

# **Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature,**

## **Lecture 14, Sacrifices, Sabbaths and Feasts**

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That's enough of that for today, wouldn't you say? Let's pray together as we start.

Oh God, our Heavenly Father, we're thankful for another day that you have given to us. We're thankful for the beauty outside.

We're thankful for the crisp reminders of purity as we see new fallen snow. And Lord, as we think of that, we make the connection to this psalm and ask that you would indeed create in us pure hearts. Let's plant the truth of this psalm deep in our hearts and our minds, Lord.

And we do implore you that by your spirit you would give us joy, the joy of your salvation, that we might indeed be beacons of light to a world that's dark and in pain and in suffering. So, prepare us to serve you and to serve our fellow people as well. We pray for those who are not well.

We pray you'll restore their health. We pray for those who aren't here. For whatever reason, you would indeed bring them here, help us learn together in ways that are both pleasing to you and will make an impact in our lives.

I pray you'd help me to teach with clarity today and help us to learn together. And may we give you the honor and the glory. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Okay, let's kind of power part of this off. Well, we're going to pick up a little bit of stuff that we left off at the end of last time.

So, although we're going to technically be talking about the second lecture on Ritual Torah, I believe it's 14, is that right? Okay, with Sabbath festivals and vows, we've got just a little bit to do to talk about sacrifices from last time. So, with no further ado, let me run through sort of a combination of what you've read in Youngblood about sacrifices and again review that because it's really important stuff and then some of the additions that I'm going to make to it as well. So, some lessons that we learn from this whole procedure of bringing sacrifices.

Don't lose sight of the fact that even though we don't offer blood sacrifices anymore, thank the Lord for what Jesus has done on our behalf. There are still profound lessons to be learned from that. So, the first thing that every person who was bringing a sacrifice went through was to actually bring it. Now, I grant you that most of the sacrifices were indeed animal blood sacrifices, but there were some that were not.

The fellowship and the grain offerings, sorry, not the fellowship, the grain offerings were obviously grain offerings, but by and large, we're talking about the sacrificial animals, and of course, it was to be a special animal. It was supposed to cost this person something, and so therefore, we have, you know, sprinkled throughout the rest of scripture, and we see it particularly with David when he's going to offer a sacrifice at the end of first Samuel, and we're going to get to that when we do David. He says I'm going to pay for this.

This should cost me. Am I going to give something to the Lord that hasn't cost me something? And so, the whole idea of bringing a sacrifice meant that it was sacrificial, just in terms of the cost it would mean. Whoops, let's do this one at a time.

When the, yeah, I'm sorry, Susanna. I was just about that. I was sort of wondering because, like, reading all the little medical laws and everything, it makes me feel like it's just killing animals right and left just because, like everybody, it's just like everyone sins like every day, and like all the little stipulations.

I was just thinking, what would they afford? Like, I don't think he said it should be something that costs them, so. Good, reading law, good, good question. In other words, when you read all these laws and the kinds of guilt that you incurred, sin offerings, guilt offerings, burnt offerings, wouldn't it have just been an overwhelming amount of ongoing sacrifices and extremely expensive? One of the things that we see is that you're right, but we also see God's provision for those who are in poverty. What could they bring? Birds.

All right, so you didn't always have, throughout this whole sequence of things, lambs or goats always being the sacrificial animal, and for people who had to bring sin offerings that were close to destitute, they could bring doves. And so that was, interestingly enough, this is a New Testament issue, but I'll tell you anyway. In the first century, there is evidence, both from archaeological stuff that they found, with dove coats, where they raised doves for sacrificial offerings.

We also have literary evidence from the rabbinic materials. So, we know that they were in the business of raising literally thousands of doves in this area in the hill country of Judah. So that was always the way out if you will, so it wasn't so costly.

Keep in mind that we're talking about a population that is pastoral, and therefore, they are always raising lots of flocks. Kaylin, how many sacrifices would a single person make a year? I honestly have no idea about that, but if you look at the, first of all, and we're going to talk about this in a moment, there were festivals, and for festivals, they were clearly to bring their sacrificial animal for the three pilgrim festivals, and we're going to talk about that in about 20 minutes or so. In terms of

how often they are offering sin offerings and those kinds of processes, the guilt offering if they've done something that was breaking one of these issues of sanctity and holiness, I don't know.

I don't know. Some of us might be doing a whole lot more than others. Trevor? I'm almost asking the same question, but do you think it's probable that they would have to take time out of every single day, like a large chunk of time, to make, you know, sin offerings or guilt offerings? Would it be reasonable to think that they would be making sin or guilt offerings every day? It's a tough question to ask.

One of the things that we do know is that they were to bring it to the sanctuary, and so obviously, once they get in the land, and the sanctuary is one place, and they're spread all over the land, that's obviously not going to be happening in that case so that things will change a little bit in that context as well. There are a lot of unknowns in this, and I'm saying, I don't know because I don't know. Yeah, Ginger.

No, not Ginger, McKenna. What age do they start? Probably once they are considered to be an adult, and that raises an interesting issue in terms of exactly when this would be, whether it would be the equivalent of what we think of as the bar mitzvah, when they're becoming, or whether it's when they start doing the census, which I believe is age 20, although I'm not entirely certain about that. Ted, am I right on that? I think it's age 20.

