

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 14

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips in her Old Testament History, Literature, and Theology course, Lecture #14.

That's enough of that for today, wouldn't you say? Lets pray together as we start. *Oh God, our heavenly father, we are 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. Plant the truth of this psalm deep in our hearts and our minds, Lord. And we do implore you, that by you 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 suffering. So prepare us to serve you and to serve our fellow people as well. We pray for those who are not well and we pray you restore their health. We pray for those who aren't here for whatever reason- that you would indeed bring them here. Help us to learn together in ways that are both pleasing to you, and also, ways that will make an impact in our lives. I pray you 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.*

Well, we're going to pick up a little bit of material 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 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, and I'm going to make some additions 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's 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 grain offering were obviously grain offerings. But by in 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, sprinkled throughout the rest of Scripture, and we see it particularly with David. When he is going to offer a sacrifice at the end of 1 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 doesn'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. Let's do this one at a time.

Suzanna: Just about that. I have a question. I was sort of wondering, cause reading all the laws and everything, it makes me feel like it's just killing animals right and left just because everyone is doing it every day and all the little stipulations--I was just thinking did they hoard? And like you said, it should cost them.

Dr. Phillips: 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 have just been an overwhelming amount of ongoing sacrifices and extremely expensive. That's one of the things that we see, you're right. But also, we see God's provision for those who are in poverty, and what could they bring? Birds. Alright, 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 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 archeological stuff that they've found with dove coats, where they've raised doves for sacrificial offerings. And we have literary evidence from the rabbinic materials as well. So we know that they were in the business of raising literally thousands of doves in this area of the hill country of Judah. So, that was always the "way out," if you will. So it wasn't so costly. Keep in

mind as well, that we are talking about a population that is pastoral, and therefore they are always raising lots of flocks.

How many sacrifices would a single person make a year? I honestly have no idea on that. But, if you look at first of all, we're going to talk about that in just 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. So, in terms of how often they were 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. Some of us might be doing a whole lot more than others.

Trevor: I'm kind of almost asking the same question, but do you think it's probable that they would have to take time out of every single day, a large chunk of time, to [inaudible?]

Dr. Phillips: Would it be reasonable to think that they would be making sin or guilt offerings out of 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, things will change a little bit in that context as well. There's a lot of unknowns in this and I'm saying "I don't know" because I don't know.

McKenna: I was about to say...What age do they start making sacrifices? Would children have to?

Dr. Phillips: Probably once they are considered to be an adult. So, 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, or whether it's when they start doing a census, which is I think is age twenty. Although, I'm not entirely certain about that. Ted, am I right on that? I think it's age twenty. Yeah. Okay... Further questions? Good questions. Keep them coming.

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, 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, and 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 we said last time, the shedding of blood meant blood taking the place of my life, which is really to forfeit, the blood of that animal. So 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 one bringing the sacrifices 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 incredible symbolisms and messages 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 the blood and sprinkles it. He's the one who is going to sprinkle it on the altar, clearly representative of the fact that between me and God's holiness and his sanctuary, there is person who is individually mediating. And again that is a picture of the role Jesus fulfills.

Sacrifices burned in part or in whole, depends on the type 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 precious metals. So there's that whole symbolic intent of that in this as well. Depending on what the 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 God. The fellowship offering is going to symbolize that.

So basic components of the process here. Now let's look really quickly at the major sacrifices themselves. And I'll do this fast cause I know Youngblood does this, so you can go back and review this material. And also, this is actually in Leviticus 1-7. Right?

Whole burnt offering. Leviticus 1:4. 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, and sinned unintentionally. There are some paradigm examples that are given as you read through Leviticus.

The guilt, or trespass offering is an interesting one. There are actually two purposes that are articulated here; especially in chapter five, I think it is, of 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. That would be an unintentional sin, if I hadn't deliberately gone and done it. But I've done something to effect an animal that is given over to part of the whole process for sacrificing. Interestingly enough, as you read also, and I want to just take a quick look at this with you. Turn over to Leviticus 5, because there is often the statement made that there is no real offering for intentional sins. But, the end of Leviticus 5 talks about the guilt-offering. Verse 15, "When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally regarding any of the Lord's holy things." Now verse 17: "If a person sins and does anything that is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, even though he doesn't know it." But now look at what we have in terms of the examples at the beginning of chapter 6. That's why I think there is some covering here for even out intentional sins, and I'm kind of glad to know that, aren't you? Because we're in the business of, out there, doing things

intentionally 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. But look what's going on here. Still talking about the guilt offering. Verse 2: "If anyone sins or is unfaithful to the Lord by 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." All those things have, to me a ring of intentionality. And of course, once you've done it and your conscious convicts you, then you've got to turn around, and that's what the guilt offering is for. And so praise the Lord, so even in that context there are options for atonement there as well.

