

LEVITICUS 2

A Bloodless Offering

The Grain Offering (2)

Until we have seen ourselves as God sees us, we are not likely to be much disturbed over conditions around us as long as they do not get so far out of hand as to threaten our comfortable way of life.

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

What does a bloodless sacrifice tell us about approaching God's holiness?

How does the grain offering compare with the offering of Cain (Genesis 4)?

This chapter lays out in three sections:

- *a raw flour offering (2:1-3),*
- *various cooked flour offerings (2:4-10), and*
- *general instructions on these offerings (2:8-16). The final part can be divided as:*
 - *how it was used (10),*
 - *what was prohibited and always included (11-13), and*
 - *first portion of grain offering (14-16).*

RAW FLOUR (2:1-3)

¹“When you present grain as an offering to the LORD, the offering must consist of choice flour. You are to pour olive oil on it, sprinkle it with frankincense, ²and bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests. The priest will scoop out a handful of the flour moistened with oil, together with all the frankincense, and burn this representative portion on the altar.

It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

³The rest of the grain offering will then be given to Aaron and his sons. This offering will be considered a most holy part of the special gifts presented to the LORD.

Two different words for offering are used in 2:1. *Qorban* used already in 1:2, 3, 10, 14 describes a gift totally given to God, but in *Leviticus 3* it also describes a *gift* which is given to God, but God now owns and controls what can be eaten and when (7:11, 15-17). The second word is *minchah* (was used of ‘gifts to superior persons ... to convey an attitude of homage and submission ... sometimes translated as ‘tribute,’ see Jacob’s gifts to Esau *Genesis 33:10*; and the nation’s gifts to Solomon *1 Kings 4:21*).¹ It seems reasonable to conclude that the grain offering was offered as thank you gift to God. The *minchah* in a religious context is a technical term for the *grain offering*.

¹ TWOT, 1214.

That this representative portion is pleasing to the Lord indicates acceptability of the worship. This is in contrast to Cain's *minchah* which was not pleasing (this is indicated by the fact that God did not regard it – Genesis 4:4-5).

It is likely that grain offerings were presented along with the burnt offerings.

A grain offering could be offered by itself as a distinct sacrifice (e.g., vv. 14–16; 6:14; Num. 5:15). However, its more common use was as an accompaniment to either a burnt or a fellowship offering. It always accompanied fellowship offerings (Lev. 7:12–14; cf. Num. 15:4) and normally accompanied burnt offerings, especially the calendrical offerings (Num. 28–29).

Another supplemental offering not mentioned in Leviticus 1–7 but explained in Numbers 15:8–10 was the drink offering (consisting of wine or strong drink) which was poured out to the Lord “at the sanctuary” (Num. 28:7). This oblation was offered along with the grain offering which accompanied a burnt or fellowship offering. The quantity of both the grain offering and the drink offering was fixed according to the type of sacrificial animal which it accompanied (cf. Num. 15:2–10).

However, grain offerings were excluded from the burnt offerings for the high priest and the people in the special atonement ritual on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:3, 5, 24). Special rituals which prescribed the grain offering included (a) purification rituals after the termination of a Nazirite vow (Num. 6:15, 19) or after the purification of a leper (Lev. 14:10, 20–21, 31); and (b) the “jealousy ritual,” which used one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal without oil or frankincense (Num. 5:15, 18, 25–26).²

Why ‘olive oil’? Because this was what they used to bind the flour together to make bread. It was the shortening of the ancient world. ‘Olive oil’ is mentioned in 197 verses in the Bible. It was used for anointing oneself (2 Samuel 14:2; Luke 7:46) as well as sacred items such as stones to mark holy places (Genesis 28:18), priests (Exodus 29:2) and kings (1 Samuel 10:1).

Why ‘frankincense’? This word comes from the Hebrew word for ‘white’ and refers to the white dust that forms on drops of it. “Frankincense seemed to be such a characteristic element in the sacrificial system that the term could be used to represent the entire system (Isa 43:23; Jer 6:20).”³ It is particularly associated with the grain offering (5:11; 6:15; 24:7; Nehemiah 13:5,9; Isaiah 43:23; 60:6; Jeremiah 17:26). It is symbolic of prayer (Psalm 141:2; Exodus 30:1,7-8; Luke 1:8-10; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4; for a pagan illustration – Jeremiah 11:12).

