

FACT QUESTIONS 22:17-33

514. Which is the most important—the priest or the sacrifice?
515. Who was really responsible for obtaining an acceptable sacrifice?
516. How does a vow or a freewill offering relate to the burnt offering?
517. Why list all the blemishes of verse 22?
518. What is the one exception? Discuss.
519. Why was castrating so violently opposed?
520. Why not kill the mother and the young on the same day?
521. Why does God identify Himself four times in five verses?
522. Give the three characteristics of real thanksgiving.
523. List and discuss the five motives for obedience.

C. SANCTIFICATION OF FEASTS 23:1-25:55

1. SABBATHS AND ANNUAL FEASTS 23:1-44

a. THE SABBATH 23:1-3

TEXT 23:1-3

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my set feasts.
- 3 Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of work: it is a sabbath unto Jehovah in all your dwellings.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:1-3

518. In what way can we call the sabbath a feast?
 519. What is the meaning of the term "convocation"?
 520. Notice the difference in the text and the paraphrase in verse 3. Do you agree with the implied thought?
 521. Do we have any form of sabbath today?
 522. Was the sabbath observed in the days of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob?

PARAPHRASE 23:1-3

The Lord said to Moses, "Announce to the people of Israel that they are to celebrate several annual festivals of the Lord—times when all Israel will assemble and worship Me. (These are in addition to your Sabbaths—the seventh day of every week—which are always days of solemn rest in every home, times for assembling to worship, and for resting from the normal business of the week.)

COMMENT 23:1-3

vs. 1-3 We like the words of C. H. MacKintosh: "One of the most profound and comprehensive chapters in the inspired volume now lies before us, and claims our prayerful study. It contains the record of the seven great feasts or periodical solemnities into which Israel's year was divided. In other words, it furnishes us with a perfect view of God's dealings with Israel during the entire period of their most eventful history."

Looking at the feasts separately, we have the Sabbath, the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the first-fruits, Pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. This would make eight altogether; but it is very obvious that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place."

THE JEWISH SABBATH

Some years ago we prepared a short study on the subject of *The Sabbath*. We believe it would be appropriate to include it just here:

SPECIAL STUDY

THE JEWISH SABBATH

Question: When was the sabbath first made known to man?

Answer: At Mt. Sinai. Read this reference very carefully: "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And *madest known unto them thy holy sabbath*, and commandedst them commandments, and statutes, and a law by Moses, thy servant." Neh. 9:13, 14

Someone will immediately recall that the seventh day is mentioned in Genesis 2:1-3. Note carefully, please, that it is not referred to in "rest." At Sinai, Moses set aside the seventh day (under God's direction) for *man's rest* because in the creation of the earth the seventh day was God's day of rest. Consider carefully the total circumstances of Genesis 2:1-3. No command is given here to man. No example is found here of the seventh day observance by man. There is one other reference to examine in connection:

"But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah, thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed *the sabbath day*, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11.

It was not *the sabbath day* when God rested, but it was so called when Moses wrote this account in Exodus. The use of the word "sabbath" as found here is called a literary prolapse. To illustrate, we say that on February 22 we remember the birth of

the first president, George Washington. In reality, on February 22, 1732, a baby named George Washington was born, but not at that time, *President George Washington*. If a historian were to describe the actual event of his birth as of 1732 he would not call him president; if the same historian were to look back on his birth from our day, he could very well call him President George Washington when speaking of his birth. Washington became president years after his birth. The seventh day became the sabbath years after God rested on that day.

In Genesis 3:20 we have an example of a literary prolapse. Note: "And the man (Adam) called his wife's name Eve; because *she was the mother of all living*." At the time that Adam called his wife Eve, she had not so much as one child, but from the time that Moses wrote this he could see very well how the name Eve found its fulfillment.

Question: Is there any historical or archaeological evidence that the sabbath was kept prior to Exodus?

Answer: None. No evidence has been presented that shows sabbath observance prior to Exodus 16:23.

Question: If the sabbath was made known at Mount Sinai, how is it that instructions for the use of manna for the sabbath were given before the giving of the law? (*Cf.* Ex. 16:23.)

Answer: This must have been a preparatory measure. The nation of Israel was being prepared for the sabbath observance by this means. Without preparation there could have been a terrible destruction of sabbath breakers inasmuch as the penalty for not keeping the sabbath was death. (*Cf.* Ex. 31:14.)

John the Baptist came preaching and practicing a baptism of repentance. John's baptism was in preparation of the baptism of our Lord (Acts 19:1-6). The baptism of Christ was so very important that preparation of the minds and hearts of the people was very necessary. When Jesus commanded His apostles to "go into all the world and baptize," the apostles knew what baptism was and so did the people to whom the apostles spoke. John's baptism prepared them for the baptism of Jesus.

Just so in the wilderness, when the seventh day began to be observed by the nation of Israel in connection with the gathering

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of the manna, they were preparing for the giving of the law when it was going to be observed in a new fashion.

You will note some interesting features about the observance of the seventh day in Exodus 16 that are different than the later observance of the sabbath.

- (1) There was no punishment given for the violation of the day.
- (2) When it was violated there was no punishment of the violator.
- (3) No specific instructions for its observance other than the manna is given.

Can we say a *law* has been given when no punishment has been specified for violators? If not, then no *law* for sabbath observance was given before the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai.

Question: If we were to observe the sabbath today as it was observed in the days of Moses or Jesus, what would be required of us?

Answer:

- (1) No cooking to be done on the sabbath. Ex. 16:23.
- (2) No fires to be built. Ex. 35:3.
- (3) Two lambs to be offered. Num. 28:9-11.
- (4) Not to pick up sticks. Num. 15:32-36.
- (5) To be kept according to Jewish time—sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.
- (6) Violators put to death. Ex. 31:14.

Question: Why do you not observe the sabbath today?

Answer: There are seven very adequate reasons. Here they are:

(1) The sabbath was given to the Jews only. Read these references:

“Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.” Deut. 5:3.
“And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm, therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. Deut. 5:15. (Cf. Ex. 20:1, 2; 24:8.)

There is no example of any Gentile observing the sabbath day at any time, anywhere. If the covenant which contained the

sabbath law was made with the Jews as a nation and we are not a part of that nation, what reason do we have for observing the sabbath day?

It might be well to explain just here the thought that "Sunday is the Christian sabbath." The word "sabbath" means "rest." Sunday, or the first day of the week, is *not* portrayed in the New Testament as a day of rest, but rather a day of worship. The sabbath has always been on the seventh day and could not therefore fall on the first day, even in the Christian dispensation.

(2) The sabbath has no commemorative value for any other than the Jew. Deut. 15:5. We were never in Egypt as slaves. We were never led out.

(3) Note, please, that the reference to the creation is for the purpose of showing why the seventh day was chosen as a day of rest; *i. e.* God rested, so you rest. The sabbath was a sign between God and Israel.

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily, ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign *between me and you* throughout your generations; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Ex. 31:12, 13a, 17. (Cf. Ezek. 20:12-20.)

Let us understand again why a reference is made to the creation. The purpose is to point out *why* God chose the seventh day for rest. God rested on the seventh day and was refreshed, you rest and be refreshed on the seventh day.

The sabbath was a sign or seal of the covenant God had with Israel. We have no such covenant and no such sign.

(4) It is impossible to observe the sabbath universally. In the far north or south it could not be observed. How would you observe the sabbath from sunrise to sunset in the northern part of Alaska? The same question could be asked concerning some of the extreme southern countries. Geographical conditions are such in some countries that sheep could not be raised; hence, no lambs would be available for sacrifice. This reason presupposes that the sabbath is to be observed according to the only instructions we have for keeping of the sabbath, the Jewish law. If

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there are other directions for sabbath observance, we have failed to read them in the New Testament. Where are the directions for the observance of the sabbath *by Christians*?

(5) The sabbath was a part of the old covenant and was abolished with that covenant. There are many references to which we should refer in a careful consideration of this important point. Here are some of them:

1. The sabbath was one of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were a part of the old covenant. Ex. 24:1-8; 24:12; Deut. 4:13, 14; 9:9, 11, 15; II Chron. 6:11; Heb. 9:4; I Kings 8:9.

For sake of clarity we will reproduce two verses which speak very plainly on this point:

Speaking of the house of the Lord, Solomon says: "And there have I set the ark, *wherein is the covenant of Jehovah, which He made with the children of Israel.*" II Chron. 6:11. In I Kings we have these words: "*There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.*" I Kings 8:9.

2. The old covenant was "abolished" and "done away" in Christ:
 - (1) "Abolished" Eph. 2:14, 15.
 - (2) "Done away" II Cor. 3:3-17.
3. We are not under this law. Gal. 3:16-25; 5:18.
4. The old covenant was cast out. Gal. 4:21; 5:1.
5. We have been discharged from the law. Rom. 7:1-7.
6. The old covenant was blotted out and taken out of the way. Col. 2:14.
7. The old covenant was "nigh unto vanishing away" almost 1900 years ago. Heb. 8:13.

The sabbath observance, as a part of the old covenant, was abolished with the old covenant. *All* of the old covenant was done away in Christ. There is no suggestion in the scriptures to the contrary. It might be pointed out here that the Ten Commandments are set aside from the rest of the law by those who wish to observe the sabbath, as the *moral law* of God in contrast

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to the *ceremonial laws* of the nation of Israel. This is purely an arbitrary distinction that has no warrant in fact or scripture. The following quotation explains this thought:

"The term 'Moral Law' when applied to them is a misnomer, untrue to revelation. They neither include all morality nor exclude all immorality. . . . Only the last six deal with morals. The first four are ceremonial in their precept.

"The 'Ceremonial Law' as denominated by the Seventh Day advocates has far more moral precepts than the Ten Commandments.

"Every penalty for breaking the Ten Commandments is to be found only in the so-called Ceremonial Laws, which they say are done away with. A law is null and void without a penalty."

—A. *Word in The Church Revealed In The Scriptures*

(6) The church as a "new" and "better" covenant.

1. Jesus became "the surety of a better covenant." Heb. 7:22
2. We have a "new" and "faultless" covenant. Heb. 8:7-13.
3. Jesus is the "mediator of a new covenant." Heb. 9:15; 12:18-24.
4. The new covenant "surpasseth" the old covenant in glory. II Cor. 3:3-17.
5. We, who are under the new covenant, are "free," whereas those that were under the old covenant were in "bondage." Gal. 4:21; 5:1.

(7) The sabbath was not incorporated in the new covenant. *Nine* of the ten commandments are embodied in the new covenant.

The ten commandments of the old covenant. Ex. 20:3-17. All but the sabbath are found in the new covenant:

I—Other gods. v. 3	Acts 14:11-18; I Tim. 1:17
II—Images. vs. 4-5	Acts 15:20; I John 5:21
III—Name in vain. v. 7	James 5:12
IV—Sabbath. v. 8	Not in New Testament
V—Father and Mother. v. 12	Eph. 6:1, 2; Col. 3:20
VI—Kill. v. 13	Rom. 13:9; James 2:11
VII—Adultery. v. 14	Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:9, 10

VIII—Steal. v. 15

Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:28

IX—False witness. v. 16

Col. 3:9; Rev. 22:18

X—Covet. v. 17

Rom. 13:9; Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3

Question: Why did Jesus keep the sabbath?

Answer: Jesus kept the sabbath because He was living under the old covenant of which it was a part. The old covenant lasted until the death of Christ when He nailed it to the cross and took it out of the way. Col. 2:14. The new covenant was not brought into effect until the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's death.

Someone will undoubtedly want to know under what covenant or "will" man was living during the forty days after the resurrection while He made His appearances on earth before He ascended. The simple answer is that *no will is in effect until it is read*. Until Peter made known the terms of the "New Testament" or "will" on the day of Pentecost, man was yet under the former or old covenant.

Question: Why did the Apostle Paul go into the synagogues on the sabbath?

Answer: Paul was preaching Christ to the ignorant and unbelieving Jews. Acts 9:20; 13:5. They needed to know the conditions of the new covenant whereby they could receive redemption for their transgressions under the old covenant. Heb. 9:15.

