

THROUGH THE BIBLE

LEVITICUS 16-22

I love clichés. I am a connoisseur of clichés. And it's amazing how many of the clichés we use every day have their origin in the Bible. For example, "Escaped by the skin of my teeth" that's Job 19:20. "A drop in the bucket," Isaiah 40:15. "Whiter than snow," Psalm 51:7. "Harder than a rock," Jeremiah 5:3. "Blind leads the blind," Matthew 15:14. "Rise and shine," Isaiah 60:1. "Fuel to the fire," Ezekiel 21:32. "Hole in the wall," Ezekiel 8:7. "Catch my breath," you'll find in Job 9:18.

And here in Leviticus 16:26 we find another familiar cliché - the word "*scapegoat*." How many times have you heard someone say, "I was made the scapegoat."

God gave to Israel a *scapegoat*. All the people's sin, from the whole past year, was confessed over the head of a goat; that was then led away into the wilderness. It was a beautiful way to illustrate to God's people that their sin had been *freely forgiven* and *fully forgotten*.

This made the Day Of Atonement the most important day of the calendar. It is still their highest of holy days.

Verse 1, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died; and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat." Nadab and Abihu had barged into the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies irreverently and uninvitedly. They'd engaged God's sacred space with no regard to God's holiness. Now God imposes restrictions so it doesn't happen again.

Only one man - only one day a year... will be allowed to enter the inner sanctum. On the tenth day, of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, or Tishri (our September/October), Aaron the High Priest will enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for Israel.

Verse 3, "Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on." It's interesting, on this special day Aaron leaves his normal priestly attire in the closet - *His purple robe and ephod and breastplate and crown*. He approaches God in basic linen. He comes humbly. Throughout this ritual Aaron stands

as a type of our High Priest, Jesus, Who laid aside His robes of glory and took the role of a servant, in the likeness of men. He too came humbly.

The Jewish Midrash, an OT commentary, says the night before the Day Of Atonement the High Priest pulled an all-nighter, preparing Himself spiritually for the big moment. This was serious business. The sin of the nation needed to be covered... Remember too, Jesus also spent a sleepless night in the Garden of Gethsemane before He atoned for the sin of the world.

On the special day the High Priest took two kid goats to the door of the Tabernacle, and cast lots. One goat was selected for sacrifice. You might say, *“God got His goat.”* And the other goat became the **scapegoat**.

The High Priest first made sacrifice for himself and his family; then took hot coals off the altar, put them in a censer, and burned incense over them. The censer was like an ancient smoke machine. It created a cloud shielding the priest from the full brunt of God’s glory. Verse 13 tells us without the smokescreen the priest would’ve died from overexposure to God’s holiness.

The Midrash also said the priest entered the Holy of Holies sideways. This protected him from God’s glory. And when he entered the Holy of Holies a rope was tied to his ankle; for if God rejected his sacrifice and struck him dead, he could be dragged from God’s presence without anyone else risking their lives.

Remember Nadab and Abihu had turned God’s sacred space into a crime scene. Rebellion now marred *the place and people*. Thus, the High Priest’s job was to sprinkle sacrificial blood at the location where God met with man - in the deepest Tabernacle, over the mercy seat, the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

And as the priest worked inside, the people waited outside with eager anticipation. The reappearance of the priest meant all was forgiven and forgotten and right again for another year - **that God had accepted their sacrifice**. When they saw the priest the whole congregation breathed a sigh of relief. Israel could rest assured their sin was forgiven for another year.

Then in verse 21 we’re told the priest would take the scapegoat, lay his hands on its head, and confess over it all the nation’s sins for the past year. Throughout the year people offered sacrifices for themselves, but the scapegoat was a blanket solution for everyone’s sins.

A **“suitable man”** turned the goat loose in the desert. In later years the goat was led out a Sabbath day’s distance; then turned loose... Still later it was taken out twelve miles... Even later the goat was led over a cliff..