That the priests receive the remainder for their exclusive use (most holy) makes this the first of the offerings to be put to human use, but still the worshipper gets no part of the offering. This will change with the Peace Offering.

What were the provisions for the support of the priesthood?

1. Their portion of the grain offerings (2:3,10; 5:13; 6:16-18) with exceptions (6:23)
 - a. Oven baked, pan fried, griddled belong to offering priest (7:9)
 - b. Other grain offerings share (7:10)
 - c. Grain portion of the peace offering, unleavened (7:12)
 - d. Grain portion of the peace offering, leavened (7:13-14)
2. The restitution + 20% of the guilt offering for sacred things (5:16)
3. Priest's portion of the sin offering (6:26,29) with exceptions (6:30)
4. Breast of the peace offering (7:31)
5. Right thigh of the peace offering (7:32-36)

² F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1985, 1, 176.

³ Andrew Bowling, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1999, 468.

6. The sin and guilt offerings (7:6-7)
7. A priest's family may eat (22:10-13)
8. The priest doing the offering received the hide from the burnt offering (7:9)
9. The 12 sacred loaves (24:5-9)
10. Unredeemed land (27:21)
11. The tithe (27:30-33)

Notice that the burnt portion of the grain offering is *special gift (fire) a pleasing aroma*, just as the meat offerings were (2:2,9). In this instance, the burning grain is not said to atone for sin (1:4), but it does as the poor person's sin offering (5:11-13). The fact that it is required with a peace offering given as thanksgiving (7:12-13) also argues against it having any atoning benefit.

There is introduced in this offering the concept of it being *holy*, specifically, the remainder of it is *most holy*. What does this mean?

Holy is the word *qadesh* indicating something belongs to the sphere of the sacred, that is, it belongs to God who is the very definition of *holy*. When a Hebrew wanted to indicate that something was holy, he would call it *qadesh* (Exodus 3:5). If something was most holy, he would use the word twice to emphasize that it was *qadesh qadesh*, holy holy. The ultimate was to repeat it three times to indicate the most holy place *qadesh qadesh qadesh* (Exodus 26:33) or God Himself (Isaiah 6:3). God is not merely separated forever from that which is common or unclean, but is holy in His character thus totally good, entirely without evil (TWOT).

Since saints are called to be like God, we must be holy, since He is holy.

COOKED (2:4-10)

⁴If your offering is a grain offering baked in an oven, it must be made of choice flour, but without any yeast. It may be presented in the form of thin cakes mixed with olive oil or wafers spread with olive oil. ⁵If your grain offering is cooked on a griddle, it must be made of choice flour mixed with olive oil but without any yeast. ⁶Break it in pieces and pour olive oil on it; it is a grain offering.

⁷If your grain offering is prepared in a pan, it must be made of choice flour and olive oil.

⁸No matter how a grain offering for the LORD has been prepared, bring it to the priest, who will present it at the altar.

⁹The priest will take a representative portion of the grain offering and burn it on the altar.

It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁰The rest of the grain offering will then be given to Aaron and his sons as their food. This offering will be considered a most holy part of the special gifts presented to the LORD.

The fact that a portion of this offering has been burnt on the altar to God means that the rest of the offering has transferred from the common realm to the sacred. It is most holy and can only be eaten by those set apart, the priests.

The word of God, the bread of life, is most holy. The natural man can hear it, he cannot comprehend it because it is not for him. Words are very common things, but divine truth, though communicated through words becomes sacred in the life of those filled with the Spirit. The same words are considered foolishness to those without the Spirit. Ultimately, the bread must be identified with Jesus, the true bread of life (John 6).

THIRD SECTION (2:10-16)

This third section gives further instructions regarding all of the grain offerings plus one more:

- *how it was used (10),*
- *what was prohibited and always included (11-13), and*
- *first portion of grain offering (14-16).*

¹¹“Do not use yeast in preparing any of the grain offerings you present to the LORD, because no yeast or honey may be burned as a special gift presented to the LORD.¹²You may add yeast and honey to an offering of the first crops of your harvest, but these must never be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

¹³Season all your grain offerings with salt to remind you of God’s eternal covenant. Never forget to add salt to your grain offerings.