FACT QUESTIONS 21:1-3

524. Name eight feasts. Why not include the sabbath?

525. When was the sabbath first made known to man?

526. Doesn't Genesis 2:1-3 teach us the sabbath was known at creation? Discuss.

527. Is there any historical or archaeological evidence that the sabbath was kept prior to Exodus? Discuss.

528. What about the instructions in Exodus 16:23?

529. If we were to observe the sabbath today as in the days of Moses, how would we do it?

530. Why not observe the sabbath today? List all seven answers and discuss.

531. Discuss the "moral" and "ceremonial" laws.

532. Why did Jesus keep the sabbath?

**b. PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF
UNLEAVENED BREAD 23:4-14**

TEXT 23:4-14

- 4 These are the set feasts of Jehovah, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season.
- 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, is Jehovah's passover.
- 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Jehovah: seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread.
- 7 In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.
- 8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah seven days: in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.
- 9 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest:
- 11 and he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.
- 12 And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah.
- 13 And the meal-offering thereof shall be two tenth parts of an *ephah* of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin.

PASSOVER AND FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD 23:4-14

14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:4-14

523. What is involved in the word "proclaim" in verse 4? (Cf. Num. 10:1-10.)
524. There seems to be a civil and religious calendar for the Jewish nation, or two methods of counting the months. Research this question in a good Bible Dictionary.
525. Does the feast of unleavened bread have a direct relationship to the Passover, or is it a separate feast? Cf. Ex. 13:4; 23:15; Deut. 16:1; Neh. 2:1; Esther 3:7; John 19:14.
526. Why eat unleavened bread? What did it symbolize?
527. Once again: what is "a holy convocation"?
528. Some work could be done. What was it?
529. What type of offering is suggested in the expression, "an offering made by fire"?
530. Why give regulations for activities that would only happen years later?
531. Is the feast of the first-fruits separate from the passover and the feast of unleavened bread? If not, what possible connection is there?
532. What was meant by the feast of the first-fruits?
533. Waving the sheaf carried what symbolism?
534. What is involved in "the drink offering"?
535. Why not eat until the feast day?

PARAPHRASE 23:4-14

These are the holy festivals which are to be observed each year: *The Passover of the Lord*: This is to be celebrated at the end of March. *The Festival of Unleavened Bread*: This is to be celebrated

beginning the day following the Passover. On the first day of this festival, you shall gather the people for worship, and all ordinary work shall cease. You shall do the same on the seventh day of the festival. On each of the intervening days you shall make an offering by fire to the Lord. *The Festival of First Fruits:* When you arrive in the land I will give you and reap your first harvest, bring the first sheaf of the harvest to the priest on the day after the Sabbath. He shall wave it before the Lord in a gesture of offering, and it will be accepted by the Lord as your gift. That same day you shall sacrifice to the Lord a male yearling lamb without defect as a burnt offering. A grain offering shall accompany it, consisting of a fifth of a bushel of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil, to be offered by fire to the Lord; this will be very pleasant to Him. Also offer a drink offering consisting of three pints of wine. Until this is done you must not eat any of the harvest for yourselves—neither fresh kernels nor bread nor parched grain. This is a permanent law throughout your nation.

COMMENT 23:4-14

v. 4 The heading is here repeated because the feasts or festivals which follow are separate from the sabbath. The gathering of the people was done by blowing the silver trumpets. Cf. Num. 10:10.

v. 5 A copy of the chart showing the Hebrew calendar is given here because it is important to our understanding just here. We need to add that the two names for the same months come from the two calendars—the civil and the religious. The second set of names were not given until after the exilic captivity. The civil calendar began numbering with the seventh month of the religious calendar.

PASSOVER AND FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD 23:4-14

HEBREW CALENDAR

MONTH	OUR MONTH	FESTIVALS	SEASON
1. Abib or Nisan Ex. 23:15; Neh. 2:1	Mar./Apr.	14. Passover 15-21. Feast of Unleavened Bread	Latter rains. Jordan in flood. Barley ripe in lowlands.
2. Ziv or Iyar I Ki. 6:1, 37	Apr./May	14. Passover for those who could not keep regular one. Num. 9:10-11	Early figs. Barley har- vest in hill country.
3. Sivan Esth. 8, 9	May/June	6. Feast of Weeks	Wheat harvest.
4. Tammuz	June/July		Dry season from late April to early Oct. First ripe figs.
6. Ab	July/Aug.		Olives in the lowlands
6. Elul Neh. 6:15	Aug./Sept.		Grape gathering. Summer figs.
7. Ethanim or Tishri I Ki. 8:2	Sept./Oct.	1. Feast of Trumpets 10. Day of Atonement 15-22 Feast of Ingather- ing or Tabernacles	Pomegranates ripe. Former or early rains begin.
8. Bul or March- shevan I Ki. 6:38	Oct./Nov.		Olives gathered in northern Galilee. Planting time for barley and wheat.
9. Chisleu Zech. 7:1	Nov./Dec.	25. Feast of Dedication	
10. Tebeth Esth. 2:16	Dec./Jan.		
11. Shebat Zech. 1:7	Jan./Feb.		
12. Adar Esth. 3:7	Feb./Mar.	14-16. Feast of Purim	Oranges and lemons ripe in lowlands. Almond trees blossom.

Each month (new moon) began with the blowing of trumpets and offering of sacrifices. Numbers 28:11; 10:10; Psalm 81:3.

We also reproduce our comments on *The Passover* as they appear in *OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY*, pages 153-54:

The primary purpose of this festival was to commemorate Jehovah's "passing over" the houses of the Israelites when he "passed through" the land of Egypt to slay the first-born in every house. (Ex. 12:11-12). But just as the history of Israel was typical of the whole pilgrimage of man, and as their rescue from Egypt answers to that crisis in the life of God's redeemed people, at which they are ransomed by the blood of the atonement from the penalty of sin, to which they also are subject, so we trace this wider and higher meaning in every feature of the institution.

The day, reckoned from sunset to sunset, in the night of which the first-born of Egypt were slain and the Israelites departed, was the fourteenth of the Jewish month *Nisan* or *Abib* (March to April), which began about the time of the vernal equinox, and which was now made the *first month* of the *ecclesiastical year*. (The civil year began, like that of the Egyptians, about the autumnal equinox, with the month *Tishri*.) This was the great day of the feast, when the paschal supper was eaten. But the preparations had already been made by the command of God.

(Ex. 12:1-27). On the tenth day of the month, each household had chosen a yearling lamb (or kid, for either might be used) (Ex. 12:5), without blemish. This "Paschal Lamb" was set apart till the evening which began the fourteenth day, and was killed as a sacrifice (Ex. 12:27) at that moment in every family of Israel. But before it was eaten, its blood was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the lintel and door-posts of the house: the divinely-appointed sign, that Jehovah might *pass over* that house, when He passed through the land to destroy the Egyptians. (Ex. 12:7, 12, 13, 22-23). Thus guarded, and forbidden to go out of doors till the morning, the families of Israel ate the lamb, roasted and not boiled, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bones were not suffered to be broken, but they must be consumed by fire in the morning, with any of the flesh that was left uneaten. The people were to eat in haste, and equipped for their coming journey. For seven days after the feast, from the fourteenth to the twenty-first, they were to eat only unleavened bread, and to have no leaven in their houses, under penalty of death. The fourteenth and twenty-first were to be kept with a holy convocation and Sabbatic rest. The Passover was to be kept to Jehovah throughout their generations, "a feast by an ordinance forever." (Ex. 12:14). No stranger might share the feast, unless he were first circumcised; but strangers were bound to observe the days of unleavened. (Ex. 12:18-20, 43-49). To mark more solemnly the perpetual nature and vast importance of the feast, fathers were especially enjoined to instruct their children in its meaning through all future time. (Ex. 12:25-27).

vs. 6-8 As we have observed, the feast of unleavened bread became a vital part of the passover; indeed it is even called "the feast of unleavened bread"—the terms are linked in verses 5 and 6. Cf. Ex. 12:15, 18-20. The time of the day for the observance of the passover became quite an issue between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The controversy hinged on the meaning of the phrase, "at even" in verse 5. It literally means "between the two evenings." *Ginsburg* observes on this point: "According to the Sadducees it denotes the time between the setting of the sun and the moment when the stars become visible, or when darkness

sets in, *i. e.* between six and seven o'clock, a space of about one hour and twenty minutes. According to the Pharisees, however, 'between the two evenings' means from the afternoon to the disappearing of the sun. The first evening is from the time when the sun begins to decline towards the west, whilst the second is when it goes down and vanishes out of sight. This is the reason why the paschal lamb in the evening sacrifice began to be killed and the blood sprinkled at 12:30 P.M. This is more in harmony with the fact that the large number of sacrifices on this could be offered up in the longer period of time."

The seven days of unleavened bread were intended to be a week-long reminder of the conditions which prevailed in Egypt at the time of deliverance. No work of a gainful purpose was permitted on the first or the seventh days. "No building or pulling down edifices, weaving, threshing, winnowing, grinding, etc."—while needful work could be done such as killing beasts, kneading dough, baking bread, boiling, roasting, etc. The violators were not stoned but received forty stripes.

The offerings on each of these days in addition to the daily sacrifices were: two young bulls, a ram, seven lambs of the first year, along with a meat or meal offering to accompany these burnt offerings, and a goat for a sin offering. *Cf.* Num. 28:19-23. During this festive occasion each worshipper was also expected to bring offerings of his own. *Cf.* Ex. 23:15; Deut. 16:16; 27:7. These offerings were to be given as peace offerings. *Cf.* 3:1-5; 7:16-18, 29-34.

vs. 9-14 Some commentators wish to separate the offering of the sheaf of the first-fruits from the Passover and the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread. They wish to consider it as an independent action. Others like Charles F. Pfeiffer unite it with the feast of unleavened bread. He says: "During the Feast of Unleavened Bread 'on the morrow after the sabbath' a sheaf of first-fruits of barley was offered as a wave-offering before the Lord. Oil and frankincense were mixed with flour and the whole offered as a meal offering. In waving the sacrifice, *i. e.* holding it out toward the altar, and bringing it back again, God was recognized as the author of the entire harvest. The harvest was ceremonially

dedicated to Him. It was then received back, symbolizing the fact that the blessing of the harvest had come from Him. A portion was burned on the altar, and the rest was eaten by the worshipper." It was on this day the counting began to complete forty-nine days in establishing the day of Pentecost. Forty-nine days were counted (which included the day on which the first-fruit was offered). The day following the forty-ninth day (seven times seven days) was the Day of Pentecost. The Passover was always on the 14th of Nisan. The first day of the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, which was called "a sabbath" (Cf. 23:24, 32, 34 for such a term) was the 15th of Nisan. On the day following, or on the 16th of Nisan, the sheaf of first-fruits was offered and the counting for Pentecost began. (*i.e.* according to one point of view.) By a simple reasoning process it becomes apparent that if this interpretation is right we cannot conclude that the day of Pentecost was always on the first day of the week, since the counting did not always begin on the same day of the week. The whole issue is decided on how the term "sabbath" is used in verses 11 and 15.

The provisions here required anticipate occupying the land of Canaan. The eating of the unleavened bread must not begin until after the sheaf of the first fruit has been offered. The grain for the unleavened bread of the first two days was from the harvest of the previous year. The meal used in the bread in the remaining five days came from the new or current harvest. At this time of the year only barley was ripe.

FACT QUESTIONS 23:4-14

533. Was the Passover held on the fourteenth day of the first month or the fourteenth day of the seventh month?
534. In what month according to our calendar?
535. How many days involved in the observance of the Passover?
536. There are two opinions as to the time for the observance of the Passover. Give them and discuss.
537. What was the purpose of the seven days of unleavened bread?

538. What work was unlawful? On what days?
539. List the offerings on the seven days. What was the grand total of the seven days?
540. When was the sheaf of the first fruit offered? Why?
541. Discuss one method of counting the 49 days between the day of the sheaf offering and Pentecost.
542. Did the counting begin on the seventeenth of Nisan or on the Saturday following the Passover? Discuss.
543. When did the Israelities begin eating the unleavened bread?

c. THE FEAST OF WEEKS, OR PENTECOST
23:15-22

TEXT 23:15-22

- 15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete:
- 16 even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah.
- 17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts *of an ephah*: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, for first-fruits unto Jehovah.
- 18 And ye shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish a year old, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering unto Jehovah, with their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah.
- 19 And ye shall offer one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace-offerings.
- 20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before Jehovah, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest.
- 21 And ye shall make proclamation on the selfsame day; there shall be a holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile

work: it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

- 22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them for the poor, and for the sojourner: I am Jehovah your God.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:15-22

536. Is "the sabbath" in verse 15 the same as the day on which the sheaf offering was made?
537. Are we to count seven Saturdays or just 49 days? If the latter is true we would then count every seventh day from the first day as a "sabbath." This seems to be a strange use of the term "sabbath."
538. It would be a simple matter to say that "the sabbath" here involved was the nearest Saturday to the fifteenth of Nisan. On the day after that Saturday the sheaf offering was made and the counting of seven more Saturdays began. The day following the seventh Saturday was Pentecost (the 50th day). Which viewpoint appeals to you? Why?
539. Anything significant about the new grain to be presented on Pentecost?
540. The two loaves presented on Pentecost could be symbolic. Of what?
541. The seven lambs, the young bull, the two rams as a burnt offering were given on whose behalf?
542. A "he-goat" for a sin offering—any symbolism here?
543. Two he-lambs a year old for a peace offering—these were to be waved before the Lord along with the bread of the new harvest. Why?
544. Does verse 21 seem to say that the day of Pentecost is to be regarded as a sabbath?
545. Why mention the provision for the poor in this context?
Cf. v. 22.

