite a settled point whether one or both hands were laid on; but all are agreed that it was to be done ‘with one’s whole force’ — as it were, to lay one’s whole weight upon the substitute.” (Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 113–14.)

This practice shows that the sacrifice had a dual symbolism. First and foremost, it represented the only sacrifice that could ultimately bring peace and remission of sins, namely that of Jesus Christ. But the laying on of hands showed a transfer of identity; that is, the offerer put his own identity upon the sacrificial animal. Thus, the slaying of the animal implied symbolically one of two things, depending on the kind of offering. First, it implied that the sinful self, the “natural man,” as King Benjamin called it (see Mosiah 3:19), was put to death in order that the spiritual person could be reborn. Paul used this terminology in Romans 6:1–6, and the baptismal font is compared to a grave in Doctrine and Covenants 128:13. Why? Because the “old man” of sin is buried there (Romans 6:6). Second, if it was not a sin offering, the death of the animal would imply a giving up of one’s life, that is, a total sacrifice of one’s self to God.

The word translated “atonement” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to cover over or hide.” The connotation is not that the sin no longer exists but that the sin has been covered over, or, more scripturally, blotted out before God through His grace or loving kindness (see Alma 7:13). That is to say, the power of sin to separate man from God has been taken away (see Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 1:2:276). Thus, the word *at-one-ment* was used to show that man becomes one with God again.

5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

(14-6) Leviticus 1:5. Why Is There Such Emphasis on Blood?

Of all the elements of the ordinance of sacrifice, nothing played a more prominent part than the administration of the blood of the offering. The manner of its offering was

minutely specified by the Lord. Depending on the offering, the blood was dabbed upon the horns of the altar, sprinkled or splashed upon all four sides of the altar, or dumped out at the base of the altar.

The Lord chose blood to dramatize the consequences of sin and what was involved in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore, blood symbolized both life (see [Leviticus 17:11](#)) and the giving of one's life. Death is the consequence of sin and so the animal was slain to show what happens when man sins. Also, the animal was a type of Christ. Through the giving of His life for man, by the shedding of His blood, one who is spiritually dead because of sin can find new life. Out of this truth grows a spiritual parallel: "As in Adam, or by nature, all men fall and are subject to spiritual death, so in Christ and his atoning sacrifice all men have power to gain eternal life" (McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 259).

The purpose of the shedding of blood was to bring expiation, or atonement (see [Leviticus 17:11](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#)). As noted in Reading 14-5, the Hebrew verb which is translated by the English word *atonement* means "to cover." Thus, the smearing, splashing, or daubing of blood "covered" sins and thus brought about atonement. There is a beautiful paradox in the idea that the righteous are those "whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb" ([Ether 13:10](#); see [Alma 5:21](#)). It is the blood of Christ that covers sins and makes us pure so that we can receive at-one-ment with God. Thus, the blood was a symbol for the whole process by which we become reconciled with God. "From all of this it is apparent that those in Israel who were spiritually enlightened knew and understood that their sacrificial ordinances were in similitude of the coming death of Him whose name they used to worship the Father, and that it was not the blood on their altars that brought remission of sins, but the blood that would be shed in Gethsemane and on Calvary" (McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 258).

6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.

7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:

8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar:

9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, *to be* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

(14-7) [Leviticus 1:6–9](#). What Was the Purpose of Dividing the Animal?

The unique aspect of the burnt offering was the dividing of the animal into various parts and the washing of the inwards and legs of the bullock in water. Yet it is this very thing which gave this sacrifice its own significance apart from the others. One author described the symbolism thus:

“Man’s duty to God is not the giving up of one faculty, but the entire surrender of all. So Christ sums up the First Commandment,—all the mind, all the soul, all the affections. ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy mind*.’ I cannot doubt that the type refers to this in speaking so particularly of the parts of the Burnt-offering; for ‘the head,’ ‘the fat,’ ‘the legs,’ ‘the inwards,’ are all distinctly enumerated. ‘The head’ is the well-known emblem of *the thoughts*; ‘the legs’ the emblem of *the walk*; and ‘the inwards’ the constant and familiar symbol of *the feelings and affections of the heart*. The meaning of ‘the fat’ may not be quite so obvious, though here also Scripture helps us to the solution. It represents the energy not of one limb or faculty, but *the general health and vigour of the whole*. In Jesus these were all surrendered, and all without spot or blemish. Had there been but one thought in the mind of Jesus which was not perfectly given to God;—had there been but one affection in the heart of Jesus which was not yielded to His Father’s will;—had there been one step in the walk of Jesus which was taken not for God, but for His own pleasure;—then He could not have offered Himself or been accepted as ‘a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah.’ But Jesus gave up all: He reserved nothing. All was burnt, all consumed upon the altar.” (Jukes, Law of the Offerings, pp. 63–64.)

