

# LEVITICUS AND REVELATION

## Bible Reading Schedule

### 6 Weeks

#### WEEK 1

The power of Leviticus is found in the importance of sacrifices and the holiness of God. According to Matthew Henry, a famous Bible scholar, Leviticus highlights God ordained sacrifices and obligations necessary for the payment of sin, which easily directs us to the blood of the Lamb of God, right!? It will take discipline to read through Leviticus, but you can do it. Thanks for joining me!

DAY 1 – Leviticus 1 & Revelation 1:1-11

Scholar R. K. Harrison summarizes the personal theme for us from Leviticus, “No person can be his own savior or mediator. An individual must come before God in penitence, confess his sin, and obtain pardon from a merciful God who repudiates sin but shows covenant love for the sinner.” Most agree that Moses wrote Leviticus during Israel’s time in the wilderness after the Exodus. Moses recorded God’s instructions about the Tabernacle, the priesthood, sacrifices, holy days, and ceremonial purity. How could sinful people relate to a holy God? The provisions and commands of this book provide answers to that question. Clearly, Leviticus will cause us to appreciate the final provision for payment of sin, the sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Chapter 1 begins the emphasis on burnt offerings and the sacrificial system put in place by God through Moses. This sentence summarizes so much found in verse 4, “The Lord will accept its (the animal’s) death in your place to purify you, making you right with him.” This is the idea of making atonement for you. This launches us into seven chapters on sacrifices with repetitive wording, which must be worth repeating. This first chapter points to our great need for forgiveness. Romans 3:25 reads, “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood...” You can see why Leviticus is an important book for us to read, deepening our appreciation for Jesus and what he did for us. What are your first impressions of Leviticus? Why?

I would like to begin with the words of Grant R. Osborne, a New Testament Professor, from Trinity Evangelical Seminary, before his death. “It is important to realize that we know no more about the second coming than Jesus’ Jewish disciples did about his first. They too thought they

were reading the Scriptures rightly... In interpreting the symbols of the book, we first need 'hermeneutics of humility' to realize we 'see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror' (1 COR 13:12)." I read Revelation as a symbolic book of things to come. I lean on the interpretation of others who are far more knowledgeable than me. I want to share that as a preface with you as we begin the most intriguing book in the Bible. These first eleven verses are inspiring to me; how about you? Why? Did you notice the phrase, "from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne?" Most believe this is elevating the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is one of perfection. But others point to seven angels and then the seven churches. Why I mention this is because from the very beginning, Revelation has wording that makes it hard to say that is exactly what it means. I am drawn to elevating the role of the Holy Spirit, who is the One who revealed this revelation to John. We learn that John is on an island as a prisoner. Patmos was known to be a place where the Roman authorities sent prisoners and exiles. John wrote to a persecuted, suffering church to give fellow believers hope. How does this prologue to Revelation speak to you?

#### DAY 2 – Leviticus 2 & Revelation 1:12-20

The grain offering of this chapter represents a gift of worship to God. We can understand this emphasis as we often suggest that our offerings and tithes represent worship and gratitude. This fits that idea very closely. The grain offering supplied the priest with bread for his daily sustenance, along with those who served with him. The priesthood with the Levites had no farmland allocated to them. The grain offering also represented the reality that God owns everything; it all belongs to him. The strong command to not use yeast points back to the Exodus. Unleavened bread was bread without yeast. Unleavened bread was required for the Passover, in remembrance of Israel's bondage in Egypt and their speedy departure from the land. (Ex 12:34, 13:3) Following the Exodus, unleavened bread acquired the status of altar bread. Leavened bread was not to be burned on the altar. You can see that this offering was focused on worship and honor of God, as he wonderfully supplies. We still do the same today with tithes and offerings. Portioned giving, that is, we give a portion of what he has supplied to his purposes in the church and around the world; this has always been a principle of God to be honored by his people. He provides abundantly, and we demonstrate our thanks through generosity.

Revelation 1:12f mesmerizes us with this amazing, symbolic vision of Jesus. We can feel the strength of the Lord in these words. They are meant to help us realize the great security and assurance we have as followers of Jesus. Verse 12 suggests a lighted menorah, which points to the presence of God among his people. Then, of course, Jesus shows up. What part of the vision of the Son of Man gets your attention? "His eyes were like flames of fire." The piercing look of

Jesus cuts through any pretense or misnomer that you can hide anything from him. Isn't it just like the Lord to tell John not to be afraid (V17)? This vision is meant to help the church understand that the Lord is strong and mighty both in the present moment and as far as you can imagine into the future. He is the first and the last. Can anything stretch beyond that? The answer is obviously "no!" Plus, knowing he holds the keys to death and the grave means he controls life beyond our earthly existence. What a fantastic introduction for us as we begin this incredible book, "The Revelation!"

## WEEK 2

This week will cover the sacrificial offerings prescribed by God through Moses. Each one of these offerings taught theology through a hands-on approach. Priests were required to officiate in the sacrificial worship at the Tabernacle. Next week, we will learn even more about the role of the priesthood for God's people. Leviticus is relevant in that it continues to remind us about the sacrifice of Jesus, who fulfilled all the law required.

Revelation will highlight five of the seven churches mentioned in chapters 2 & 3. The author John exhorts each church with concerns about their spiritual health and ministry. Oftentimes, these instructive words are not just meant for the churches then but for us today. For example, the primary concern for the church in Ephesus challenges their motivation. It used to be Christ-centered and full of love, but now they are just going through the motions. That still happens today, of course. This is sure to be an important week of reading God's Word.

DAY 3 – Leviticus 3 & Revelation 2:1-7

The peace offering of chapter 3 expressed a sense of worship that enjoyed fellowship with God and with others. The word is derived from "shalom," which I am sure you have heard of. This speaks to wholeness, well-being, harmony, and peace, of course. It remedies the possible hostility between God and the one worshipping; the experience of a harmonious bond of fellowship is provided through the offering given. The peace offering was therefore a shared meal celebrating fellowship with God and others. This offering often followed the whole burnt offerings, showing that fellowship with God follows atonement. This is also true through Jesus, as Romans 5:1 points out: "Since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." It is easy to see the connection between the meaning of the peace offering and the result of what Jesus did for us.