PARAPHRASE 23:15-22

The Festival of Pentecost: Fifty days later you shall bring to the Lord an offering of a sample of the new grain of your later crops. This shall consist of two loaves of bread from your homes to be waved before the Lord in a gesture of offering. Bake this bread from a fifth of a bushel of fine flour containing yeast. It is an offering to the Lord of the first sampling of your later crops. Along with the bread and the wine, you shall sacrifice as burnt offerings to the Lord seven yearling lambs without defects, one young bull, and two rams. All are fire offerings, very acceptable to Jehovah. And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male yearling lambs for a peace offering. The priests shall wave these offerings before the Lord along with the loaves representing the first sampling of your later crops. They are holy to the Lord, and will be given to the priests as food. That day shall be announced as a time of sacred convocation of all the people; don't do any work that day. This is a law to be honored from generation to generation. (When you reap your harvests, you must not thoroughly reap all the corners of the fields, nor pick up the fallen grain; leave it for the poor and for foreigners living among you who have no land of their own; I am Jehovah your God!)

COMMENT 23:15-22

v. 15 Either the counting began from the sixteenth of Nisan or on the day after the weekly sabbath in the Passover week. Let us suppose an actual case in hand: the fourteenth of Nisan in a particular year occurred on Tuesday. On this day the Passover was observed. On Wednesday the seven days' feast of the unleavened bread began. On the first day of unleavened bread the sheaf of the first-fruit of barley was offered. Do we begin counting seven weeks from this day? If we do, Pentecost will be on Thursday, not Sunday. On the other hand, if the Passover was on Tuesday, the seven day feast of unleavened bread began

the day following (and that day was treated as "a sabbath"—23:7) but we wait until Saturday and after the sheaf of first-fruits on the day following, or Sunday, we then begin a count of the seven weeks, or seven Saturdays. Pentecost is by this count always on Sunday. We have presented both sides to this issue. We leave it up to our readers to choose for themselves.

vs. 16, 17 In whatever way we count the fifty days, we need to understand the events of Pentecost. We want to learn about the origin of the feast and its activities. The name "Pentecost" refers to the fiftieth day, and is so called in the New Testament, Acts 2:1; 20:16; I Cor. 16:8. It is called "the feast of weeks" in the Old Testament. *Cf.* Exodus 34:12; Deut. 16:10, 16; II Chron. 8:13. The particular cereal offering to be presented on this day was two loaves of bread. The preparation of these loaves were from a fifth of a bushel of fine flour, containing yeast. This was symbolic as it was waved before the Lord at the altar. This was but a sampling of the whole harvest that has now been completed. It all came from God and belongs to God.

vs. 18-22 "The additional sacrifices for the feast day consisted of two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, which were a burnt offering, and a goat for a sin offering (Num. 28:26, 27, 30). Besides these, however, the new meal offering of the two loaves mentioned in the text before us were brought, and with it are to be offered one bullock, two rams, and seven lambs, all for burnt offerings." (*Ginsburg*)

We should say a word about "the drink offering" in this chapter introduced for the first time in Leviticus. It was never made independently but always in accompaniment with the cereal offering. It consisted of wine which was poured out upon the ground before the altar. It symbolized thanksgiving and consecration. Sometimes oil was used in the drink offering.

There were also offered a goat for a sin offering and two lambs for a peace offering. Josephus sums up the sacrifices as: fourteen lambs, three young bulls, and three goats. It has been thought that the sacrifices described here and those in Numbers 28:27 were made at two separate times. The ones in Leviticus to accompany the offering of the two loaves—those in Numbers to be

offered during the feastial day. It is also thought that those mentioned in Numbers were offered during the wilderness and those in Leviticus offer entrance to the Promised Land.

The action described in the 20th verse happened in the following manner, according to the description of the Temple service at the time of our Lord. "The two lambs were brought into the Temple, and waved together or separately by the priest while yet alive. Whereupon they were slain, and the priest took the breast and shoulder of each one (*Cf.* 7:30-32), laid them down by the side of the two loaves, put both his hands under them, and waved them all together or separately towards the east side forwards and backwards, up and down. He then burned the fat of the two lambs, after which the remainder of the flesh, which became the prerequisite of the officiating priest, was eaten by him and his fellow priests. Of the two loaves the high priest took one, and the other was divided between the officiating priests, who had to eat them up within the same day and half the following night, just as the flesh of the most holy things. After these prescribed sacrifices had been offered, each individual brought his free-will offering, which formed the cheerful and hospitable meal of the family, and to which the Levite, the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger were invited." (*Ibid*)

Traditionally the day of Pentecost was considered the day upon which Moses received the law at Mt. Sinai, *i.e.* it was 50 days from the Passover in Egypt until God called Moses up to the Mount to give him the law. This is only a tradition; but it became a time of remembrance during the time of Christ and after.

Amid all the rejoicing and thanksgiving for the harvest the poor should be remembered; they too have needs and God has made provision for them. Leave the corners of your fields for them. *Cf.* 19:9.

FACT QUESTIONS 23:15-22

544. Was Pentecost on Sunday or some other day? Discuss.
545. What is the meaning of the term "Pentecost"? Why called "the feast of weeks"?
546. What was the form of cereal offering presented on this day? What did it represent?
547. What was the purpose of "the drink offering"? Give the total number of sacrifices.
548. There seems to be two sets of animals for two separate offerings. What were they?
549. The sacrifice of the two lambs is very meaningful. Describe it in your own words.

d. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS 23:23-25

TEXT 23:23-25

- 23 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation:
- 25 Ye shall do no servile work; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:23-25

546. What was the purpose of the feast of the trumpets?
547. Refer to the calendar and notice what day is to succeed this day. Is there any connection?
548. The ceasing of work sets this day aside as a sabbath, and yet it is not a sabbath. Discuss the difference.

PARAPHRASE 23:23-25

The Festival of Trumpets: Mid-September is a solemn time for all the people to meet together for worship; it is a time of remembrance, and is to be announced by loud blowing of trumpets. Don't do any work on the day of the celebration, but offer a sacrifice by fire to the Lord.

COMMENT 23:23-25

We cannot imagine a more beautifully descriptive comment than that of C. D. Ginsburg. We share it with our readers:

Literally, *remembrance blowing*, for which see Num. 29:1, the only place in the Old Testament where this festival is named as "the day of blessing," *i. e.*, the trumpets. As the first of *Ethanium*, as the month is called in the Bible (I Kings 8:2), or *Tishri*, as the Jews call it, in which this festival occurs, is the commencement of the civil new year, this festival was called "the Festival of New Year" ever since the time of the second Temple, and has been regarded as preparatory to the great day of Atonement, which is ten days later. The blowing of trumpets, therefore, which was the distinguishing feature of this festival, was designed to summon the Israelites to enter upon the work of sanctification, which will be accounted to them as a merit in the sight of God, and for which they are promised to be especially remembered before the Lord (Num. 10:9, 10). Hence its name, *Remembrance blowing*—the blowing of trumpets, which will make them to be remembered before the Lord. The synagogue, however, takes the name more in the sense of "reminding" God of the merits of the patriarchs and his covenant with them, and for this reason has appointed Gen. 21:1-34; 22:1-24, recording the birth and sacrifice of Isaac, as the lesson for this festival. As the festival is also the new moon, a threefold sacrifice was offered on it, *viz.* (1) the ordinary daily sacrifice which was offered first; (2) the appointed new moon sacrifice (Num. 28:11-15); and (3) the sacrifice for this festival, which consisted of a young bullock,

a ram, and seven lambs of the first year, with the usual meat offerings, and a kid for a sin offering (Num. 29:1-6). With the exception, therefore, of there being one bullock instead of two, this sacrifice was simply a repetition of the monthly offering by which it was preceded in the service. During the offering of the drink offering and the burnt offering the Levites engaged in vocal and instrumental music, singing the eighty-first and other psalms, whilst the priests at stated intervals broke forth with awful blasts of the trumpets. After the offering up of the sacrifices, the service was concluded by the priests, who pronounced the benediction (Num. 6:23-27), which the people received in a prostrate position before the Lord. Having prostrated themselves a second time in the court, the congregation resorted to the adjoining synagogue, where the appointed lessons from the Law and the Prophets were read, consisting of Gen. 21:1-34; Num. 29:1-6; I Sam. 1:1-2:10; Gen. 22:1-24; Jer. 31:2-20. Psalms were recited and the festival prayers were offered, beseeching the Lord to pardon the sins of the past year, and to grant the people a happy new year. This concluded the morning service, after which the families resorted to their respective homes, partook of the social and joyous repast, and in the evening went again into the Temple to witness the offering of the evening sacrifices, and to see the candlestick lighted with which the festival concluded, all wishing each other, "May you be written down for a happy new year; may the Creator decree for you a happy new year." To which was responded, "And you likewise." With the exception of the sacrifices, the Jews keep this festival to the present day. The trumpet which they use on this occasion consists of the curved horn of a ram, in remembrance of the ram which Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac. This event, as we have seen, is also commemorated in the lesson of the day.

FACT QUESTIONS 23:23-25

550. This day celebrates the beginning of a new year, but it is the beginning of a civil new year. Explain.

551. It is also preparatory. For what?
 552. The Lord is to remember as well as the people. What is He to remember?
 553. List the three-fold sacrifices for this day.
 554. What happened during the drink offering and the burnt offering?
 555. The people received the following benediction: Num. 6:23-27—in what posture? Why?
 556. After the Temple service what happened?
 557. What lessons were read from the Old Testament?
 558. What happened at home? At the evening services?
 559. It would seem we are indebted to the Jewish race for our celebration of the new year. Discuss.

e. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT 23:26-32

TEXT 23:26-32

- 26 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
 27 Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.
 28 And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God.
 29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day; he shall be cut off from his people.
 30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.
 31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
 32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your sabbath.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:26-32

549. This surely was a distinctive day. Mention the distinctions.
550. What was the purpose of fasting?
551. What was the penalty for not properly observing this day?
552. Is this the only day in the year just like the weekly sabbath?
553. Please read again our comments on 16:1-30. *Cf.* 19:8.
Just what is involved in being "cut off" as verse 30?
554. Just what is meant by "afflict your souls"?

PARAPHRASE 23:26-32

The Day of Atonement follows nine days later: all the people are to come together before the Lord, saddened by their sin; and they shall offer sacrifices by fire to the Lord. Don't do any work that day, for it is a special day for making atonement before the Lord your God. Anyone who does not spend the day in repentance and sorrow for sin shall be excommunicated from his people. And I will put to death anyone who does any kind of work that day. This is a law of Israel from generation to generation. For this is a Sabbath of solemn rest, and in it you shall humble your souls and be filled with remorse; this time for atonement begins on the previous evening and goes on until the next evening.

COMMENT 23:26-32

vs. 26-32 We covered the Day of Atonement in our comments on chapter sixteen. The emphasis in these verses seems to be upon the fasting of this day. This is the only day in the Hebrew calendar when fasting was required. Since the subject of fasting is almost unknown to the average church member, we feel it would be profitable to here include an outline of the subject:

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

FASTING: RESOURCE FOR SPIRITUAL POWER

1. Our Lord's Teaching and Example:

a. Matthew 6:1-18

Please notice that our Lord did *not* say "If" you fast, but "when you fast." Jesus expected His followers to pray, so He said "when you pray" in verse 5. He expected His disciples to give, so He said "when thou doest alms," verse 2. In verse 16 He uses the same anticipation—*He expects us to fast*. The wrong motive does not cancel the act.

b. Mark 2:18-22

Jesus said there would come a day when His disciples would fast. When the bridegroom has left "then will they fast in that day." We are living in that day awaiting the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, come ye forth to meet Him." Fasting is a grand catalyst for bringing the body into subjection. If we do not control the appetites of the body we will be controlled by them.

c. Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1ff.