The washing of the inwards and legs suggests the need for one to be spiritually pure not only in what he does but also in what he desires (see [Ephesians 5:26](#); Jukes, Law of the Offerings, p. 71).

Taken together, these things reveal the quality of the life the Lord lives. His feelings, thoughts, activities, and whole life were placed in submission to God. At the same time, the sacrifice stressed the idea that only when the offerer yields himself to God is his life sweet or satisfying to the Lord.

10 ¶ And if his offering *be* of the flocks, *namely*, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar:

13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring *it* all, and burn *it* upon the altar: it *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

14 ¶ And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD *be* of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons.

15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn *it* on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar:

16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes:

17 And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, *but shall not divide it asunder*: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that *is upon the fire*: it *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

(14-8) Leviticus 1:10–17. Why Did the Lord Allow for Various Grades of Offerings?

Acceptable sacrifices were from these groups: a male ox or bull, a male sheep or goat, a turtle dove or pigeon. The economic situation of the individual determined which animal was sacrificed. That each of these animals was totally acceptable to God is indicative of His mercy. With Him it is not the gift that counts but the intent of the giver's heart.

Leviticus 1–10: A Law of Performances and Ordinances, Part 1: Sacrifices and Offerings

Question. Wasn't the law of Moses given as a genuine rebuke to Israel and imposed upon them as a punishment for rejection of the higher law?

Response. Admittedly, God does chasten His people for disobedience, but the giving of laws is not a punishment. His commandments are, as Moses said, "for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24). Every law is meant to lift and inspire, reconcile and perfect. That principle includes the law of Moses. It was a punishment only in the sense that it was less than they could have received. But it was a means for accomplishing God's ends, as are all His commandments. As the Lord told the early Saints of this dispensation, if they obey His gospel they will "be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few" (D&C 59:4).

Question. But wasn't the law of Moses at least a great step backward?

Response. No. It was a great step forward, not as great as Israel could have taken, but a great step nevertheless. We know from the record that Israel was in poor spiritual condition when they came out of Egypt. They had lost the prophetic office, prophecy, and the spirit of revelation and had become steeped in Egyptian tradition and idol worship. The Lord commanded Israel to give up their abominations and idols when He first came to deliver them from Egypt, but the people would not listen: "They did not every man cast away the abominations ... [nor] forsake the idols of Egypt" (Ezekiel 20:6–8). Had it not been for His mercy and the covenants made with the early patriarchs, the Lord could have justly vented His anger against Israel and destroyed them all (see Exodus 32:7–14). Instead, He blessed them with a law suited to help them grow spiritually, starting from where they were.

Question. Then the turning of the Hebrews to Egyptian gods in the wilderness was not a new experience for them? The golden calf was actually carried there in the hearts of an Israel that was spiritually weak and immature?

Response. Yes. It was a far greater challenge to get Egypt out of Israel than it was to get Israel out of Egypt. Consider, too, that Moses had to use signs to convince not only pharaoh but also Israel. And when signs have to be used as proof of authority, that is the mark of an evil and adulterous generation (see Matthew 12:39). Moses declared, “Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you” (Deuteronomy 9:24).

Question. Then when you said that the law was not a punishment but a means to an end, you meant that it was a deliberate and carefully designed plan to bring Israel to Jehovah?

Response. That, and more. The law not only would bring them to Christ but would also be the means through which a covenant relationship could be developed to increase their spiritual power so that they could enjoy the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit, gain a perfect brightness of hope, and have a love of God and a love for all men. And, if they continued to press forward and endure to the end, they would receive the assurance of eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:20).

Question. I never understood that the law of Moses could do all that. How was it possible?

Response. It is easier to see when we consider the relationship of all the aspects of the law to the spiritual progress of the individual. The problem is that we generally think of the law of Moses as only that part dealing with performances and ordinances.