While *yeast* and *honey* can be given, and in some situations should be given (23:16-17), they are never to be burned up on the altar. Items with *yeast* do not become *most holy*, but are eaten also by the priests and their families.

Why can you give yeast or honey, but not burn it as an offering?

The short answer is because God said so, but did not say why nor did He say that these were evil things. Both were allowed and blessed, but not appropriate for an offering by fire.

We recognize that suggested answers are speculative as there is no definitive word on the reason for their prohibition.

Yeast was used to illustrate the corrupting and permeating influence of false teaching and tolerated sinfulness (Matthew 16:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9). But yeast was permitted to Israel, even the priests, but not on Passover (Leviticus 23:16-17; Exodus 12:15).

Honey is not a bad thing. The land to which they were going was described as a place of ‘milk and honey’ (Exodus 13:5; 33:3). It was permitted to give both yeast and honey (Lev. 2:12), but not to offer it in fire. The only negative reference to honey is in Revelation 10:9-10.

It may be that the grain offering is the result of human toil, but that the effects of yeast and honey are not produced by human effort. Yeast does its work when left alone. Man cannot make honey.

There are two words translated “yeast” in chapter 2. The first is *matzah* (2:4), the word for *unleavened bread*. The second is *seor* the word for ‘yeast’ which is forbidden in 2:11 (*the other uses of this word in Exodus 12:15,19; 13:7 and Deuteronomy 16:4 relating to the Passover*).

The honey in Leviticus 2:11 Although it is not necessarily fermented, it is excluded from the altar, apparently because it is susceptible to fermentation (cf. Num. 6:3–4, where a Nazirite is prohibited from consuming even unfermented grape products because grapes ferment easily and are used for making fermented wine⁴

On the other hand, *salt should always be a part of what is burned*.

Why salt with grain offerings?

We are given a clear answer as to why salt (2:13) it served to remind them of God’s eternal covenant (see Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5). No one likes food without salt (Job 6:6). We are to be salt to draw the world to Him (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50; Colossians 4:6).

1197 מֶלַח (mālah) II, **salt, season**. Denominative verb.

1197a מֶלַח (melah) **salt**.

1197b מְלֵחָה (mēlēhā) **saltiness, barrenness**.

1197c מַלְלוּאָה (mallūāh) **mallow, a plant which grows in salt marshes** (Job 30:4).

1197d מַלְלוּ (mallāh) **mariner**.

Only three passages use this denominative verb. According to Lev 2:13, the meal offering is to be seasoned with salt. In Ex 30:35 the ingredients used in compounding incense were to be salted (KJV, “tempered together”).

Nowhere does there occur the aspect of entering into friendly relations by eating bread and salt together. Arab society to this day retains such expressions as “there is salt between us” or “I love you as I love salt.”

⁴ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 80.

The third passage is Ezk 16:4, which uses a Hophal perfect and infinitive absolute to describe a newborn baby being rubbed or washed with salt. Probably this is merely to cleanse and heal the child rather than to establish any covenant [of salt] between the newborn and God. We may hope the salt solution was dilute!

מֶלַח (*melah*). **Salt**. Various uses of salt are mentioned in twenty-eight passages of the OT. It was obtained from large quarries located on the southwest side of the Dead Sea (Gen 19:26; Ezk 47:11; Zeph 2:9). In Job 6:6 it is mentioned as a condiment. Salt and oil were always mixed with the meal offering (Lev 2:13). Ezekiel 43:24 notes that the priest will cast salt on the burnt offerings of the millennial age. The incense offering, the symbol of public worship to God, must also be “seasoned with salt” (Ex 30:35).

Some hold that salt in these offerings represents that which prevents putrefaction, while honey and leaven do not prevent it and were excluded for that reason. Others point out that the use of salt as a preservative is not clear in the Bible. The burnt offerings, at least, were not to be kept and incense does not putrefy. Therefore the use of salt in these offerings may be a matter of seasoning or of dedication, for salt was an item of value. Honey, on the other hand, does not easily putrefy.