At the beginning of His ministry, our Lord entered a period of fasting and prayer. It could be significant that Jesus was tempted by Satan to eat, but not to drink. Jesus was voluntarily refusing food as a part of His control of the body.

2. The Example of Paul

a. Acts 9:9

Saul of Tarsus became Paul the Apostle, and fasting was a part of his change. This was a three-day absolute fast. The normal fast of only water and no food was superseded by the circumstances.

b. II Corinthians 6:3-10

The list of events here given demonstrate the character of Paul. The use of the term "fastings" would seem to suggest that Paul was often involved in this practice. In 11:23-27 fastings could be involuntary, *i. e.* because he had no food, but in 6:3-10 there is no reason to believe that it is used in

LEVITICUS

any but the ordinary sense of the term: *Paul chose to fast often.*

3. The Early Church

a. Acts 13:1-3

As the leaders in the Syrian church at Antioch "ministered to the Lord" they were fasting. This was a united effort. It was associated with their worship, and was yet apart from it. In this environment the Holy Spirit said, "separate unto me Barnabas and Saul." In the action taken by the leaders of the church to set Barnabas and Saul apart fasting was accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands.

b. Acts 14:23

Prayer and fasting was practiced in the Gentile churches of Lystra, Derbe and Antioch of Pisidia. Fasting is here a part of the ordination of elders.

4. Examples of Fasting From the Old Testament

a. David - Psalms 35:13; 69:10

The control of ego's demands as well as the control of the lust of the flesh are here involved.

b. Jehoshaphat - II Chronicles 20:1-30

We face as formidable a foe today as did Jehoshaphat. We need to use the same weapons in our warfare. *Cf.* II Cor. 10:4.

c. Ezra 8:21-23

We sometimes presumptuously commit ourselves and only fasting and prayer can give us the answer.

d. Esther 4:1ff.

The whole nation was saved—fasting had a part.

e. Nineveh - Jonah 1:1ff; 3:5-9.

Both God's blessings and His judgments are conditional. Fasting has never been an end in itself (except when hypocrites made it such—*Cf.* Matt. 6:16ff). It is a grand aid to the goal of "buffeting the body and bringing it into subjection." *Cf.* I Cor. 9:27; *Cf.* Gal. 5:17.

If an act or an attitude is wrong fasting will not make it right. Only prayer and restitution will do that. Fasting is not some type

of holy gimmick or cure-all. Fasting is no substitute for any other part of God's provisions. On the other hand no other provisions of God are a substitute for fasting. The regularity of your prayer life is a pattern for your fasting. Fasting once a week would be a way to give practical value to this spiritual discipline.

FACT QUESTIONS 23:26-32

560. Discuss the two references to fasting in Matthew 6:1-18 and Mark 2:18-22. What application does this have for us?
561. Is the fasting and prayer of our Lord an example for us? Discuss.
562. What shall we say of the example of Paul: Cf. Acts 9:9; II Cor. 6:3-10.
563. Where did the early church get the thought that they should fast? Cf. Acts. 13:1-3.
564. How do we use fasting today? Discuss.
565. We have given five examples of fasting in the Old Testament. What lesson is in this for us?
566. What is the basic purpose of fasting?
567. How can we incorporate this discipline into our life? Discuss.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES 23:33-44

TEXT 23:33-44

- 33 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah.
- 35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.
- 36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto

- you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: it is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work.
- 37 These are the set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, a burnt-offering, and a meal-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings, each on its own day;
- 38 besides the sabbaths of Jehovah, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill-offerings, which ye give unto Jehovah.
- 39 Howbeit on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruits of the land, ye shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days: on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest.
- 40 And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.
- 41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto Jehovah seven days in the year: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations; ye shall keep it in the seventh month.
- 42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths;
- 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God.
- 44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the set feasts of Jehovah.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:33-44

555. Review again on the chart the feasts in the seventh month. Name them in order. Where does the feast of Jubilee fit?
556. When we read of "an offering made by fire" of what do we think?
557. God is trying to teach us something in the absorption of so much of the time of Israel by the many sacrifices. What is it?

558. Does verse 39 begin a description of another feast or is this a continuation of the feast of tabernacles?
559. What is "the fruit" of the trees as mentioned in verse 40?
560. Just what form did these booths take? *i.e.* what did they look like?
561. What was the purpose of such strange dwellings?

PARAPHRASE 23:33-44

The Festival of Tabernacles: Five days later, on the last day of September, is the Festival of Shelters to be celebrated before the Lord for seven days. On the first day there will be a sacred assembly of all the people; don't do any hard work that day. On each of the seven days of the festival you are to sacrifice an offering by fire to the Lord. The eighth day requires another sacred convocation of all the people, at which time there will again be an offering by fire to the Lord. It is a joyous celebration, and no heavy work is permitted. (These, then, are the regular annual festivals—sacred convocations of all people—when offerings to the Lord are to be made by fire. These annual festivals are in addition to your regular giving and normal fulfillment of your vows.) This last day of September, at the end of your harvesting, is the time to celebrate this seven-day festival before the Lord. Remember that the first and last days of the festival are days of solemn rest. On the first day, take boughs of fruit trees laden with fruit, and palm fronds, and the boughs of leafy trees—such as willows that grow by the brooks—and (build shelters with them), rejoicing before the Lord your God for seven days. This seven-day annual feast is a law from generation to generation. During those seven days, all of you who are native Israelites are to live in these shelters. The purpose of this is to remind the people of Israel, generation after generation, that I rescued you from Egypt, and caused you to live in shelters. I am Jehovah your God. So Moses announced these annual festivals of the Lord to the people of Israel.

COMMENT 23:33-44

Among the several accounts we have read on this feast, we have found the following of superior worth. We gladly share it with our readers:

How and where these tabernacles are to be erected the law here gives no directions. The details, as in many other enactments, are left to the administrators of the Law. From the account of the first celebration of this festival after the return from Babylon, the Jews, according to the command of Ezra, made themselves booths upon the roofs of houses, in the courts of their dwellings, and of their sanctuary, in the streets of the Water-gate and the gate of Ephraim. These tabernacles they made of olive branches, pine branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of thick trees (Neh. 8:15-18). The construction of these temporary abodes, however, was more minutely defined by Ezra's successors. It was ordained during the second Temple that the interior of each tabernacle must not be higher than twenty cubits, and not lower than ten palms, it must at least have three walls, with a thatched roof partially open so as to admit a view of the sky and the stars. It must not be under a tree, nor must it be covered with a cloth, or with any material which contracts defilement. Only branches of shrubs which grow out of the ground are to be used for the covering. These booths the Israelites began to erect on the morrow after the Day of Atonement. On the fourteenth, which was the day of preparation, the pilgrims came up to Jerusalem, and on the even of this day the priests proclaimed the approach of the holy convocation by the blasts of trumpets. As on the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, the altar of burnt-offering was cleansed in the first night watch, and the gates of the Temple, as well as those of the inner court, were opened immediately after midnight, for the convenience of the priests who resided in the city, and for the people, who filled the court before the cock crew, to have their sacrifices duly examined by the priests.

On the first day shall be an holy convocation. At daybreak of this day one of the priests, accompanied by a jubilant procession

and a band of music, went with a golden pitcher to the pool of Siloam, and having filled it with water, returned with it to the Temple in time to join his brother-priests in the morning sacrifices. He entered from the south through the water-gate, when he was welcomed by three blasts of the trumpets. He then ascended the steps of the altar with another priest, who carried a pitcher of wine for the drink offering. The two priests turned to the left of the altar, where two silver basins were fixed with holes at the bottom, and simultaneously poured into their respective basins the water and the wine in such a manner that both were emptied at the same time upon the base of the altar. This ceremony of drawing the water was repeated every morning during the seven days of the festival. Another jubilant multitude, who went outside Jerusalem at the same time to gather willows, now returned. With great rejoicings and amidst blasts of trumpets they carried the willows into the Temple, and placed them at the altar in such a manner that their tops overhung and formed a kind of canopy.

Seven days ye shall offer. The special sacrifices for this day consisted of a burnt offering of thirteen bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs, with an appropriate meat and drink offering, and a goat for a sin offering (Num. 29:12-38). Whereupon were offered the peace offerings, the vows and the free-will offerings which constituted the repasts of the people. Whilst these sacrifices were being offered up the Levites chanted the festive Hallel, as on the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. This was repeated every day during the seven days of the festival, only that the number of animals offered as sacrifices diminished daily during the middle days of the festival, according to the prescription in Num. 29:12-38. On the eve of the second day, or what is called the lesser festival, and on each of the five succeeding nights, was celebrated the "Rejoicing of the water-drawing" in the court of the Temple. Four huge golden candelabra were lighted in the centre of the court, and the light emanating from them was visible to the whole city. Around these lights pious men danced before the people with lighted flambeaux in their hands, singing hymns and songs of praise, whilst the Levites, who were

stationed on the fifteen steps which led into the women's court, and which corresponded to the fifteen psalms of degrees, *i.e.*, steps (Ps. 120-134), accompanied the songs with instrumental music. It is supposed that on the last evening of the festival, when the splendid light of this grand illumination was to cease, Christ called attention to himself, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), which is to shine for ever, and illuminate not only the Temple and the holy city, but all the world.

On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation. That is, like the first day, since no servile work is to be done on it. As it is not only the finishing of the feast of Tabernacles, but the conclusion of the whole cycle of festivals, the dwelling in tabernacles is to cease on it.

Ye shall offer. For this reason the sacrifices offered on this day are to be distinct, and unlike the sacrifices of the preceding days. The burnt sacrifice is to consist of one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs, with the appropriate meat and drink offerings, and one goat for a sin offering. (Num. 29:36-38.) Being, however, attached to the feast of Tabernacles, the two festivals are often joined together, and spoken of as one festival of eight days.

These are the feasts of the Lord. That is, the above named six festivals, *viz.*—(1) the Passover (verses 4-14), (2) Pentecost (verses 15-22), (3) New Year (verses 23-25), (4) Day of Atonement (verses 26-32), (5) Tabernacles (33-36a), and (6) the concluding festival (verse 36b). Thus the list of these festivals concludes with the formula by which they were introduced in verse 4.

To offer an offering. On these festivals sacrifices are to be offered as prescribed in Num. 28 and 29.

Beside the sabbaths. By a figure of speech called metonymy, which is frequently used both in the Old and New Testaments, the expression sabbaths stands here for *the sacrifices of the sabbaths*, just as in chapter 25:6 "sabbath of the land" denotes the produce of the sabbath of the land, or of the sabbatic year, and as the phrase "it is written in the prophets" (Mark 1:2) is used for "it is written in *the writings* of the prophets." (Comp. also Matt. v. 17; 7:12; 22:40, etc.) The meaning, therefore, of

the passage before us is that the sacrifices ordered for each of these festivals are to be in addition to the sacrifices appointed to each weekly sabbath in the year; so that when one of these festivals falls on a sabbath, the sacrifices due to the latter are not set aside by the former. Both must be offered in their proper order.

Beside your gifts. Nor are they to interfere with the voluntary offerings which each individual brought privately (Deut. 16:10, 17; II Chron. 25:7, 8), or with the performance of vows (Deut. 12:6-12).

Also in the fifteenth day. After the list of festivals discussed in this chapter has been summed up in verses 37 and 38, the next five verses recur to the feast of Tabernacles. The regulations are supplementary to those given before, and embody a separate enactment.

When ye have gathered in the fruit of the land. That is, those productions which ripen in the autumnal season, as wheat, barley, oil, wine, etc.

Ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord. The Israelites are then to keep a festival in which they are to acknowledge the bounties of the Lord and express their gratitude to the Giver of all good things. For this reason this festival is also called "the Feast of Ingathering" (Exod. 23:16, 24:22).

On the first day shall be a sabbath. Both on the first and last days of this festival there is to be abstention from all servile work. (See verses 35, 36.)

And ye shall take you on the first day. The four species of vegetable production here ordered are a distinctive feature of this festival. They have been most minutely defined during the second Temple.

Boughs of goodly trees. Better, *the fruit of goodly trees*, as the margin rightly renders it. As this phrase is too indefinite, and may simply denote the fruit of any choice fruit-tree, there can hardly be any doubt that in this instance, as in many other cases, the lawgiver left it to the administrators of the Law to define its precise kind. Basing it therefore upon one of the significations of the term here translated "goodly," which is

to dwell, to rest, the authorities during the second Temple decreed that it means the fruit which permanently rests upon the tree, *i.e.* the citron, the paradise-apple. If it came from an uncircumcised tree (see chap. 19:23), from an unclean heave-offering (comp. Num. 18:11, 12), or exhibited the slightest defect, it was ritually illegal.