Question. What are the other aspects of the law?

Response. The basic elements of the law are defined under the keys of authority of the lesser priesthood (see D&C 13; 84:26–27; 107:14, 20). These are as follows.

- Faith: Though never referred to directly in these scriptures, this principle is implied since faith is absolutely necessary in all acts to please God and fulfill His purposes (see Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23). Amulek clearly taught that faith was a prerequisite to the law bringing one to repentance (see Alma 34:15).
- Repentance: The sacrificial systems of Israel were expressly designed to help bring about a repentant attitude by teaching the people of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Then, if they exercised faith in Him and repented of their evil works, their sins were remitted, not by the law of Moses but through their faith in the future Messiah, which was demonstrated by their obedience to the law of Moses (see Mosiah 13:28).
- Baptism by immersion: Baptism was the most important outward ordinance of the law, being the means by which the individual established a covenant relationship with Jehovah. Unfortunately, any reference to baptism in the Old Testament has been lost, but from other sources we learn that it was part of the Mosaic law (see 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; 1 Nephi 20:1; D&C 84:26–27).
- The law of carnal commandments, or the law of performances and ordinances (see D&C 84:27; Mosiah 13:30): In our day the word *carnal* has sexual connotations, but the Latin word from which it is derived means “flesh.”

Therefore, these commandments deal with actions in mortality. As Abinadi taught, these commandments were designed “to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him” (Mosiah 13:30).

- The ministration of angels: This administration is expressly to prepare men to have faith in Christ so that they may receive the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 7:30–32).

Question. Then the Mosaic law really embraced all the basic principles of the gospel?

Response. More accurately, the Mosaic law is called the “preparatory gospel” (D&C 84:26). Because Israel lost the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, they could not have the fulness of the law of Christ. And when the Lord fulfilled the law, the preparatory gospel was brought under the law of Christ and the carnal commandments were done away.

Question. Can we see these things in the Old Testament as it is today?

Response. Yes, once we know what to look for and how to look. Mormon taught that the converted Lamanites properly understood the law of Moses because they had the “spirit of prophecy” (Alma 25:16; see also v. 15). The spirit of prophecy is the “testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 19:10; see also Alma 6:8). The law of Moses was a “schoolmaster” to bring Israel to Christ (Galatians 3:24); however, it was given in “types, and shadows” (Mosiah 3:15; see also 13:31; 16:14). Only those with the spirit of prophecy can understand these symbolic teaching devices. For, as Amulek said, “Behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice” (Alma 34:14).

LEVITICUS CHAPTER 16

How and when Aaron must enter the holy place is explained — Sacrifices are offered to reconcile Israel to God — The scapegoat carries away the sins of the people — The sins of all Israel are forgiven on the Day of Atonement.

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;

2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin offering.

10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil:

13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 ¶ Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy *place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

18 And he shall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.

19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20 ¶ And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy *place*, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

21 And Aaron shall lay both his ^ahands upon the head of the live goat, and ^bconfess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a ^cfit man into the wilderness:

22 And the goat shall ^bbear upon him all their ^biniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy ^aplace, and shall leave them there:

24 And he shall wash his flesh with water ^ain the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

27 And the bullock *for* the sin offering, and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy ^aplace, shall *one* carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

29 ¶ And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall ^aafflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own ^bcountry, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

31 It *shall be* a ^asabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

32 And the ^apriest, whom he shall ^banoint, and whom he shall ^cconsecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments:

33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the ^acongregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I can be forgiven.

Much of the book of Leviticus may seem strange to us—animal sacrifices, rituals involving blood and water, and laws governing minute details of life. But these rituals and laws were meant to teach principles that are familiar—repentance, holiness, and the Savior’s Atonement. To find these principles as you read [Leviticus 1:1–9; 16](#), consider questions like these: What can I learn from these sacrifices about Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice? How am I like those making these sacrifices? You might consider reviewing “[Thoughts to Keep in Mind: The Tabernacle and Sacrifice](#)” in this resource and “[Sacrifice](#)” in [Guide to the Scriptures](#) (scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Thoughts to Keep in Mind

The Tabernacle and Sacrifice

As we read the Old Testament, we sometimes find long passages about things that were clearly important to the Lord but may not feel immediately relevant to us today. [Exodus 25–30; 35–40](#); [Leviticus 1–9; 16–17](#) are examples. These chapters describe in detail Israel’s tabernacle in the wilderness and the animal sacrifices to be performed there.¹ The tabernacle was a portable temple, the Lord’s dwelling place among His people.