The first church mentioned in Revelation is Ephesus. I think this warning is as relevant as any we will read in the next few days. The believers in the church of Ephesus are doing the right things, but not for the right reasons. They followed through with good deeds but had lost their original zeal and love for Christ and each other. "You have lost your first love." (V4) When the church was first established, their love for Christ and each other had been strong. Struggles with false

teachers and persecution had caused their original love to grow cold. 1 COR 13 reminds us that obedience, sacrifice, and even generosity are empty (worthless) if love is missing. I think of this as “just going through the motions.” As will be a repeated theme in these churches, the believers in Ephesus are admonished to repent. Repent can simply mean “turn.” If any area of my spiritual life, as a Christian, is going in the wrong direction, I am called to repent. Are you sensing a need to repent in your life and your walk with Jesus?

#### DAY 4 – Leviticus 4 & Revelation 2:8-11

There’s no doubt that the issue of sin required more explanation with a longer presentation, probably because it was the crux of God’s concern. We read about the sin of the high priest (V3), the sin of Israel’s leaders (V22), and the sin of the people (V27). The implications of the sacrifice required were that the sin of the high priest had a greater impact, since an expensive bull was offered in this case. Smaller animals of lesser value were used for leaders and the common people. The sense of connection was especially strong with the sins of others affecting the whole community. This is hard for us to understand since all we know is an individualistic approach to life. But God’s people understood the togetherness of community and also the responsibility of community. Nehemiah portrays this so strongly as he identifies with the sins of his people, which were committed before he was even born (Neh 1:6-7). Through this process, which is outlined in this chapter, the priest would purify the people from their sin, making them right with the Lord, and providing forgiveness as well. (V35) How do you relate to the message of this chapter?

What do you think of the Smyrna Church? (2:8-11) Obviously, this is a shorter letter to the believers in Smyrna. These prophetic words are focused on encouragement during intense suffering. We can be proud of this church as it remains strong in spite of persecution. And, the promise of the “crown of life” in verse 10 is impressive to me also. It is the only city of the seven that has survived to this day (Izmir, Turkey). Plus, one of John’s pupils, Polycarp, was a martyr in Smyrna in the mid-100s AD. Faithfulness until death is described as being victorious; overcoming the second death means receiving eternal life. (V11) In Revelation 20:14-15, it says, “Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.” The believers in Smyrna are worth emulating; they displayed amazing perseverance. Of all the churches mentioned in chapters 2 & 3, they are affirmed the most. What does that say to you?

## DAY 5 – Leviticus 5 & Revelation 2:12-17

Is it surprising to you that confession of sin is an essential aspect of being forgiven? I think that is quite fascinating because it is still a very important principle to God today. However, confessions and even apologies are rare. People are very cautious about letting the truth out. But that means that our sin can own us. From the beginning of God's plan, he wanted to deal with our sins as well as cover our sins; so, he included sacrificial payment and confession of guilt in his plan. How do you respond to this continuing principle among God's people? The next section shows the grace of God, as the poor also needed atonement and reconciliation. Even if people were too poor to offer two birds, they could present a bloodless offering of flour (V11-13). To me, this emphasizes the symbolic nature of these sacrifices while we long for a more permanent solution. You obviously know what I am getting at since I have brought it up before. A sacrifice once and for all is what people ultimately long for. The Book of Hebrews highlights this sacrifice for all times and all people through Jesus (read Hebrews 10:1-18). The guilt offering pertains to a subject that is more about restitution than forgiveness. These topics remind me of our propensity to sin. These chapters are more interesting than I had anticipated because confession, restitution, forgiveness, and sin are as prevalent now, even though we have the Holy Spirit. But if we don't walk in the Spirit, our inclination is still selfish and sinful. May this remind us about how much we need God's help and keep us walking in humility and dependence on the Lord.

Pergamum is the most unknown city of all the churches for me. But Pergamum, in that day, was a significant city as it was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It boasted of a famous library, and its citizens developed the use of animal skins as writing materials. It was located about 100 miles north of Ephesus. The city was also known for several temples, pagan temples to Athena and Asclepius, along with the altar to Zeus. That's why it was described as the city of Satan. Syncretism was common among the people of Pergamum, which is the combining of Christianity with paganism, and even immoral activities like eating food offered to idols and sexual sin were prevalent. John compares them to Balaam, who lured Israel into sin. (Numbers 25:1-3) The manna (V17) that is in heaven has such an interesting Jewish tradition. During the Exodus, a jar of manna was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. Jewish thought was that at the coming of the Messiah, the Ark would reappear, and manna would be eaten at the messianic banquet. (Revelation 19:1-10) But John's encouraging conclusion tells the people, if they remain strong and do not compromise, the future is sure to be victorious!

## DAY 6 – Leviticus 6 & Revelation 2:18-29

An interesting insight into the teaching of Leviticus has to do with the Hebrew word “torah.” It is commonly translated “law” in most of the Bibles we read, like the ESV. In verses 9 & 14, the ESV says, “This is the law of...” But in the NLT, it reads “instruction.” Actually, “torah” doesn’t mean “law.” A better way of translating the word would be “teaching,” “instruction,” or “doctrine.” The term law often brings to mind an authority imposed by an external force (such as government) and is often perceived as harsh and unbending. The torah of Moses, however, is instructional. Do you notice that the Lord is concerned about a close and continuous relationship with his people? He provided a way to remain right with him and with others, as is the emphasis in verses 1 to 7. God’s laws are connected to his principles. People will always need restraints, instruction, and direction for godly living. This is still true today. What stands out to you in this chapter that gives us even greater detail about the offerings necessary for forgiveness and making things right with God?

The issue of compromise surfaces again, just as we read about yesterday. Thyatira was a smaller inland city, but growing in the trades like weavers and dyers. Spiritually, good things were happening with a growing reflection of Christ in their lives (V19). But there were signs of compromise and a lack of confrontation concerning serious sin. The kind of sin associated with Jezebel. The message seems to identify an actual person who is leading people astray. She will not go unpunished, so don’t let her deceptive ways lure you into a similar place of judgment. The word of instruction is to “hold tightly” to what you know and what you believe as a follower of Jesus. Her influence is from the pit of hell and Satan himself. People who follow her ways are sure to end in destruction and “smashed (them) like clay pots.” (V27) I am drawn to the title “morning star” (V28, Rev 22:16), which is the planet Venus and signals the coming of a new day. The promise of Christ’s return and his ultimate victory is the hope for these believers in Thyatira, as well as every believer since then.