Branches of palm trees. During the second Temple this was defined as the shoot of the palm-tree when budding, before the leaves are spread abroad, and whilst it is yet like a rod. It is technically called *lulab*, which is the expression whereby it is rendered in the ancient Chaldee version. The *lulab* must at least be three hands tall, and must be tied together with its own kind.

The boughs of thick trees. This, according to the same authorities, denotes *the myrtle branch*, whose leaves thickly cover the wood. To make it ritually legal it must have three or more shoots round the stem, and on the same level with it. If it is in any way damaged it is illegal. This accounts for the ancient Chaldee version rendering it by "myrtle branch."

Willows of the brook. That species, the distinguishing marks of which are dark wood and long leaves with smooth margin. The palm, the myrtle, and the willow, when tied together into one bundle, constitute the *Lulab*. Whilst the psalms are chanted by the Levites during the sacrifices, the pilgrims, who held the *Lulabs* or palms, shook them thrice, *viz.*, at the singing of Psalm 118:1, then again at verse 25, and at verse 29. When the chant was finished, the priests in procession went round the altar once, exclaiming, "Hosanna, O Lord, give us help, O Lord! give prosperity!" (Psalm 118:25). Whereupon the solemn benediction was pronounced by the priests, and the people dispersed amidst the repeated exclamations, "How beautiful art thou, O altar!" It is this part of the ritual which explains the welcome that the multitude gave Christ when they went to meet Him with palm branches and shouts of hosanna (Matt 21:8, 9, 15; John 12:12, 13).

Seven days in the year. These seven days denote the feast of Tabernacles proper, whilst the eight days in verse 39 include the

concluding festival of the last day. (See verse 36.)

In your generations. Better, *throughout your generations*, as the Authorised version renders it in verses 14, 21, and 31 of this very chapter. (See chap. 3:17.)

Dwell in booths seven days. Because the eighth day was a separate festival, when the booths were no more used. (See verse 36.)

That your generations may know. When their posterity are securely occupying the land of Canaan, the temporary dwelling in booths once a year may remind them of the goodness of God vouchsafed to their fathers in delivering them from the land of bondage, and sheltering them in booths in the wilderness.

And Moses declared. In accordance with the command which Moses received (see verse 2), he explained to the children of Israel the number and motive of these festivals. This verse therefore forms an appropriate conclusion to the whole chapter.

FACT QUESTIONS 23:33-44

568. How and where were these tabernacles to be built?
569. When did the Israelites begin to erect these booths?
570. When were the gates of the Temple opened for the beginning of the day?
571. Tell in your own words of the ceremony of the golden pitcher.
572. There were four huge golden candelabra used. Where and when?
573. Show how this ceremony related to our Lord and the New Testament.
574. What was "the feast of the ingatherings"?
575. The fruit of some trees was acceptable and some was not. Which was which?
576. Mention three trees whose branches were used for the booths.

2. HOLY LAMPS AND SHOWBREAD 24:1-9

a. THE HOLY LAMP 24:1-4

TEXT 24:1-4

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually.
- 3 Without the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, shall Aaron keep it in order from evening to morning before Jehovah continually: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.
- 4 He shall keep in order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before Jehovah continually.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:1-4

562. Who was to supply the oil for the lamp?
563. What is meant by "pure olive oil beaten"?
564. How often was the lamp to be trimmed?
565. The light in the holy place was there continuously. Is this true?
566. Was the candlestick to be kept clean? Is this the meaning of verse 4?

PARAPHRASE 24:1-4

The Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to bring you pure olive oil for an eternal flame in the lampstand of pure gold which stands outside the veil that secludes the Holy of Holies. Each morning and evening Aaron shall supply it with fresh oil and trim the wicks. It will be an eternal flame before the Lord from generation to generation.

COMMENT 24:1-4

S. H. Kellogg has given us some very splendid comments on these verses. We offer them here to our readers:

First (vv. 1-4) is given the direction for the ordering of the daily light, which was to burn from evening until morning in the holy place continually. The people themselves are to furnish the oil for the seven-branched candlestick out of the product of their olive yards. The oil is to be "pure," carefully cleansed from leaves and all impurities; and "beaten," that is, not extracted by heat and pressure, as are inferior grades, but simply by beating and macerating the olives with water, a process which gives the very best. The point in these specifications is evidently this, that for this, as always, they are to give to God's service the very best, an eternal principle which rules in all acceptable service to God. The oil is to come from the people in general, so that the illuminating of the Holy Place, although specially tended by the high priest, is yet constituted a service in which all the children of Israel have some part. The oil was to be used to supply the seven lamps upon the golden candlestick which was placed on the south side of the Holy Place, without the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting. This Aaron was to "order from evening to morning before the Lord continually." According to Exod. 25:31-40, this candlestick—or, more properly, lampstand—was made of a single shaft, with three branches on either side, each with a cup at the end like an almond blossom; so that, with that on the top of the central shaft, it was a stand of seven lamps, in a conventional imitation of an almond tree.

The significance of the symbol is brought clearly before us in Zech. 4:1-14, where the seven-branched candlestick symbolises Israel as the congregation of God, the giver of the light of life to the world. And yet a lamp can burn only as it is supplied with oil and trimmed and cared for. And so in the symbol of Zechariah the prophet sees the golden candlestick supplied with oil conveyed through two golden pipes into which flowed the golden oil, mysteriously self-distilled from two olive trees on either side of the candlestick. And the explanation given is this:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” saith the Lord. Thus we learn that the golden seven-branched lampstand denotes Israel, more precious than gold in God’s sight, appointed of Him to be the giver of light to the world. And yet by this requisition of oil for the golden candlestick the nation was reminded that their power to give light was dependent upon the supply of the heavenly grace of God’s Spirit, and the continual ministrations of the priest in the Holy Place. And how this ordering of the light might be a symbolic act of worship, we can at once see, when we recall the word of Jesus (Matt. 5:14, 16): “Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

How pertinent for instruction still in all its deepest teaching is this ordinance of the lamp continually burning in the presence of the Lord, is vividly brought before us in the Apocalypse (1:12,13), where we read that seven candlesticks appeared in vision to the Apostle John; and Christ, in His glory, robed in high-priestly vesture, was seen walking up and down, after the manner of Aaron, in the midst of the seven candlesticks, in care and watch of the manner of their burning. And as to the significance of this vision, the Apostle was expressly told (v. 20) that the seven candlesticks were the seven Churches of Asia,—types of the collective Church in all the centuries. Thus, as in the language of this Levitical symbol, we are taught that in the highest sense it is the office of the Church to give light in darkness; but that she can only do this as the heavenly oil is supplied, and each lamp is cared for, by the high-priestly ministrations of her risen Lord.

FACT QUESTIONS 24:1-4

577. In what sense was the oil to be “pure” and “beaten”?
 578. What principle is here given?
 579. Why was the oil supplied by the people?
 580. Zech. 4:1-14 explains the significance of the symbol. What was it?

581. Was Israel to be a light to the world? Explain.
 582. Revelation 1:12, 13 gives us the application of the Golden Lampstand for our life. What is it?

b. THE SHOWBREAD 24:5-9

TEXT 24:5-9

- 5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth parts *of an ephah* shall be in one cake.
 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before Jehovah.
 7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be to the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.
 8 Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before Jehovah continually; it is on the behalf of the children of Israel, an everlasting covenant.
 9 And it shall be for Aaron and his sons; and they shall eat it in a holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire by a perpetual statute.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:5-9

567. How much flour was in each cake by our measurement? Were these cakes unleavened or leavened?
 568. Were these cakes in piles or rows?
 569. What is meant by calling the table "pure"?
 570. Where was the frankincense? Why use it?
 571. How often were the cakes to be changed?
 572. In what sense was the observance "an everlasting covenant" on behalf of the children of Israel?
 573. Who was to eat of this showbread? Where?

PARAPHRASE 24:5-9

Every Sabbath day the High Priest shall place twelve loaves of bread in two rows upon the golden table that stands before the Lord. These loaves shall be baked from finely ground flour, using a fifth of a bushel for each. Pure frankincense shall be sprinkled along each row. This will be a memorial offering made by fire to the Lord, in memory of His everlasting covenant with the people of Israel. The bread shall be eaten by Aaron and his sons, in a place set apart for the purpose. For these are offerings made by fire to the Lord under a permanent law of God, and most holy.

COMMENT 24:5-9

vs. 5,6 We must read Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16 for comparative descriptions. The amount of flour used to produce one loaf, *i.e.* about one-half peck (or six quarts) would present a very large loaf. The top of the table of showbread was 18 inches wide and 36 inches long. If these loaves were placed in rows they probably covered the top of the table, or if they were piled on top of each other, they made sizeable piles.

The term "showbread" means "presence bread" or "bread of faces." This refers either to the fact that the bread was baked in square or six-sided pans to provide several "faces" on the bread, or because the bread was placed in the presence of God (or before the face of God) in the Holy Place. We prefer the latter interpretation.

The number twelve indicates the priest would be eating this sacrifice on behalf of the united nation. It is probably true that these loaves were unleavened since no leaven was allowed on the altar. However no direct statement is made. The table is called "pure" because it was cleansed by the sprinkling of blood. The total concept of these twelve loaves that were kept continually before Jehovah in the Holy Place was of a perpetual cereal offering. The whole nation of Israel were saying by these loaves that

they were daily grateful before God for all His benefits. Here is a continual consecration sacrifice.

v. 7 The location of the frankincense has been a question. Was it sprinkled on the bread and burned there? Or was it placed in containers beside the bread: Josephus tells us that the incense was placed in golden saucers with each row of bread. He also indicates that the incense was burned upon the altar on the Sabbath at the time the bread was changed. Cf. Exodus 37:16; 25:30; 35:13; 39:36; Num. 4:7; I Chron. 9:32; 23:29; II Chron. 13:11; Neh. 10:33; II Chron. 29:18.

v. 8 Aaron was to carry out this instruction as indicated in verse 3. The priests were to attend to this duty every sabbath throughout the year. "Four priests according to Jewish tradition enter, two of them carrying the piles of bread, and two of them the cups of incense. Four priests had gone in before them, two to take off the two old piles of showbread, and two to take off the cups of incense. Those who brought in the new stood at the north side facing southward; those who took away the old, at the south side, facing northwards. One party lifted off and the other put on, the hands of one being over against the hands of the other, as it is written, 'Thou shalt set upon the table bread of the Passover always before Me.' The loaves that were removed were delivered to the priests for their consumption within the tabernacle, the whole quantity amounting to seventy-five pounds per week." (*Meyrick*)

v. 9 From what has been said it becomes apparent that this bread could have provided a substantial part of the food for several priests. *Ginsburg* observes: "Of the many things connected with the national service which became prerequisites of the priests, there were eight only that had to be consumed within the precincts of the sanctuary, and the showbread was one of them. The others were: (1) the remnant of the meal offering—2:3; (2) the flesh of the sin offering—6:26; (3) the flesh of the trespass offering—7:6; (4) the leper's log of oil—14:10; (5) the remainder of the omer—23:10,11; (6) the peace offering of the congregation; (7) the two loaves—23:19,20."

FACT QUESTIONS 24:5-9

583. How much flour for each loaf? Why such large loaves?
584. Was the table large enough to hold the bread?
585. What is the meaning of the term showbread?
586. Why twelve loaves? Were they leavened?
587. What is the basic teaching of this table?
588. Where was the frankincense? When burned?
589. In what manner was the bread changed? Why? How often?
590. Where was the bread to be eaten? Name five other items to be eaten in the Holy Place.

