

April 25

Scriptures: Read Leviticus 24

Key Verse: “You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 24:22)

Overview

This chapter speaks about the holy light, the holy bread, and the Holy Name. The finest and most pure olive oil was to be provided by the people so that Aaron, and all the succeeding high priests might “make the lamps burn continually” (24:2; cf. Ex.25:31-40). This golden lamp stand found in the Holy Place was the only source of light in the tabernacle. The light represents Jesus Christ, the only true light of the world (John 8:12). The body oil in the Bible typically represents the Holy Spirit. It was important for the lamp stand to be continually attended to, to keep a fresh and full supply of oil burning. Similarly, it is necessary that believers keep their lives full of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus’ light may shine brightly.

Also found in the Holy Place was the pure gold table of showbread (Ex.25:23-30). This was replenished every Sabbath with twelve large fresh loaves of bread which Aaron and his sons were to eat in the Holy Place. These loaves signified God’s sustenance and provision for His people and may have represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus called Himself “the bread of life”, for whoever comes unto Him will never hunger (John 6:35). Spiritual food is necessary for our souls, just as physical food is necessary for the body.

To illustrate the holiness of the Name of God, and to describe the seriousness of blasphemy against the Lord, this incident is recorded; a man, while fighting, was caught cursing the Name of God. Since up until this point no penalty had been given for breaking this third commandment, the man was confined until Moses heard from the Lord what he should do. The severe punishment of stoning to death was the answer, for the offender was to bear his own guilt. The witnesses, by putting their hands on his head, represented his own responsibility for what was to befall him. It served as a lesson for everyone to be aware of the seriousness of blasphemy or even taking the Name of God lightly. The Lord God was to be honored by all and His Holy Name revered and feared, even by foreigners living among the covenant people (24:22; Ex.12:49), for His laws are universal and His judgments just.

As well as capital punishment for blasphemy, we find here the same punishment also restated for premeditated murder; this punishment had been instituted by God much earlier (Gen.9:6). In general, the main principle of the civil law was retribution. In this way, tit limited retaliation or revenge for the wrong committed. For example, if one’s eye was put out he, or a family member, might want to kill the guilty person, but this law prevented such revenge and permitted only an equal punishment, the putting out of the guilty person’s eye. (24:20). For the Israelites, who were to administer the punishment publicly, this would be just and fair, for the penalty was to fit the crime and not exceed it.

Jesus did not change or abolish the Law, not did He deny the exercise of civil law, but He modified and brought a new light on it. Concerning retribution He said to turn the other cheek,

“love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:28-29). Jesus’ teaching brought a fuller revelation of truth. Concerning capital punishment for such things as breaking the Sabbath and adultery, He showed that He had all authority, for He was the “lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28), and He displayed mercy and grace to the woman caught in adultery. He looked upon the heart, rather than the actions. To do good on the Sabbath (as Jesus did and was accused, John 5:15-16) was in keeping with the spirit of the Sabbath. He internalized the law. In the case of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus stirred the crowd’s conscience. Everyone had sin and therefore had no right to throw the first stone. Jesus did not condemn her; rather, in mercy, He gave her the opportunity for repentance (John 8:3-11). Because of sin, we all deserve death, but because of the marvelous work of Jesus and His intercession, we no longer live under the curse of the Law, but under God’s wonderful grace (Gal.3:13; Rom.6:15).

Prayer

O Great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant that the windows of our lives will always be clear to receive Your light of truth. May we ever feast on Your Showbread, Jesus and help us to lift up in reverence the Name, which is above every name, the Name of Jesus.