Yeah. Okay. Further questions? Good questions.

Keep them coming. The second step in this whole process was extremely significant in terms of its symbolism, and that is once the worshiper who has brought the sacrifice brought it there, then the worshiper's hands were placed on the head of the sacrificial animal, and again, I've noted for you the symbolism here. Not only that, but I think this is Youngblood's issue: Is this symbolic transfer of sin taking place?

In other words, my sins are put on the head of that animal, but also, it's an identification with the animal, and that's going to be really important in terms of the fact that we said last time the shedding of blood meant blood taking the place of my life, which is really forfeit the blood of that animal. So, both of those things are part of that. The third thing that people often forget sort of thinking the priests are the ones who do all this gory stuff, but the person bringing the sacrifice was really the one who killed the animal, and again, as I tried to say last time, this gives us some kind of a reminder of the horror of sin and the mess that sin has caused and the mess that my sin has caused, now I'm actually sort of reenacting that in this symbolic way of shedding the blood of this animal as well.

So, some interesting things, incredible symbolism, and lessons really come through as we think about this whole process. Then, remember the priest is the mediator,

and therefore once the blood has been shed, then it's the priest who takes that blood and sprinkles it. All right, bless you.

He's the one who's going to sprinkle it on the altar, so clearly representative of the fact that between me and God's holiness in his sanctuary, there is a person who is individually meditating, and again, that's a picture of the role that Jesus fulfills. Sacrifices burned in whole or in part depend on the kind of sacrifice, and there's a whole list of those sacrifices. I'm going to run through them really fast in just a minute, but again, the burning is significant simply to indicate the whole process of consecration, of giving over, and then, of course, you know that fire is used to refine, it's used to refine even precious metals, and so there's that whole symbolic intent event in this as well.

Depending on what this sacrifice was, you might eat part of it, you might eat the whole of it, perhaps in the case of the whole burnt offering, all of it was given over, and that whole burnt offering was to atone for sin on a regular basis, on a daily basis. We'll say more about that in a moment. In terms of this fellowship offering, kind of keep that in the back of your mind as the adumbration, if you want to put it that way, of what we do when we do communion, as we're eating together, and eating in fellowship, and eating now that this reconciliation has taken place between us and between God, the fellowship offering is going to symbolize that kind of thing.

So, basic components of the process here, now let's look really quickly at the major sacrifices themselves, and I'll do this fast because I know that Youngblood does it; you can go back and review this material, and also this is actually Leviticus chapters one through seven, right? In the whole burnt offering, Leviticus chapter one, verse four, the purpose is stated: to atone for sin on a daily basis. The sin offering and guilt offering, we can kind of think of together in some ways because they're often offered together, and so when we have our sin offering, it's to cover when someone has sinned, okay, and sinned unintentionally, and there are some paradigm examples that are given as you read through Leviticus. The guilt or trespass offering is an interesting one, and there are actually two purposes that are articulated here, especially in chapter five. I think it is in Leviticus, where it says to atone for unintentional sins, not just, you know, garden variety unintentional sins, but unintentional sins with regard to holy things.

Let's say, for example, that there is a sacrificial animal that has been dedicated to the Lord, and somehow I do something with regard to that animal that makes it unclean or whatever, you know, that would be an unintentional sin if I hadn't deliberately gone and done it, but I've done something to affect an animal that is given over to part of the whole process of sacrificing. Interestingly enough, as you read also, and I want to just take a quick look at this with you, turn over to Leviticus chapter five because there's often the statement made that there's no real offering for intentional sins, but the end of Leviticus five talks about the guilt offering. Verse 15,

when a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, right? Now, in verse 17, if a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, even though he doesn't know it, look at what we have in terms of the examples at the beginning of chapter six.

That's why I think there is some covering here for even our intentional sins, and I'm kind of glad to know that. Aren't you? We're in the business of intentionally doing things all the time that we know are wrong. At least I do. If you don't, I want to know you.

I'd like to learn from you. Okay, but look what's going on here. We are still talking about the guilt offering.

Verse two, if anyone sins is unfaithful to the Lord by, you're ready for this, deceiving his neighbor, cheating him, that sounds like it's kind of intentional to me, finding lost property and lying about it, swearing falsely, you know, all those things have to be a ring of intentionality, and then of course once you've done it and your conscience convicts you, then you've got to turn around, and that's what the guilt offering is for. And so, praise the Lord, even in that context, there are options for atonement there as well. There's also the grain offering, and I'll do these last ones quickly.

The grain offering of course does not involve any kind of blood sacrifice. It accompanies a lot of the other offerings. And then the peace or the fellowship offering, and this of course is the one where in utter gratitude to God, the people would come together and eat the part of the offering in community, celebrating reconciliation within the community and with God as well.

Then there are additional offerings, thank offerings, and those related to vows. We'll come back to vows in a moment. I'm mostly concerned that you know the first three.

Okay, the first three are probably the most critical because we're going to see examples of those coming up as some of our historical narratives unfold. So that'll be significant. Now, I'm about ready to transition to Sabbath.

Any questions on this stuff? Trevor? Should we know the different types of like offerings? Like what exactly? In other words, you don't need to know which animals are for what and so forth. Don't worry about that. I'm mostly concerned about these large categories and what they were designed for because, as I said, even when we get into the book of Judges, we're going to see some interesting things with regard to guilt offerings and Samuel as well.