Jewish tradition says a crimson sash was tied to the Tabernacle door. After the goat was led away the sash turned white. It was a supernatural sign of God's pardon. As it says in Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Another tradition says that for the forty years after Jesus' crucifixion and before the Temple was destroyed the ribbon remained red. *For when the Jews crucified Jesus they rejected God's only means of forgiveness.*

Verse 22 explains the plight of the scapegoat. "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness." Remember, it was the "scapegoat," not the "scape-lamb." Lambs would return to their flock. But a goat was prone to wander away and never return. When the scapegoat was out of sight the nation Israel knew their sin was not only *forgiven*, but *forgotten*.

Which reminds me of the pastor who was tormented by a past indiscretion early in his ministry. No one knew about it but him. He'd confessed it countless times, yet could never rid his conscience of the guilt.

At the time there was a hyper-spiritual lady in his church who claimed God spoke to her. The pastor thought it was a bit presumptuous for anybody to claim to have a hotline to God. So he decided to put this lady in her place. One day, she said that God had told her this or that... The pastor challenged her, "If God speaks to you, then ask Him to reveal the sin I committed early in my ministry. If He tells you I'll believe God speaks to you." She agreed to ask God. A few weeks later the pastor saw the woman again and asked, "Did God tell you?" She replied, "No, He didn't. He only said He doesn't remember it anymore."

Jesus is not just our sacrifice, but scapegoat. Psalm 103:12 promises, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

And once a year, every year this was reinforced in the minds of God's people. Verse 29 says the Day Of Atonement was to be observed as a day of rest, and a day to "afflict your souls" - a Hebrew phrase for fasting.

In the Hebrew language the word "day" is "yom," and the word "atonement" is "kippur." Thus *the Day Of Atonement* is also referred to by Jews as "Yom Kippur."

So fast forward 3,410 years... From Moses and Aaron to October 6, 1965, Sandy Koufax, the Los Angeles Dodgers' ace, *and a Jew*, refused to pitch the opening game of the World Series **because** it fell on *Yom Kippur*. Koufax obeyed verse 29. He refused to work, and became a hero to religious Jews all around the world, *except maybe those who were Dodger fans.*

Later someone summed up Jewish history as “Three thousand years of beautiful tradition: from Moses to Sandy Koufax.” That’s taking it a bit too far, but even today serious Jews treat Yom Kippur as a Sabbath. They don’t work, because God did the work in Christ.

Leviticus 16:34 sums up this holiest day, “This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.”

In Leviticus 17 God tells Moses whenever a Hebrew kills an animal for food it should first be brought to the Tabernacle and sacrificed. Every meal was a sacrifice to God. The motive here is similar to what we do when we pray before a meal. We’re offering up thanksgiving.

(In Deuteronomy 12:15 when Israel moves into the land of Canaan they’ll be allowed to kill and butcher livestock at home. But in the wilderness the slaughter of meat was always considered a sacrifice to God.)

Which reminds me of the man describing his wife’s cooking? He said, “My wife treats me like a god. Every night at dinner she presents me with a burnt offering.”

In the wilderness most of Israel’s meals were manna. Seldom was livestock slaughtered for food. But when it happened, the meat was first brought to the Tabernacle and sacrificed to God. And here’s the reason, verse 7, “They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.”

Understand, Israel wasn’t the only nation that sacrificed animals. Many pagan cultures offered sacrifices. Here, Israel is warned not to sacrifice to “demons.” The Hebrew word is “satyr” or “he-goat.” It’s a reference to the god the Greeks called, “Pan.” The half-man, half-goat usually depicted playing a flute. *And Pan tormented his subjects.* He caused “panic.” Worshippers of Pan sacrificed to him to avoid panic.

But this is why Israel killed all their animals at the door of the Tabernacle. It was the centralization and regulation of sacrifice that kept their worship pure and protected from idolatry. If worship had been left up to personal preference and individual tastes errors would eventually result and the worship would get warped.

The same is true today. Stop coming to church and decide you can worship just as well *on the golf course, or at the lake house, or the campground* and your faith will lose focus. You can worship God anywhere, but you maintain purity and passion at the house of God.

Leviticus 17:10 forbids the eating or drinking of blood. In Hebrew society when an animal was butchered its blood was first thoroughly drained.

And this is one reason the Roman Catholic doctrine of communion is unbiblical. When Jesus said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him...” He was speaking figuratively. If Jesus meant it literally He would’ve been breaking the Levitical Law.