The term “**covenant of salt**” is applied to the perpetual statute by which revenue was to be given to the priests (Num 18:19), and to the covenant established with David whereby he was accorded an everlasting reign over Israel (II Chr 13:5). These relationships are thereby designated as irrevocable and binding (see also Lev 2:13).

The preservative qualities of salt are perhaps seen in the prophet Elisha’s using it to purify the spring at Jericho (II Kgs 2:20–21), though the efficacy here was miraculous. On the other hand, salt was scattered over the site of a city devoted to God for destruction (Jud 9:45) which thus became the symbol of barrenness and desolation (see also Deut 29:23 [H 22]; Job 39:6; Zeph 2:9).⁵

FRESH HEADS OF GRAIN (2:14-16)

The concluding portion of this chapter talks about a further grain offering, *the first portion*. This reminds us of the addition of *birds* as acceptable offerings. In this case, the offering is not a concession to the poor⁶, but a faith statement from the harvester.

14“If you present a grain offering to the LORD from the first portion of your harvest, bring fresh grain that is coarsely ground and roasted on a fire.

15Put olive oil on this grain offering, and sprinkle it with frankincense.

16The priest will take a representative portion of the grain moistened with oil, together with all the frankincense, and burn it as a special gift presented to the LORD.

It is in chapter two that we first encounter the word *HOLY* in Leviticus. This word has been used multiple times in Exodus.

It occurs first in 2:3 in its double form, “*holy, holy,*” which means *most holy*.

Some of the grain and oil with frankincense burned, but the majority is given to the holy priests as payment for their services.

Additional Instructions on the Grain Offering (6:14-18)

14“These are the instructions regarding the grain offering.

Aaron’s sons must present this offering to the LORD in front of the altar.

15The priest on duty will take from the grain offering a handful of the choice flour moistened with olive oil, together with all the frankincense. He will burn this representative portion on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

16Aaron and his sons may eat the rest of the flour, but it must be baked without yeast and eaten in a sacred place within the courtyard of the Tabernacle. 17Remember, it must never be prepared with yeast.

⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1999, 506–507.

⁶ When grain is used in the sin offering it is a concession to the poor (5:11-13), but it is not technically a grain offering.

I have given it to the priests as their share of the special gifts presented to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy.

¹⁸Any of Aaron's male descendants may eat from the special gifts presented to the LORD. This is their permanent right from generation to generation.

Anyone or anything that touches these offerings will become holy.”

Anyone or anything that touched these offerings was transferred into the realm of the holy, separated solely for God's use.

Something common can become holy!

The token offering of grain in Leviticus 2 serves as a simple gift to the Lord, expressing a positive relationship with him and honoring the One who provides “daily bread” (cf. Matt. 6:11).⁷

HELPS

2:1 grain as an offering translates two words *corban* (*offering, sacrifice*) and *minchah* (*gift, tribute*). Not only was this gift dedicated to the Lord, it was His due as the owner and ruler of all.

Choice flour is *solet* which was a finely ground *wheat* flour, probably not as refined as most flour today, but not as coarse as meal. It could be translated as ‘grits.’ This was quite expensive.

Frankincense was the chief type of incense. “A balsamic gum from plants of the genus *Boswellia*, which are native to southern Arabia and northern Somaliland. The residue, once exuded, hardens into a natural resin that is considered the finest burning incense in the world” (*Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, 121–22)⁸. It came to be associated with prayers ascending.

2:2 burn translates *qatar* referring to the sacrificial smoke. It is likely that its ascension was an indication of the acceptability of the offering.

Representative portion in other versions is called the memorial portion. God is called upon to notice that the worshipper is paying his due not merely in the burned offering, but also in giving the rest as He had directed.

Special gift we have seen is the word for fire and pictures the offering being consumed upon the altar.

Pleasing aroma means that just as the burnt offering satisfies the LORD, so this grain offering does.

2:3 most holy part – this is the first two of 81 occurrences of the word *qodesh*, holy, in Leviticus. The doubling up of the word indicates just how set apart this offering is. What was common has now been transformed into something so sacred that only God and the sacred priest may partake of it.

2:4 without any yeast is *challah matzah* refers to something pierced (*challah*) as well as unleavened (*matzah*). This not only speaks of the purity of Christ, but points as well to the bread of life being pierced for us.