## DAY 7 – Leviticus 7 & Revelation 3:1-6

As we wrap up this section in Leviticus about making an offering to the Lord, we see the instructions being repeated several times and even in greater detail. The Lord seems especially particular about these sacrifices. It makes me think about the seriousness of sin. Sin should never be taken lightly. There is also an emphasis on staying clear of anything contaminated or unclean. For some reason, this reminds me of the Lord’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

He challenged anger, lust, divorce, and hatred, along with other things that we might deem as less crucial. But the specific instruction in Leviticus and the warning of Jesus dovetail for me in my desire to be holy. I could never live a completely holy life, but I can live a more honest life. When I give in to anger, lust, revenge... I have a remedy from God, which began in Leviticus and God's instruction to Moses on Mount Sinai. Confess and bring an offering are the remedies in the simplest of terms. The offering has already been given on Calvary, but the confession is up to me. "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

The intensity of John's words for the church of Sardis seems the strongest. In fact, verse 5 has a warning next to the promise. Those clothed in white can be assured of their eternal destiny, for their names will never be erased from the Book of Life. The thought of one's name being erased from the Book raises questions for some about the believer's security. To me, this is a stern warning stressing the importance of obedience, endurance, and standing in faith. The Bible does challenge people who say they are Christians but have little interest in obedience, worship, serving, and humility. John said the harshest words to this church, "You have the reputation for being alive—but you are dead." (V1) It is hard to know for sure what this declaration means, but it is definitely a warning that a dead church might be no church at all, which also means that a dead believer might be no believer at all. How do you respond to these stern words directed at the church in Sardis?

## WEEK 3

Leviticus highlights the role of the Priest and his team, and also helps us understand the definition of clean and unclean. These topics are found in the next five chapters of Leviticus. Clean and unclean are actually quite important to life as a community, with hygiene concerns and the overall health of the community. Thank you for being determined to read through this historic book. The joke has been, please don't begin your Bible Reading in Leviticus. The chances of you making it to chapter 27 are fairly slim.

I don't think I will have to persuade you to read in Revelation. The last two church communities will launch us into this week, with Philadelphia and Laodicea giving us very relevant topics to contemplate. Chapter four introduces the dramatic stage of the issues filling the end times. We will begin with a picture of worship in heaven. I am confident these inspired words will lift your heart.

DAY 8 – Leviticus 8 & Revelation 3:7-13

Ordination is quite the process. I was ordained in the Christian & Missionary Alliance in 1986. There were several requirements of study and examination, but the actual ordination was fairly simple, with some prayers and laying on of hands by other pastors and leaders. The specific instructions in Leviticus for ordination were quite thorough and exacting in nature. And just think, to disobey meant a penalty of death. Yikes! The procedure of sacrificing a bull (V14f) was very similar to the other offerings we have read about. Two aspects of the ceremony get my attention. The blood on the earlobe, thumb, and toe of the priest is unusual but purposeful, with these representing the total person. A priest was to mediate between God and the people. He needed ears that could hear the words of God and the needs of the people. He needed hands ready to do God's bidding, and also feet ready to take him where he was needed. It was meant to be a complete dedication of his life as a priest to the people. And, verse 35 tells us that these holy servants were to remain in the Tabernacle for seven days before leaving to reenter everyday life. This was to be a memorable and life-changing experience for the priesthood of Aaron and his sons.

Previously, I thought Smyrna was the only church community in Revelation that received no warnings or rebuke, but Philadelphia does not include any words of disapproval either. I think their commendation is especially positive because it says they were weak and powerless. The promise in verse 10 gets my attention: "I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come on the whole world to test those who belong to this world." This is surely referring to the great tribulation prophesied in the end. The reference to the new Jerusalem also points to the

close as we read about its arrival in Revelation 21. I think these words should be a great encouragement to us since they remind us that God is always aware of the needs of his people and our vulnerability to the forces of Satan. We can be secure as God's people. He will carry us through whatever comes our way. Philadelphia has a good reputation; how do these words encourage you?

#### DAY 9 – Leviticus 9 & Revelation 3:14-22

This describes the beginning of the priest's ministry and the importance of sacrifices to make certain that all sin was atoned for and the covenant with God affirmed. These specific steps were commanded by God, which were to be followed by the priests with the anticipation of God showing up in his glory. (V4) This promise is carried through the whole chapter by saying, then "the glory of the Lord may appear to you." (V6) Some of this chapter repeats the procedure for presenting the sin, burnt, peace, and grain offerings for the priests as well as the people. After each section, we read about the revelation of God's presence. The chapter concludes with an inspirational scene, "When the people saw this (God's glory), they shouted with joy and fell down on the ground." God's presence would demonstrate his approval of the priests and his acceptance of their offerings. The role of the priest in God's community was very important because the team of priests was spiritual shepherds but also leaders of the people.

I think that the words written to the church in Laodicea are the most repeated words of all the seven churches. It is because we notice "lukewarm" faith in others and in ourselves. Also, the picture of Jesus knocking at the door of our hearts makes so much sense spiritually. He won't barge in, but he invites us to open the door for him to enter. These words are found in verse 16 and in verse 20. The Laodiceans were wealthy and viewed themselves as capable and self-sufficient, but this led to a growing sense of complacency and even indifference. They had gold, fine clothing, and a center exporting their goods, and they were famous for a special eye ointment from the famed physician Demosthenes Philalethes. But the Lord doesn't give up on them and offers another opportunity to commune with Christ and be renewed in him. Many have suggested that the Laodicean Church is most like the present-day American church, wealthy and often self-sufficient. Lukewarm Christianity produces little spiritual fruit. So, the NLT says, "turn from your indifference." (V19) The invitation is to respond to the Lord's knocking at your heart. Do you hear the Lord knocking? Let him in because he offers fresh water and the restorative breath of the Spirit. Amen!

#### DAY 10 – Leviticus 10 & Revelation 4

How are we to understand this severe punishment of death on Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu? They had obviously been careless and seemingly approached God on their own terms. Somehow, the holiness of God was violated by the sons of the highest priest, Aaron. Verse 3 reminds us of God's absolute holiness. There is no other way of interpreting what takes place other than they were ignoring and profaning the holiness of God. God's holiness leads us to a response of awe and reverence. Anything less would be dishonoring and sinful. Perhaps this was the error that cost Nadab and Abihu their lives. Only in recognizing the awesomeness of God can we appreciate his great love for us and worship him authentically and wholeheartedly. How do you respond to the holiness of God?