Our modern temples share similarities with Israel’s tabernacle, but they certainly don’t match its description in Exodus. And we don’t kill animals in our temples—the Savior’s Atonement ended animal sacrifice over 2,000 years ago. Yet despite these differences, there is great value today in reading about ancient Israel’s forms of worship, especially if we see them the way God’s people in the Book of Mormon did—as a way “to strengthen their faith in Christ” ([Alma 25:16](#); see also [Jacob 4:5](#); [Jarom 1:11](#)). When we understand the symbolism of the tabernacle and animal sacrifice, we can gain spiritual insights that will also strengthen our faith in Christ.

The Tabernacle Strengthens Faith in Jesus Christ

When God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle in the camp of the Israelites, He stated its purpose: “that I may dwell among them” ([Exodus 25:8](#)). Within the tabernacle, the presence of God was represented by the ark of the covenant—a wooden box, covered with gold, containing the written record of God’s covenant with His people (see [Exodus 25:10–22](#)). The ark was kept in the holiest, innermost room, separated from the rest of the tabernacle by a veil. This veil symbolizes our separation from the presence of God because of the Fall.

Other than Moses, we know of only one person who could enter that “most holy place” ([Exodus 26:34](#))—the high priest. Like the other priests, he first had to be washed and anointed (see [Exodus 40:12–13](#)) and dressed in sacred clothing symbolic of his office (see [Exodus 28](#)). Once a year, on a day called the Day of Atonement, the high priest would offer sacrifices on behalf of the people before entering alone into the tabernacle.

At the veil, he would burn incense (see [Leviticus 16:12](#)). The scented smoke ascending to heaven represented the prayers of the people ascending to God (see [Psalm 141:2](#)). Then the high priest, carrying blood from an animal sacrifice, would pass through the veil and approach the throne of God, symbolized by the ark of the covenant (see [Leviticus 16:14–15](#)).

Knowing what you know about Jesus Christ and His role in Heavenly Father’s plan, can you see how the tabernacle points us to the Savior? Just as the tabernacle, and the ark within it, represented God’s presence among His people, Jesus Christ *was* God’s presence among His people (see [John 1:14](#)). Like the high priest, Jesus Christ is the Mediator between us and God the Father. He passed through the veil to make intercession for us by virtue of the blood of His own sacrifice (see [Hebrews 8–10](#)). Some aspects of Israel’s tabernacle may sound familiar to you, especially if you have been to the temple to receive your own ordinances. Like the tabernacle’s most holy place, the temple’s celestial room represents the presence of God. To enter, we must first be washed and anointed. We wear sacred clothing. We pray at an altar from which prayers ascend to God. And we finally pass through a veil into God’s presence.

Perhaps the most important similarity between modern temples and the ancient tabernacle is that both, if understood correctly, strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ and fill us with gratitude for His atoning sacrifice. God wants all of His children to enter into His presence; He wants “a kingdom of priests” and priestesses ([Exodus 19:6](#)). But our sins prevent us from obtaining that blessing, for “no unclean thing can dwell with God” ([1 Nephi 10:21](#)). So God the Father sent Jesus Christ, our “high priest of good things to come” ([Hebrews 9:11](#)). He parts the veil for us and empowers *all* of God’s people to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy” ([Hebrews 4:16](#)). Today, the purpose of temples is more than obtaining exaltation for ourselves. After receiving our own ordinances, we can stand in the place of our ancestors, vicariously receiving ordinances in their behalf. In a sense, we can become something like the ancient high priest—and the Great High Priest—opening the way to God’s presence for others.

Sacrifice Strengthens Faith in Jesus Christ

The principles of atonement and reconciliation are taught powerfully in the ancient practice of animal sacrifice, which existed long before the law of Moses. Because of the restored gospel, we know that Adam and Eve offered sacrifice, understood its symbolic reference to the Savior’s sacrifice, and taught this to their children (see [Moses 5:4–12](#); see also [Genesis 4:4](#)).