There is 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 many 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 in the community, and with God as well. And 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. The first three are probably the ones that are the most critical cause 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?

Trevor: Do we need to know, or be familiarizing ourselves with the different types of offerings? Like, what exactly are they?

Dr. Phillips: 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, Sara.

Now remember, it's the persons that bring the sacrifices that are doing the messy part. There are bowls in which the blood gets put, alright? There is a high priest who are doing this stuff. You know, you've got a whole family of Aaron who are 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 simply wear, well, something simpler. So it's not quite, all that being polluting the high priestly attire. Yeah, good question.

Let's carry on with Sabbath. This is a fascinating issue and it's an issue that's germane for 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 maybe think a little differently about that. I don't want to be heavy-handed about it, just encouraging. At any rate, in terms of principle, the idea is that you rest every seventh period. And of course, you're aware that we currently have faculty members that are on sabbatical this term. That means they're taking a rest. Dr. Hildebrandt is on sabbatical this term, so he's resting back there on his stool. Yeah, right? He's just twiddling his thumbs. At any rate, that's the whole principle, you rest. Now, actually, Gordon is a little odd, because we do ours every fifth year. 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 about that in a moment. That's really, really important. And then finally, what it does is set God's people apart. And as I said before, when we talk about Exodus 16, after they've come out of Egypt and they've had the manna experience. And in that context, God gives them the Sabbath. This is something they'd never experienced before. Not in Egypt. And so it sets God's people apart. And in fact, throughout history, the Jews were known through the wider culture to be as those who didn't work one day of the week. Now, sometimes the wider culture took advantage of that and actually attacked 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, separating or setting God's people apart was one of the issues.

We're going to spend a little time here with these categories of Sabbath observance, and I want to read, especially with regard to 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 and keep it holy. You and your maid-servant, and your animals" etcetera, etcetera "are to rest." Why? Exodus 20 says, "because in six days God created the heavens and 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 actions of creation, that is providential sustaining, and there is a difference involved. We can't even begin to comprehend it. But the text intimates, there is a difference involved.

Secondly, in Deuteronomy 5 we were 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 based on creation and on redemption, both are transcendent principles, and we want to keep that in mind. Now, interestingly enough, if you look at Exodus 31, in terms on the Sinai covenant, which is what we're talking about right now, it says in 31:12: "You must observe my Sabbath." Verse 13, "as a sign between me and you." Verse 14, "Anyone who desecrates the Sabbath must be put to death. Who ever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people." He reiterates it at the end of verse 15, "Anyone who does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death." It's a sign, it's a lasting covenant. So get that in your heads, because we're going to talk about in a moment 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. And I'll say more about that in a second.

We need, however, to talk about the seventh year procedures, as well. And I want to just move on to Exodus 23. I'm going to read 3 passages here with the seventh year procedures to get them into your heads. First of all, Exodus 23, simply verses 10-11. "For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops. During the seventh year let the land lay unplowed and unused and the poor among your people may get food from it."

That's important. We're not sitting here harvesting everything that we can that seventh year. But it's growing on 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 at verse 2. "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 it six years and the seventh year, the land is to have a Sabbath of rest. Don't sow your fields; reap the vineyards, the crops. The land is to have a rest. Are you getting the impression that God concerned for the land? He says it three times in that passage: "The land must have a rest." Something we could probably learn from, okay?

So, you not only have that. Then if you go over very quickly, or at least write this down and have a look over later on, Deuteronomy 15. The first two passages I've emphasized are the environmental ones; if you want to put it that way. Right? The land is to have a rest, emphatic. Now, Deuteronomy 15, "at the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts." Then it goes on to say how that's to be done--cancelling debts. If there is 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, "The seventh year, the year for cancelling debts is near, so I'm not going to do anything about this." 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, on 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 permanent social underclass. The point is this: you don't have a permanent underclass. So there's some sociological ramifications here that are really important. Because you cancelled the debts, they aren't saddled with this debt burden forever and ever, and you freed slaves. And when you freed slaves, you were supposed to provision them as they went so that they can get started all over again. So incredibly important environmental implications are built into the social Torah here, and also social implications for the structure of society.