Revelation 4 is the best! We think of this book in a heavenly manner; at least I do. It points to the intensity of life on earth at the culmination of the age. But it also contrasts the glory of heaven and eternity. This chapter gives us a glimpse of heaven and why we often think of heaven as a place of worship. There is a song I used to sing often that uses the words of verse 11, "Thou Art Worthy!" I can sing it out right in this moment because it meant so much to me previously. What do you learn about heaven from these verses? Also, in this chapter, we are introduced to numbers that might suggest we should always take them literally. 24 thrones with 24 elders and seven torches, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God; these are examples for us that will be repeated as symbols of future events, which demand careful interpretation so that we stay away from wild speculation. The interpretation of symbols, numbers, and incredible supernatural characters has made this book difficult to understand precisely. You will notice my reluctance to be dogmatic in what John's revelation absolutely means. Still, I hope our reading in this glorious book stirs your heart for God and your anticipation of what is to come.

DAY 11 – Leviticus 11 & Revelation 5:1-8

Are you ready for the details about clean and unclean animals? It is quite a list. These next few chapters will address God's concern and instruction about clean and unclean things. Reading about this topic has helped me realize the importance of "normalcy." God is a God of order. Things that are normal in God's order are called "clean" and are permitted. Abnormal things would be unfit for food or offerings, which are called "unclean." A normal land animal would be a vegetarian (Gen 1:30). A normal human body would have no infections or discharges (Ch. 15). If abnormalities occurred in animals, people, or even clothing, this would deem them unclean. Holy is sacred, clean is common and normal, unclean is defiled and must be restored, which highlights the extensive procedures for sacrifice and offerings. In Acts 5:1-11, we read about Ananias and Sapphira's offering. It was unclean; why? They lied about it, which defiled the offering and made them unclean. There are choices we make and behaviors we enact that make

us unclean, but through Jesus, we have continued access to forgiveness and restoration. How does that sound?

This is a short reading, of course. But the significance of it seemed worthy of extended contemplation. The scroll is especially important with the interpretation of the scroll containing the plan of God for the future. The announcement of the One who is worthy to open the scroll is the highpoint of these verses: "Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir of David's throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals." (V5) Next week we will read about the breaking of each seal and the prophecy behind it. God's plan for history centers around Jesus and what he has done. His relationship to the scroll indicates his control of history. No wonder the elders and angels respond with enthusiastic worship, as we will read tomorrow. Plus, we read a statement that will be repeated in Revelation more than once: "They held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people." Revelation definitely elevates the significance of the prayers of God's people.

DAY 12 – Leviticus 12 & Revelation 5:9-14

These stipulations might seem unusual to us, but the discharge of childbirth was the main issue, according to what I have read. It was unclean because it was abnormal to the way things usually are. Circumcision was delayed for a few days so that the baby might develop to the point where the blood can clot properly. 40 days of purification for the mother were thought of as a period of time necessary to complete the process. You might find it interesting that if the couple could not afford a lamb for the offering, they could bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons instead. We know that Mary and Joseph brought the two birds for the ceremony of circumcision for Jesus. We perceive Mary and Joseph as being poor. The offering for the woman's return to her community was meant for restoration, not forgiveness, because there was no sin involved. Reconciliation is an important part of God's plan for his people. The ministry of Jesus was one of reconciliation, as we can read about in 2 COR 5:18-21. These details in Leviticus elevate the concerns of God for forgiveness, cleansing, and reconciliation. The specifics can seem "over the top," but the issues underlying the details are what I hope you notice the most.

This short reading contains words of worship. That's what I hope you will do as you read these words and make them into a song or prayer to the Lord. It says, "They sang a new song!" It is still the beginning of 2026, so what a great time to sing a new song to the Lord. What phrase or sentence in this chorus of elders and angels draws you to worship? I am inspired by the words, "every tribe and language and people and nation." (V9) By the time Jesus returns, every people group in the world will have had a chance to receive Jesus as their Savior. The Lord said he would return when everyone had heard the Good News. (Matthew 24:14) When this scene

takes place, it seems to me, everyone would have heard the message of Christ. Can you imagine the mighty song(s) of heaven sung by the throngs of people assembled to worship the Lamb?! I invite you to pray a prayer of worship to the Lamb!

## WEEK 4

The highlight this week in Leviticus will be the Atonement, I am quite sure. The instructions for skin disease and clothing, plus the way to treat it goes into repetitive detail. I want to give you a heads up on this week's readings; I want to stir up your determination to read on through and contemplate why such elaborate directives are given to the Israelites. I appreciate your desire to read this often-overlooked Old Testament book with me.

Even if you are tempted to skip Leviticus, I bet you will read our Scripture from Revelation. What are the seals and what do they mean? Plus, the trumpets will sound off as well. These 4 chapters begin the cyclical prophecy of John that culminates with the return of Christ. What might God reveal to us about his message in this fascinating book? Chapter six launches us into the core of Revelation on the judgments of God.

DAY 13 – Leviticus 13 & Revelation 6:1-8

Isn't it interesting that the priests not only served the religious needs of the people but also their physical needs? In other words, they were the physicians for the people. Skin disease had to be a serious issue since they lived in close proximity to each other, and skin disease can be especially contagious. These instructions brought me back to our battle with COVID as a society and even as a world. The first thing that concerned them was probably leprosy, which would discolor the skin. But skin disorders may range from allergic rash, ringworm, or eczema to something much more serious like gangrene or leprosy. Diagnosis had to be done by observation. Thus, the seven-day quarantine was imposed to see if the condition improved or not. The last section includes the concern about one's clothing. Contagious diseases might have a devastating result if not managed properly. God's care for the community included these kinds of procedures and instructions.

The visionary message of John in chapter 6 begins with some intensity as four war horses are introduced in these verses. You might think that the first horse and its rider are Jesus Christ, but the sequence of these four seals is full of destruction and violence. It seems that these four horses represent the power struggle in the world, not the victory of Christ. The breaking of the seals points to judgment on the earth. The red horse is most likely connected to bloodshed and war on the earth. The black horse of darkness portrays a world of injustice and economic chaos. Money was worshipped, but ended up being worth almost nothing. The pale green horse is a putrid color whose rider was death. The result would be the killing of millions, but the final judgments of God on the earth have still not arrived. However, these seals reflect a time of destruction and tribulation that is predicted for the close of the age.