Notice too, verse 11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood...” Leviticus 17 was written 3500 years ago, but assumes modern medical knowledge. A doctor today couldn’t describe the importance of blood any better than verse 11. The blood brings oxygen, and protein, and nutrients to the organs and tissues of your body. At my annual physical I always have my blood drawn. And the blood tests reveals everything that’s going on in my body. Nourishment, and health, and life flow through the blood. As verse 11 puts it, “the life...is in the blood.”

And this too, is why God requires a blood sacrifice. The wages of sin is death, or **the giving up of life**; thus, blood has to be shed. Christ had to be crucified.

In August 2003 thieves broke into the Church of the Holy Cross in New York City, and stole a valuable crucifix. But here’s what they did, they took the statue of Jesus, just not the cross to which He was attached.

They took Jesus, but left behind the cross. And that’s the mistake churches today make. They leave the cross of Jesus behind. Yet we’re told in Leviticus 17:11, “it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

Now at the end of Chapter 17 all has been made right. The Tabernacle is cleansed and the people have been forgiven. Atonement has been made. Once again God is **at-one** with mankind. *Let’s start afresh - so how should man live and interact with his fellow man?* Chapters 18-22 answers that question with a set of moral laws, sometimes called “**The Holiness Code.**”

Chapter 18 deals with sexual and moral laws. **Egypt**, the land the Hebrews left, and **Canaan**, the land where they’re headed were both sexually defiant societies. And God wants His people to be different - set apart or **holy!** Here, God sets up safe and loving boundaries.

Verse 6, “None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD.” “Uncover his nakedness” is a euphemism for sexual intimacy. A person’s nakedness belongs only to them and their spouse - no one else. Don’t uncover what doesn’t belong to you. This outlaws pornography.

Verses 6-17 define and prohibit incest. Never sexualize family relationships. Incest destroys families and societies. Which reminds me, “Did you hear about the redneck

who went to the family reunion to pick up girls!” That’s what Moses prohibits in these verses.

And before we get into this, I hope you realize God knows more about sex than you do! He created sex and knows how its best enjoyed. God understands how to minimize its dangers and maximize its pleasures. His boundaries are a reflection of *love* not *repression*. God wants to protect us, His people, from the hurt and damage and degradation that sexual defiance causes.

Here are the sexual relationships that are morally off-limits: [parents](#), [step-parents](#), [parents-in-law](#), [children](#), [step-children](#), [brothers and sisters](#), [step-brothers](#), [step-sisters](#), [grandkids](#), [grandparents](#), [aunts](#), [uncles](#), [son-in-laws](#), [daughter-in-laws](#), [brother-in-laws](#), [sister-in-laws](#).

Verse 8 tells us, “**The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness.**” In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul writes to the church in Corinth and rebukes them for allowing a man in their church to live with his step-mom. *Leviticus had taught them better.*

Verse 11 prohibits sex with a half-sister. “**The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father - she is your sister - you shall not uncover her nakedness.**” Remember this was the relationship between Abraham and Sarah. He married a half-sister.

It seems for a long time in the ancient world marriage between siblings was a common practice. In the beginning it must’ve been accepted by God. *Where else could Cain have gotten his wife?* At the time, Adam and Eve were the only family on earth. **Cain obviously married his sister.** But as sin and decay took its toll on the human gene pool interbreeding began to cause problems. And by the time Moses laid down the Law, God had decided to outlaw the practice.

Verse 18 says you shouldn’t marry your wife’s sister, and create a sisterhood rivalry in your home. This was Jacob’s mistake when he married Leah and Rachel.

Verse 20 forbids adultery... Verse 21 prohibits the worship of Molech, “**You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech.**” Molech was a Canaanite idol - with the face of an ox, and body of a man. He was a fertility god - *and an offspring of sexual pleasure, a child, was sacrificed to him.* The idol itself was a hollowed-out brass statue. The Canaanites would light a fire inside the statue, heat the medal; then lay their babies in Molech’s outstretched arms. The priests would beat their drums as loud as they could to drown out the baby’s horrific screams.