3. HISTORICAL: THE PUNISHMENT OF A BLASPHEMER 24:10-23

TEXT 24:10-23

- 10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp:
- 11 and the son of the Israelitish woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him unto Moses. And his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.
- 12 And they put him in ward, that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of Jehovah.
- 13 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 14 Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.
- 15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.
- 16 And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the sojourner, as the home-born, when he

- blasphemeth the name of *Jehovah*, shall be put to death.
- 17 And he that smiteth any man mortally shall surely be put to death.
- 18 And he that smiteth a beast mortally shall make it good, life for life.
- 19 And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him:
- 20 breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him.
- 21 And he that killeth a beast shall make it good: and he that killeth a man shall be put to death.
- 22 Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the sojourner, as for the home-born: for I am *Jehovah* your God.
- 23 And Moses spake to the children of Israel; and they brought forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stoned him with stones. And the children of Israel did as *Jehovah* commanded Moses.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:10-23

574. Why mention that the father of this offender was an Egyptian?
575. About what do you imagine they were fighting, or arguing?
576. Just what was the sin?
577. Why not know immediately what to do with him?
578. How do you suppose this man found a place in the camp of Israel? Cf. Ex. 12:38.
579. Why the laying on of hands? Who did the stoning? Why?
580. Does verse 15 say that cursing is not the same as blasphemy?
581. What a severe penalty for a verbal sin! Discuss the reason for it.
582. Why repeat the laws of retribution here?
583. Are we to understand that mutilation of the body was punishment for sin? Discuss.
584. These laws seem to be repeated here for the benefit of the sojourners. Is this a fair estimate? Discuss.

PARAPHRASE 24:10-23

Out in the camp one day, a young man whose mother was an Israelite and whose father was an Egyptian, got into a fight with one of the men of Israel. During the fight the Egyptian man's son cursed God, and was brought to Moses for judgment. (His mother's name was Shelomith, daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan.) He was put in jail until the Lord would indicate what to do with him. And the Lord said to Moses, Take him outside the camp and tell all who heard him to lay their hands upon his head; then all the people are to execute him by stoning. And tell the people of Israel that anyone who curses his God must pay the penalty: he must die. All the congregation shall stone him; this law applies to the foreigner as well as to the Israelite who blasphemes the name of Jehovah. He must die. Also, all murderers must be executed. Anyone who kills an animal (that isn't his) shall replace it. The penalty for injuring anyone is to be injured in exactly the same way: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever anyone does to another shall be done to him. To repeat, whoever kills an animal must replace it, and whoever kills a man must die. You shall have the same law for the foreigner as for the home-born citizen, for I am Jehovah your God. So they took the youth out of the camp and stoned him until he died, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

COMMENT 24:10-23

vs. 10,11 We could account for the presence of this incident in the midst of the many laws because it occurred while such laws were being given. There are similar records in Deut. 4:41-49 and Num. 15:32-36. It could be that this man "whose father was an Egyptian" was of that "mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt with Israel. *Cf.* Exodus 12:38.

The expression "went out among the children of Israel" might suggest that he was camped elsewhere. Much traditional

information can be read concerning this man. We do not know his name or who he was, other than his immediate family. Such is not important; the principle, not the person, is important here. We do not know of the cause of this argument but we do know of the sin involved. It was a flagrant violation of the third commandment. God had said He would not hold the transgressor guiltless but no penalty was given.

We need to appreciate the enormity of this sin. The strong and repeated emphasis upon the character of God found in this book and throughout the Old Testament should give us some insight. God is very concerned about maintaining a good name among men. To lose respect for the person of God is for Him to lose all influence in life. There is nothing more important than "hallowing" the name of God. Reverence and respect are the beginning of worship and service.

Kellogg gives us an interesting comment upon the use of "the name":

The incident which was the occasion of the promulgation of these laws was as follows. The son of an Israelitish woman by an Egyptian husband fell into a quarrel in the camp. As often happens in such cases, the one sin led on to another and yet graver sin; the half-caste man "blasphemed the Name, and cursed"; whereupon he was arrested and put into confinement until the will of the Lord might be ascertained in his case. "The Name" is of course the name of God; the meaning is that he used the holy name profanely in cursing. The passage, together with ver. 16, is of special and curious interest, as upon these two the Jews have based their well-known belief that it is unlawful to utter the Name which we commonly vocalise as Jehovah; whence it has followed that wherever in the Hebrew text the Name occurs it is written with the vowels of *Adonāy* "Lord," to indicate to the reader that this word was to be substituted for the proper name,—a usage which is represented in the Septuagint by the appearance of the Greek word *Kurios*, "Lord," in all places where the Hebrew has Jehovah (or Yahveh); and which, in both the authorised and revised versions, is still maintained in the retention of "Lord" in all such cases,—a relic of

Jewish superstition which one could greatly wish that the Revisers had banished from the English version, especially as in many passages it totally obscures to the English reader the exact sense of the text, wherever it turns upon the choice of this name. It is indeed true that the word rendered "blaspheme" has the meaning "to pronounce," as the Targumists and other Hebrew writers render it; but that it also means simply to "revile," and in many places cannot possibly be rendered "to pronounce," is perforce admitted even by Jewish scholars. To give it the other meaning here were so plainly foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament, debasing reverence to superstition, that no argument against it will be required with any but a Jew.

And this young man, in the heat of his passion "reviled the Name." The words "of the Lord" are not in the Hebrew; the name "Jehovah" is thus brought before us expressively as THE NAME, *par excellence*, of God as revealing Himself in covenant for man's redemption. (Cf. the expression used with reference to Jesus Christ, Phil. 2:9 [R.V.] "the name which is above every name.") Horrified at the man's wickedness, "they brought him unto Moses"; and "they put him in ward" (v. 12), "that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of the Lord" what should be done unto him. This was necessary because the case involved two points upon which no revelation had been made: first, as to what should be the punishment of blasphemy; and secondly, whether the law in such cases applied to a foreigner as well as to the native Israelite. The answer of God decided these points. As to the first (v. 15), "Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin," *i.e.* he shall be held subject to punishment; and (v. 16), "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him." And as to the second point, it is added, "as well the stranger, as the homeborn, when he blasphemeth the Name, shall be put to death."

vs. 12-16 No prison sentence is found in the whole Mosaic legislation. Safe custody was practiced, but only until the judgment could be given and punishment meted out; which always consisted of stripes or death.

It is quite possible that Moses went into the sanctuary to receive the message of God from the mercy seat between the cherubim. Cf. Exodus 25:22. The sentence was not delayed: the offender must be taken outside the camp where all unclean persons were found. Cf. Num. 5:2,3. It was here that certain other malefactors were executed. Cf. Heb. 13:12,13.

Laying hands upon the head of the offender was in essence saying to all who observed that the persons contained by his sin were now transferring it to him. The total consequences of his act were upon him. The solemn circumstance of the act added much to its meaning.

Do verses 15 and 16 contemplate one or two sins? *i.e.* is cursing "his God" the same as blaspheming the name of God? We believe there is but one sin involved. Verse 16 is an enlargement upon verse 15. "The Scriptures recognize but one God, and he is the Lord Jehovah. Whoever curses him shall bear his sin, that is, shall be guilty in such a way that his sin must be purged either by punishment or by sacrifice, in this case the purging can only come by death." (*Meyrick*)

vs. 17-23 This is a reiteration of Laws discussed earlier. Cf. Exodus 21:12, 33, 34. They are given here again to show their application to the stranger and foreigner as well as the Israelite. O. T. Allis summarizes these verses in a fine way:

With regard to this *lex talionis*, three things are to be noted. First, it was intended to be a law of exact justice, not of revenge. Secondly, it was not private vengeance, but public justice. Thirdly, by excluding murder from the crimes for which ransom is permissible (Num. 35:31f.) it makes it probable that compensation for injuries was often or usually allowed to take the form of a fine. The claim that "there is in Jewish history no instance of the law of retaliation ever having been carried out literally—eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" may or may not be justified, although such mutilating of the body was contrary to the spirit of the Mosaic law. Yet for centuries in Christian lands, torture and mutilation was the customary punishment for crime, and often, contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Mosaic law, it was utterly out of proportion to the offense. This incident serves to

remind us of the grievousness of the sin of profanity, which is one of the great evils of today.

FACT QUESTIONS 24:10-23

591. How account for this historical incident in the midst of these laws?
592. How does Exodus 12:38 relate to this section?
593. What is the most important part of this account?
594. Explain the enormity of the sin of blasphemy.
595. "The name" was very important to Israel. Discuss this fact.
596. There were no jails in all the nation. Why?
597. What was said in the act of laying on of hands?
598. What are the three things to be noted in verses 17-23?

4. SABBATICAL AND JUBILEE YEARS 25:1-55

a. THE SABBATICAL YEAR 25:1-7

TEXT 25:1-7

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto Jehovah.
- 3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruits thereof;
- 4 but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath unto Jehovah: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.
- 5 That which groweth of itself of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, and the grapes of thy undressed vine thou shalt not gather: it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.
- 6 And the sabbath of the land shall be for food for you; for thee, and for thy servant and for thy maid, and for thy hired

- servant and for thy stranger, who sojourn with thee.
7 And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be for food.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:1-7

585. Are we to understand from verse 1 that Moses is now called up on the mount to receive these instructions?
586. Besides the benefit to the land was there another purpose in the sabbath year?
587. There is a work principle here. Does it have any relation to present society? Discuss.
588. Vineyards and orchards would already be planted. What is to be done with them?
589. From what would the nation live if the increase was for the slaves and servants?
590. How would they feed their animals?

PARAPHRASE 25:1-7

While Moses was on Mount Sinai, the Lord gave him these instructions for the people of Israel: When you come into the land I am going to give you, you must let the land rest before the Lord every seventh year. For six years you may sow your field and prune your vineyards and harvest your crops, but during the seventh year the land is to lie fallow before the Lord, uncultivated. Don't sow your crops and don't prune your vineyards during that entire year. Don't even reap for yourself the volunteer crops that come up, and don't gather the grapes for yourself; for it is a year of rest for the land. Any crops that do grow that year shall be free to all—for you, your servants, your slaves, and any foreigners living among you. Cattle and wild animals alike shall be allowed to graze there.

COMMENT 25:1-7

vs. 1-4 The seventh year is a very important time in the book of Leviticus: (1) to teach equality; the slaves were set free, the land was free for indiscriminate use by all the inhabitants; (2) to teach kindness and thoughtfulness to slaves, servants and cattle; (3) to teach a dependence on God who must provide in the sixth year what they would not have in the seventh or the eighth; (4) break the routine of the pursuit after mammon—they did have time to teach and worship; (5) to let Israel know *they* did not own the land but were only using it. (*Calmet*) In verses 20 and 21 of this chapter, God plainly states He will provide three times as much in the sixth year than in any other year. This would be necessary for the sixth year, the sabbath year, and the eighth year. What a lesson such care would give to the stranger in the land! Just when this practice began would be hard to determine. Some believe it was in the twenty-first year after their entrance into Canaan. It is calculated by considering seven years for conquest (Joshua 14:10), seven years to dividing the land among the tribes (Joshua 18:1), and seven years of crops.

vs. 5-7 There is a most intriguing principle taught here: God wants man to enjoy the creation He has provided. God will actually enable the land to produce enough for three years for the express use of man in a year of rest, learning, worship and relaxation. Could this be but a foretaste of the “sabbath of rest” God has for all His children in that upper and better Canaan? Cf. Heb. 4:9.

FACT QUESTIONS 25:1-7

599. Show the importance of the seventh year.
 600. The strangers in the land could learn a very important lesson. What was it?
 601. When did the first sabbath year begin, *i.e.* after entrance into Canaan?

602. What intriguing principle is taught in verses 5 to 7?

b. THE YEAR OF JUBILEE 25:8-55

RULES FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE JUBILEE 25:8-22

TEXT 25:8-22

- 8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years, and there shall be unto thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years.
- 9 Then shalt thou send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land.
- 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.
- 11 A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather *the grapes* in it of the undressed vines.
- 12 For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.
- 13 In this year of jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession.
- 14 And if thou sell aught unto thy neighbor, or buy of thy neighbor's hand, ye shall not wrong one another.
- 15 According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbor, *and* according unto the number of years of the crops he shall sell unto thee.
- 16 According to the multitude of the years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years thou shalt diminish the price of it; for the number of the crops doth he sell unto thee.
- 17 And ye shall not wrong one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am Jehovah your God.

- 18 Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep mine ordinances and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety.
- 19 And the land shall yield its fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.
- 20 And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase;
- 21 then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years.
- 22 And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, ye shall eat the old store.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:8-22

591. Was the year of Jubilee in the 49th or the 50th year?
592. On what annual feast day was the trumpet sounded for the year of Jubilee?
593. This was surely a day of liberty. Mention two liberations.
594. There was also liberation from harvesting. Was this good news?
595. Who made the original division of the land to decide the ancestral property?
596. Please explain verse 14 in its context.
597. No property was actually sold. How would you define what happened?
598. The land was not being sold, only the number of crops until Jubilee. Was there any problem with this arrangement? Discuss.
599. Someone could take advantage of his neighbor. How? What was intended to prevent this?
600. God promised safety and enough food. Upon what conditions?
601. Why the increase for three years? *Cf.* v. 21.
602. There was a very significant purpose to the observance of the year of Jubilee. What was it? What lesson is in it for us? *Cf.* Heb. 11:13; I Pet. 2:11-17.