## DAY 14 – Leviticus 14 & Revelation 6:9-17

Yesterday we read about the topic of skin disease, and today is the spiritual and physical remedies. The washing and cleansing with water seems practical for a person being purified, but much of the ceremony is related to the relationship with God and the community. As verse 18 says, “Through this process, the priest will purify the person before the Lord.” During a period of uncleanness, the person would not be able to participate in the ritual offerings necessary for right standing before the Lord. So, these offerings would be given specifically for the person who is now healed of their skin disease and readied to enter community life again. Isn’t it fascinating that the everyday life of the Israelites dealt with things like mold and mildew? Sometimes the house must be destroyed because the problem is not removed by the traditional approach. Twice in this chapter, a bird is released to fly away (verses 7 & 53). It symbolized the removal of the uncleanness for the individual and also for the house of those who lived there. We will read more about the release of an animal/goat symbolizing the removal of sin as in 16:10, 20-22. These visible rituals were often tied to God’s invisible work of healing and forgiveness. The issue of sin and disease was often tied together, seeking God’s intervention. This points to the Lamb, who would once and for all, shed his blood for spiritual cleansing and community togetherness as the Body of Christ. Remembering how these practices in ancient Israel point to Jesus will help make our readings relevant to our lives as followers of Christ.

As you are reading these nine verses that recognize seals 5 & 6, you might anticipate number 7, but it doesn’t appear until chapter 8 with an interlude of silence. Seal 5 reveals the martyrs, and seal 6 most likely represents the Day of the Lord, which is highlighted several times in Scripture. The end of verse 11 tells the present martyrs to rest and wait until the full number of martyrs has joined them. We know that right now, people throughout the world are being martyred for their faith in Christ. So, John’s statement is very accurate, as there will be martyrs until Christ returns. The request of the martyrs is for justice from God, who avenges evil. Seal 6 represents the cataclysmic signs on earth and in the heavens associated with God’s wrath and mentioned previously in Isaiah 13:4-12; 34:1-4; Joel 2:1-32; Zephaniah 2:1-3; Mark 13:1-37. This is closely connected to the return of Christ, as both Mark and Matthew mention this event. In fact, they both put the Day of the Lord right before the Son of Man coming on the clouds. What do you think about that? The seven seals cover the judgment topics of the end times, and the trumpets may very well repeat the topics and go even deeper with greater detail. You can anticipate launching those judgments as we begin reading about them next week.

## DAY 15 – Leviticus 15 & Revelation 7:1-8

This chapter on human discharge is not especially inspiring and actually leaves some uncertainty about what is specifically meant by discharge for the man. Semen and menstrual period discharge are specific and defined, but other possibilities of discharge could be diarrhea, pus, and or blood from a wound, or something less prevalent like gonorrhea, which is a sexually related disease. It would seem to me that the discharge would be of a more serious problem than mere diarrhea. However, women have a menstrual period every month, but because it was natural for women, it did not demand sacrifices and offerings, only a seven-day waiting period followed by a cleansing bath. These are unique precautions relevant to the environment of the desert and a nomadic lifestyle.

The reading from Revelation touches on a debated topic of the 144,000. Before that, we read about the delay of destruction until the seal of God was placed on the foreheads of God's people. This is called an interlude because it tells us about God's protection and care over his people. This is the first interlude in a book about destruction and war. It would secure God's people against the outpouring of the judgment coming. The seal is promised to 144,000, but the number is too small to represent all believers, even if it is only referring to Jewish believers. So, most scholars believe the number is symbolic even as the New Jerusalem is described in similar symbolic language. Revelation 21:16 uses 12,000 stadia on each side, with the city being a perfect cube. The completion of people receiving the seal points to every believer being secure who is still alive. Obviously, this precludes the mark of the beast and sets up an oppositional dynamic as the culmination of life on earth, as we know, comes to a close.

#### DAY 16 – Leviticus 16 & Revelation 7:9-17

The Atonement – that's a name you recognize! Once a year, there was the Day of Atonement as outlined in this chapter. In fact, this was the most important day of the year for the Israelites. It was the only required fast, and it was a Sabbath rest for all the people. It was obviously the day designated when the corporate sins of the community were atoned for. That in and of itself is huge, right? Only the high priest (Aaron) could officiate, because only he could represent all the people. Today, the Day of Atonement is called Yom Kippur. But our day of atonement is the weekend of Good Friday and Easter, when Jesus shed his blood for our sins and won the victory over death and the grave. The sacrifices of Leviticus 16 can seem very similar to the sin offering and other offerings, but the priest wore special clothing, and entry in the Most Holy Place was reserved for this day. This specific day is the most meaningful to us because it points to Jesus, the One who atoned for our sins on the cross through his shed blood as payment for our sins. Jesus paid our debt of sin and satisfied God's judgment against us. This continuity throughout God's Word is indeed special and should strengthen your faith, knowing that God has a

purposeful design for everything he does. We are most fortunate to have been recipients of his grace and salvation. Amen!

The idea of an interlude means that while destruction is predicted and judgment is sure in the last days, the people of God in heaven are rejoicing with shouts of joy. Each one is secure in Christ, even though Revelation depicts great bloodshed and intense warfare. All tears and sorrow have ended for them. The days leading up to this joyous scene may be especially difficult, as it says in verse 14, "These are the ones who died in the great tribulation." But the promise is eternal life as a throng of God's people stand in front of his throne. (V15) What inspires you about these verses? How does the promise of eternal communion with God one day help you persevere right now?

#### DAY 17 – Leviticus 17 & Revelation 8:1-5

An aspect of this stipulation has to do with pagan practices surrounding Israel, which are contrary to God's ways. If the people are sacrificing everywhere and at any time, the unsupervised ritual could easily deviate from God's directives. Killing an approved animal for food was common, but the warning had to do with the blood. The blood was reserved as God's portion and often utilized as a sacrifice for atonement. The blood of a murdered animal was to be drained and buried in the ground. The burial signified the return of that life to God. There was concern about uncleanness if someone ate meat with the blood still in the animal's tissues. Essentially, animals that died naturally were not to be eaten, nor were those animals that were killed by a wild animal. The blood could not be drained properly. The blood was so significant in the atonement that special care had to be observed.