2:7 pan 7:9 makes it clear that one cooked “on” a griddle but “in” a pan. This suggests that the oil in the pan served for deep fat frying, hence the translation “deep fried in olive oil”⁹

2:8 “And you shall bring the grain *offering* that is made from these things to Yahweh, and *the offerer* shall bring it to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar.” The DSS and LXX read “And he shall bring” as opposed to “And you shall bring” in an attempt to conform this phrase to the use of the third person throughout the rest of the verse.

⁷ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 79.

⁸ James W. Knox, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, 2016.

⁹ Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Le 2:7.

There are several person, gender, and voice verb problems in this verse. First, the MT has “And you shall bring the grain offering,” but the LXX and Qumran have “he” rather than “you.”

Second, the MT has “which shall be made” (i.e., the 3rd person masculine Niphal passive verb which, in fact, does not agree with its feminine subject, מִנְחָה, *minkhah*, “grain offering”), while the LXX has “which he shall make” (3rd person Qal), thus agreeing with the LXX 3rd person verb at the beginning of the verse (see above).

Third, the MT has a 3rd person *vav* consecutive verb “and he shall present it to the priest,” which agrees with the LXX but is not internally consistent with the 2nd person verb at the beginning of the verse in the MT. The *BHS* editors conjecture that the latter might be repointed to an imperative verb yielding “present it to the priest.” This would require no change of consonants and corresponds to the person of the first verb in the MT. This solution has been tentatively accepted here (cf. also J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* [WBC], 26–27), even though it neither resolves the gender problem of the second verb nor fits the general grammatical pattern of the chapter in the MT.¹⁰

2:11 Leaven “Every grain offering you bring to Yahweh must not be made of yeasted food, because you must not turn into smoke any yeast or any honey from an offering made by fire for Yahweh.” The LXX, Sam., Tg., and some Hebrew manuscripts replace “turn into smoke” with “present.”¹¹

It is believed that the reason yeast and honey were forbidden in this offering was that they both ferment under certain conditions. For this reason, honey may have been associated with corruption. Because yeast (leaven) also permeates, it is used almost without exception to symbolize the insidious spread of evil. In Mark 8:15, it's recorded that Jesus told his disciples: “And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven (yeast, NIV) of the Pharisees, and of the leaven (yeast, NIV) of Herod” (KJV).

Honey here refers to *wild honey* produced by bees. This was a great luxury and trade item. It could be given, but not burnt on the altar.

2:12 You may add yeast and honey is supplied by the NLT to make clear what the ‘them’ refers. The NKJV makes this ambiguous implying that it is the firstfruits which are not burnt on the altar. This is true (*Numbers 18:12*), but in the context it is talking about giving yeast and honey. Later he will discuss firstfruits as a separate item (*2:14-16*). The yeast and honey are given as firstfruits, but no representative portion of them is burnt.

2:13 “Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.”

Salt stands for permanence and incorruption. Thus when salt is used in a “covenant of salt,” it always signifies an everlasting covenant, with the salt being an emblem or symbol of perpetuity. The use of salt in an offering, would therefore signify the everlasting relation between God and His people—they everlastingly belong to Him, and He everlastingly belongs to them. For this reason, salt and permanence were always associated in a covenant; 2 Chronicles 13:5 states: “Don’t you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?” (See also *Numbers 18:19*.)¹²

God’s eternal covenant - Literally it says *God’s covenant*. The addition of the word *eternal* is to convey the meaning of the *salt*. This idea is more clearly seen in 2 Chronicles 13:5.

2:14 first portion – translates *bikkurim* which other translations call *first fruits*. The very best of the early crop was to be offered to the Lord as a way of honoring Him (*Proverbs 3:9*). Christ is the first fruit of resurrection (*1 Corinthians 15:20*) meaning more to come.

¹⁰ Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*, (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Le 2:8.

¹¹ Rick Brannan and Israel Loken, *The Lexham Textual Notes on the Bible*, Lexham Bible Reference Series, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), Le 2:8–11.