Now the question you ought to be asking is, "well, did the Israelites do this?" The answer is, "No!" And we actually know as we read 2 Chronicles 36, which is the end of

the whole historical sweep, and the people have been sentenced to exile after centuries of sin. And it says, “And the land finally had its rest.” Intimating that, now they’re not there, and they haven’t been doing this. Now the land is going to get its rest.

Finally then, we do have the Jubilee as well. This is all the rest of chapter 25 of Leviticus. I’ve 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 the description of the things that I’ve got summarized here in little bullets: return to family property. So you don’t have here big property monopolies. Instead, you go back to the clan and family properties. Rest for the land again, free the slaves, 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: 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 to 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? 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 25:10. “Proclaim liberty throughout the land.” Now, by the way, where does the name Jubilee come from? 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. But 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, “Yovale.” And J and Y are a little bit interchangeable coming from that language coming through German to us. And so, the Yovale was the trumpet that they sounded when the Jubilee year began. That’s where that term “jubilee” is coming 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 of Egypt paradigm that's there.

Becca: I'm just getting confused with the every seventh year versus the Jubilee year. Is it just like, the Jubilee was a special seventh year?

Dr. Phillips: Actually, that's an interesting question. What's the distinction between every seventh year, which would mean you would 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 to say the Jubilee year is gonna be an overlap of the 49th seventh year. But most people, as they're interpreting it say, you've got the seven years, and once you get to seven times seven, the Jubilee is added on top of that. That 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.

Well, the question is, how does this work with all the property exchange? Let's try to and think back in terms of property being primarily belonging to family, clans, and tribes. And we're going to see tribal allotments when we get into the land. So we're going to try this large family inheritance structure. The only way they should've been selling property was if they got into debt and had to do that sort of thing. And even then, there was a process form redeeming that property. So it's not like it's going to be all over the place. Some owner from Mesopotamia is suddenly grabbing a land grant somewhere at 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 will 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. It's a great question. We don't really have any sense, in terms of how these family's pieces were plotted out. I think they were probably kept under the big *bet av* [father's house], which is kind of the clan structure. 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 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, 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 to be kept 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? Alright. Let's see what we've got here. What did Jesus have to say about the Sabbath? Here's where I want to keep in mind, first of all, his opponents. And you've all had 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 far 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 they were so concerned about this. So let me just take you back ten minutes in our discussion. The Pharisees, with all their flaws and warts, were people who were really concerned with 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. Alright? It's their hypocrisy that's the problem, it's not their doctrine. At any rate, they're very concerned for 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, the 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? 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.

In the Mishnah, the Mishnah's 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, sometime when you see or when you hear sermons in church that they had 39 categories of work, and people want to poo-poo it. That's not really fair to the people who were trying very hard to protect this idea of keeping the Sabbath. Now, granted, they're again, being

hypocritical and legalistic.

But we have 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 and threshing it, as it were. Rubbing it between their hands, and that's called threshing, and therefore, the Pharisees would be upset about that. And Jesus comes back at them with an illustration about David and we're going to get to the David thing in about a month or so. But, at any rate, in that context you have that incident. 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 and marked that way, we have very important teaching from Jesus.

First of all, Sabbath is made for us. Sabbath is made for humankind. We're not meant to be slavishly bound to the Sabbath. That's not the point. But the Sabbath is God's gift. Go back to Exodus 16 where people were working really, really, really 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 and this or else. Okay? The Sabbath is to get away from that. Then, more important than that, Jesus says the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath. In other words, that one day in seven, when every day you take it, right?--that one day in seven, Jesus is recognized as the Lord of that day. Not me, not my desires, not my list of things to do, not the paper, not the exam, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath at that point. But then of course, the important corollary to that is Jesus is important on the Sabbath, because you do good on the Sabbath. Interestingly enough, there is a rabbinic, well there is a rabbi, Shibomen Minasha 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. And therefore there are some priorities in regards to 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. Has all this passed? We kind of reinterpret Jesus to, He didn't say, "and keep the