The chapter begins with the seventh seal initiating silence throughout heaven. The seventh seal is associated with the seventh day of creation. Isn't that interesting? It is a mysterious silence that is hard to imagine, but the hush on the earth and in the heavens could be a response to what has been happening or a quick rest before the intensity is turned up. Verses 2 to 5 seem important to me as they reveal the role of prayer in the activity of God. The prayers seem to call forth justice and judgment on the earth. The thought I have is that this phase of God's judgment is launched by prayer. God waited for the prayers to ascend, and then he "threw down... thunder... lightning..." But not until the people prayed. What do you think about that? This clearly tells us that God hears our prayers and is prepared to act upon them, and because of them. What is your relationship to prayer? Do you find prayer to be rich and meaningful or challenging and empty? This tells that God will raise up people of prayer as a part of his plan to wrap up life as we know it on earth. This paragraph tells us that prayer is the forerunner to God's activities. How might God be calling you to pray?

## WEEK 5

Leviticus addresses issues of everyday life for the Hebrews in these next five chapters. Sexual conduct, other aspects of holy living, warning of pagan practices, and the role of the priest in the community fill the pages of this next section. You might skip over a verse that is timeless in the midst of regulations that pertain to life for the Israelites after Egypt. That verse is found in 19:18, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We embrace that challenge every day as followers of Christ. I am sure there will be other truths that are still relevant today. Keep your eyes open and your ears attentive to the Lord as you read.

We are obviously reading through the Book of Revelation very slowly on purpose. Again, this week we will examine the "Trumpets of Judgment," which remind us of the seals broken in last week's readings. This will lead us to the second interlude that highlights the activity of the Angel who initiates God's secret thunders and leads us to the two witnesses. The mystery of John's revelation will continue with language that is unique and symbolic. Let's ask the Lord to help us understand how we are to respond to these powerful and mysterious words.

DAY 18 – Leviticus 18 & Revelation 8:6-13

"I am the Lord your God." (V2) These instructions come with authority. The Lord has always cared about the sexual behavior of human beings, both to honor the significance of marriage and to direct the people in a proper understanding of sexual intimacy. The surrounding nations were immoral in many ways, and their sexual practices were undefined and contrary to the way God wanted his people to behave. The instructions in this chapter seem repetitive, but the thoroughness of it helps us understand that God was especially concerned about sexuality among his people. But this is not just something he cared about back then; there is instruction throughout God's Word about appropriate sexual expression. In fact, it is interesting to realize that in the Book of Acts, as the Early Church was expanding, the Apostles did not want to heap huge demands on new believers, demands that the Jews hadn't lived up to either. So, in Acts 15, we learn that the new believers must "abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of a strangled animal, and from sexual immorality." (V29) They didn't want to make it too hard on new believers but there were a few things that were unacceptable, and sexual immorality was one. This issue is still very prevalent in our day. Reference – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

In this short reading, we have four trumpet judgments presented. It is interesting that each of the judgments declares that one-third of its target will be destroyed. The point is not to convey

an exact measurement; instead, it indicates that God's judgment on earth is beginning but has not reached its zenith. There is a similarity to the first four seals in chapter 6:1-8. The power structures of our world and the natural disasters in our reading today might be parallel in their arrival. At least some scholars would interpret it that way. In each case, whether seals or trumpets, the message is that wide-scale judgment has begun. The mention of the eagle's voice (V13) screeching a message of terror points to a symbolic messenger of God that is meant for the people of the world, which will be demonstrated when trumpets number five and six are blown.

#### DAY 19 – Leviticus 19 & Revelation 9:1-12

As we begin this chapter, we notice the connection to the Ten Commandments and the practicality of the instruction beginning in verse 9. Of course, the command that could slip by because it is mentioned so nonchalantly: "love your neighbor as yourself," (V18) is timeless and essential to the Lord. This is the cornerstone of biblical ethics and is repeated time and again throughout the Bible. Which commands and/or instructions are you noticing? There are definitely several decrees that are important in God's community still today. Again, there are several that overlap with the Ten Commandments. The distinction of life in God's community is important to God. These are principles of holy living, and as God's family, the Israelites were called to obey. There are certain aspects of life that, when ignored, lead to hurt, disease, division, and living in sin. Obviously, some of these seem foreign to us, but many are helpful, like being sensitive to the poor (Verses 9-10) and those who are disabled must be supported and treated kindly (V14). I find that most of these are still important to live well with others in a community. What do you think?

Our next section in Revelation predicts the fifth trumpet of judgment, and it is intense, to say the least. This is the judgment of the locust from the bottomless pit. The word associated with the pit is "abyss." This word most often refers to a dwelling place of demonic forces. There has been some debate on the literal judgment of locust, thinking that the locust could be symbolic of attacking helicopters, missiles, or other modern armaments. But the normal life span of a warring locust swarm was five months, so it could be a literal warning of judgment for all those who do not have the seal of God (V4). The name "Apollyon," destroyer, could refer to a demonic connection between the devil and this king of the locust; the prince of demons is linked to Satan in the Gospels. Again, the intensity described tells us that these last days will be full of judgment from God, but also a time of devilish destruction released by the hatred of Satan himself.

#### DAY 20 – Leviticus 20 & Revelation 9:13-21

The sexual practices of the pagan people surrounding the Israelites were immoral and ignored the creation plan of honoring marriage. I am sure you question the severity of the punishment, but God's desire to preserve a "holy" people set apart for his purposes was paramount. For example, the health of the family was essential to the well-being of the nation. Children who dishonor their parents (V9) could affect the health of the community. Plus, the word dishonor is often translated as "curse." If a child would "curse" their parents, it could lead to irreparable division in the home and spill over into the life of God's community. The principle is that proper worship of God led to proper conduct toward other people, and the opposite was also true. We might not understand why death was the judicial outcome of many of these offenses. But we would probably have to understand the enormity of immoral behavior in the nations of Canaan to be able to see why. Nonetheless, the consequence was huge, which led to a greater desire to obey God.