¹² James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible*, (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 143.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY QUOTES

The *typology* of the grain offering pictures the person of Christ and points up the substitutionary value of His death on the cross. This is illustrated in the normal conjunction of the grain offering with the burnt or fellowship offerings. It may be that the fine flour speaks of His perfect, well-balanced humanity, the oil pictures the Holy Spirit who overshadowed Him at the Incarnation, the frankincense points to the moral fragrance of His person, and the absence of yeast (leaven) illustrates His separateness from sin. Beyond this, it is interesting that even the image of grain falling into the ground and “dying” to bring forth fruit was used by Jesus to illustrate His death (John 12:23–24).¹³

¹³ F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1985, 1, 177.

HOLINESS WORD STUDY

Someone “holy” can become “unclean” by touching something defiling and must act to purify himself to be “clean.” The high priest is always ‘holy,’ but may become ‘unclean’ by sin or other defilement. He must purify himself before coming into God’s presence or performing some other action as a priest. *This is similar to the Christian saint, who may be in sin, but does not cease to be a saint, instead, he has ceased to walk with God and have the Spirit’s power operating in his life.*

Something which is “unclean” can be dedicated to the Lord and thus become “holy.”

Something which touches ‘holy’ also becomes ‘holy,’ even if it is an unclean thing. But note the question asked in Haggai 2:12. Touching something that is touching something holy does not transfer holiness.

1990	קָדַשׁ (<i>qādaš</i>) be hallowed, holy, sanctified; to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate. Denominative verb.
1990a	קִדְשׁ (<i>qōdeš</i>) apartness, holiness, sacredness.
1990b	קָדוֹשׁ (<i>qādōš</i>) holy, Holy One, saint.
1990c	קַדְשָׁי (<i>qādēš</i>) male temple prostitute (Deut 23:17; II Kgs 23:7).
1990d	קִדְשׁ (<i>qedeš</i>) Kedesh.
1990e	קַדְשׁ (<i>qādēš</i>) Kadesh.
1990f	מִקְדָּשׁ (<i>miqdāš</i>) holy place, sanctuary.

The verb *qādaš* in the Qal connotes the state of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred. Thus it is distinct from the common or profane. In the Piel and Hiphil it connotes the act by which the distinction is effected. It is a denominative verb.

...

The word occurs in several dialects of Akkadian with the basic meanings “to be clean, pure, consecrated.” In the Canaanite texts from Ugarit, the basic meaning of the word group is “holy,” and it is always used in a cultic sense.

A definitive use of the term occurs in Num 16:38 [H 17:3]. The censers of the Korahites were regarded as holy because they had been devoted to the Lord. They were thus regarded as having entered the sphere of the sacred by virtue of cultic ritual (v. 17 [H 16:18]) and were accorded a special place in the sanctuary. The devotion of the censers seems to have created a condition of inviolable holiness that could not allow for their being treated in a common way. It seems best to see the root *qdš* as serving to delineate the sphere of the “holy.”

In the Qal the verb *qādaš* is used most frequently to describe the state of consecration effected by Levitical ritual. In Ex 29:21, 37; 30:29 certain articles used in the Levitical service were consecrated to God and were thus recognized as belonging to the realm of the sacred. Transmission of the state of holiness to anything that touched a person or object so consecrated (Ex 29:37; 30:29; Lev 6:18 [H 11], 27 [H 20]) does not necessarily imply that a transferable divine energy exists in the “holy.” Rather, it seems that the person or object entered the state of holiness in the sense of becoming subject to cultic restrictions, as were other holy persons or objects, in order to avoid diffusion of the sacred and the profane (cf. the state of holiness of the priesthood [Lev 21:1–8] and the strictures applied to a garment accidentally sprinkled with the blood of the sin offering [Lev 6:27, [H 20]).

In the Piel the word is used most frequently of the act of consecration. In Ex 19:23 the consecration of Mt. Sinai by establishing boundaries around it served to keep out all that might have profaned God’s holy presence.

The ethical connotations of the concepts of holiness find their basis in the proscriptions against diffusing the realms of the sacred and the profane (Lev 22:32).

In the Niphal the verb *qādaš* may connote the concept “to prove one’s holiness.” God proves his holiness by judging sin (Lev 10:3; cf. 1–2; Num 20:13; Ezk 28:2). His holiness is also demonstrated in his adherence to his promises (Ezk 20:41; 28:25; 39:27).