Okay, good question. Anything else? Yes, Sarah? Yeah, well, remember, it's the persons who are making the sacrifice who are doing the messy part. There are bowls

in which the blood gets put, all right? And the priests are, it's not only the high priest who's doing this stuff.

You know, you've got a whole family of Aaron who's serving as priests, and they're not all wearing the ephod and the breast piece and the turban. They don't have that kind of clothing. The priests were simply wearing, well, something simpler.

So, it's not quite all that stuff being polluting the high priestly attire. Yeah, it's a good question. Well, let's carry on with the Sabbath.

This is a fascinating issue, and it's an issue that's germane for, well, students at Gordon College, because I'm willing to bet that Sunday afternoon is usually a panic time in the library for a lot of us as we get ready for Monday. I want to encourage you to think maybe a little differently about that. I don't want to be heavy-handed about it, just encourage.

At any rate, in terms of the principle, the idea is that you rest every seventh period, and of course, you're aware that we have faculty members who are actually currently on sabbatical this term. That means they're taking a rest. Dr. Hildebrand is on sabbatical this term, so he's resting back there on his stool, right? Yeah, all right.

No, he's just twiddling his thumbs. At any rate, that's the whole principle. You rest.

Now, actually, Gordon is a little bit odd because we do ours every fifth year, but generally speaking, in the biblical scene of things, it's every seventh period. Notice as well, as you read through this stuff on sabbatical, it not only affects human beings, sabbatical, on Sabbath, it not only affects human beings, it is to affect the land as well, and I'll say more about that in a moment. That's really, really important.

Finally, it sets God's people apart. As I said before, when we talked about Exodus 16, after they've come out of Egypt and had the manna experience, God gives them the Sabbath. This is something they'd never experienced before, not in Egypt. And so, it sets God's people apart.

In fact, throughout history, the Jews were known by the wider culture as those who didn't work one day of the week. Now, sometimes, the wider culture took advantage of that and actually attacked Jews on what they knew to be their Sabbath. So, there was actually a ruling that you could fight on the Sabbath if you had to, simply because there were some really malevolent intents on the part of enemies of the Jews at certain points.

At any rate, setting God's people apart was one of the issues. We're going to spend a little time here with this category of Sabbath observance, and I want to read, especially with regard to the every seventh year and the jubilee. We've already read

the stuff that has to do with the seventh day, because we've read the two versions of the Ten Commandments, right? In Exodus 20, when it says, remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, you and your maidservant, your animals, are supposed to rest.

Why? Exodus 20 says, because in six days God created the earth, and on the seventh he rested. And so it's based on creation. Right from the get-go, God has built this into his design for his creation.

He does it after these magnificent acts of creation, then he's providentially sustaining, and there's a difference involved. We can't even begin to comprehend it, but the text intimates there's a difference involved. Secondly, in Deuteronomy chapter 5, we're supposed to observe the Sabbath.

Why? Because with an outstretched arm, God brought you out of bondage in Egypt and redeemed you. And so Sabbath observance in that context is said because God has redeemed you. So, both are based on creation and redemption, both of which are rather transcendent principles, and that's something we want to keep in mind.

Now, interestingly enough, if you look at Exodus chapter 31, in terms of the Sinai covenant, which is what we're talking about right now, it says, chapter 31, verse 12, you must observe my Sabbath. Sorry, verse 13, this will be a sign between me and you. Verse 14, anyone who desecrates the Sabbath must be put to death.

Whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. The text reiterates this at the end of verse 15: anyone who does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. This is a sign.

It's a lasting covenant. So, kind of get that into your heads, because we're going to talk in a moment about why the people in Jesus' day were so concerned about keeping the Sabbath. This is one of the reasons, because they knew that according to the Torah, as it was articulated at Sinai, something was profoundly important about Sabbath keeping.

I'll say more about that in a second. We need to discuss the seventh-year procedures as well, but I want to move on to Exodus 23.

I'm going to read three passages here with the seventh-year procedures, kind of get them into your heads. First of all, Exodus 23, simply verses 10 and 11. For six years, you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops.

During the seventh year, let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then, the poor among your people may get food from it. That's important.

We're not sitting here harvesting everything we possibly can in that seventh year, but it's growing of its own accord, and the poor are allowed to get food from it. Turning over to Leviticus 25, the first seven verses. I'm starting with verse two.

When you enter the land I'm going to give you, the land itself must observe a Sabbath to the Lord. Then, it talks about sowing in six years. In the seventh year, the land is to have a Sabbath of rest.

Don't sow your fields, prune your vineyards, reap the crops. The land is to have a rest. Are you getting the impression that God's concerned for the land? He says it three times in that passage.

The land must have a rest. Something we could probably learn from. So, you not only have that, then if you go over very quickly, or at least write this down and have a look at it a little later on.

Deuteronomy 15. The first two passages I've emphasized are the environmental ones if you want to put them that way. The land is to have a rest, emphatic.

Now, Deuteronomy 15. At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts. And then it goes on to say how that's to be done.

Canceling debts: if there's a poor man among you, don't be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother. Be open-handed and lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought, quote, the seventh year, the year for canceling debts is near.

So, I'm not going to do anything about this now. No, God says, concern for your brother, you cancel those debts—likewise, verse 12.