Sabbath.” So what should we be doing with this? And by the way, I know that there are legitimate differences of opinion here and there are legitimate differences of opinion, so I’m just going to give you my opinions and you can argue with me, or think differently if you wish. 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 and redemption, which I’m sure are fairly important theological issues that I would say transcend the Sinai covenant, even though it is a sign of the Sinai covenant. Creation and redemption, and interestingly enough, in Hebrews 4, the author of Hebrews enjoins us to enter the Sabbath rest. He’s using that whole Sabbath idea as something profoundly important. 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, I strongly 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 anyone 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 aren’t doing this list of things,” or “they’re doing this list of things, and they shouldn’t be doing it.” There’s a very delicate balance here. And I like to look at the Sabbath as a positive thing. Those who have Jewish friends that are orthodox practicing Jews, ordain days for the chosen. In the chosen we get pictures of the joy for the Sabbath. As you bring that day in, it’s with lights. And we come to the close of the Sabbath, it’s a time of morning because you’ve ended a day that’s just been filled with the presence of God. You entering a new week, and you’re going refreshed by that day, but they actually have a time of the day at the closing of the Sabbath that’s a little bit of a morning time. So kind of keep that in mind. I’m going to encourage you to keep the Sabbath in some way or another. Again, not legalistic about this at all.

I have to tell you a little narrative. When my husband went to graduate school, that was when he became a Christian, not until then. He struggled with school, he'd be the first one to tell you that. His first year was just hideous, and he almost got thrown out. During that same year he'd become a believer, and his pastor said, "I want you to try an experiment." Because he'd really been working seven days a week, 18 hours a day, and life was tough. And the pastor said, "I want you to try an experiment. I want you to take Sunday off," which sounded as counterintuitive as all get-out. But Perry took him up on it. So the first six days of the week were hard work, increasingly hard work. But the seventh was such a joy, and 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 twenty minutes to talk about festivals and other religious observances. As we think about the festivals, one of the things that I want you to try and put together here is how these festivals are the Old Testament counterparts to the kinds of celebrations 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. Now granted, there were other worship times. But these were special worship times. And we're going to talk about each of them in a moment and we're going to try to map those out in 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." You didn't come into God's presence empty-handed. You came to the festival to worship so that means you brought something, and that's why we talked about the whole cost of sacrifice.

Second and third, since I've got them up there. I especially like the second one. These were to serve as educational tools. They're 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, there are different ways of saying it, and you've got to sort through Deuteronomy, 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 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. But all these were to be reminders. Those of you who've grown up in churches that really celebrate festivals will have some sense of this.

This is my story day, so I'm going to tell you another story. My parents sort of migrated through at least three churches that I can remember when I was growing up. It might have been more, but I remember three of them--first Methodist, then Lutheran, and finally, Presbyterian. Our days 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 there was a statue of Jesus out front and the whole bit, pretty liturgical. But every Monday Thursday, that statue of Jesus, what did they do to it? Those of you from a Lutheran or a Roman Catholic background, what do they do to the statue of Jesus? Does anyone know? Zach? They cover it. Yes. A purple veil was put over it. Then obviously you have Good Friday, and the tragedy and the horror and the sadness of the death of Jesus. But what happens Sunday morning? And put yourself in a tiny five year-olds 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 today, right now, tingles going up and down my spine as I think about the implications of that. The resurrection, after that horror of death, is lived out, or not lived out, is reenacted with that liturgy that's part of the Lutheran church. And so there's an awful lot of beauty in education that's built into that, that 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 this is some good educational instruction.

At any rate, the third thing in terms of purposes, they were to appear before the Lord. Period. And when God said do it, and they did it, they were being obedient to the Lord. That's why they had 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 as you get into Deuteronomy 16. "Three times a year, you're to celebrate a festival to me." And it describes them. "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. Let's look at what 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 chose," which will be Jerusalem, "and there you are going to worship me." So Jerusalem is the objective goal of these pilgrims when they go on festival. So think about those as the pilgrim festivals.

First one draws together Passover, and remember when we talked about Exodus 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 the feast of Unleavened Bread. And of course, the key here is, not only the blood of the Passover lamb, that kind of takes 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, we were talking about this, means getting rid of the sin. Leaven comes to symbolize sin. 1 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 within you." He's referring to the sin that's in the Corinthian church at that point. So Passover, Unleavened Bread, tremendously important festival, takes place in springtime.

