

## Leviticus 1-14

### Introduction

Leviticus is the third book of the Holy Bible. It is also the third book of the Pentateuch, the Law of Moses – the *Torah* (Hebrew). Leviticus, apparently a book of laws, is the centre of the Pentateuch. Leviticus immediately follows Exodus. The Sinai covenant and the Ten Words (ten commandments) form the core of the laws and ordinances in the book of Exodus. The various laws of the book of Leviticus are presented as part of the Sinai covenant. Leviticus illustrates how the Ten Words were put into practice in the particular life context of the Israelites.

### 2 . Central Message

The central theme or the major concern of Leviticus is holiness of the whole community of the people of God. “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (19,2). This / similar call to holiness is repeated seven times in the book (11,44.45; 19,2; 20,7.26; 21,6.8). Words like ‘holy,’ holiness,’ ‘clean,’ ‘purification,’ ‘impurity,’ also recur in the book. The people chosen to worship the Holy God must be holy. That God is holy means that he is above all creatures. “Holiness means to be set apart by God for a special purpose. Holiness is expressed in proper forms of worship and living out the love of God in the routine of daily life” (*The Holy Bible*, NRSV).

### 3. Titles of the Book in Relation with its Central Message

The laws and rubrics that the priests of the tribe of Levi (the Levites) of the covenant people must know and observe form the main content of Leviticus. The whole people of Israel are bound by them (1,2; 26,46; 27,34). They help the priests and people to be holy. The title ‘Leviticus’ takes its name from the Latin word for “book of the Levites,” the book intended mainly for the Levites. In Hebrew, the original language of the book, it is titled *wayyiqra*, which means ‘he called.’ *Wayyiqra* is the first word of the book in Hebrew. (In Hebrew every book of the Pentateuch, *Torah*, is known by its very first word). The Hebrew title reminds the whole community, both the priests and the people, of their call to holiness, and prompts them to lead a holy life keeping the laws written in the book. Thus the Hebrew title points to the central message of the book.

A briefing of the way the book was titled Leviticus is quite beneficial. Greek translators of the book from Hebrew to Greek titled it *Levitikon*, which means ‘concerning the Levites.’ Vulgate, the Latin version, titled the book ‘Leviticus.’ The same title was taken over to the English versions. These Greek, Latin, English and Malayalam titles indicate the content of the book. Lev 26,46 and 27,34 are key passages shedding light to the content, character and significance of the book of Leviticus. “These are the statutes and ordinances and laws that the Lord established between himself and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses” (26,46). “These are the commandments that the Lord gave to Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai” (27,34).

#### 4. Author and Period

“The Lord spoke to Moses.” This is an introductory statement that appears as a refrain repeated in the beginning of almost all the chapters. Nearly fifty six times in the book it is indicated that all the laws written in it are revealed by God to Moses. This is an indication of the belief that the whole law of Israel is given by the Lord. However, this belief does not vouch for the direct authorship of Moses for all the laws in Leviticus. And the book itself does not attest the fact that Moses has written anything at all.

Here we draw our attention to a few of the inferences that modern scholarship has reached regarding the present form of Leviticus. This book is a compilation of many law codes. Possibly Moses started the process. Laws formulated in different contexts and situations through many centuries and preserved in oral traditions are compiled in this book. Influence of the historical events such as the tent of the desert, the Temple of Solomon, religious reformation by King Josiah, Babylonian diaspora, and the liturgical services in the Temple constructed after the return from diaspora is evidently reflected in the law code of Leviticus. It is certain that Ezekiel, priest and prophet, who preached to the diaspora Israel in Babylon, Ezra and Nehemiah who took the lead for the religious renewal in Israel after the diaspora, and their disciples have also influenced the formulation of the Leviticus code. It reached its final form in fifth century B.C, that is to say, almost 1000 years after Moses.

#### 5. The Background of Leviticus

At Mount Sinai, while the people Israel was on its way from Egypt to the land of Canaan, God gave them the laws. He chose them to be his own people and established the covenant with them (Ex 19,5.8). He ordered them to build the tent of meeting so that he could be with them, and it was built and consecrated (Ex 35-40). At his behest Moses elected Aaron and his sons and consecrated them as priests in order to serve and conduct holy services in it (Ex 28-29). Now it remained to be clarified the way the priestly kingdom and the holy people shall conduct the worship. Which sacrifices have to be offered to regain holiness, if lost? What are the laws for the priests and the people with regard to these situations? The book of Leviticus is the answer.

#### 6. Major Themes of Leviticus

##### 6.1 Holiness and the Ways for Holiness

No.2 above has pointed out that holiness of God’s people is the central theme of Leviticus, and that God is the Holy One. The greatest demand of the Holy God from his people is that they be holy, for he is holy. The book of Leviticus provides the priests and the people with the laws that they shall keep so that they could be holy. These laws ultimately aim at helping them, who are sinners, to reconcile with their God, who is holy. As a prior condition to be holy, each and every one of them shall keep her/himself ritually ‘clean’ by avoiding all that makes her/him unclean. Bodily purity is part of holiness. According to Leviticus, all creatures judged as unclean (Lev 11), human uncleanness and other unclean

things, man's discharge and woman's discharge of blood, skin diseases, homosexuality, dead body etc. make the members of the community of Israel unclean/impure.