Infant sacrifice sounds barbaric - so far removed from modern decency... until we take an honest look at **abortion**. *In many cases are we not sacrificing unborn babies*

to the god of sexual pleasure? Then we allow a liberal media to drown out their silenced screams. We want the pleasures of sex without its responsibilities.

Leviticus 18:22 says clearly, “**You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.**” It’s clear God opposes same-sex practices. He even uses the term “**abomination**” meaning “**disgusting or revolting.**”

Realize, the Bible is not ambiguous here. God is not confused about this issue. Homosexuality is not merely a sin, but an abomination... Of course, there are other abominations in Scripture: *insincere worship, giving God less than your best, a haughty look, a lying tongue, one who sows discord among brothers* are all an abomination. *Don’t be proud that your abomination is less of an abomination than someone else’s abomination.* What’s disgusting to God is disgusting to God and should stop. And that includes homosexuality.

Thankfully, Jesus loves the abominable! He hates sin, but He loves sinners, *including those who are attracted to the same sex.* And if anyone turns away from their sin, and is willing to accept and conform to God’s will for their life, Jesus promises to forgive that person and transform their fallen desires.

Verse 23, “**Nor shall you mate with any animal... It is a perversion.**” Once you reject the fact that sex is sacred - a gift from God - and consider it nothing but an instinctive, animalistic act - then anything goes. It’s a slippery slope and unimaginably vulgar acts follow. Incest, pedophilia, bestiality - all kinds of perversions are practiced. Whatever brings pleasure to sinful and twisted people becomes permissible. But God created sex, not you or I. He sets the standard, not us.

God knew the depths to which humanity would sink and provided these prohibitions. *And don’t think this isn’t happening in our neighborhood.* In the last twenty years arrests for bestiality in America have increased 3000%. People have become shamelessly immoral.

And verse 25 speaks of the consequences of these perversions, “**For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.**” A society can become so morally nauseating the land vomits it from its borders. Apparently, environments have a threshold of decency that can only stomach so much perversion. There comes a point where a deranged people won’t survive.

In 19:2, God appeals to Israel, “**You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.**” It’s interesting, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus repeats this call... Peter, repeats this call... Paul, repeats this call... **You be holy, just as God is holy...** Not perfect per se’, but “**set apart,**” dedicated, reserved for God’s exclusive use.

In verses 3-4 three of the Ten Commandments are repeated... *Honor your parents. Keep the Sabbaths, there's actually more than one. And don't worship idols.*

Some instructions are then given to the priests, followed by a very wise welfare system, 19:9-10. When the Hebrews enter their land, and harvest their fields their reapers are not to go over every inch with a fine-tooth comb. They should leave a little for the poor and needy. But it's interesting, the poor are required to go out into the field and pick up the leftovers. The welfare isn't packaged for them - they have to go work for it.

Verses 11-17 repeats a few more of the Ten Commandments - *don't steal, or speak falsely - don't cheat - pay your workers on time - be kind to the deaf and blind - don't be partial to the poor or mighty - judge righteously - don't gossip - don't hate your brother - be willing to rebuke and hold each other accountable.*

Recall when Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, He quoted, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" His second command comes from 19:18.

Some of the laws in Leviticus 19 sound strange, but they target specific Canaanite practices that related to idolatry. For example, verse 19 deals with laws prohibiting mixtures. Don't interbreed your livestock, or sow a field with mixed seed, or blend fabrics - like linen and wool. The idolatrous Canaanites believed these mixtures held magical powers. Thus, God wanted His people to have no part in what were pagan practices.

But all this talk about mixtures reminds me, *know what you get when you breed Lassie with a pit bull? You get a dog who mauls you, then runs to get help.*

Another Canaanite practice is behind the instructions in 19:23-24. The Canaanites ate the initial harvest of their fruit as a sacrifice to their idols; thus God prohibited the Hebrews from eating the fruit of their trees until the fifth year they were in the land. He didn't want His people associating with Canaanite idolatry.

Verse 26, *"no divination or soothsaying."* The Hebrews were forbidden to try and access spiritual power through means or sources other than God. No incantations or spells or communication with the dead.

And this applies to us today. Divination is any attempt to gain power apart from a direct encounter with God. In our day, horoscopes, and seances, and palm readers are off-limits. Participate in these things and you're inviting Satan to use his deceptions on you.