If a fellow Hebrew is sold to you and he serves you six years, in the seventh year, you must let him go free. So, what's the implication of this? I think I may have intimated this earlier. You don't have a social permanently underclass.

That was syntactically really bad, but the point is this. You don't have a permanent underclass. So, there are some sociological ramifications here that are really important.

Because you cancel the debts, they're not saddled with this debt burden forever and ever and ever, and you free slaves. And when you freed slaves, you're supposed to provision them as they went so that they could get started all over again. So incredibly important environmental implications are built into the social Torah here, as well as social implications for the structure of society.



Now, the question you ought to be asking is, well, do the Israelites do this? The answer is no. We actually know this as we read 2 Chronicles chapter 36, which is the end of the whole historical sweep. And the people have been sent into exile after centuries of sin.

And it says, and the land finally had its rest. Intimating that, you know, now they're not there, and they haven't been doing this. Now, the land's going to get its rest.

Well, finally, then we do have the Jubilee as well. This is all the rest of chapter 25 of Leviticus. I referred you to the first seven verses with regard to the seventh-year procedures.

In the Jubilee, we have the rest of the chapter devoted to a description of the things that I've summarized here in little bullet points. Return to family property. So, you don't have big property monopolies.

Instead, you went back to the clan and family property. Rest for the land again, and slaves were set free. And the text continues to say, remember that you were in bondage in Egypt.

That's why you're to set slaves free. It also has another steady drumbeat throughout this chapter. And that is, the land is God's.

The land belongs to the Lord. The land belongs to the Lord. Three times in the chapter, it emphasizes that.

And that's why they are to conduct themselves in this way. The land isn't theirs permanently. Instead, it goes back to those family structures that God has allotted right from the get-go when they get into the land.

So, the Jubilee is really significant. Those of you who know what's on the Liberty Bell, do you know what's on the Liberty Bell? Does anybody know that? Sixth grade, did you learn what's engraved on the Liberty Bell? This is terrible. This is absolutely terrible.

Proclaim liberty throughout the land, right? That's what's on it. It comes right out of Leviticus 25, verse 10. Proclaim liberty throughout the land.

Now, by the way, where does the name Jubilee come from? Have you ever heard this? Why are we calling this Jubilee? Everybody, if you're into the current proper things to be doing in terms of social justice issues, you are throwing around the term Jubilee a lot. That was said with the tiniest, tiniest bit of cynicism. Forgive me.

At any rate, we use the term Jubilee in certain circles a lot, but very few people really know where it comes from. It actually is a Hebrew word, Yovel. And J and Y are a little bit interchangeable when we're coming from that language through German to us.

And so, the Yovel was the trumpet that they sounded when the Jubilee year began. That's where the term Jubilee comes from. And now, of course, we use it without even knowing what it's all about.

At any rate, get the point here. It's a reminder of God's ownership of the land and the redemption from Egypt paradigm that's there. Yeah, Becca.

I'm looking at this Jubilee here. Is it just like the Jubilee when the Ascensionals send them here? Actually, that's an interesting question. What's the distinction between every seventh year, which would mean then you'd get to 49, and then the Jubilee is going to be the year after that?

Now, not everybody agrees with that, by the way. Some people try and say the Jubilee year is going to be sort of an overlap of the 49th and seventh year. But most people, as they're interpreting it, say you've got this series of seven years.

And once you get to seven times seven, then the Jubilee is added on top of that, which really means when you stop and think about it, these people had to implicitly trust God to provide for them through two successive years in which they weren't going to be intentionally dealing with crops and things. So, it's kind of interesting. Yeah, Kaylin.

How do they just leave their property? Like, if they bought property, would they just leave their property to take it from their private person? Well, the question is, yeah, how does this work with all this property exchange? Let's try to think back to the property primarily belonging to families, clans, and tribes. And we're going to see tribal allotments when we get into the land, all right? So, it's supposed to stay within this large family inheritance structure. The only way when they should have been selling property was if they got into debt and had to do that kind of thing.

Even then, there was a process for redeeming that property. So, it's not like it's going to be all over the place, with some owner from Mesopotamia suddenly grabbing a land grant somewhere around Hebron. It doesn't work that way.

It's just a matter of making sure that the family structure does indeed continue to have property. So, it'll go back to them if for some reason or other in the interval, it's had to leave their ownership. Did individuals within that own their own piece of land? I'm not entirely sure that would have been true.

We don't really have, I mean, it's a great question. We don't really have any sense in terms of how these family pieces were plotted out. I think they were probably kept under the big bait of, which is kind of the clan structure.

That's my guess. But that's about, the example that we have that might help us the most is Ruth. When we get to the book of Ruth, as you know, Naomi's family seems to have been a fairly wealthy family, but she comes back from Moab poverty-stricken because she's lost her husband, she's lost her two sons and she's bringing Ruth back with her.

At that point in time, there along comes an unnamed relative and Boaz, both of whom are up for being able to buy that piece of property. And basically, she can't afford to keep it, but it's still within the family. There are family members who can purchase it.

So, it's keeping it within that family structure. But that's the best I can do for you on that. I don't know that much more about it, actually.

Good questions. So far, so good? All right, see what we got here. What did Jesus have to say about the Sabbath? Here's where we want to keep in mind, first of all, his opponents.