Observance of God's commandments is a sign of holiness. Leviticus as a whole, and especially chapters 18-25, narrate the ways for keeping oneself holy. The people of Israel knew that they are called to be holy. However, in day to day life, there is a multiplicity of the possibility to become unholy. The book of Leviticus narrates different reparatory sacrifices that provide them with the way to approach the holy God.

## 6.2 God's Presence

The 'God-with-us' conviction of the people of Israel distinguished them from other nations. They cherished the faith that always God was with them. At the same time they were also aware that they were in need of avoiding the punishment that they deserved on account of their going against God's will in word and deed. The only way is to approach (*qareb*) God – go near to God- with *qorban*, namely the offering of sacrifice. *Q/kurbana* is the Syriac equivalent of the Hebrew word *qorban*. Both these nouns derive from the verb *qareb*. The people of Israel firmly believed that as they approached (*qareb*) God with sacrifices (*q/kurbana*) of self-surrender and thanksgiving, particularly with burnt offerings, they and God mutually approached – came near, and their unity was re-established.

## 7. Importance of Leviticus

We have already noted above that Lev 26,46 and 27,34 are indications to the particular significance of the book of Leviticus. Lev 26,46 is a conclusive summary statement about the laws and statutes in it. We know that Jews divide their sacred scripture into three main sections: the Law (*Torah*), prophets (*n<sup>e</sup>biim*), and writings (*ketubim*). Of these three, the Law (*Torah*), that is to say the Pentateuch (cfr. No. 3 above), is the most prominent for Jews. And since Leviticus is the centre of the Pentateuch or *Torah*, the Jewish tradition esteems it as the most important book of their sacred scripture.

## 8. Leviticus and the New Testament

Here we briefly discuss about the relevance of Leviticus in the New Testament. We read some Pauline words such as those in Gal 2,16.21; Rom 7,1-6; 8,13; Col 3,5-6; Eph 2,8-9 which seem to challenge the relevance of the book of Leviticus and the laws it contains for Christians, the people of the New Testament. We know from the Gospels that like the Old Testament prophets, Jesus also raised his voice against the mere external observance of the laws in the sacred scripture while neglecting their inner spirit (e.g., Mtt 12,7; 23,23-28). At the same time Jesus says: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Mtt 5,17). These words are very particularly relevant with regard to the book of Leviticus. We also note that Jesus and his disciples have obeyed laws written in it (cfr. Lk 2,4.21-24; Mk 1,44; Jn 2,13; 7,10; 12,1; Acts 21,16). Jesus the Teacher quotes from Lev 19,18 to the Pharisees the second commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mtt 22,39). Thereby he highlights the perennial significance and relevance of Leviticus.

The book of Leviticus has decisively influenced the faith, vision of life, and liturgical rubrics of the Church. Hebrews 9 teaches that laws regarding sacrifice, priesthood etc. in the Old Testament are signs of those things that were yet to come. "Here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1,29). "... the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1,7). These are two samples of the New Testament understanding of Jesus' sacrifice. These / similar New Testament words about Jesus' sacrifice could be properly understood only in the light of the image of the sin offerings given in the book of Leviticus. The sacrifices and offerings with restitution that are narrated in Leviticus are only forerunners and signs of the one single sacrifice that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ's self-sacrifice. The newness and the multidimensional significance of the one single sacrifice fulfilled in Jesus Christ and of the holy Eucharist are deeply comprehensible against the background of the many sacrifices and offerings narrated in the book of Leviticus.

1 Pet 1,16 quotes the Leviticus words, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19,2). It is clear that almost all aspects of the Church have been influenced by the laws in Leviticus. Let us have a few sites: the self-understanding of the Church as a people called to holiness, and elected for worshiping God, her liturgy, sacraments, feasts, the different vocations of life and service in the Church. As already noted, the original root of the word *kurbana* is the Hebrew words *qorban* and *qareb* in Lev. 1,2. The spirit of the laws in Leviticus regarding the holiness of priests is ever relevant and valid for all the faithful, who participate in the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ. The deep sense of the holiness of the holy God created in the hearts of the faithful, the universal call to holiness, the constant and oft repeated invitation to keep clean/purity in all dimensions of human life, and the law of love recorded in Lev 19,18 are truly invaluable treasure for the Church. Individuals and communities who do not give heed to these values are certainly on their way to perdition. Many of the laws and statutes regarding sacrifices, food, bodily cleanliness etc. in Leviticus are not as such relevant for today. However, divine worship, holiness of life, and love of one's neighbor which they aim at are ever relevant for humanity.

## 9. Structure of the Book

Leviticus is divided into two main parts: The first part (chapters 1-16) narrate chiefly laws to maintain God-man relation in order. The second part (chapters 17-27) deals with laws that facilitate mutual human relations. The core ordinances of these two parts are given respectively in 19,2 and 19,18. A five-part division is also followed for the sake of a convenient study purpose: (i) offerings and sacrifices (chaps: 1-7), (ii) priesthood (chaps 8-10), (iii) purity and reparation for sin (chaps 11-15), (iv) The day of atonement (16), (v) laws of holiness (17-27).