The symbolism of animal sacrifice may have seemed especially poignant on ancient Israel’s Day of Atonement (“Yom Kippur” in Hebrew). The need for this annual ceremony was expressed in [Leviticus 16:30](#): “On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” Thus God’s presence could remain among the people. This atonement was accomplished through a variety of ceremonies. In one of these, a goat was killed as an offering for the sins of the people, and the high priest took the goat’s blood into the

most holy place. Later, the high priest laid his hands on a live goat and confessed the sins of the children of Israel—symbolically transferring those sins to the goat. The goat was then driven out of the camp of Israel.

In this ritual, the goats symbolized Jesus Christ, taking the place of the sinful people. Sin must not be allowed in God's presence. But rather than destroy or drive out the sinners, God provided another way—a goat would be killed or driven out instead. "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities" ([Leviticus 16:22](#)).

The symbolism of these rituals pointed to the way God has provided to bring us back into His presence—Jesus Christ and His Atonement. The Savior has "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," even "the iniquity of us all" ([Isaiah 53:4, 6](#)). He stood in our place, gave His life to pay the penalty of sin, and then conquered death through His Resurrection (see [Mosiah 15:8–9](#)). The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the "great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast" but rather "an infinite and eternal sacrifice" ([Alma 34:10](#)). He was the fulfillment of everything the ancient sacrifices pointed toward.

For this reason, after His sacrifice was complete, He said, "Ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices ... shall be done away. ... And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit" ([3 Nephi 9:19–20](#)).

So when you find passages in the Old Testament about sacrifices and the tabernacle (or later, the temple)—and you'll find a lot of them—remember that the primary purpose of it all is to strengthen your faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Let your heart and your mind turn to Him. Ponder what He has done to bring you back into God's presence—and what you will do to follow Him.

(15-8) [Leviticus 16](#). The Day of Atonement and Israel's Forgiveness

"The Day of Atonement, which took place in the fall of the year, was the most sacred and solemn of all the Israelite festivals. In it we most clearly see the typology or symbolism of Christ's work for Israel. It was a day of national fasting and one that signified that the sins of Israel had been atoned for and that the nation and its people were restored to a state of fellowship with God. The feast included the following major items (see [Leviticus 16](#) where the details are given):

1. The high priest had to go through meticulous preparation to be worthy to act as the officiator for the rest of the house of Israel. This included sacrifices for himself and his house, as well as washing and purification through the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on various objects in the tabernacle.
2. The high priest put off the official robes he normally wore and clothed himself in simple, white linen garments. (See [Revelation 19:8](#) for the significance of white linen garments.)
3. Two goats were chosen by lot. One was designated as the goat of the Lord, and one was designated as the scapegoat, or in Hebrew, the goat of *Azazel*. The goat of Jehovah was offered as a sin offering, and the high priest took its blood into the holy of holies of the tabernacle and sprinkled it on the lid of the ark of the covenant (called the 'mercy seat'), thus making atonement for the sins of Israel.

4. The other goat, *Azazel*, was brought before the high priest, who laid his hands upon its head and symbolically transferred all of the sins of Israel to it. Then it was taken out into the wilderness and released where it would never be seen again. One commentator explained the significance of *Azazel* by saying that it represented ‘the devil himself, the head of the fallen angels, who was afterwards called Satan; for no subordinate evil spirit could have been placed in antithesis to Jehovah as *Azazel* is here, but only the ruler or head of the kingdom of demons.’ (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, bk. 1: The Pentateuch, ‘The Third Book of Moses,’ 10 bks. [n.d.], p. 398.)

“... The book of Hebrews [draws] heavily on the typology of the Day of Atonement to teach the mission of Christ. In that epistle he made the following points:

1. Christ is the great high priest ([Hebrews 3:1](#)) who, unlike the high priest of the Aaronic Priesthood, was holy and without spot and did not need to make atonement for his own sins before he could be worthy to officiate for Israel and enter the holy of holies ([Hebrews 7:26–27](#)). His perfect life was the ultimate fulfillment of the symbol of wearing white garments.
2. The true tabernacle (or temple, or house of the Lord) is in heaven, and the earthly tabernacle made by Moses was to serve as a shadow or type of the heavenly one. (See [Hebrews 8:2–5](#); [9:1–9](#).)
3. Christ is the Lamb of Jehovah as well as the High Priest. Through the shedding of his blood he became capable of entering the heavenly Holy of Holies where he offered his own blood as payment for the sins of those who would believe in him and obey his commandments. (See [Hebrews 9:11–14](#), [24–28](#); [10:11–22](#); [D&C 45:3–5](#).)” (Lund, “Old Testament Types and Symbols,” Symposium, 187–88.)