PARAPHRASE 25:8-22

Every fiftieth year, on the Day of Atonement, let the trumpets blow loud and long throughout the land. For the fiftieth year shall be holy, a time to proclaim liberty throughout the land to all enslaved debtors, and a time for the canceling of all public and private debts. It shall be a year when all the family estates sold to others shall be returned to the original owners or their heirs. What a happy year it will be! In it you shall not sow, nor gather crops nor grapes; for it is a holy Year of Jubilee for you. That year your food shall be the volunteer crops that grow wild in the fields. Yes, during the Year of Jubilee everyone shall return home to his original family possession; if he has sold it, it shall be his again! Because of this, if the land is sold or bought during the preceding forty-nine years, a fair price shall be arrived at by counting the number of years until the Jubilee. If the Jubilee is many years away, the price will be high; if few years, the price will be low; for what you are really doing is selling the number of crops the new owner will get from the land before it is returned to you. You must fear your God and not over-charge! For I am Jehovah. Obey My laws if you want to live safely in the land. When you obey, the land will yield bumper crops and you can eat your fill in safety. But you will ask, What shall we eat the seventh year, since we are not allowed to plant or harvest crops that year? The answer is, I will bless you with bumper crops the sixth year that will last you until the crops of the eighth year are harvested!

COMMENT 25:8-22

vs. 8-13 In the following verses we have the prelude to a most meaningful time in the life of the Hebrew man or woman. The seventh day reminded him of his deliverance from Egyptian bondage, *i.e.* that he belonged to God by right of deliverance from death and slavery. The seventh month spoke to him again and again of God's provisions for him in the several feasts of

the month. The seventh year told him of God's ownership of the land. Now the climactic, once-in-a-lifetime experience, "the year of Jubilee." Seven times seven years—the year of deliverance and restoration. It was announced with the sound of the silver trumpets. Perhaps these were ram's horns plated with silver and fitted with a mouth-piece of gold. How we would like to share with the sincere Israelite all the wonder, excitement and joy this glorious year brought. Perhaps we can share a little by a careful understanding of each verse.

It was on the close of the great day of atonement that the loud blasts from the trumpets was heard ". . . when the Hebrews realized that they had peace of mind, that their heavenly Father had annulled their sins, and that they had become reunited to Him through His forgiving mercy, every Israelite was called upon to proclaim throughout the land, by nine blasts of the trumpet, that he too had given the soil rest, that he had freed every encumbered family estate, and that he had given liberty to every slave, who was now to rejoin his kindred. Inasmuch as God had forgiven his debts, he also was to forgive his debtors." (Ginsburg)

Since the Day of Atonement was on the tenth day of the first month of the religious calendar of Israel, the year of Jubilee was counted as beginning from the first day of the month Tishri (*i.e.* according to Jewish tradition). The Feast of Trumpets occurred on the first day of Tishri, hence the blowing of the trumpets of the new year was an announcement for the slaves that liberty was at the door. In the interim of ten days, the slaves were said to have put on garlands of flowers (by provision and permission of their masters); they ate, drank and rejoiced in eager anticipation of the coming year of Jubilee. If Israel began the counting of the years only after they had taken possession of the land, this would have placed the first year of Jubilee on the sixty-fourth year after they came into the promised land. The observance of Jubilee was almost identical to the sabbath year. Indeed every fifty years then were what amounted to two successive sabbath years. In contemplating the return to their ancestral possessions we can say with Bonar, ". . . we see a picture of

human happiness in one of its most natural and intelligible forms. You see parents rejoicing for their children's sake, and children for their own, in being once more allowed to sit under their vine and fig tree, and pluck the flowers and fruit of a region so sweet, and balmy, and abundant. You see their happy countenances, and eyes bright with joy; and the holy look toward heaven of the man of faith and prayer, who thanks the Lord for all. They forget the past in the joy of the present. Past losses are made up. Nor is one solitary individual forgotten. Every man has his portion."

vs. 14-18 Satan has always been present, even in Eden, to distort to his own advantage all the good gifts of God. In what way could the law of Jubilee be abused? We can think of at least two ways, and we are sure there are others: (1) charging excessive lease money for the use of the land. All that could actually be sold was the number of crops to be produced by the land. Misrepresentation of what had been produced on the land, and therefore what could be expected in the future would be one way of defrauding your neighbor. According to tradition one-sixth was the maximum mark-up for any sale. Two years was the minimal time. Accurate records of what the land had produced plus one-sixth interest was allowed, but not more; (2) the sabbath years could be easily counted in the sale when in fact no crop would be forthcoming. The sale amounted to the total number of crops so the price was lower and lower as the year of Jubilee approached. We are sure there were ways to oppress and cheat and intimidate, even as there are today. Only reverence toward God can offset greed and lust. Remember, if you do not answer to your neighbor, you will most assuredly answer to God. God reminds Israel that His statutes are not only for reading, they are for doing!

vs. 19-22 The safety of the nation was contingent upon their obedience to His laws. "As God is Israel's strong tower and wall of defense, it is by keeping His commandments that the Israelites will enjoy the security which other nations endeavor to obtain by great labour and mighty armies." (*Ibid*) Why would anyone ask the question: ". . . what shall we eat the seventh year?" Someone

had not taught or someone had not listened. The promises were clear and sure. *Cf.* Deut. 28:8. Couldn't they remember God's provision of manna on the sixth day in excess to cover the seventh day? Hadn't He provided every sixth year for the sabbath years? What was wrong with their memory?—or their confidence in the character of a loving living heavenly Father? Perhaps the same thing that affects our memory and faith.

FACT QUESTIONS 25:8-22

603. Show the relation of the year of Jubilee to the sabbath day, the sabbath month, and the sabbath year.
604. How was the year announced? When?
605. How do the words of our Lord, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" relate to the year of Jubilee?
606. What supposedly happened in the first ten days of the month of Tishri?
607. When was the first year of Jubilee observed?
608. Describe in your own words the happiness that must have prevailed in the year of Jubilee.
609. In what two possible ways could the year of Jubilee be abused?
610. Israel would enjoy prosperity and safety upon what conditions?
611. Why would anyone ask the question "what shall we eat the seventh year?"

THE LAW OF REDEMPTION 25:23-34

TEXT 25:23-34

- 23 And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.
- 24 And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

- 25 If thy brother be waxed poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next unto him come, and shall redeem that which his brother hath sold.
- 26 And if a man have no one to redeem it, and he be waxed rich and find sufficient to redeem it;
- 27 then let him reckon the years of the sale thereof, and restore the over-plus unto the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return unto his possession.
- 28 But if he be not able to get it back for himself, then that which he hath sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.
- 29 And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; for a full year shall he have the right of redemption.
- 30 And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubilee.
- 31 But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee.
- 32 Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time.
- 33 And if one of the Levites redeem, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the jubilee; for the house of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.
- 34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:23-34

603. What relationship did the Israelites sustain to the Lord?
Cf. verse 23.
604. What is the meaning of the word "redemption" as it is used here?

605. Why any need to redeem if the land was to revert back to the original owner?
606. Please explain in your own words verses 26 and 27.
607. Would the principle of the year of Jubilee work in our society? Discuss.
608. Why the distinction in the sale of a house in a fortified city? Cf. verses 29,30.
609. What interest rate do you suppose was charged on the redemption of "the old home place"? Discuss.
610. What provision did God make for the Levites as to a place to live? Why?
611. There was a field or a pasture land that could not be sold. What was it?

PARAPHRASE 25:23-34

And remember, the land is Mine, so you may not sell it permanently. You are merely My tenants and sharecroppers! In every contract of sale there must be a stipulation that the land can be redeemed at any time by the seller. If anyone becomes poor and sells some of his land, then his nearest relatives may redeem it. If there is no one else to redeem it, and he himself gets together enough money, then he may always buy it back at a price proportionate to the number of harvests until the Jubilee, and the owner must accept the money and return the land to him. But if the original owner is not able to redeem it, then it shall belong to the new owner until the Year of Jubilee; but at the Jubilee year it must be returned again. If a man sells a house in the city, he has up to one year to redeem it, with full right of redemption during that time. But if it is not redeemed within the year, then it will belong permanently to the new owner—it does not return to the original owner in the Year of Jubilee. But village houses—a village is a settlement without fortifying walls around it—are like farmland, redeemable at any time, and are always returned to the original owner in the

Year of Jubilee. There is one exception: the homes of the Levites, even though in walled cities, may be redeemed at any time, and must be returned to the original owners in the Year of Jubilee; for the Levites will not be given farmland like the other tribes, but will receive only houses in their cities, and the surrounding fields. The Levites are not permitted to sell the fields of common land surrounding their cities, for these are their permanent possession, and they must belong to no one else.

COMMENT 25:23-34

v. 23 It is a comforting as well as humbling realization that we are only temporary tenants upon this earth. Our deeds of ownership do not declare the real owner. The nation of Israel was to be even more aware of this fact. Although they must live in the same land area throughout their generations it was for the purpose of identifying the real owner of the land. Remaining where they were assigned by Joshua would preserve the genealogies unmixed until the Messiah came. Covetous ambition would be lowered as no one could add field to field. The most cherished of family associations would gather around the "old home place" and thus would family ties grow strong. The land could not be sold for more than 49 years.

vs. 24-28 But the land was sold, for men became hungry and they must eat. However, even when it was sold the owner did not hold a permanent deed. If the original owner could find relatives with money, they must be given permission to buy back the land, or if the first owner prospers himself he can buy back his land. When such a circumstance arises the land is to be sold under the following conditions: count the years since it was sold and deduct the price of the crops for those years from the original purchase price. The remainder must be paid to the one who purchased the land. The total purchase price was controlled by the year of Jubilee, *i.e.* if it were 20 years to Jubilee, the cost of twenty crops would be the purchase price. If the land was redeemed after ten years, one-half of the price would remain

to be paid.

If the land is not redeemed it remains the possession of the purchaser until the year of Jubilee.

We refer the reader to our *Introduction* by W. G. Moorehead in which a beautiful comparison is made between the redeemer of this chapter and our Lord. Notice: (1) The redeemer was to be one of near kin with the one to be redeemed—vs. 25,48. So Jesus—Heb. 2:14-18; (2) He was to redeem the person—47-50, as illustrated by Ruth—4:4,5. So Jesus brought His people—I. Cor. 6:19,20; (3) He was to redeem the property that had been disposed away—vs. 25, 29. So, too, Christ hath redeemed for us our lost inheritance—I Pet. 1:3-5; (4) He was to avenge the brother on his enemies—Num. 35:12. The “avenger of blood” seems to have been a near kinsman of the one injured. And Christ will in due time take vengeance on the enemies of His people—Deut. 32:43; II Thess. 1:6-8.

vs. 29-34 The kindness expressed in these laws is very impressive. Even when a man has lost his house through poverty he has a whole year in which to redeem it. Houses are not like fields, they are made by man and are subject to decay. “It is the land, and God’s allotment of the land, that is to continue; not man’s work in it.” Yet man’s work is respected and can be restored to him. The city dweller can lose his house. A permanent deed can be written for the purchase of a house in a fortified city.

There are three cases of real estate to be considered: (1) the house in the fortified city; (2) the house in the country or in a village; (3) the houses of the Levites.

The home in the village was considered landed property and is subject to the law of Jubilee.

The tribe of Levi never had a land allotment. They were given forty-eight cities scattered throughout the tribes. Cf. Num. 35:1-8; Josh. 21:1-3.

The houses built in these cities by the Levites were to have the same value as the land. If sold, the houses could be redeemed at any time, and were subject to the law of Jubilee. Even if a fellow Levite purchased a house or land from his fellow Levite he

could not have permanent possession.

Such a regulation for the Levites was to protect the only possession they had—their home. The pasture lands outside the cities of the Levites were never to be sold. Cf. Num. 35:4, 5. “These outlying fields, which were beyond the suburbs, they are forbidden to sell. These estates belong to the whole tribe to all futurity, and the present occupiers have to transmit them intact to their successors. Hence no present owner, or all of them combined, have a right to dispose of any portion of the estates, or materially to alter it. They must hand these estates down to their successors as they received them from their predecessors.” (*Ibid.*)

FACT QUESTIONS 25:23-34

612. What is the comforting as well as humbling realization?
613. Give three reasons for staying in the allotment given to them by God through Joshua.
614. For what reason was the land sold?
615. What were two of the ways of redeeming the land?
616. Under what circumstances was the land returned to the original owner?
617. In what way was the total purchase price controlled by the year of Jubilee?
618. Give the four beautiful comparisons between our Redeemer and the redeemer of the land.
619. Point out the kindness found in these laws.
620. Why could a house be sold permanently?
621. List three cases of real estate to be considered.
622. Why the special regulations for the Levites?