קִדְשׁ (*qōdeš*). **Apartment, holiness, sacredness, hallowed, holy** (ASV, RSV, similar). The noun *qōdeš* connotes the concept of “holiness,” i.e. the essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred and which is thus distinct from the common or profane. This distinction is evident in Lev 10:10 and Ezk 22:26 where *qōdeš* occurs as the antithesis of *hōl* (“profane,” “common”).

There is some truth in the idea of R. Otto (see bibliography) that the word “holy” refers to the *mysterium tremendum*. It speaks of God with a measure of awe. It can be used almost as a synonym of deity. “His holy name” is the name of God. The inner room of God’s dwelling is called the Holy of Holies—the most holy place.

But the biblical viewpoint would refer the holiness of God not only to the mystery of his power, but also to his character as totally good and entirely without evil. Holy objects therefore are those with no cultic pollution which is symbolic of moral pollution. They are not merely dedicated, but dedicated to what is good and kept from what is evil. The separation of men from what defiles ceremonially is but typical of the holiness that is spiritual and ethical. “Be ye holy for I am holy” is quoted from the OT (I Pet 1:16; Lev 19:1; 20:7, etc.) and the so-called holiness code is heavily ethical. “Man was made in the image of God and capable of reflecting the Divine likeness. And as God reveals himself as ethically holy, he calls men to a holiness resembling his own” (ISBE, “Holiness”).

A basic element of Israelite religion was the maintenance of an inviolable distinction between the spheres of the sacred and the common or profane (Num 18:32). That which was inherently holy or designated so by divine decree or cultic rite was not to be treated as common. The sabbath was holy, and the restrictions connected with that day served to maintain its distinctive nature and to guard against its being treated as common (Ex 16:23–26; Isa 58:13, 14). Special restrictions were placed on the priests to guard against profanation of its holy status (Lev 21:6ff.). Sexual intercourse was not considered immoral in the OT but it did effect a state of Levitical defilement (Lev 15:18) which prohibited contact

with that which was holy (I Sam 21:4). The same principle applied to the peace offering (Lev 19:5–8), the holy oil (Ex 30:32–33), and holy incense (Ex 30:37).

That which was dedicated to God was conceived of as entering the sphere of the “holy.” This included the various elements of Levitical worship called “holy things” in Lev 5:15–16, the produce of the land (Lev 19:24), personal property (Lev 27:28), and spoils obtained in military action (Josh 6:19). The sacrifices that were to be eaten only by the priests were denominated “holy” by virtue of their absolute dedication to the sphere of the sacred as represented by the priesthood (Lev 19:8).

While the realm of the holy was conceptually distinct from the world with its imperfections, it could nevertheless operate within the world as long as its integrity was strictly maintained. The maintenance of the integrity of the “holy” was a function of the Israelite cultus. The holy God came to man in redeeming love within the context of regulations and proscriptions that were designed to maintain the purity of holiness that characterized God’s essential nature. Even before the establishment of the Levitical system, this principle was recognized (see Ex 3:5).

The cultus also effected the holiness of those who participated in it. This was essential to the concept of redemption for, by definition, holiness is separate from all that is sinful and profane. God, therefore, calls man to holiness because he himself is holy (*qādōš*) (Lev 19:2; cf. I Pet 1:15).

Because of his holiness, God is above the weaknesses and imperfections of mortals and thus can accomplish the deliverance of his people (Ex 15:11–12). Only those who are holy will dwell in God’s holy hill (Ps 15:1ff.). Because God is holy by nature and separate from moral imperfection, he can be trusted to be faithful to his promises (Ps 33:21).

Inherent within the redemptive work of God is the promise of the ultimate manifestation of God’s holiness in the glorification of his people and the deliverance of the creation from the imperfections resulting from the edenic curse (Rom 8:18–23).

קָדוֹשׁ (*qādōš*). **Holy, Holy one, saint** (ASV, Rsv similar). The adjective denominates that which is intrinsically sacred or which has been admitted to the sphere of the sacred by divine rite or cultic act. It connotes that which is distinct from the common or profane.