And you've all had the New Testament now, so you know that Jesus had an ongoing, rocky relationship with the Pharisees over the issue of breaking the Sabbath. That's what they were accusing him of. And I know that the Pharisees are, as he says, hypocrites, and they're sort of like us and all those things.

But we need to keep in mind why it was that they were so concerned about this. So let me just take you back 10 minutes in our discussion. The Pharisees, with all their flaws and warts, were people who were really concerned for keeping Torah.

We need to keep that in mind. And you've probably heard this said: Jesus shared the same doctrinal affirmations with the Pharisees, basically, all right? So, it's their hypocrisy that's the problem. It's not their doctrine.

At any rate, they're very concerned about keeping the Torah. And if they know, and they do, that if you break the Sabbath, the death penalty is what's coming. And yet, if Torah is not exceedingly explicit on what constitutes Sabbath-breaking, you're aware of that, right? It's not really explicit in terms of what, I mean, they're not supposed to light a fire, and they're not supposed to gather sticks.

We have that from two incidents. But what does breaking the Sabbath mean? And of course, because it's not defined, they went to great lengths to define what Sabbath-

breaking was. And in the Mishnah, the Mishnah is not written down until 220 AD, but it's carrying on some long oral tradition.

In the Mishnah, it lists 39 categories of work. Now, sometimes when you see, sorry, see, when you hear sermons in church that, oh, they had 39 categories of work, and people kind of poo-poo it, that's not being really fair to the people who are trying very hard to protect this idea of keeping the Sabbath. Now, granted, they're, again, being hypocritical and legalistic, but we need to understand what's going on and why they would be so incensed when Jesus does healings on the Sabbath.

I'm not going to read the passages, but go and look up the end of Mark 2 and the beginning of Mark 3, where we work our way through this. First of all, Jesus' disciples are gathering grain, threshing it, as it were, you know, rubbing it between their hands, and that's called threshing. And therefore, the Pharisees are a little upset about that, and Jesus comes back at them with an illustration from David.

We're going to get to the David thing in a couple, well, about a month or so. But at any rate, in that context, you have that incident, and then right after that, at the beginning of Mark 3, Jesus heals on the Sabbath. And in conjunction with those two incidents that are compressed in Mark that way, we have very important teachings from Jesus.

First of all, the Sabbath is made for us. The Sabbath is made for humankind. We're not made to be slavishly bound to the Sabbath. That's not the point.

But the Sabbath was God's gift. Go back to Exodus 16. For people who are really, really working hard, the Sabbath is just a joy because you get a day away from that drudgery, that anxiety of work, that compulsion that you've got to do this, this, this, and this, or else, okay? The Sabbath is to get away from that.

More importantly than that, Jesus says, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. In other words, that one day in seven, whenever day you take it, right? Whenever day you take it, that one day in seven, Jesus is recognized as Lord of that day. Not me, not my desires, not my list of things to do, not the paper that's not the exam.

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath at that point. But then, of course, the important corollary to that is Jesus heals on the Sabbath because you do good on the Sabbath. Interestingly enough, there is a rabbinic, well, there's a rabbi, Shimon ben Menashe is his name, who says exactly the same thing that Jesus says.

It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath, he says. It's lawful to heal. Therefore, there are some priorities in terms of preserving human life and caring for human life and giving dignity and restoration to human life that transcend the boundaries of the Sabbath.

That's what Jesus has to say. Well, ready to go on? What do you think about this one? We're in a new covenant. Is all this stuff past? Do we kind of reinterpret Jesus to, well, kind of, you know, he didn't say, and keep the Sabbath.

So, what should we be doing with this? And by the way, I know there's differences of opinion here and there are legitimate differences of opinion. So I'm just going to give you my ideas and you can argue with me or think differently if you wish. But just a reminder, it's kind of important.

If it's one of the Ten Commandments, it's kind of important, I would suggest. And it's based, of course, on the whole idea of creation-redemption, which are fairly important theological issues that I would say transcend a Sinai covenant, even though it is a sign of the Sinai covenant. Creation, redemption, and interestingly enough, in Hebrews chapter four, the author of Hebrews enjoins us to enter the Sabbath rest.

He's using that whole Sabbath idea as something very profoundly important. And so that might be something we want to think of, too, in terms of putting together this whole picture. So, you can take what you want with this, but I would simply make the following suggestion that I have.

However, you want to do this, let me encourage you to think about taking one day in seven. It's God's gift to you. It's God's gift to you.

And then you give back by making the Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath. Having said that, Colossians 2:16 is extremely important. Does anybody know what this says? Paul speaking.

Don't let anybody judge you in regard to Sabbaths, new moons, or festivals. And he's trying to avoid that horror of legalism because legalism is usually the matter of my looking at something and my looking at somebody and saying, well, they're wrong because they're not doing this list of things or they're doing this list of things and they shouldn't be doing it. Okay, so there's a very delicate balance here.

And I like to look at the Sabbath as a positive thing. Those of you who have Jewish friends who are Orthodox practicing Jews, hey, you've read the Chosen. In The Chosen, we get a picture of the joy of the Sabbath.

As you bring that whole day in, it's with lights. And when you come to the close of the Sabbath, it's a time of mourning because you've ended a day that has just been a day of presence with God. And you're entering a new week and you're going refreshed by that day, but they actually have a tiny little time at the closing of the Sabbath that's a little bit of a mourning time.