After reading Leviticus, we might have hoped for a little less intensity. But the sixth trumpet judgment brings enormous destruction and death. The mention of horses reminds us of seals 1 through 4. The plagues match the colors with red for fire, blue for smoke, and yellow for sulfur—all of which are signs of judgment in Scripture. It is hard to imagine that human beings would ignore God after facing plagues and death to this degree. It is amazing how hard a person's heart can become. The Bible tells us about the natural decline in the human heart because of sin. Romans 1:23f addresses this decline specifically as God gave them over to the depravity of their hearts. Revelation tells us the same thing in verses 20 & 21. It reveals how captivating evil, pagan worship, idols, and immorality can be for unbelievers. The Lord shows how he is willing to accept the repentance of sinful people, but they refuse. Believers are called to have sensitivity to the Lord and his desires over our own desires. When we get those reversed, we must be willing to repent as well. In Revelation chapters 2 & 3, the believers in those churches were challenged to repent quite often. We are not immune to sin. The series of sins is recognized by the severity of these judgments.

#### DAY 21 – Leviticus 21 & Revelation 10

The special calling on the life of a priest was meant to reflect the purity and holiness of God. The repetition of the phrase, "I am the Lord who makes... holy," affirms the necessary connection between the holiness of God and the holiness expected of the priesthood. It is clear that leadership from the priest had so much to do with the worship of God that the highest standards of conduct in his personal life were commanded. Priests were to adhere to these expectations, and the high priest was even challenged at a higher level. For example, common priests could marry a widow, but the high priest could only marry a virgin from his own clan. The role of the priest represented God's character and his presence among the people. In the New

Testament, we learn that believers have the same high calling as ambassadors for Christ, as we represent the Lord in our world. Let's pay close attention to our conduct so that we reflect a clearer image of who God is.

There are so many aspects of Revelation that intrigue me. Why conceal the meaning of the seven thunders? For me, it reminds me that I will never be able to figure out the exact meaning of these words, or even other difficult passages in the Bible. But nonetheless, this should increase my trust, not diminish it. There's both a sweetness and a bitterness to the scroll in verse 10. The sweetness points to the certainty of victory from God and his plan. But the sour effects when the scroll is digested remind us that his victory will not come easily, and many will be destroyed. The purpose of an interlude described in this chapter is to assure believers that God has a plan and he will surely rescue his people, even though everything we are reading is full of destruction and violence. What might give you encouragement in this chapter?

DAY 22 – Leviticus 22 & Revelation 11:1-14

As we read about the stringent rules and stipulations required, it can seem like too much and also a bit redundant. I am sure we would understand the specifics better if we actually lived during this time in Israel's history. To me, there is a clear severance from living in Egypt with a high regard for honoring Yahweh and living according to his commands and directives. The provision God had in mind for the priesthood and their families had to be protected. It was the only way they could receive food through the various offerings instituted. They had no land of their own. God wanted their provision to be considered sacred.

I have always been fascinated by the two witnesses. Most believe that the witnesses will appear on the scene during the great tribulation. We can think of the two witnesses as prophets who are obviously bringing a message of warning and impending judgment. Most also believe that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, as when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, and they appeared to Peter, James, and John with Jesus. They have miraculous power and will be raised up after being killed, as it clearly says in this chapter. The beast in verse 7 appears and has devilish power and evil intent. He will slay the two witnesses. This is the beginning of a warring battle that is initiated by Satan. Previously, the judgments have been orchestrated by God, but the scene changes with the beast and the antichrist, and the two sides of the great conflict are identified in the next few chapters. But even if other believers are killed, like the two witnesses, we will be raised up because of Christ. The hopeful vision of the two witnesses can apply to all of God's witnesses, because only the Lord has the power over death. How does the arrival of these two witnesses strike you? Why are these words meant to be an encouragement for God's people?

## WEEK 6

Leviticus closes with several chapters explaining the festivals, the tabernacle, the jubilee, the profound comparison between blessings and curses, and other regulations to be honored by the people. These are details that set the people up for success. They needed thorough instructions because they had become ingrained in Egyptian culture. The Lord wanted a God-centered approach to living well as His people. This week will carry us through the rest of the book.

Revelation will give us some relevant prophecy that focuses on the end but also has daily implications for our lives. This will make our readings even richer. 12:10-12 are some of the most enlightening words about the present-day conflict we battle as believers.

DAY 23 – Leviticus 23 & Revelation 11:15-19

Do you find it interesting that the Jewish people were to honor 7 festivals? That might seem like a lot, but not all of these festivals required travel to Jerusalem. It seems to me that we also have many holidays and several festivals. The three most significant festivals were Passover, Harvest, and Shelters. Harvest came to be known as Pentecost, 50 days after the first harvest. The Day of Atonement is connected with the Festival of Shelters, which is easily understood as especially important. Passover had the strongest connection to their time in Egypt. Shelters were a reenactment of living in the wilderness for 40 years. Harvest represented the entry into the Promised Land, which allowed them to have their first harvest after 40 years of manna and quail. The emphasis in this chapter is on the logistics of the festivals, but I am more interested in the meaning of the festival. What makes Passover so special? Why is Passover still important to us today as believers? Harvest is something we also celebrate with a holiday called Thanksgiving. What connections did you make after reading this chapter? Isn't it marvelous that God built into the importance of harvest the need to remember the poor? (Verse 22)

There are contrasting dynamics at play in our reading from Revelation. The hopeful words of victory, as "he will reign forever and ever," bump up against the release of God's wrath. Like Revelation 7:9-17, this scene provides a dramatic window into the ultimate finale of triumph in the midst of judgment, which combines final realities for believers and unbelievers at the same time. We can definitely appreciate the worship prayer of verse 17 and make it our own because God's reign now and forever is something to praise him for. But verse 18 describes the intensity of destruction for those who have not accepted God's invitation for life through his Son (John 3:16-20). This doom of God's enemies is the third and final terror (11:14). Beginning tomorrow,

John's revelation will bring expressive language to the great conflict at the end of the age. Thank you for being on this journey with me.