## 10. 1,1-7,38: Offerings

It is generally accepted that ancient religions offered sacrifices mainly for three purposes, namely, to placate god, to receive the desired blessings from god, and to thank god for blessings already received. This remains true also for the sacrificial offerings of Leviticus/the Bible. However, the biblical offerings are enriched with a distinctive element, and that is the vision about the relation between the people of God and YHWH their God. YHWH the God of Israel is not a god, who being pleased with the offerings grants anything and everything that the one who offers asks for. YHWH of Israel demands from

his people a life in accordance with his will revealed in his commandments and ordinances. He is a God, who blesses those who comply with his will, but punishes the disobedient. His orders to offer him sacrifices are not meant for getting food for him, but to grant his people the occasion to thank him (Ps 50,14). He has strictly prohibited making of idols and idolatry. "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit" (Ps 51,17). What is mainly reflected in the laws of Leviticus is God's will for the holiness of his people.

The first seven chapters contain the laws regarding the sacrifices that are to be offered in the tent of meeting built at the bottom of Mount Sinai. These laws are introduced as those said by the Lord to Moses (1,1).

Chapters 1-7 narrate about the following five offerings: burnt offering, grain offerings, offerings of well-being, sin offerings, and offerings with restitution. The introductory words "When any of you bring an offering ..." (1,2) indicate that all the said are freewill offerings. The name "the burnt offering" hints at the manner of offering, namely, the offering is burnt by fire. All the five offerings described in chapters 1-7 are, in fact, burnt offerings. "Grain offering," the second name, shall be understood as one indicating the offering in which grain is offered, and also as representing the offerings (the things) offered in all offerings in general. The names such as offerings of well-being, sin offerings, and offerings with restitution point to the purpose of these offerings. Offerings of well-being could be those of thanksgivings, or votive offering / payment of vow, or even freewill offering. Sin offerings are intended for atonement of sins, and offerings with restitution are restitution, say, compensatory. The difference between the two said last is not always clear.

Based on the offerings (things offered) offerings could be divided into three: animal offering, grain offering, and drink offering. Animal offering is that in which animals or birds are offered. Its offerings are bull, cow, sheep/goat, (turtle)dove or pigeon. Bull is slaughtered after the one who offers it has laid his hand on its head. This laying of his hand on its head signifies the offering of his own life wholly to God. Grain offering is that in which grain is offered. Wheat, barley, or their choice flour is offered in grain offering. Drink offering is that in which drinks as wine or olive oil is offered. Frankincense also is offered together with some grain offering (6,15).

Based on the ritual of offering, there are four types of offerings: (1) *The* burnt offering in which "the priest turns *the whole* (bull) into smoke on the altar as a burnt offering" (1,9). 1,3-9 narrates its ritual. The whole offering turned into smoke on the altar rises to God's presence as a symbol of the one who offered the bull. It signifies the total self-offering of the one who offers it. This is considered as the most pleasing sacrifice to the Lord. The other three are burnt offering, elevation offering, and meal offering (eating part of the offering). Depending on the financial capacity of the one who offers, offerings could be a bull (1,1-9), (sheep/goat (1,10-13), or bird (1,14-17). Those who offer the animal/s themselves slaughter, flay and cut them up into their parts. In the case of birds, all rubrics of offering are performed by the priest.

The laws contained in chapters 1-7 regarding the offerings of sacrifice are of two groups: as meant for the whole community of Israel, and as meant for the priests. In the first part, namely 1,1-6,7,

the laws are presented from the part of the one who offers the offering. The second part (6,8-7,38) reproduces the same laws for and from the part of the priests, namely, Aaron and his sons. In this part the order of the sacrifices is slightly different from that in the first part. Offerings with restitution, fifth in the first (1,1-6,7), is transferred to the third place in the second (6,8-7,38). No explanation is given for this shift.

### An overview of burnt offerings

Burnt offering, grain offerings, offerings of well-being, sin offerings, and offerings with restitution

Burnt Offerings: animals: bull/cow, sheep/goat, bird

grain offering: choice flour, (unleavened) cakes/ wafers, grain prepared on a griddle / in a pan + oil + frankincense + salt

First fruits: coarse new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire

Offerings of Well-being – (1) for thanksgiving

Offerings: animal, 2 kinds of unleavened bread + wafer + lev. bread

(2) votive offerings: like that for thanksgiving

(3) freewill offering: like that for thanksgiving

Sin Offerings: Offerings: animal / grain offerings

(for five sections)

(1) for the sin of a priest – bull

(2) for the sin of the whole congregation of Israel

(3) for the sin of a ruler

(4) for the sin of anyone of the ordinary people

(5) for different trespasses

Offerings of restitution (5,14ff): Guilt offering (7,1ff) – like the sin offering (7,7)

### 11. 8,1-10,20: The Rites of Ordination of Priests and Their Service

Having given the general directives about the different offerings the author turns to the priests, who receive them from those who offer them, and offer them on the altar. Here, first he narrates the rites of the ordination of Aaron and his sons along with the offerings of the seven subsequent days (Lev. 8). The ordination of Aaron and his sons is conducted in three steps: anointing with oil (8,10-13), anointing with blood (8,23-24), and anointing with some of the anointing oil and some of the blood (8,30). In between these three steps there are four offerings: sin offering (8,14-17), burnt offering (8,18-21), offering of well-being and grain offering (8,22-29). Moses conducts the anointing service and the offerings. Chapter 9 narrates the solemn ceremony of offerings on the eighth day after the seven days rituals of ordination of Aaron and his sons. On the eighth day, as said by Moses, Aaron took the lead in conducting various offerings by the newly ordained. They offered sin offering for themselves (9,8-14), and burnt offering, offerings of well-being and grain offering for the people. At the end “Moses and Aaron blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the alter; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces” (9,23-24).