Notwithstanding the symbolic significance of the ritual of this holy day, the ritual did have the power to bring about a forgiveness of Israel’s sins. Elder James E. Talmage said:

“The sacred writings of ancient times, the inspired utterances of latter-day prophets, the traditions of mankind, the rites of sacrifice, and even the sacrileges of heathen idolatries, all involve the idea of vicarious atonement. God has never refused to accept an offering made by one who is authorized on behalf of those who are in any way incapable of doing the required service themselves. The scapegoat and the altar victim of ancient Israel, *if offered with repentance and contrition*, were accepted by the Lord in mitigation of the sins of the people.” (Articles of Faith, p. 77; emphasis added.)

LEVITICUS CHAPTER 19

Israel is commanded: Be holy, live righteously, love your neighbor, and keep the commandments—The Lord reveals and reaffirms sundry laws and commandments—Enchantments, wizardry, prostitution, and all evil practices are forbidden.

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy.
3 ¶ Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.
4 ¶ Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I *am* the LORD your God.
5 ¶ And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, ye shall offer it at your own will.
6 It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire.
7 And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted.
8 Therefore *every one* that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.
9 ¶ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.
10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.
11 ¶ Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.
12 ¶ And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.
13 ¶ Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.
14 ¶ Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.
15 ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: *but* in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.
16 ¶ Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.
17 ¶ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
18 ¶ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

(16-2) Leviticus 19:2–18. “Ye Shall Be Holy: For I the Lord Your God Am Holy”

The last chapter examined in some detail the laws of cleanliness and uncleanness in both their physical and spiritual senses. The closing chapters of Leviticus focus on laws that defined how one under the Mosaic law lived righteously and in a manner pleasing to God. Leviticus ends with essentially the same message with which it began, namely,

the all-important admonition that men are to be holy, even as God is holy. The laws that follow this commandment may seem at first to be without logical arrangement or interconnection, but they are unified when one considers them in light of the injunction to be holy given in [verse 2](#). Note also the strong relationship to the Ten Commandments in what immediately follows (see [vv. 3–12](#)). The fifth commandment (honoring parents) and the fourth commandment (keeping the Sabbath day holy) are joined in [verse 3](#), followed immediately by the second commandment (no graven images). In [verse 11](#) the eighth commandment (stealing) is joined with the ninth (bearing false witness), and then again is immediately connected to the third commandment (taking God’s name in vain) in [verse 12](#). By this means the Lord seems to indicate that what follows the commandment to be holy is directly related to these fundamental principles of righteousness. The specific laws that follow the commandments define principles of righteousness that follow naturally from the Ten Commandments. For example, the commandment is not to steal, but these laws show that the commandment means far more than not robbing a man or burglarizing his home. One can steal through fraud or by withholding wages from a laborer ([v. 13](#)). The commandment is to honor one’s parents, but here the Lord used the word “fear” ([v. 3](#)), which connotes a deep respect, reverence, and awe, the same feelings one should have for God Himself. The example of the gossiping “talebearer” ([v. 16](#)) shows that there are ways to bear false witness other than under oath in court. And the concluding principle summarizes the whole purpose of the law. If one is truly holy, as God is holy, then he will love his neighbor as himself (see [v. 18](#)).

(16-3) [Leviticus 19:18](#). What Commandments Underlie All Others?

During His earthly ministry, the Master was asked by a scribe which of all the commandments was the greatest. The Savior’s reply is well known: Love God and love your neighbor. Then He said: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” ([Matthew 22:40](#); see also [vv. 35–39](#)). Or, to put it another way, those two principles are the foundation for all the writings of the Old Testament. All principles and commandments stem either from the need to love God or to love our neighbor. Both of the laws cited by Jesus are found in the Old Testament, but not together. The first is found in [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) and the second in [Leviticus 19:18](#). The wording of the second commandment is instructive. The statement that one is to love his neighbor as himself moves the idea of love in this case from a state of emotion to one of will. Love is that emotion which one naturally feels for oneself. Simply expressed, it is a desire one has for his own good. To love or care for oneself is natural and good, but in addition, one must feel this same emotion for others. Each must desire the good of others as well as his own. This desire is not innate but comes through a conscious act of will or agency. The commandment thus implies that one should work both for his own good and the good of others. He should not aggrandize himself at another’s expense. This

commandment is at the heart of all social interaction and becomes the standard by which every act can be judged.