And understand the popularity of these practices is growing. In 1990, 18% of people believed you could communicate with the dead. In 2024, the number had grown to 53%. In 1990, 23% believed in fortune telling and psychics. In 2024, the number was 41%. *We need to warn our neighbors that God forbids divination.*

Verses 27-28 again refer to paganism. Canaanite worship involved shaving your hair and beard a certain style, and cutting your flesh, and even specific tattoos. Thus, it would be wrong for a Hebrew to go to the Canaanite hair salon or tattoo parlor for a *new do*, or a *new tat*. That would be associating with idolatry.

But that doesn't mean weird haircuts and cheap tattoos are a sin in and of themselves! There's nothing wrong with a tattoo per se... *unless you're living under my roof*. I don't necessarily believe tattoos are a good idea, but I can't tell you these verses forbid them in general. If you want a tattoo, pray about it, then do as the Lord leads... *just remember, they don't wash off!*

Verse 29, **“Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot...”** One way to prostitute a daughter is to dress her like one, or pay for her to dress like one.

Verse 31 forbids consulting a medium. Again, any attempt to communicate with the dead God forbids. What you think is a dead person is in reality a demon.

It reminds me of the time I was witnessing to a fortune teller, when the lady started laughing at me. I wasn't going to take it, so I punched her in the mouth. Of course, I got arrested, and when I came before the judge he asked me to explain my actions. I said, **“Your Honor, I was just trying to strike a happy medium.”**

Verse 32 tells the Hebrews to respect their elderly. **“Rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man.”** That's advice we surely need to heed.

Verses 33-34 stresses kindness and hospitality to strangers. The Hebrews were strangers in Egypt and they need to be loving to the strangers among them.

Verses 35-36 mandates honest and fair business practices. In antiquity business was done with scales. No tipping the scales to your advantage. Don't fudge.

Leviticus 20 dishes out penalties for the sins listed in the Chapters 18-19. First is *idolatry*. Second is *the person who sees the idolatry, yet does nothing*. *Silence and tolerance was a capital crime*. As was *occultism, cursing one's parents, adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality* were all punishable by death in ancient Israel.

And we assume the mode of execution for each of these cases is stoning. Stoning was the Hebrew capital punishment. And it was a brutal way to die. It's said of the idolater in verse 1, **“The people of the land shall stone him with stones.”** The

community came together to execute a stoning. The judge and eyewitness would be the first persons to cast a stone.

Realize, under the Old Covenant there was no power to transform a person's heart. The Law provided an external standard, but it affected no internal change. This is why the incorrigible, the incurable, the irredeemable were eliminated from the camp. All he or she could ever be was a bad influence... But under the New Covenant there was hope. Jesus writes His law in our hearts. He transforms us from the inside out. Even the worse sinner - the most callous sinner - is never beyond the reach of the grace and mercy of Jesus.

The cure for sin under the New Covenant is not *our elimination*, but *our salvation*. I love 1 Corinthians 6, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." But then Paul says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The saints in Corinth had been notorious sinners, but the power of Jesus transformed their lives, just as it does today. "*Such were some of you, but no longer.*"

Notice verse 11, "The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them." Recall Paul addresses this exact situation in 1 Corinthians 5. A man and his step-mom in the church were shacking up. They needed to be banned or excommunicated, in hopes they'll repent of their sin.

Apparently the Corinthians followed Paul's advice and the church discipline worked. For in 2 Corinthians 2:8 Paul encourages the Corinthians to receive the brother back, "I urge you to reaffirm your love to him."

Sadly though, in the Israeli camp there was no church discipline, for the Law was powerless to rehabilitate. It was "**one strike and you're out!** Execution of the sinner was the Law's answer to sin.

Thankfully, that's not Jesus' answer... Remember what the Jews said to Jesus when they threw the half-naked, adulteress at His feet? "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" And Jesus replied, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Again, the Law's answer to sin was *elimination*, while Jesus' answer is *salvation*.

Verse 14, "If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you." Can

you imagine any scenario where a man would want to marry his wife **and mother-in-law**? Sorry, but only a real sicko is that perverse.