Lev 10 narrates the sin and the consequent punishment of Nadab and Abihu, two of the ordained priests (10,1-2). Moses made use of this mishap to accentuate the obligation of priests to be holy, and spelt out a few statutes that they should keep so that they could distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean and stay holy (10,3-18). Then Aaron repented before Moses (10,19). And when Moses heard that, he agreed (10,20). The misdeed of the two priests is described only thus: “they offered unholy fire before the LORD, such as he had not commanded them” (10,1). Possibly it means that they did not faithfully obey God’s will, but acted in a way unbecoming to the holiness of the sublime mission they were entrusted with.

## 12. 11,1-15,33: Purity and Purification

Chapters 1-10 narrate laws of divine worship. Chapters 11-15 describe laws that clarify the obligation of every individual member of the people of Israel to keep oneself clean/pure in daily life, and the laws required for the same, and also the laws of purification in case someone becomes unclean/impure. While Chapter 12 deals with clean and unclean foods, chapter 12 deals with laws of sexual purity. Leprosy, its varieties and symptoms, symptoms of ‘leprosy’ in clothing and walls of houses are discussed in chapter 13. Several skin diseases are termed as leprosy. 14,1-48 narrate the laws and rites of the purification of human skin diseases, and 14,49-53 narrate those of the affected houses.

## Luke 1-12

### 1. Introduction

The Gospel according to Luke is the third Gospel in the New Testament canon. Luke is the author also of the Acts of the Apostles. These two are two volumes of the one ‘orderly account’ (narrative) authored by Luke (cfr. 1,1-4; Acts 1-2). Both volumes were written for Gentile Christians. These volumes comprise one-fourth of the whole N.T.

Pauline epistles give some information about Luke (cfr Col 4,14; 2 Tim 4,11; Phm 23). In the Acts of the Apostles Luke hints at his accompaniment with Paul during his second and third missionary journeys (respectively Acts 16,10-11; 20,5-8), and 2 Tim 4,11; Phm 23 hint at his accompaniment with Paul during imprisonment in Rome. Paul calls Luke “the beloved physician” (Col 4,11). However, Luke’s own volumes do not bear any indication as to his being a medical practitioner. The traditional understanding that he was born in Syrian Antioch is generally accepted. Possibly his parents were Gentiles or Gentiles become Jews. So Luke was either a God-fearer Gentile like Cornelius (of Acts 10) or a son of the parents who were Gentiles become Jews. In his youth he embraced the Christian faith. His ‘orderly account’ contains ample indications to the fact that he was close bound to the Church in Syrian Antioch. He is the only Gentile author among the New Testament authors. He was enabled to have a clearer, more vivid and detailed understanding of the growth and spread of the Christian gospel throughout Palestine and the Gentile regions, all of which belonged to the Roman Empire (*oikumene*) of his time, and also of the urgent needs of the Church growing in the Gentile regions of the empire than the other evangelists were. Luke was a master of Greek styles, a great scripture scholar, an ardent lover of the Sacred Scripture, and a fervent missionary/missiological interpreter of the same, besides being a lover of liturgy (divine worship).

Luke is the sole evangelist, who has recorded pieces of the self-witness of Mary, the mother of Jesus Our Lord and Savior (Lk 1,38. 46-55). Luke's Gospel is the most ancient record of her title 'the mother of my Lord' (Lk 1,43), and her prophecy that "all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1,48) the fulfillment of which remains a perennial truth in the world. Luke testifies that her presence occasions the anointing by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1,39-45; Acts 1,12-2,4). He presents before us Mary as one who treasures all words/events and constantly ponders over them in her heart (Lk 1,38; 2,19. 51). A number of pieces of self-information of her has found way to Luke. Tradition still testifies to the many icons of her written in drawings and paintings by Luke. Tradition honors him as the patron of iconology, artists and physicians. He is also the ever first historian of the Church.

Some time between A.D.70-75(80) Luke's both volumes were written, and they were written possibly from Greece, or Rome or Syrian Antioch.

## 2. Luke's Central Message

In Jesus God has fulfilled his word spoken through Isaiah that "... all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Is 40,5LXX; Lk 3,6; Acts 28,28-31). This is the central message of Luke's two-volume "orderly account." This word (Greek: *rhema*) of God came to John the Baptist in the wilderness (Lk 3,2). God's word is the testimonial of his plan / will (Acts 20,27). In Is 40,5LXX and in the original Greek Lk 3,5 the word for 'salvation' is *soterion*, a neuter word. Jesus Christ is the Savior (*soter*: Lk 2,11) and salvation (*soterion*: Lk 2,31; 3,6; Acts 28,28-31). He is the one who gives "the salvation (*soteria*) by the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 1,77; 5,20) to those who have faith. He is the Lord and Savior (Lk 2,11; Acts 4,12; 5,31). "The word" (*logos*: Lk 1,2) is the saving gospel message that all flesh has salvation (*soteria*) in Jesus Christ, whom God has given as the Savior (*soter*) and salvation (*soterion*) in fulfillment of his 'word' (*rhema*) that "all flesh shall see the salvation (*soterion*) of God" (Is 40,5LXX; Lk 3,6).