Any person who truly understands the implications for daily living that are part of the commandment to love God with all his heart, might, mind, and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, can function well with no additional laws. One does not need to warn a person who loves God properly about idolatry, for any act of worship not devoted to God would be naturally offensive to him. The prohibitions against stealing, adultery, murder, and so on are not required if a person truly loves his neighbor as himself, for to injure his neighbor in such ways would be unthinkable. But, of course, the vast majority of men fail to understand and keep these two commandments, and so the Lord has revealed many additional laws and rules to show specifically what the commandments require. But truly, all such commandments do nothing more than define and support the two basic principles: all the law and the prophets are summarized in the two great commandments.

19 ¶ Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.

20 ¶ And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that *is* a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.

21 And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *even* a ram for a trespass offering.

22 And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.

23 ¶ And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you: it shall not be eaten of.

24 But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the LORD *withal*.

25 And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: *I am* the LORD your God.

(16-4) Leviticus 19:23–25. What Is “Uncircumcised” Fruit?

“The metaphorical use of circumcision is thus explained by the text itself: it denotes the fruit as disqualified or unfit. In [Leviticus 26:41] the same metaphor is used for the heart which is stubborn or not ripe to listen to the Divine admonitions. And in other passages of Scripture it is used with reference to lips [Exodus 6:12, 30] and ears [Jeremiah 6:10] which do not perform their proper functions.” (C. D. Ginsburg, in Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, pp. 147–48.)

Exactly why the fruit produced for the first three years of the tree was to be treated as unfit is not clear, but in this context of laws of righteousness and sanctification, this prohibition could suggest that until the first-fruits of the tree were dedicated to God, just as the firstborn of animals and men were (see [Exodus 13:1–2](#)), the tree was not viewed as sanctified, or set apart, for use by God’s people. Because the ground had been cursed for man’s sake when Adam fell (see [Genesis 3:17](#)), this law could have served as a simple reminder that until dedicated to God and His purposes, all things remained unfit for use by God’s holy people.

26 ¶ Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood; neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.

27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.

28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

29 ¶ Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.

30 ¶ Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

31 ¶ Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

(16-5) [Leviticus 19:26–31](#). Setting Israel Apart from the World

At first, the laws found in these verses may seem to have little application for the modern Saint, and may even seem puzzling as requirements for ancient Israel. What, for example, would the cutting of one’s hair and beard have to do with righteousness? But in the cultural surroundings of ancient Israel, these specific prohibitions taught a powerful lesson related to the practices of Israel’s heathen neighbors.

For example, the Hebrew word *nachash*, translated as “enchantment” ([v. 26](#)), meant “to practice divination,” and the phrase “observe times” ([v. 26](#)) comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to observe clouds” (Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. “enchantment,” p. 144). In the ancient world, sorcerers and necromancers often claimed to read the future through various omens or objects. Their methods included watching the stars (astrology), observing the movements of clouds and certain animals, tying knots, casting lots, tossing arrows into the air and then reading the pattern of how they fell, and so on. (See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “magic, divination, and sorcery,” pp. 566–70.) Thus, [verse 26](#) forbade any use of the occult to read the future. Another Bible scholar gave an important insight about why cutting the hair and beard was forbidden.

“[[Leviticus 19:27](#)] and the following verse evidently refer to customs which must have existed among the Egyptians when the Israelites sojourned in Egypt; and what they were it is now difficult, even with any probability, to conjecture. *Herodotus* observes that the Arabs *shave* or *cut their hair round*, in honour of Bacchus [the god of wine] who, they say, had his hair cut in this way. ... He says also that the *Macians*, a people of Libya, *cut their hair round*, so as to leave a *tuft* on the top of the head. ... In this manner the Chinese cut their hair to the present day. This might have been in honour of some idol, and therefore forbidden to the Israelites.