God is intrinsically holy and he calls his people to be holy, providing for them the standard of obedience whereby that holiness may be maintained (Lev 19:2ff.). Because God is holy, he is free from the moral imperfections and frailties common to man (Hos 11:9) and can be counted on to be faithful to his promises (Ps 22:3–5). This aspect of God’s character forms the basis of Habakkuk’s hope that his people would not perish (Hab 1:12).

The title “The Holy One of Israel” is applied to God numerous times in the OT, but is especially frequent in the prophecy of Isaiah (in all parts). It serves to place the sins of Isaiah’s society in stark contrast to God’s moral perfection (Isa 30:11) and expresses God’s absolute separation from evil (Isa 17:7).

The inviolability of the spheres of the sacred and the profane forms the ground for the ethical aspects of the concept of holiness. Because God is holy, the Israelites could not serve him when they persisted in their idolatrous practices (Josh 24:19ff.). They were to be separate from all that was unholy (Lev 11:44–45; Deut 14:21). Stipulations were imposed on them that they might not engage in practices common to other peoples (Lev 19:2; 20:7; Num 15:40). Their call to holiness was based on the fact that they had become God’s possession by virtue of his separating them from the nations (Lev 20:26; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:19).

It is unthinkable that a holy God could condone sin; such a concept would involve a diffusion of the sacred and profane, thus destroying the nature of holiness. The call to be holy was accompanied by the imposition of certain restrictions that served to ensure the continuing holiness of those who believed (Lev 11:44–45; 19:2ff.; Deut 14:2, 21; Num 15:40).

Various aspects of the cultus were denominated holy by virtue of their being conceived of as belonging to the realm of the sacred and were not to be treated as common. This included portions of the sacrifices (Lev 6:16; 7:6), the temple and its aspects (Ps 65:4 [H 5]; Lev 6:16, etc), and the priests (Lev 21:6, 8) and Levites (II Chr 35:3).

The presence of God within the world delineated a sphere that was holy, for God’s holiness cannot be diffused by the common (Deut 23:14).

That which is “holy” is not only distinct from the profane but in opposition to it as well. God, therefore, hates and punishes sin (Josh 24:19; Isa 5:16, 24). In the light of God’s holiness, Isaiah saw himself and his people as sinners (Isa 6:3; cf. v. 5).

קַדְשָׁי (*qādēš*). **Temple prostitute, male or female.** The adjective ... means “holy,” but holy to what? The female functionaries in the pagan shrines were called *qēdēšā*, temple prostitutes, because that is what they were. The name is a sad commentary on the licentiousness of Canaanite worship. The masculine form is used similarly for the male counterpart (Deut 23:17 [H 18]). In Gen 38:21–22 the usage may be extended to refer to prostitution in general.

קִדְשָׁי (*qedeš*). **Kedesh.** The name of several cities cited in the OT. The name means “holy.”

קַדְשֵׁי (*qādēš*). **Kadesh.** The name of two cities in the OT. The name ... means “holy.”

מִקְדָּשׁ (*miqdāš*). **Holy place, sanctuary, chapel, hallowed part.** (ASV and RSV similar except that RSV translates “holy things” in Num 10:21, Ezk 44:8; “sacred area” in Ezk 43:21 and “temple” in Dan 11:31).

The noun *miqdāš* is used most frequently in the OT as the designation of the tabernacle and the temple. It is frequently translated “sanctuary,” in these cases. In keeping with the basic meaning of the word group ... [it] denotes that which has been devoted to the sphere of the sacred. When it refers to the sanctuary, it connotes the physical area devoted to the worship of God. This area was sacred because it was the place where God dwelled among the people (Ex 25:8) and its sanctity was not to be profaned (Lev 12:4; 19:30; 20:3; 21:12, 23).

The word also designated sanctuaries that were devoted to false worship (Lev 26:31; Isa 16:12; Ezk 21:2; Amos 7:9).

The word is used for the articles of the tabernacle that were devoted to the Levitical worship (Num 10:21). The portions of the sacrifices that were particularly holy were called *miqdāš* (Num 18:29). The word *miqdāš* may refer to the abode of God in Ps 68:35 [H 36], but some commentators see this as the temple in Jerusalem. Metaphorically the word is used to refer to a place of refuge (Isa 8:14; Ezk 11:16).¹⁴

¹⁴ Thomas E. McComiskey, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1999, 786–789.