Bible commentator Adam Clarke suggested the phrase here, "**they shall be burned with fire**" meant "**branding with a hot iron.**" That rather than execution, the penalty for marrying your mother-in-law was to be marked for life. *Execution would be getting off easy.*

Leviticus 21-22 are directed toward priests. Most of these stipulations are ceremonial *or symbolic*, rather than moral... The priest was God's representative and he needed to be aware of the proper appearances.

For example, unlike pastors today who frequently officiate funerals, the priests was to have no contact with death. Again, not because a corpse adversely affected him, but *he represented a living God...*

In verse 7 the priest is to marry only a virgin - *for as God's messenger to the people His role was to always represent purity, and faithfulness, and loyalty...*

Even the kids of the priest needed to realize they too lived under a higher standard... Verse 9, "**The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.**" The child of a Levitical priest could ruin her father's reputation. She needed to live a holy life.

Here's another example, Leviticus 21:16, "**And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to Aaron... 'No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long, a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch.'**" The priest was to have no physical deformity.

In other words, there were no handicapped parking spaces in the priestly parking lot. When people came before God they brought their best offering, and apparently it was brought by the ideal offerer. **God deserved perfection.** Of course, the man's perfection was only symbolic. *There are no morally perfect men.* A person's skin can be scab-free, yet there be fungus growing in his heart. The Jewish priests who were All-American-types. Outwardly they were a cut above.

All I can say is I'm glad I'm a Christian pastor, not a Levitical priest! *Without my glasses I'm blind. I've got acne scars. I'm sure one leg is shorter than the other. As I age I'm getting a hunchback, and I got plenty of scabs and scars on my skin. Since my prostate surgery I don't even know about the eunuch thing.* I really only meet one qualification... **At least, I'm not a midget!**

It is interesting, the priest was not to be a eunuch, but a family man. You want the man who represents you before God to be aware of family issues. *Hey, I'm good when it comes to understanding families...* And this is why there's absolutely no biblical basis whatsoever for the Roman Catholic doctrine of priestly celibacy. It stems from pagan traditions, not the Bible.

Which reminds me, after Pope Francis' died he went to heaven, and immediately asked to go to the library. Once inside, he disappeared into the racks for a long time. When the angel at the front desk heard a blood curdling scream, he raced to the pope to see what was wrong... He was just sitting there pointing at the page, saying to himself, "There's an R. there's a R." The angel asked, "What do you mean?" "It says **celebrate!**"

I will make one application here. What was expected of the priest *physically* should be expected of pastors today *spiritually*. **We don't need lame pastors, who are blind to the real issues, and who lack balance - or are spiritual midgets, or spineless, hunched-over men - or who act rashly - or are spiritual eunuchs (or unfruitful).** We need to be spiritually what priests were physically.

Chapter 22 addresses priests who find themselves ceremonially unclean - *they've touched a corpse, or had sex with their wife, or have a runny nose* - they're to quarantine themselves for the rest of the day, until sundown, before they resumed their priestly activities.

And remember sundown was the beginning of the Jewish day. With a new day came a fresh start!

In verses 10 and following he addresses who can eat the priests portion of the sacrifice - only a member of the priest's household. He can't throw a party and feed his buddies from sacrifices that were offered to God.

Notice verse 12, "If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings." As long as she's part of her dad's household she can eat his food, but once she marries, she's no longer his responsibility! It's now her husband's obligation to feed and cloth the young lady. *The feeding won't be big a problem, but trust me the clothing is another issue!*

I always tell the bride's father to be thankful. "You're not losing a daughter, you're gaining a bathroom."

The end of Leviticus 22 reinforces a principle taught throughout the Bible. In giving to God He deserves our very best. Don't pick the sickly lamb or the crippled bull that

you'll probably have to put down anyway to give to God. Make sure you give Him the best you can offer.

Don't give God your leftovers. Some of you think nothing of dropping 100 bucks for concert tickets, but you can't bring yourself to put a \$20 bill in the offering box. Don't just throw God a few crumbs. He expects the cream of the crop, the pick of the litter. He wants a choice offering! King David said in 2 Samuel 24, "*nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.*" *Give God something of value.*

The chapter closes verse 31, "*Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD. You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD.*"