“The *hair* was much used in divination among the ancients, and for purposes of religious superstition among the Greeks; and particularly about the time of the giving of this law, as this is supposed to have been the era of the Trojan war. We learn from *Homer* that it was customary for parents to dedicate the hair of their children to some god; which, when they came to manhood, they cut off and consecrated to the deity. *Achilles*, at the funeral of Patroclus, cut off his golden locks which his father had dedicated to the river god *Sperchius*, and threw them into the flood. ...

“If the hair was *rounded*, and dedicated for purposes of this kind, it will at once account for the prohibition in this verse.” (Clarke, Bible Commentary, 1:575.)

In forbidding the cutting of the flesh and the tattooing of marks in the flesh, the Lord again clearly signaled that Israel was to be different from their heathen neighbors. Wounds were self-inflicted in times of grief for the dead and during worship (see [1 Kings 18:28](#)). Also, “it was a very ancient and a very general custom to carry marks on the body in honour of the object of their worship. All the castes of the Hindoos bear on their foreheads or elsewhere what are called the *sectarian marks*, which distinguish them, not only in a civil but also in a religious point of view, from each other.

“Most of the barbarous nations lately discovered have their faces, arms, breasts, &c., curiously carved or *tattooed*, probably for superstitious purposes. Ancient writers abound with accounts of marks made on the face, arms, &c., in honour of different idols; and to this the inspired penman alludes [[Revelation 13:16–17](#); [14:9](#), [11](#); [15:2](#); [16:2](#); [19:20](#); [20:4](#)], where false worshippers are represented as receiving in their hands and in their forehead the marks of the beast.” (Clarke, Bible Commentary, 1:575.) Sacred prostitution was a common practice among heathen worshipers, and often priestesses in the temples to such goddesses of love as Venus or Aphrodite were there only to satisfy and give religious sanction to immoral sexual desires. God strictly forbade these practices.

“Familiar spirits” ([Leviticus 19:31](#)) connoted those who today would be called spiritualists, or spirit mediums. They supposedly had the power to communicate through a seance with departed spirits. The Hebrew word for *familiar spirit* means

“ventriloquist,” suggesting in the very name itself the fraudulent character of such people (see Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. “ventriloquist,” p. 157). Clearly, the laws prohibiting such idolatrous practices were designed to set Israel apart from the world and its false worship. And therein is an important lesson for modern Saints. The world has not changed, although the specific practices of evil and debauchery may be different. Today the Lord still directs His people through living prophets to avoid the customs and practices of the world. It should be no surprise, then, that prophets speak out against certain hair styles, fashions in clothing, passing fads, or such practices as sensitivity groups, gambling, couples living together without marriage, and so on.

32 ¶ Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: *I am* the LORD.

33 ¶ And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.

34 *But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: *I am* the LORD your God.

35 ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.

36 Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: *I am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: *I am* the LORD.

(16-6) Leviticus 19:35–36. What Are “Meteyards,” “Ephahs,” and “Hins”?

A meteyard signified such Hebrew measures of length as the reed, the span, and the cubit, while the ephah and the hin were measures of volume. By specifying both kinds of measures, the Lord clearly taught that honesty in all transactions was required. (See *Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “weights and measures”.)

Ideas for Family Scripture Study and Home Evening

Exodus 36:1–7.

In Exodus 36:1–7, what do we learn from the way the Israelites responded to the command to build the tabernacle? As a family, you could think of ways the Lord has invited us to participate in His work. How can we follow the Israelites’ example?

Exodus 40.

As you read Exodus 40 together, you could invite family members to raise their hands each time they hear a phrase like “as the Lord commanded.” What do we learn from this chapter about obedience to the Lord?

[Exodus 40:1–34.](#)

As you read about the assembling of the tabernacle in [Exodus 40](#), you could work together to identify the different parts of the tabernacle, using the picture that accompanies this outline. To connect this discussion with temple worship in our day, you could review together “[Why Latter-day Saints Build Temples](#)” (temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) or watch the video “Temples” (ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

[Leviticus 19.](#)

Family members could each find a verse in this chapter that they feel will help them “be holy” ([Leviticus 19:2](#)) and share it with the family.

For more ideas for teaching children, see [this week’s outline](#) in *Come, Follow Me—For Primary*.

Suggested song: “[More Holiness Give Me](#),” *Hymns*, no. 131.

The Wilderness Tabernacle



The Ancient Tabernacle, by Bradley Clark