TREATMENT OF THE POOR 25:35-55

TEXT 25:35-55

35 And if thy brother be waxed poor, and his hand fail with thee; then thou shalt uphold him: as a stranger and a

sojourner shall he live with thee.

36 Take thou no interest of him or increase, but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.

37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon interest, nor give him thy victuals for increase.

38 I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God.

39 And if thy brother be waxed poor with thee, and sell himself unto thee; thou shalt not make him to serve as a bondservant.

40 As a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee; he shall serve with thee unto the year of jubilee:

41 then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

42 For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen.

43 Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God.

44 And as for thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, whom thou shalt have; of the nations that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

45 Moreover of the children of the strangers that sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they have begotten in your land: and they shall be your possession.

46 And ye shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor.

47 And if a stranger or sojourner with thee be waxed rich, and thy brother be waxed poor beside him, and sell himself unto the stranger *or* sojourner with thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family;

48 after that he is sold he may be redeemed: one of his brethren may redeem him;

49 or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that

is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be waxed rich, he may redeem himself.

- 50 And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years; according to the time of a hired servant shall he be with him.
- 51 If there be yet many years, according unto them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.
- 52 And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according unto his years shall he give back the price of his redemption.
- 53 As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him: he shall not rule with rigor over him in thy sight.
- 54 And if he be not redeemed by these *means*, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he, and his children with him.
- 55 For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:35-55

612. A special type of poverty seems to be described in verse 35. What is it? What is to be done?
613. What does the fear of God have to do with offering free board and room to our neighbor?
614. What is meant by the phrase, “. . . nor give him thy victuals for increase”?
615. God used His deliverance of Israel as a motivation for kindness and hospitality. How so?
616. Selling of one’s self into slavery is one thing *not* discussed in verse 39. What is discussed?
617. What circumstances could cause such a condition as that described in verses 39, 40?
618. Why insist that the servants and family return at the

- year of Jubilee? *Cf.* verse 42.
619. If a master did rule over his servants "with rigor" what would happen to him?
620. Does God approve of slavery in verses 44 through 46? Discuss. (Notice the careful regulations for the continuance of this practice.)
621. Could we infer from verse 46 that Israel was permitted to rule over their slaves "with rigor"?
622. What good would money be to a slave? *i.e.* if an Israelite sold himself to a stranger or sojourner, what would he do with the money?
623. Why identify the possible redeemers as in verse 49?
624. Once again the year of Jubilee controls the redemption. Explain.
625. Did the owner of the Hebrew slave have the right of life and death over him? Discuss. *Cf.* verse 53.
626. There was no perpetual slavery among the Hebrews, but they could perpetually own slaves. Is this right? Discuss.
627. How does deliverance from Egyptian bondage relate to this section?

PARAPHRASE 25:35-55

If your brother becomes poor, you are responsible to help him; invite him to live with you as a guest in your home. Fear your God and let your brother live with you; and don't charge him interest on the money you lend him. Remember—no interest; and give him what he needs, at your cost: don't try to make a profit! For I, the Lord your God, brought you out of the land of Egypt to *give* you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. If a fellow Israelite becomes poor and sells himself to you, you must not treat him as an ordinary slave, but rather as a hired servant or as a guest; and he shall serve you only until the Year of Jubilee. At that time he can leave with his children, and return to his own family and possessions. For I brought you from the land of Egypt, and you are My servants; so you

may not be sold as ordinary slaves, or treated harshly; fear your God. However, you may purchase slaves from the foreign nations living around you, and you may purchase the children of the foreigners living among you, even though they have been born in your land. They will be permanent slaves for you to pass on to your children after you; but your brothers, the people of Israel, shall not be treated so. If a foreigner living among you becomes rich, and an Israelite becomes poor and sells himself to the foreigner or to the foreigner's family, he may be redeemed by one of his brothers, his uncle, nephew, or anyone else who is a near relative. He may also redeem himself if he can find the money. The price of his freedom shall be in proportion to the number of years left before the Year of Jubilee—whatever it would cost to hire a servant for that number of years. If there are still many years until the Jubilee, he shall pay almost the amount he received when he sold himself; if the years have passed and only a few remain until the Jubilee, then he will repay only a small part of the amount he received when he sold himself. If he sells himself to a foreigner, the foreigner must treat him as a hired servant rather than as a slave or as property. If he has not been redeemed by the time the Year of Jubilee arrives, then he and his children shall be freed at that time. For the people of Israel are *My* servants; I brought them from the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

COMMENT 25:35-55

vs. 35-55 Again we are indebted to S. H. Kellogg for a splendid exposition of these verses:

The relation of the jubilee law to personal rights in the land having been thus determined and expounded, in the next place (vv. 35-55) is considered the application of the law to slavery. Quite naturally, this section begins (vv. 35-37) with a general injunction to assist and deal mercifully with any brother who has become poor. "If thy brother be waxen poor, and his hand fail with thee; then thou shalt uphold him: as a stranger and a

sojourner shall he live with thee. Take thou no usury of him or increase; but fear thy God: that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give thy money upon usury, nor give him thy victuals for increase."

The evident object of this law is to prevent, as far as possible, that extreme of poverty which might compel a man to sell himself in order to live. Debt is a burden in any case, to a poor man especially; but debt is the heavier burden when to the original debt is added the constant payment of interest. Hence, not merely "usury" in the modern sense of *excessive* interest, but it is forbidden to claim or take any interest whatever from any Hebrew debtor. On the same principle, it is forbidden to take increase for food which may be lent to a poor brother; as when one lets a man have twenty bushels of wheat on condition that in due time he shall return for it twenty-two. This command is enforced (ver. 38) by reminding them from whom they have received what they have, and on what easy terms, as a gift; from their covenant God, who is Himself their security that by so doing they shall not lose: "I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God." They need not therefore have recourse to the exaction of interest and increase from their poor brethren in order to make a living, but are to be merciful, even as Jehovah their God is merciful.

Even with the burdensomeness of debt lightened as above, it was yet possible that a man might be reduced to poverty so extreme that he should feel compelled to sell himself as a slave. Hence arises the question of slavery, and its relation to the law of the jubilee. Under this head two cases were possible: the first, where a man has sold himself to a fellow-Hebrew (vv. 39-46): and second, where a man had sold himself to a foreigner resident in the land (vv. 47-55).

With the Hebrews and all the neighboring peoples, slavery was, and had been from of old, a settled institution. Regarded simply as an abstract question of morals, it might seem as if the Lord might once for all have abolished it by an absolute prohibition; after the manner in which many modern reformers

would deal with such evils as the liquor traffic, etc. But the Lord was wiser than many such. As had been remarked already, in connection with the question of concubinage, that law is not in every case the best which may be the best intrinsically and ideally. That law is the best which can be best enforced in the actual moral status of the people, and consequent condition of public opinion. So the Lord did not at once prohibit slavery; but He ordained laws which would restrict it, and modify and ameliorate the condition of the slave wherever slavery was permitted to exist; laws, moreover, which have had such an educational power as to have banished slavery from the Hebrew people.

In the first place, slavery, in the unqualified sense of the word, is allowed only in the case of non-Israelites. That it was permitted to hold these as bondmen is explicitly declared (vv. 44-46). It is, however, important, in order to form a correct idea of Hebrew slavery, to observe that, according to Exod. 21:16, man-stealing was made a capital offence; and the law also carefully guarded from violence and tyranny on the part of the master the non-Israelite slave lawfully gotten, even decreeing his emancipation from his master in extreme cases of this kind (Exod. 21:20, 21, 26, 27).

With regard to the Hebrew bondman, the law recognizes no property of the master in his person; that a servant of Jehovah should be a slave of another servant of Jehovah is denied; because they are His servants, no other can own them (vv. 42, 55). Thus, while the case is supposed (ver. 39) that a man through stress of poverty may sell himself to a fellow-Hebrew as a bond-servant, the sale is held as affecting only the master's right to his service, but not to his person. "Thou shalt not make him to serve as a bondservant: as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee."

Further, it is elsewhere provided (Exod. 21:2) that in no case shall such sale hold valid for a longer time than six years; in the seventh year the man was to have the privilege of going out free for nothing. And in this chapter is added a further alleviation of the bondage (vv. 40, 41): "He shall serve with thee unto the year

of jubilee: then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen."

That is, if it so happened that before the six years of his prescribed service had been completed the jubilee year came in, he was to be exempted from the obligation to service for the remainder of that period.

The remaining verses of this part of the law (vv. 44-46) provide that the Israelite may take to himself bondmen of "the children of the strangers" that sojourn among them; and that to such the law of the periodic release shall not be held to apply. Such are "bondmen for ever." "Ye shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever."

It is to be borne in mind that even in such cases the law which commanded the kind treatment of all the strangers in the land (19:33, 34) would apply; so that even where permanent slavery was allowed it was placed under humanising restriction.

In vv. 47-55 is taken up, finally, the case where a poor Israelite should have sold himself as a slave to a foreigner resident in the land. In all such cases it is ordered that the owner of the man must recognize the right of redemption. That is, it was the privilege of the man himself, or of any of his near kindred, to buy him out of bondage. Compensation to the owner is, however, enjoined in such cases according to the number of the years remaining to the next jubilee, at which time he would be obliged to release him (ver. 54), whether redeemed or not. Thus we read (vv. 50-52): "He shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years; according to the time of an hired servant shall he be with him. If there be yet many years, according unto them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according unto his

years shall he give back the price of his redemption. As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him."

Furthermore, it is commanded (ver. 53) that the owner of the Israelite, for so long time as he may remain in bondage, shall "not rule over him with rigour"; and by the addition of the words "in thy sight" it is intimated that God would hold the collective nation responsible for seeing that no oppression was exercised by any alien over any of their enslaved brethren. To which it should also be added, finally, that the regulations for the release of the slave carefully provided for the maintenance of the family relation. Families were not to be parted in the emancipation of the jubilee; the man who went out free was to take his children with him (vv. 41, 54). In the case, however, where the wife had been given him by his master, she and her children remained in bondage after his emancipation in the seventh year; but of course only until she had reached her seventh year of service. But if the slave already had his wife when he became a slave, then she and their children went out with him in the seventh year (Exod. 21:3, 4). The contrast in the spirit of these laws with that of the institution of slavery as it formerly existed in The Southern States of America, and elsewhere in Christendom, is obvious.

These, then, were the regulations connected with the application of the ordinance of the jubilee year to rights of property, whether in real estate or in slaves. In respect to the cessation from the cultivation of the soil which was enjoined for the year, the law was essentially the same as that for the sabbatic year, except that, apparently, the right of property in the spontaneous produce of the land, which was in abeyance in the former case, was in so far recognized in the latter that each man was allowed to "eat the increase of the jubilee year out of the field" (ver. 12).

FACT QUESTIONS 25:35-55

623. What is the total subject of verses 35 to 55? What is the subject of verses 35 to 37?
624. What was the purpose of the provision of the law in verses 35-37?

625. Why no interest at all upon what is given to a poor brother? What is meant by "increase" as in verses 36, 37?
626. Israel had been charged no interest by God on the gifts they received from Him. When? Where? What is the principle?
627. Two cases of slavery are to be considered. What are they?
628. Why not pass a law to forbid slavery? How was slavery banished from the Hebrew people?
629. Show how Exodus 21:16 and 21:20, 21, 26, 27 relate to slavery.
630. When one Hebrew sold himself to another Hebrew he was yet not the property of his master. Explain why.
631. For how long would a Hebrew be held as a slave? *i. e.*, what was the total time of his slavery? Cf. Exodus 21:2.
632. There were exceptional cases when even this time was shortened. Explain.
633. When was permanent human slavery allowed? What were the restrictions on it?

D. CONCLUSION: PROMISES AND WARNINGS 26:1-46

1. THE NECESSITY OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS TO GOD 26:1, 2

TEXT 26:1, 2

- 1 Ye shall make you no idols, neither shall ye rear you up a graven image, or a pillar, neither shall ye place any figured stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am Jehovah your God.
- 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah.