

# Parasha “Emor” 2015

Focus- Leviticus Twenty-Four, Verses 10-23

*“The Case of the Blasphemer”*



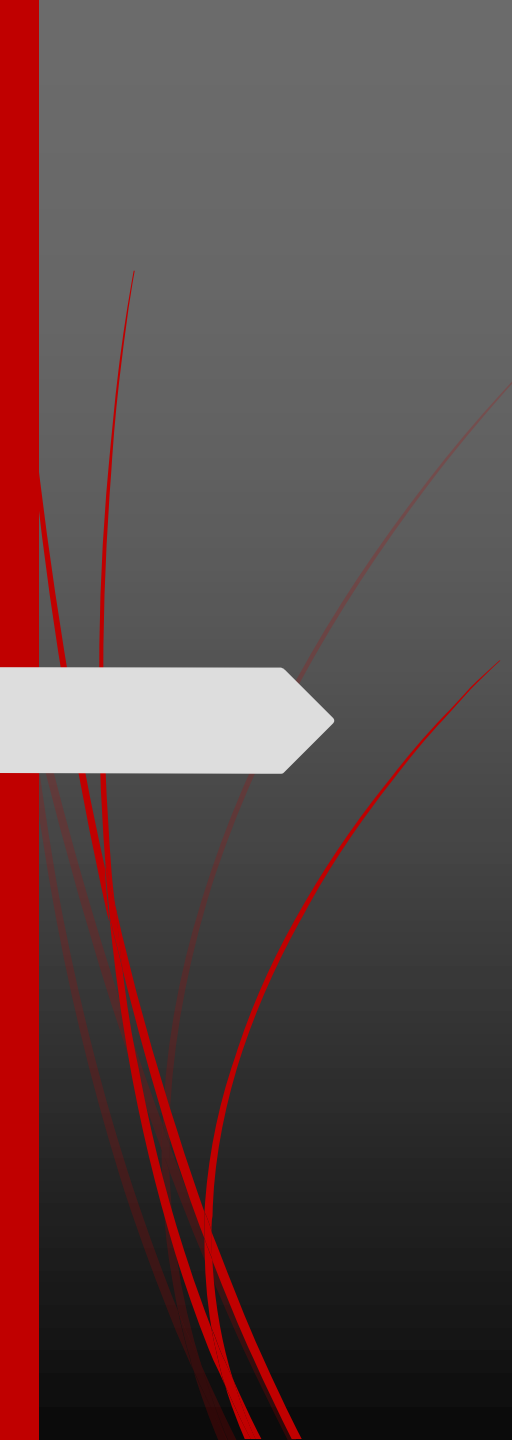
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Lev 24:10-23 And the son of an Yisra'élite woman, whose father was a Mitsrite, went out among the children of Yisra'ěl. And the Yisra'élite woman's son and a man of Yisra'ěl strove in the camp. (11) And the Yisra'élite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. So they brought him to Mosheh. Now his mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. (12) And they put him in under guard, that it might be declared to them at the mouth of יהוה. (13) And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying, (14) "Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and all those who heard him shall lay their hands on his head, and all the congregation shall stone him. (15) "And speak to the children of Yisra'ěl, saying, 'Anyone who curses his Elohim shall bear his sin. (16) 'And he who blasphemes the Name of יהוה shall certainly be put to death, and all the congregation certainly stone him, the stranger as well as the native. When he blasphemes the Name, he is put to death. (17) 'And he who smites the life from any man shall certainly be put to death. (18) 'And he who smites a beast repays it, body for body. (19) 'And when a man inflicts a blemish upon his neighbour, as he has done so it is done to him: (20) 'Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he inflicts a blemish upon him, so it is done to him. (21) 'And he who smites a beast repays it, and he who smites a man *to death* is put to death. (22) 'You are to have one right-ruling, for the stranger and for the native, for I am יהוה your Elohim.' " (23) And Mosheh spoke to the children of Yisra'ěl, and they brought the one who cursed outside the camp, and stoned him with stones. And the children of Yisra'ěl did as יהוה commanded Mosheh.



Ever wonder why the Case of the Egyptian  
Blasphemer in Leviticus 24 seems so out of  
place in its literary structure?

Article By Dr. William Ramey

“The Name of the Lord: A Sacred Trust- Leviticus 24:10-23”



“The literary placement of this incident seems to be out of sequence with its immediate context, appearing in the midst of instructions dealing with the sacred ceremonial scheduled observations (Sabbath [23:3]; Passover and Firstfruits [23:4-14]; Feast of Weeks [23:15-22]; Feast of Trumpets [23:23-25]; Day of Atonement [23:26-32]; Feast of Tabernacles [23:33-44]; the Lampstand [24:1-4]; Bread of the Presence [24:5-9]; **case concerning cursing [24:10-23]**; the Sabbatical Year [25:1-7]; and the Jubilee Year [25:8-34]). It is possible that this hideous case may have interrupted the LORD giving instruction to Moses concerning the ceremonial ritual of the sacred calendar. However, and more probable, the case concerning cursing is literarily and strategically placed in Leviticus for two important pedagogical reasons.”

*William Ramey*

“the only two narratives in Leviticus (8:1—10:20; 24:10-23) are strategically placed to divide the Book into three parts, with the proper laws concerning the sacrificial system that correspond to the wilderness Tabernacle [see Figure 1]—those that deal with the courtyard (1:1—7:38; 11:1—17:16); with the Holy Place (18:1—24:9); and the Holy of Holies (25:1—27:34) [Figure 2]. When these laws have been overlaid, as it were, in each compartment of the Tabernacle as prescribed by their position in Leviticus, they describe the actions that are performed in the appropriate place, or to describe the requirements for entry into it. Notably, the sequence of laws in Leviticus 1:1—7:38 continue in Leviticus 11, as those in 24:5-9 continue in Leviticus 25, as if they had not been suddenly interrupted by the narratives.” Page 2

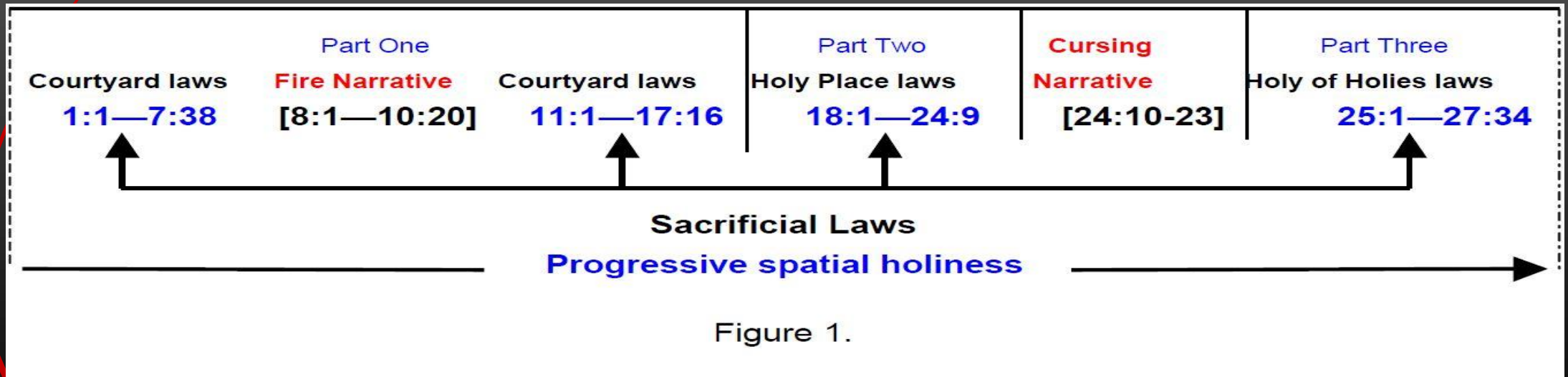


Figure 1.

# THE CONCEPT OF MA'AL

*Investigating Scriptural Trespass*



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# What is Ma'al?

“Biblical ma'al involves trespass either upon the sancta or name of God. The latter is amply attested in oath violations. The former, however, is never defined or clearly illustrated. The Hittite text, "Instructions for Temple Officials" answers this need. It further postulates that whenever the trespasser is apprehended by man, he alone suffers death but when he is apprehended by the gods, i.e., by ordeal or oracle, his family dies with him. Biblical law, however, operates on contrasting postulates: Sins against God are punishable solely by God and collective punishment can be exacted solely by God.”

*JACOB MILGROM*

# Ma'al Definition

## Brown-Driver-Briggs

**H4604**

מעל

ma'al

### **BDB Definition:**

1) unfaithful or treacherous act,  
trespass

1a) against man

1b) against God

## Strong's

**H4604**

מעל

ma'al

*mah'-al*

From H4608; *treachery, that is, sin: - falsehood, grievously, sore, transgression, trespass, X very*



## 2 Categories References

### *Sancta Trespass*

- Joshua 7 – Achon's sin
- Cherem (Lev 27:28)
  - “every devoted offering is most holy to YHVH”
- 2 Chr 26:16-18 – King Uzziah
- 2 Chr 36:14 – Ma'al defiles the house of YHVH

### *Oath Violation*

- Ezekiel 17:13-20 – King of Judah breaks oath with the king of Babylon
- Swearing an oath on the Name of YHVH
- Idolatry = *ma'al*

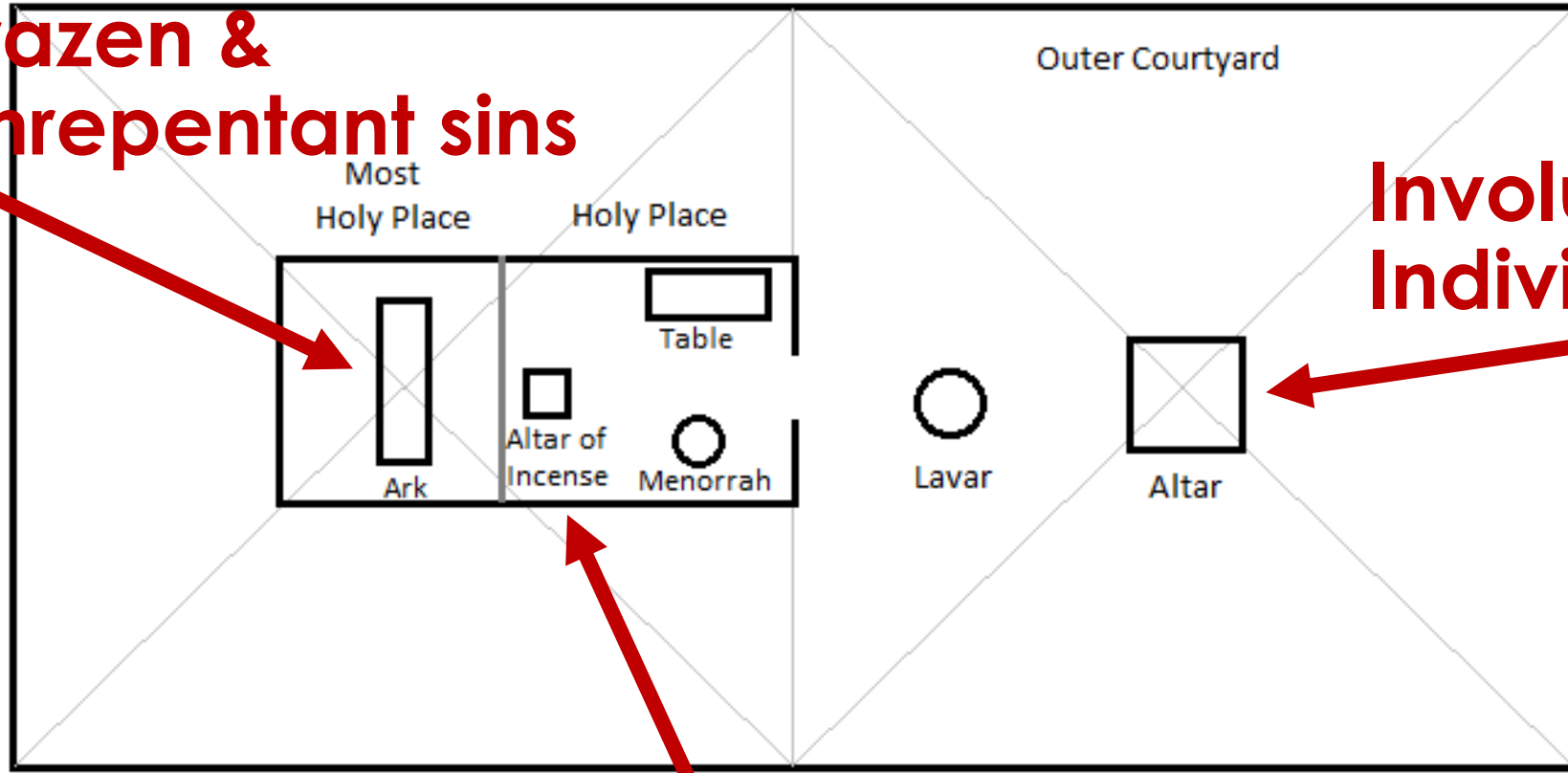
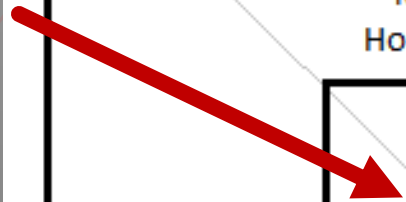
## First Category of Ma'al- *Sancta Trespass*

“Cases of ma'al trespass on Temple sancta are found only in Chronicles. Uzziah is charged with ma'al for offering incense inside the Temple (2 Chr. 26:16-18). His offering is illicit in accordance with the Priestly source, since both place and rite, i.e., entering the sanctuary and officiating there, are forbidden to a non-priest.<sup>3</sup> He is stricken with leprosy on the spot. Ahaz is also indicted with ma'al by Chronicles for tampering with the Temple sancta (2 Chr. 28:19, 22-25, cf. 2 Kgs. 16:14-17) and suspending their use (2 Chr. 29:19).”

## Second Category of Ma'al- *Oath Violation*

The second category of ma'al, oath violation, is integrally related to trespass upon sancta for the violated sanctum is none other than the Deity Himself. Adonai's name by which an oath is taken is called a sanctum, (e.g., Lev. 20:3; Isa. 57:15; Ezek. 36:20-22; Amos 2:7; Ps. 111:9), and the oath itself is called debar qodesh (Ps. 105:42, cf. vv. 8f.) and is taken bqds (e.g., Amos 4:2; Ps 60:8). In the cultic laws, as can be shown, the oath violation is defined as "swearing falsely" or "**desecrating the name of God.**" In the non-legal texts, which are examined here, it appears in a variety of forms, all of which can be subsumed under one rubric: the violation of the covenant oath.

**Brazen &  
Unrepentant sins**



**Involuntary,  
Individual**

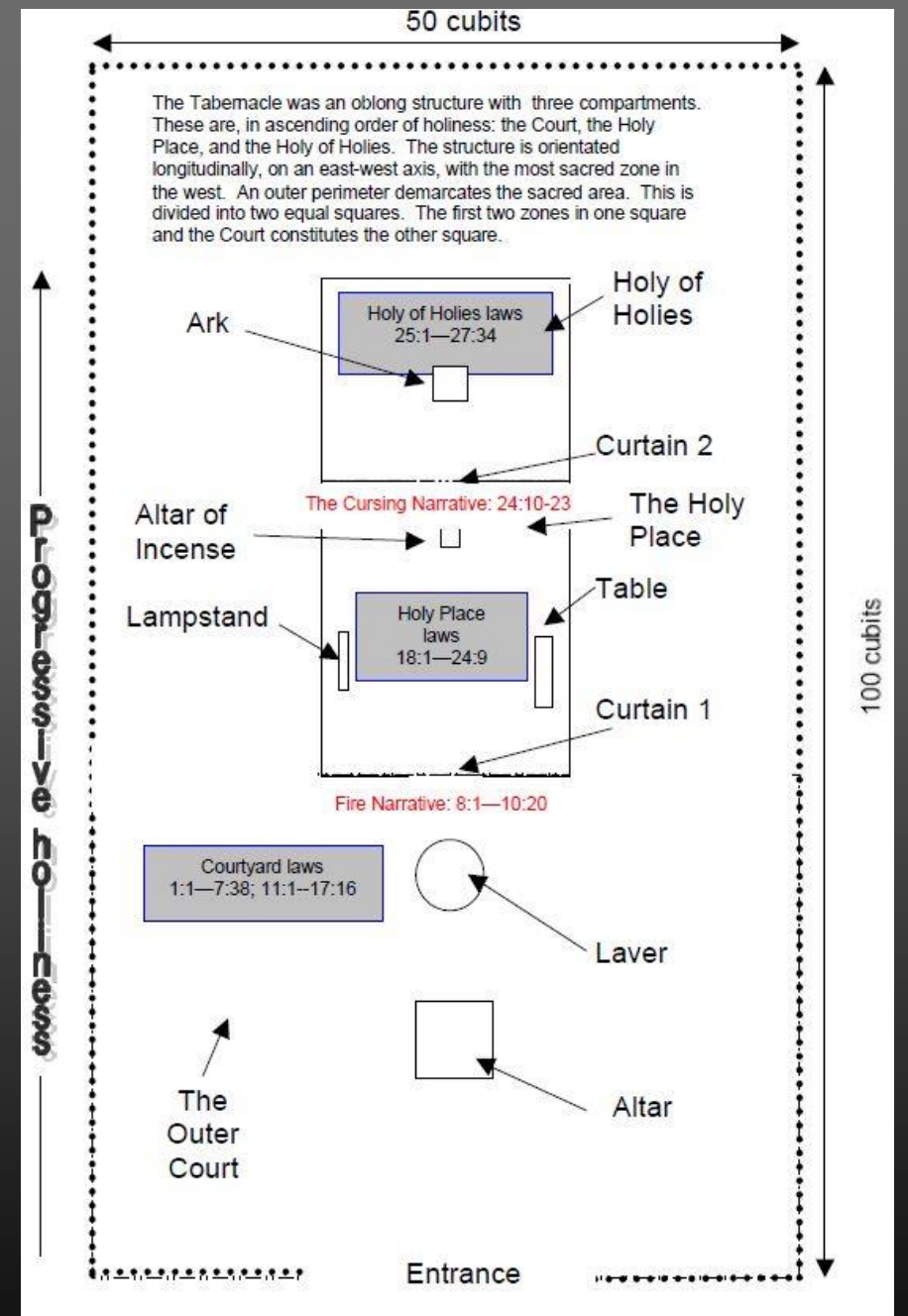


**Involuntary,  
Communal**



# Graded Stages of Kedusha And Purity in the Temple

The Literary Structure of Leviticus follows literal Structural Pattern of the Tabernacle/Temple.



# Retribution

Finally both ma'al categories share not only the nature of the sin-involving trespass upon the Divine property or name-but also call for a similar retribution. Both trespasses provoke God's consuming wrath on the family and community of the sinner. The doctrine of corporate culpability for sins against God not only informs the Priestly Code but all of biblical literature.

*Ma'al, then, means trespassing upon the divine realm either by poaching on his sancta or breaking his covenant oath; it is a lethal sin which can destroy both the offender and his community*