## 3. Luke's Two-volume Composition: An Orderly Account (Narrative); Witnessing Service of the Word (*logos*); Salvation History

### 3.1. Luke's Two-volume Composition: An Orderly Account (Narrative)

The very first preface (Lk 1,1-4) makes it clear that Luke's two-volume composition is an "orderly account" (1,2.3). In the original Greek text the word for "orderly account" in verse 1 is *diegesis*, which indicates an historical narrative – *akhyanam* or *vivaranam* in Malayalam. Luke claims that this "orderly account" is one very much improved in the light of his careful investigation of everything from first, and that for a long time (Lk 1,3). Verses 3-4 clarify that Luke's purpose is to make his addressee "know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."

"Orderly account" (*diegesis*: Lk 1,1) is a narrative in the form of history with its own order, continuity, structure, and also many events that are somehow mutually and particularly bound to the central event/plot. Luke's central event is the central message of his "orderly account." "Orderly account" (*diegesis*) is the literary form in which the Greco-Roman historians of Luke's period wrote history. Luke is also deeply familiar with the literary form, style, and content of the salvation history accounts of the Old Testament. He had also before him the "orderly account" that 'many have



undertaken to set down” (Lk 1,1) before him. Combining these traditional literary forms, and “after investigating everything carefully from the very first” (Lk 1,3), Luke writes his own “orderly account” (1,3) ‘of the events that God has fulfilled among us’ in order to fulfill in Jesus Christ his ‘word’ (*rhema*) that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” And Luke writes this “orderly account” with a definite purpose for his addressee represented in “most excellent Theophilus” (Lk 1,4; Acts 1,1).

### 3.2. Luke’s Two-volume Composition: An Orderly Account a Witnessing Service of the Word (*logos*)

It is serving the saving word of God written (=witnessed) in the sacred scripture (Is 40,3-5LXX) that John “went into all the region around Jordan” (Lk 3,1-18). And it is by becoming a servant and witness of the word in the scroll (= sacred scripture: Is 4,18-27) that Jesus also inaugurated his ministry to fulfill God’s salvific plan. The scriptural word Jesus quotes from Is 61,1-2+58,6 in fact interprets the saving word of God in Is 40,3-5. In a similar fashion he completed also his service and self-witness on the earth (Lk 24,13-27. 44-46; Acts 10,36-37). Jesus Christ is the ‘word’ (*logos*: the gospel message; not the Johannine *logos*) that has been fulfilled and is being preached. He is also *the* interpreter of the sacred scripture, and *the* key for interpreting it, and he is also *the* interpretation as well as *the* fulfillment of the scroll (the whole OT: Lk 4,18-20; 24,25-27. 44-46). It follows, to proclaim ‘the word’ (*logos*) is to proclaim him (Lk 2,11-12; Acts 8,5; 28,31). The reception and growth of the word (*rhema*) of God (Lk 1,38-56) resulted in the growth of Jesus (Lk 2,52). Subsequently by the growth of the word (*logos*) of God the Church continued to grow (NRSV: spread: Acts 6,7; 12,24; 19,20). The Church continues becoming eyewitness and servant of the word (*logos*: the gospel message), by the growth of which she continues to grow.

Those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word (*logos*: the gospel message) had handed on “the events that have been fulfilled among us,” that is to say, the events that God has fulfilled among us, to the nascent Church. Luke and his many predecessors, who have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the said events (Lk 1,1), received them from the said *logos*-tradition (Lk 1,2). And these events were taught (and explained) to Luke’s addressee (Lk 1,4). After “investigating everything carefully” (1,3) of the tradition of the primordial Church, the “orderly account” set down before his own “orderly account,” the events set down in it, the sacred scripture (OT: Acts 17,11), sayings of Gentile Greek theologians (philosophers: Acts 17,21-28), the Jewish religious system and the Roman system of governance of his time Luke writes his own “orderly account” to his addressee.

The word “orderly” qualifying Luke’s account has literary and theological connotations. A little above (cfr.No.3.1 para 2) we have indicated two elements of the literary aspect of his “orderly account.” We may note also that in order to narrate, to develop, his central message Luke has made use of many episodes, stages, events, characters, themes, literary form(s) and literary techniques. Some of the events are very dramatic so as to quickly inspire the readership. The author has strung together all these elements to write his “orderly account.”

The theological aspect of the qualification “orderly” for Luke’s account is related to its salvation-history nature (cfr. No.3.3). His account is logical according to God’s plan/will to which the sacred

scripture gives witness. Luke has, as already pointed out, mutually linked the events, especially keeping the prophecy-fulfillment timetable, and related them to the time and places where they took place. He is keen also to write in a way that helps his readership “know the truth (Greek: *asphaleia* = assurance, surety) concerning the things you have been instructed” (Lk 1,4). In order to achieve his purpose he rearranges in different ways and reinterprets the “orderly account/s” precedent to that of his, evidently those of Mark and Q. He added a number of items that are absent in the others. Luke puts spectacular emphasis on some of the perspectives of the “orderly account/s.” He is not just faithfully reproducing the tradition as a traditionalist, but while handing it over he makes changes in its order in a manner that reveals the whole plan/will of God (Acts 20,27) for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles (Lk 2,30-32; Acts 13,28. 44-48). There are a number of elements that considerably helped Luke to write his “orderly account.” We may mention a few of them: God’s plan/will to which the sacred scripture gives witness, traditional elements and views, visions and materials of the different aspects of Christian faith, the life and mission Luke inherited from his Church in Antioch, his own experience of and in his Church in its life context, and his own Christ-experience. Luke shares with his addressee a Christology that took shape from all these. He discarded those things which seemed unwelcome to the Gentile addressee of his “orderly account.” But he writes it in a way that makes it tasty and encouraging to them. The kernel of the ‘order’ of his account consists in clarifying that the events took place in accordance with God’s plan/will/word. Mary’s saying “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word” (Lk 1,38) and Jesus prayer “yet not my will but yours be done” (Lk 22,42) are “orderly” according to God’s plan/will/word.