#### DAY 24 – Leviticus 24 & Revelation 12:1-9

There are obviously two themes in this chapter. The thoughtfulness about the tabernacle arrangements and the protocol is fairly easy to understand, but the intensity around cursing the name of the Lord is challenging. A large body of non-Israelites came out of Egypt with Israel. A fear of God was essential to the harmony of the community. If cursing the Lord was allowed, the religious fabric of the community would diminish. The connection to cursing the name means that the identity and character of the person were shamed. If anyone was allowed to shame the name of God, it would mean His holiness wasn't that important. We may not be able to understand the extreme measures taken to punish the blasphemer, but the reason behind the punishment was a severe lack of reverence and allegiance to God. The Israelites were called by God to honor and protect a God-centered community. Other severe consequences are outlined in this chapter regarding human life and the payment for injury inflicted. The judicial process was made simpler for the well-being of the whole community. These standards were required of both native-born Israelites and of the foreigners living among them. (V22)

I remember sharing this prophecy on a Christmas Sunday several years ago. It is obviously a very fascinating picture of the birth of Christ. So fascinating that not all scholars even connect it to Christ's entry into the world through the virgin Mary. Oftentimes, prophecies are not always chronologically arranged, so these words compress the diversity and dynamics of a battle in heaven, the birth of a ruler, and the ongoing spiritual conflict until the end into one scene. The crown of twelve stars suggests the woman represents God's people, with the dragon and his many heads and horns making him a foe of supernatural power that is evil and opposed to the plan of God. Personally, I make several connections to events that have already taken place, such as the battle in heaven with a third of the angels cast out of heaven. (VV3-4) Also, the birth of a son who rules must be Jesus the Messiah, right? The expulsion of the dragon and his angels portrays the vision of the battle, which is now centered on earth and against God's people. (VV7-9) The inclusion of 1,260 days (NLT, V6) gives us a sense of end times terminology, but many scholars suggest that this is symbolic of how life is for believers now and until Christ returns. How do you respond to this fascinating and helpful prophecy that gives us a snapshot of such important events, past, present, and future?

#### DAY 25 – Leviticus 25 & Revelation 12:10-12

The pattern of creation is represented in the Sabbath, the harvest, and the year of Jubilee. Seven days equaled a week ending in a Sabbath day; seven years ended with a Sabbath year; and seven Sabbath years brought about a special year called Jubilee. I think that is a marvelous name for what Jubilee means. It includes debt forgiveness, freedom for those hired as servants/slaves, and property restoration to correct economic inequality. It signifies a time of grace and spiritual renewal, which is exciting to read about in the context of the Old Testament and the law. The way this reads means that the Israelites were merely tenants because the land belonged to the Lord. (V23) I was reading Psalm 24 last week, which you might have also as a part of the reading schedule. It says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." (Ps 24:1) So much of this chapter is essentially saying the same thing. How do you respond to this gracious approach to ownership and hiring people as servants?

These three verses are ones that I refer to as much as any in the Book of Revelation. Why? Because they speak to me directly. The proclamation of Christ's authority and the defeat of the enemy through the shed blood and the courageous testimony of God's people make so much sense to me. Will I speak out for the Lord boldly, or am I afraid because of opposition or persecution? The idea of the devil being an Accuser is also very relevant, as we often sense his deception by lying to us, and too often, we believe his lies. I have memorized verse 11, which challenges me to be both courageous and outspoken for the Lord. The Apostle Paul said, "if I boast, I boast in the Lord." That's the concept I see in verse 11. It also confirms that the devil is "prowling around like a roaring lion," because he knows his time is short (V12). There are several connect points in these three verses; so what stands out to you and why?

#### DAY 26 – Leviticus 26 & Revelation 12:13-18

This chapter in Leviticus has often been simplified to "blessings and curses." If God's people obey the covenant that God has made with them, they will be blessed. If they disobey, then God's punishment would fall on them like a curse. The disobedience section (beginning in verse 14) of this chapter is longer because the human inclination is selfish and prone to ignoring God. Obedience was straightforward and simpler: fidelity to God and the keeping of the Sabbath. Verses 3-13 affirm this basic truth of obedience and devotion to God. But since the possibilities of disobedience were strong, the message was longer and full of warning. But as is often the case, Moses relays a message of hope in verses 40-45. Even after Israel violated the covenant and experienced judgment, reconciliation and restoration remained possible if the people confessed and repented. God's grace had not been taken away. God did not want to destroy his people; he would restore them if they would only humble themselves and repent. (2 Chron. 7:14) How might you follow the pathway of obedience outlined in verses 3 to 13?

The battle on the earth is a constant war prior to being rescued by God and living in his presence forever. In other words, as a follower of Christ, we have a relentless enemy who has declared war (V17) against the children of the woman. That definition might seem confusing but it is clear from the rest of the verse that this is about believers. "All who keep God's commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus." This paragraph has imagery that is hard to define, like the wings of an eagle describes the woman. The dragon spews out water to drown the woman who is flying like an eagle. The earth drains the water, and the dragon redirects his fury against her children. As I have mentioned, the vision of John represents something or someone(s), and the interpretation takes into account these symbols as illustrative of something real, like a battle between the devil (dragon) and the offspring of the woman (believers). The next chapters are usually interpreted as predictive and use symbolic language to describe the final days of the age. What might you take away from this reading in Revelation?

#### DAY 27 – Leviticus 27 & Revelation 13:1-10

These vows are often related to the funding necessary for the sanctuary. This chapter reads like an addendum to the rest of the book. The practice of making a vow was obviously an important aspect of religious life in Israel. These vows were not to be made flippantly. Jesus even addressed the subject in Matthew 5:33-37. Jesus appears to lessen the importance of an oath or a vow. I imagine that these vows could be performed as a show of righteousness, which could be solely an external emphasis. There were so many religious regulations by the time Jesus walked the earth that I think he was de-emphasizing their importance because so many of the religious people were just going through the motions. But the principle of the tithe that surfaces near the close of the book has remained. The tithe (a tenth) represented the whole thing. The whole flock, for example, was God's, and by releasing one in ten sheep or cattle as a tithe to the Lord, this would be used by the Levites for their provision as well as sacrifices. Honestly, I didn't find this chapter to be that helpful, except that the tithe has lasting value of acknowledging that it all belongs to God, and I worship him and trust him when I generously tithe. Congratulations, you have read through what is considered the lost challenging book in the Bible to read for your devotional life.

Chapter 13 turns up the heat as the beast joins the dragon with great fury and deadly destruction. These characters are part and parcel of Satan's devilish regime. They have power, authority, and a following. It says the people on earth worshiped the beast. (V8) Early interpretation of John's revelation (81-96 AD) suggested that Nero, the cruel Emperor, would be raised to life. Nero was known for a similar hatred of Christians. Also, this prophecy was

connected to Rome because of how ruthlessly Roman rulers executed Christians. The Great Tribulation is thought of as a time when the powers of darkness reign. The meaning of verse 5 is often thought of as three and a half years of devilish persecution and great bloodshed. Next week, we will read about another devilish character who is most often identified as the Antichrist. These predictions are full of violence and a disregard for human life. May they pass quickly.