So, kind of keep that in mind. Let me encourage you to keep the Sabbath in some way or other. Again, not legalistic about this at all.

I have to tell you a little narrative. When my husband went to graduate school, it was when he became a Christian, not until then. And he struggled in graduate school.

He'd be the first one to tell you that. His first year was just hideous, and he almost got thrown out. But during that same year, he'd become a believer.

And his pastor said, I want you to try and experiment because he'd really been working seven days a week, 18 hours a day, and it was life was tough. And the pastor said I want you to try and experiment. I want you to take Sunday off, which sounded counterintuitive as we all got out.

But Perry took him up on it. So, the first, you know, the six days of the week were hard work, increasingly hard work. But the seventh day was such a joy.

And so, he's continued to do that. And thank the Lord, he's got me going on it as well. I came to Christ in that same church context.

So, I was very thankful for that. However you want to do it, I'll leave that up to you. We need to carry on in terms of festivals because we only have about 20 minutes to talk about festivals and other religious observances.

As we think about the festivals, one of the things I want you to try and kind of put together here is how these festivals are the Old Testament counterpart to the kinds of celebrations that we have in our Christian spheres, okay? So, see if you can come up with the counterparts. First of all, some purposes. The festivals were designed to be a time of worship.

Granted, there were other worship times, but these were special worship times. We'll talk about each one of them in a moment and try to map those out a little bit. This is why it's so important to have a sense of sacrifice in mind.

In Exodus 23, where we have probably the most abbreviated list of the festivals, and we'll look at them in a moment, the most abbreviated list still says, don't anybody come empty-handed, okay? You didn't come into God's presence empty-handed. You came to the festivals to worship, and that meant you brought something, and that was why we talked about the whole cost of sacrifice. Second and third, since I got them up there, I especially like this second one.

These were to serve as educational tools, okay? Reminders. Every one of the three major pilgrim festivals, which we're going to list in a moment, every one of the three major pilgrim festivals was a reminder in some way of God's mighty redemption of

his people out of Egypt. Now, different ways of saying it, and you've got to sort of sort through Deuteronomy and Leviticus and Exodus to find that, but every one of them in some way is a reminder of what God had done for them in the context of bringing them out of Egypt.

So, kind of keep that in mind. In some cases, they were building booths. In other cases, they were getting rid of leaven and killing a Passover lamb, right? But all these were to be reminders.

Those of you who have grown up in churches that really celebrate festivals will have some sense of this. This is my story day, okay? So, I'm going to tell you another story. My parents sort of migrated through at least three churches, which I can remember from when I was growing up.

There might have been more, but I remember three of them: first Methodist, then Lutheran, and finally Presbyterian. Our days in the Lutheran church were, well, our years in the Lutheran church were probably about six or seven years, and I was a tiny child at that point.

But here's the memory I have. More than anything else about that Lutheran church, and it was a pretty high church type thing, so a statue of Jesus in front and the whole bit. Pretty liturgical.

But every Maundy Thursday, that statue of Jesus, what did they do to it? Those of you from a Lutheran or a Roman Catholic background, what did they do to the statue of Jesus? Anybody know? Zach? They cover it. Yes, a purple veil was put over it. And then obviously of Good Friday, and the tragedy, and the horror, and the sadness of the death of Jesus.

But what happens on Sunday morning? And put yourself in about a five-year-old tiny child's position at this point. On Sunday morning for the Sunday morning service, the trumpet sounds, and someone just rips that veil off of Jesus. I still remember that, and I still have, I'll tell you, even today, right now, tingles going up and down my spine as I think of the implications of that.

The resurrection after that horror of death is lived out or not lived out. It's enacted with that liturgy that's part of the Lutheran church. And so, there's an awful lot of beauty and education that's built into what kids pick up.

It's a tragedy that so many of our churches don't engage in liturgy that teaches and teaches well. Now, maybe there are churches that do pageants and who knows what, but there's some good education stuff. At any rate, third thing in terms of purposes, they were to appear before the Lord, period, okay? And when God said do it, and they did it, they were being obedient to the Lord.

That's why you have these three major pilgrim festivals. Let's look at Exodus 23. Again, this is our shortest declaration of the festivals in terms of what they were.

There are much longer ones when you get into Deuteronomy 16. Three times a year you're to celebrate a festival to me, and then it describes them, okay? Do this as I've commanded you. Verse 17, three times a year, all men are to appear before the sovereign Lord.

Just no question about it. They are to do it. Okay, well, let's look at which ones we have here.

These must be rather important. Look at the number of times they're talked about. Again, Exodus 23 is our shortest version of them.

Deuteronomy 16 expands on them considerably. Also, Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28-29, which include several festivals beyond these three first ones. These are the pilgrim festivals because these are the ones where they were to take themselves and go to Jerusalem.

In Deuteronomy 16, the Lord says, go to the place where I will choose, which will be Jerusalem, and there you're going to worship me. So Jerusalem is the objective, the goal of these pilgrims when they go on festivals. So, think of them as the pilgrim festivals.

First one, draw us together Passover. And you remember when we talked about Exodus chapter 12, we talked about the celebration of Passover in Egypt that night, and then also the fact that it talks about how to do it for the generations to come. So now we're talking about the generations to come, and Passover is linked together with unleavened bread.

And, of course, the key here is not only the blood of the Passover lamb; that kind of takes a second, not second place, but it's not nearly as significant now as the whole seven days of purifying. Because getting rid of the leaven, as we said earlier when we were talking about this, means getting rid of the sin. Leaven comes to symbolize sin.

First Corinthians 5, again, I know I've mentioned it before, but when Paul says, Christ, your Passover lamb is slain, so get rid of the leaven that's within you, and he's referring to the sin that's in the Corinthian church at that point. So Passover unleavened bread, a tremendously important festival, takes place in springtime. What's the counterpart for us? Yeah, it's Easter, of course.

Sometimes that's in fairly close calendar conjunction with Passover, but not always. Now, in God's mercy, he provides an opportunity for people who have not been able



to celebrate Passover in the first month, in the month of Aviv or Nisan, he provides the opportunity for them to do it. Numbers chapter nine says that if someone is ritually unclean, they've come in contact with a dead body, or if they've been away on a journey, here's the chance for them, indeed, to celebrate Passover.

It shows us how important Passover was. And again, it's the celebration of their redemption. You can see why they would want to celebrate it.

It's going to be the celebration that King Hezekiah and King Josiah when they affected reforms in their fallen kingdoms, you know when the reform comes through, they are going to celebrate Passover because now there's been a redemption, a restoration, a revival, whatever you want to call it. All right, so Passover unleavened bread. The second one, get both of these names, by the way, because Exodus is going to call it one name, and Deuteronomy is going to call it another.

Feast of Weeks. I've given it the name Weeks because that's the one that has sort of continued on throughout Jewish history. Those of you who go to Israel, if you go in June or end of May, you're going to hear all about Shavuot.

Shavuot is the Hebrew word for weeks, and they're celebrating this Feast of Weeks. Now, of course, it also comes to be called Pentecost because it's 50 days after Passover time. And Pentecost has remarkable illustrations of incidents in terms of us because it's in Acts chapter 2. And now, again, you've studied the New Testament, you know this.

All those people are gathered in Jerusalem. Why are they there? They're there for Pentecost. They're there because from all over the whole Roman world, you've got faithful pilgrims.

You've got pilgrims who are being obedient to the command of the Lord and coming to Jerusalem as part of that Pilgrim Festival. That's why Luke, as the author of Acts, lists all these people. I think it's 15 or 16 different locations from what they've come.

They all don't speak Aramaic, yet the apostles are given the gift of speaking the languages into their cultural context so that they hear the good news. So Pentecost is also tremendously important.

Traditionally, in Judaism, the Torah is given at this festival. And that's kind of interesting when you stop and think about it. And it makes sense because the Torah is given three months after they leave Egypt.

They leave Egypt in April in Nisan. Three months later brings us right to Shavuot. And you've got the Torah given.

And isn't it fascinating that the Torah is given on Mount Sinai with fire? And the Holy Spirit descends in Jerusalem with tongues of fire. And the word of the Lord goes forth.

I mean, there's some fascinating parallels there. Okay, and then finally we have Tabernacles. This is the name that has survived as well.

It's also called ingathering. If you read Exodus, it's called ingathering in verse 16 of chapter 23. But now in Judaism, it's Sukkot.

Sukkot. Sukkah is a tabernacle, a booth, sorry. And so, it's called the Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Sukkot.

This has got some interesting New Testament connotations as well. Do you know where they connect in terms of New Testament stuff? If I mention transfiguration, what happens? Peter's up on this mount, Peter's up on the, Jesus is up on the, well, Peter's there too, right? Jesus is on the mountain. Peter, James, and John are with him.

The veil of flesh is in some way not there anymore. And Peter, James, and John see the glory of Jesus manifest. And what does Peter say? Let's build ourselves some booths.

This probably took place close to the time of Tabernacles. And by the way, Tabernacles came to be associated with Messianic implications. And so, Peter's got all these things bubbling in his head in terms of what he'd like to see happen next.

Especially since in chapter 16 of Matthew, which is right before chapter 17, which is where the transfiguration takes place. In chapter 16, Peter has just confessed, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. And even though he's had to endure a little bit of a rebuke, in fact, it's a huge rebuke. Get behind me, Satan, when he tries to say, you're not going to die, et cetera.

Nevertheless, Jesus has said to him, you have spoken this because of God has made it known to you. And so you can imagine then the next incident up on that mountain transfigured, why all those things would still come to the surface and he'd say, wow, let's build some booths. This is a remarkable incident.

Let's preserve it. All right, I've gone way astray on that. Those are the three major festivals.

Pilgrim festivals, keep them in line. Two other additional major festivals. We don't know a lot about trumpets.

We really don't. The text doesn't say a whole lot about it. It generally takes place, what we would think of now as September, October.

And it's what we call Rosh Hashanah, or for those of you from New York, Rosh Hashanah, right? There's a difference in accents here. But Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year. But again, not much is said about it.

Traditionally in Judaism, it commemorates the creation of the world, but that's traditionally. The second one, by way of contrast, is the second of the major festivals, and no, the fifth of the major festivals. At any rate, it's the Day of Atonement.

And here we want to spend just a little more time. Last time we talked about the horrible incident in Leviticus 10, where Nadab and Abihu went charging into the Holy of Holies with unauthorized fire. And of course, they were consumed because they had transgressed that most sacred place.

Leviticus 16 starts out by referring back to that and saying that nobody is going to go into that holy place except once a year, and the high priest alone is going to do it. And then, it goes on and talks about what happens on that day, the Day of Atonement, when the high priest the only day when the high priest is to enter the most sacred, holy place. And here are some of the things that it actually says about the Day of Atonement.

And again, we're going through this in slightly more detail because there might be some kind of an illusion back to that when John 1, verse 29 says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You know, one of these goats is taking away the sin of the world. There might be an illusion there, not a complete one, but it might.

At any rate, interestingly enough, if you read the Hebrew, this is not the Day of Atonement. It's the Day of Atonements. And it's plural. The text is very clear in saying that these atonements are needed for everything that's part and parcel of this sanctuary because they've become polluted.

You've had day after day after day, blood being shed on them and all that figurative adding and weight of sin. Now they're going to be atonements for the high priest, the sanctuary, and the people. The term transgressions is used there.

It's a Hebrew word that's very interesting. I've just indicated for you what it implies. It implies intentional rebellion.

This is a time to deal with that as well. Some of you know if you've had Dr. Wilson for something, or if you've read his book, or you've just listened to him, it can't help but just listen to him and learn all sorts of things. You absorb Dr. Wilson, basically.

But the point is that between Rosh Hashanah, the head of the new year, and the Day of Atonement are the 10 days of awe. And during that time, all Jews very carefully sort through their sins and they confess and atone for them because this is a period of judgment.

In traditional Judaism, it's a period of judgment. And so, the Day of Atonement still has very profound, profound implications for Judaism and observant Jews today. Well, back under the tabernacle temple economy, the two goats were there as well.

And these are the interesting aspects of Yom Kippur. At any rate, the two goats were brought.

The goat, on the one hand, is for the Lord. That one's slaughtered. The blood is sprinkled in the most holy place. The other goat is called the goat for Azazel.

Now, who or what is Azazel? This is the goat, by the way, that has been misnamed scapegoat. Do you know the English term scapegoat? We all know it. We're scapegoating this person or we're scapegoating that person.

Actually, an improper derivation into English from a Hebrew word that has taken Azazel. The Hebrew is Azazel. And some people have said, Az is goat and Azal means to go away.

That must mean the goat that goes away or the goat that escapes. The goat that escapes. Are you hearing scapegoat coming out of the escape goat? Interesting derivation of the English word.

Probably a better interpretation, although lots of people argue about this, vociferously is, grammatically, one goat is for the Lord, and the other goat is for Azazel. For centuries, early Christian interpreters and Jewish interpreters, even before Jesus, said Azazel was a chief demon of some sort. Therefore, in sending that goat laden with the sins of the people, remember the priest confessed the sins of the people over the goat, and then they sent it off to the wilderness.

In doing that, the goat was being sent back, symbolically burdened with all the sins of the people, to the source of the sin. Now, a lot more we could say about that, but guess what? We don't have time. We just have to do a couple more things and then we'll stop for the week.

Vows. I have two things to say about vows. First of all, be aware of the Nazirite vow, which is extremely important.

We're going to have Nazirites sprinkled throughout, not only Old Testament history, but John the Baptist as well is going to be in that category. So, look at Numbers chapter six. The purpose was to be set apart for the Lord, for something the Lord wanted you to do.

It could be a Nazirite vow that involved the entire lifetime. It could also be a short-term vow. And hair, long hair, was a distinction here.

Samson comes to your mind. He should, okay? They were also not to touch things dead. They were not to consume the fruit of the vine and not to cut their hair.

So, keep in mind Nazirite vow. The other thing I want to say about vows is simply this. When you read Numbers chapter 30, we get a profound sense that we have really, really lightened up on vows.

We have marriage vows that, I guess I don't like the person anymore. I think I'll just break that vow. Vows under this Sinai covenant.

We're very, very sober, very firm. If you made a vow, you kept it. You kept it.

Read Numbers chapter 30. The only distinction was if a woman made a vow that her husband or her father thought was a foolish vow. He could abrogate it for her, but she couldn't herself.

We've talked about tithes already. And you can have a quick look at Numbers, sorry, Numbers, Deuteronomy 14 on tithes. But let me reiterate something I said the other day.

And that's this distinctive tithe in the third year. Tithes were to celebrate before the Lord. You know what it says.

If you're coming from a long distance, leave your possessions there, bring the money, bring it to the Lord, buy stuff to celebrate with, wine, strong drink, and come and celebrate in the Lord's presence. Fascinating statement. Tithes were to celebrate.

But in the third year, tithes were also designed to contribute to a kitty so that those who didn't have money, widows, aliens, and orphans could be provided for and priests as well. Well, and then one last, two last things. I just have a look at these because I know it's time to quit at this point.

Leviticus 27 has a lot to say about this process of giving something to the Lord, dedicating to the Lord. And then you'll remember, you know by now that redemption means to buy back. Have a good look at that.

Have a good look at Numbers chapter 19, which is a fascinating ritual. It talks about a red heifer. But I won't say anything more about that right now because it's time to go to convocation.

I'll leave this up here for just a minute. Shabbat Shalom to you. We have one more time session on Monday, Lord willing, and then exam on Wednesday. Great.