What's the counterpart for us? Yes, it's Easter, of course. Sometimes that' 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 Nissan. He provides the opportunity for them to do it. Numbers 9 says, "If someone is ritually unclean," they've come in contact with a dead body, "or if they've been 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 the 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, when their reform comes true, they are going to celebrate Passover. Because now there has been a redemption, a restoration, a revival, whatever you want to call it. Alright so, Passover, unleavened bread...

The second one, get both of these names by the way because Exodus is going to call it one name, Deuteronomy is going to call it another--the 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. Okay? 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 of 50 days after Passover time. And Pentecost has remarkable incidents, because in terms of us because it's in Acts 2. Now again, you've studied New Testament, so 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 commandment 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 where they've come, and they're all not speaking Aramaic. And 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, it's at this festival that the Torah is given. 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 Desna, and three months later brings us right to Shavuot, and you've got the Torah given. Isn't it fascinating that the Torah is given 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 are some fascinating parallels there.

Okay, and then finally we have Tabernacles. This is the name that has survived as well. It is also called, "In Gathering." If you read Exodus, it's called "In Gathering," in 16:23. But now in Judaism it's Sukkot. Sukkah is a tabernacle or a booth. And so it's called Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Sukkot. This has got some interesting New Testament connotations as well. Do you know where it connects in terms of New Testament events? If I mention transfiguration, what happens? Peter is up on the mount, Jesus is up on this mount, Peter's there too. 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. What does Peter say? "Let's build ourselves some booths." This is probably taking place close to the time of Tabernacles. And by the way, Tabernacles came to be associated with Messianic implications, so Peter has all these things bubbling in his head in terms of what he's likely 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, "O well, you're not going to die." Nevertheless, Jesus has said to him, "you have spoken this because God has made it known to you. So you can imagine then, the next incident that happened up on that mountain transfigured, why all those things would still come to the surface and he would say, "Wow. Let's build some booths." This is a remarkable incident. Let's preserve it.

Alright, 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 the Feast of 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 New York, "Rash hashanah." Right? There's a difference in accents here. Now there's 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 fifth of the major festivals, at any rate, is 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, when Nadab and Abihu go charging in to 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 referring back to that and saying nobody is going to go into that most holy place except once a year, and the high priest alone is going to do it. Then it goes on and talks about what happens on that day, the Day of Atonement. This is the only day when the high priest was to enter the most sacred, most holy place. And here are some of the things that it actually says about the Day of Atonement. Again, we're going about this in slightly more detail because, there might be some kind of an allusion back to that when John 1:29 says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." You know, one of these goats is going to take away the sin of the world. There might be allusion there. Not a complete one, but there might be.

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. And the text is very clear to say that these atonements are needed for everything that is 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, there are going to be atonements for the high priest, the sanctuary, and the people. The word "transgressions" is used there. It's a Hebrew word and I 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 you've read his book, or you've just listened to him. You can't help but to just listen to him and learn all sorts of things. You just 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 ten 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. And it's a period of judgment, so the Day of Atonement still has very 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, and 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 that has been misnamed "scapegoat." Do you know that English term, "scapegoat"? We all know it. We're scapegoating this person, or we're scapegoating that person. Actually, that's an improper derivation into English from a Hebrew word that has taken the Hebrew *Azazel*, and some people have said, "Hm, *az* is goat, and *azel* is to go away. That must mean the goat that goes away, or the goat that escapes." The goat that escapes. Are you hearing the 'scapes' 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. And 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 because, 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, there is 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 6. 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. They were also not to touch things dead, they were not to consume the fruit of the vine, and they were not to cut their hair. So keep in mind Nazarite vow. The other thing I want to say about vows is simply this. When you read Numbers 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 guess I'll just break that vow. Vows under this Sinai covenant were very, very sober--very firm. If you made a vow, you kept it. You kept it. Read Number 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.

Well, we've talked about tithes already, and you can have a quick look at 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. It says if you're coming from a long distance, leave your possessions there, bring the money, bring it to the Lord, buy food to celebrate with. Wine, strong drink and come and celebrate in the Lord's presence. Fascinating statement. Tithes were to celebrate. But, on 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 the priests as well.

And one last, well, two last things, just have a look at these, cause 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 19, which is a fascinating ritual. It talks about a red heifer. But I won't say anymore 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, Lord willing, and an exam on Wednesday.

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