“The things” (NRSV Lk 1,4; Greek original: *logoi* = “words”) are detailed explanations of “the word” (*logos*), the gospel message (Lk 1,2). Luke writes an “orderly account” comprising the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles so that his addressee may know the truth concerning “the things” (words) about which they/he have been instructed (1,4). And his “orderly account” is his own witness and service of “the word” (gospel message) for its growth. In word and deed Jesus, Peter, Paul and many others were its witnesses and servants. Now Luke by writing his “orderly account” (1,4) becomes a witness and servant of “the word.” His “orderly account” is a witness and service of “the word” aimed at inspiring his addressee and readership to become witnesses and servants of the same “word.”

### 3.3 Luke’s “Orderly Account” - Salvation History

The events that Luke records took place in the Roman Empire of the time of John the Baptist, Jesus and Luke himself. The events began taking place in Galilee in the north of Palestine of the Roman Empire and the process extended up to Jerusalem, the very centre of Jews, and still farther to the Gentile regions around Palestine and to Europe and even up to Rome, the very capital of the Roman Empire of Luke’s time. He has written also the names and titles of the Roman emperor, his governors and prefects and other Roman officials in the Jewish land as well as the names and titles of the Jewish political and religious rulers and leaders in Palestine and Jerusalem. Luke’s salvation history is part of world history.

According to Luke’s “orderly account,” what God has done in Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of what He has been doing from the very first up to Jesus to save the world. And Jesus missionaries

continue his saving work. In the traditional literary form used by Greco-Roman historians of his cultural milieu to set history Luke presented the saving events to his addressee/readership. Thereby Luke's "orderly account" was composed as part of the history of salvation, more over as salvation history, which is practically history of mission. Thus Luke's "orderly account" became the history of the increase (growth) of the Church; and the very first history of the Church. It turns salvific to the readership of each and every day that positively responds to it and becomes part of it, as it has happened to the many thousands, who are already made part of it. We come across many in both the volumes of Luke's "orderly account" who ask: What should we do?" (Lk 3,10-14; Acts 16,30). Today's every reader of Luke's salvation history can, rather should, become part of it by raising the same question at every juncture of her/his reading it. Following this way one can complete Luke's salvation history in and for her/himself; and that is Luke's ultimate purpose and what Jesus the Lord Savior expects.

### 3.4 Two Volumes

Luke has written the salvation history in two volumes, say, two main parts. In the first, traditionally titled 'The Gospel according to Luke,' he narrates the history of the service of Jesus Christ in whom God has fulfilled his plan of the salvation all flesh. It is Luke's orderly account of the saving service of Jesus Christ that people could directly see and hear in this world. The second main part is that which is traditionally titled 'The Acts of the Apostles.' It is the narration/history of the acts of the risen-exalted Jesus Christ, invisible to this world. Sitting at the right hand of God the Father (= sharing power and authority with God: Acts 2,34-35) he sent/sends the Holy Spirit to the Church, namely, to the apostles and other missionaries. In the Holy Spirit the exalted Jesus Christ is present in the Church and acts through her. Hence, Jesus Christ is the main actor in both volumes/parts of Luke's "orderly account."

### 3.5 Some Characteristics of Luke's First Volume

Now let us have a bird's eye view of some of the characteristics Luke's salvation history fulfilled in Jesus Christ, with special reference to the first part since Lk 1-12, the portion for Logos Quiz 2013, belongs to it. First of all Luke's salvation history is a history of God acting "in remembrance of his mercy" (Lk 1,54-58). At the same time Luke is very keen to make it clear that God is harsh with those who are unwilling to inherit God as the real, eternal and life-giving wealth, but rely on the rich wealth, glory and authority of this world and attempt at justifying themselves (cfr. Lk 6,24-28; 12,13-21; 18,18-30). Jesus of Luke's Gospel is the Savior of all sections of 'the poor.' The title 'Savior' for Jesus is almost a unique feature of Luke's "orderly account." He showers God's love, mercy and provisions for the poor (cfr. Lk 4,18; 6,2-23; 7,36-50; 14,12-14). From among the four New Testament Gospels, Luke's Gospel is the one which highlights the most God's mercy and kindness (see for example, Lk 7,41-43; 10,27-37; 13,6-9; 15,11-32). Worth particular mention is the brightest revelation of God's mercy towards women and Gentiles who belong to 'the poor' (7,1-17. 36-50; 8,2-3; 10,38-42). Many of the women characters of Luke's Gospel are absent in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Luke's Gospel could be justifiably divided into alternate man-women sections. Women also enjoy God's salvation in Jesus Christ and co-operate in his saving ministry. Luke's Gospel, famed as the Gospel of God's mercy, is as well famed as the Gospel of women. The salvation history that Luke narrates is one of constant and uninterrupted work of the Holy Spirit. Hence both volumes / parts of Luke's salvation history are renowned as 'Gospels of the Holy

Spirit.’ Attractive and inspiring models of prayer experience and praise recorded in this Gospel make its very reading a prayer experience. Luke is the only evangelist, who portrays Jesus as one praying from the very preparation (Lk 3,21-22) to the end of his public ministry (23,46), and also as one intermittently teaching his disciples on prayer. Readers of the third Gospel frequently meet Jesus engaged at prayer. Quite attuning to this prayer mood is the role and significance Luke assigns to the Temple in his “orderly account.” Worth singular attention is the literary structure of his “orderly account” that he begins and ends its first part (Gospel) with Temple scenes (Lk 1,5-25; 24,52-53). Luke’s history of salvation has its own ‘Temple science.’ The Gospel according to Luke is also wide known as ‘the Gospel of prayer.’ Since the events written in his “orderly account” are of the period of the fulfillment of the salvation promised by God an atmosphere of overflowing joy overshadows it. A rich vocabulary of joy and happiness present in it, especially in its first part, justifies its fame as ‘the Gospel of joy.’ Renan has described Luke’s first volume as the most beautiful book. Here, a scholarly observation of F.L.Cross on Luke’s Gospel: “This gracious humanity, accompanied by a strong sense of the supernatural, which is shown in the working of the Spirit and the ministry of the angles, make the peculiar charm of the Gospel, from which, at all times, saints as well as artists have drawn inspiration” (*Oxford Dictionary the Christian Church*, Oxford University Press, 1963, 829).

#### 4. Structure of Luke’s Gospel

P.O.C Bible reproduces the following structure:

- 1,1-2,52: Infancy Gospel
- 3,1-4,13: Preparation for Service
- 4,14-9,50: Service in Galilee
- 9,51-19,46: Journey to Jerusalem
- 19,47-21-38: Service in Jerusalem
- 22,1-24,53: Passion and Glorification

However, here below we draw a slightly variant structure. It is prepared in the light of modern Lukan scholarship, which takes into account various factors such as Luke’s theology of salvation, salvation history, theological geography, the parallelism and ‘inclusion’ between the summary reports in Lk 4,14-15 and the summary report of Jesus service recorded in Lk 4,42-44 and Acts 10,36-37.39. According to Luke’s “orderly account,” Jesus service took place in three geographical parts of the land of Jews. Galilee and Judea belong to the land of Jews (Acts 10, 39Greek). Luke does not separate Galilee as “Galilee of Gentiles” in the words of Isaiah 9,1-2.

- 1,1-4 Preface
- 1,5-4,13 Preparation for Jesus service
  - two subsections: 1,5-2,52 – Infancy Narratives
  - 3,1-4,13 – preparation for Jesus service
- 4,14-24,53 Jesus service in the whole land of Jews
  - three subsections: 4,16-9,50 - beginning and first part of Jesus service in Galilee
  - 9,51-19,46 – second part: Jesus travel to Jerusalem

19,47-24,53 - third part and fulfillment of Jesus service  
two subparts  
19,47-21-38: third part of Jesus service – in Jerusalem  
22,1-24,53: fulfillment of Jesus service (passion and glorification)

## 5. A Few Comments and Explanations

### 5.1. 1,1-4: Preface

Luke is the only New Testament author who has written a preface like the one in Lk 1,1-4 to his literary work. This preface sheds clear light to the literary form, content, source, author's personal involvement, the method of his work, his contribution, the addressee and the purpose of his "orderly account."

### 5.2. 1,5-4,13: Preparation for Jesus Service

#### 5.2.1. 1,5-2,52: Infancy Narrative

This part of the Gospel is traditionally called 'infancy gospel.' It contains the prophecies and their fulfillment of the birth of John and Jesus. There are also prophecies about their service as well of its prophetic descriptions. This part is an orderly account of divine promises and their fulfillment that is set as the general introduction and beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." We have clarified above that this promise – fulfillment is the central message of Luke's "orderly account." Herein God's word and events mutually interpret. Six out the seven episodes described at considerable length in Lk 1,5-2,52 proclaim Jesus. As per Luke's "orderly account," "Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home" (1,56) just before "the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son" (1,57). This timetable is indicative of the nearness and difference between the periods of John and Jesus (Lk 16,16) in salvation history. Almost all theological themes of Lk-Acts are present in the infancy narrative. It is a general introduction to the whole of Luke's two-volume "orderly account."

#### 5.2.2. 3,1-4,13: Preparation for Jesus Service

There are two subsections: 3,1-20, and 3,21-4,13. The first one in 3,1-20 narrates John's service in preparation for Jesus public service. The "word (*rhema*) of God," which includes also the word that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Is 40,3-5) came to John in the desert, and he preached it in the region around the Jordan. He proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in order to see the one who is salvation and Savior. He baptized all the people who positively responded. Herod not only did not repent, but also "added to all the evil

things that he had done by shutting up John in prison” (Lk 3,18-20). It is against this background that Jesus gets prepared for his service (3,21-4,13).

Luke’s narration of the preparation of Jesus for his service (3,21-4,13) has three parts. First, his anointing - appointment (Lk 3,21-22). Jesus unites himself with the sinners, who repent according to God’s will for them. Now when all such people were baptized Jesus was baptized. While after baptism Jesus was praying the Holy Spirit anointed him, and the Father spoke to him. Thus Jesus, God’s Son, was appointed for his service (3,21-22). It is worth noting that Jesus is baptized while John is in prison. This narrative phenomenon implies that it is not John who anointed Jesus for his service, and that historically Jesus is not the successor of John, and also that Jesus service is not a continuation of that of John (cfr. Lk 16,16; Acts 13,25).

Luke narrates Jesus genealogy (Lk 3,23-38) as the second part of the preparation for his service. Jesus genealogy runs backwards from him to Adam. It attests that as the descendant of Abraham and David he is virtuous for the task. Jesus genealogies in Lk and Mtt differ at various points. According to Lk, the father of Joseph, Mary’s husband, is Heli instead of James in Mtt. All suggestions proposed hitherto to solve this difference remain mere conjectures. Even the suggestion that James and Heli were brothers, and Joseph was actually born of Heli, and because James had no children born of him, Joseph was thought of as son of James is supported neither by the Holy Bible nor by any other valid ancient document or tradition. Modern biblical scholars including Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI are of the opinion that Jesus genealogies in Lk and Mtt must be counted for their symbolic value. It must be especially noted that Luke narrates Jesus genealogy in relation to his service for the salvation of the whole mankind. Jesus genealogy in Luke’s “orderly account” is set immediately after Jesus anointing - appointment for his service and immediately before his being tempted by devil in the wilderness. Thus according to Luke, Jesus is anointed - appointed for his service and is about to defeat devil in order to save the whole humanity, at this juncture, beginning from Joseph his legal father to farther backwards up to Adam -in other words, in order to make the whole humanity God’s own. “Jesus takes upon himself the whole of humanity, the whole history of man, and he gives it a decisive re-orientation towards a new manner of human existence” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, The Infancy Narratives*, 11).

The third part of Jesus preparation for his service is his temptation in the wilderness (4,1-13). It prefigures and summarizes in advance the Satanic temptation through many people that he was about to face throughout his service, and particularly upon the cross. Jesus, anointed by the Holy Spirit was led by the Holy Spirit in the wilderness. Temptation in the wilderness confirmed that Jesus, Son of God and Servant of the Lord, would defeat the devil by the power of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the word of God, and establish God’s rule. For Jesus temptation in the wilderness was his final round preparation for beginning his service to carry out his mission by the power of the Holy Spirit.

5.2.3. Lk 4,14-9,50: The Beginning and First Part of Jesus Service

Having defeated the devil Jesus enters the field of his service. In Galilee Jesus begins and inaugurates his service in the whole land of the Jews. It is after three introductory accounts (4,1-15; 4,16-30; 4,31-44) that Luke continues with the details of Jesus ministry.

First, 4,14-15: It is Luke's preface to the account of Jesus service in the land of the Jews. This is the most summarized account of Jesus ministry. It summarily defines the geographical area and the form of Jesus service. In Galilee he begins his service in the whole land of Jews including Judea (cfr. 4,14.44). It is being filled with the power of the Spirit, by whom he was led in the wilderness, that Jesus fulfilled his service. He began to teach in the synagogues of Galilee (4,15) and continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea (4,44). Jews constituted the major portion of his audience. The very first word Luke uses to describe Jesus service is "teach" (4,14), which means also that "he was proclaiming the message" (4,44). His rebuking of unclean spirits from humans and healing the sick also are part of his 'teaching' or his 'utterance' (see 4,31-42; 23,5). The response in general was this: he "was praised - glorified, according to Luke's Greek - by all" (4,15).

Lk 4,16-30 is the second introductory account of Jesus service. It is an account of Jesus solemn inauguration of his service. He inaugurated it during a Sabbath service in the synagogue of Nazareth, his native place. This account contains Jesus ever first sermon (4,18-27) according to Luke's "orderly account." The word of God that "... all flesh shall see the salvation of God" was spoken through Isaiah (40,5). Quoting words God spoke through the same Isaiah (Is 61,1-2 + 58,6) does Jesus introduce his service and himself (Lk 4,18-19). Quoting these words and interpreting them Jesus theologically interprets his whole service. The scriptural words he read from Isaiah during the inaugural service interpret the word of God that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Is 40,5). The images "all flesh" and "shall see the salvation of God" of Is 40,5 are interpreted in Lk 4,18-27. Lk 4,21-27 is Jesus own scriptural interpretation of the passage he read from the sacred scripture.

"All flesh" of Lk 3,5 belong to "the poor" of Lk 4,18-19. All those who suffer from any sort of bondage are "poor." In the course of his "orderly account" Luke illustrates that Jesus considers all those who are in the bondage of devil / evil spirits or sickness, the dead, the unclean, sinners and Godless as "poor." "The salvation of God" is God's gift of the freedom through Jesus, His Messiah, from all sorts of bondage. The fundamental freedom is "the salvation by the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 1,77). The scriptural passage Jesus read from Prophet Isaiah contains some details of the freedom that Jesus brings. His interpretation of that passage highlights that Gentiles and women also are "poor" (Lk 4,21-27). Luke reports three responses of those who heard Jesus inaugural proclamation in the synagogue. First, "The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him" (4,20). A little after, "All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth..." (4,22). But his interpretation of the scriptural passage favoring Gentiles irritated the audience. "When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff" (4,28-29). All these three reactions foreshadow the response he encountered during his service. "But he passed through

the midst of them and went on his way” (4,30). This end of Jesus inaugural ceremony prefigures the end of his service in the land of the Jews. After his teaching in the Temple of Jerusalem (19,47-21,38) he was killed by his enemies. But he suffered these things and then entered into his glory (Lk 22-24). His inaugural service is his own self-witness.

Lk 4,31-44 forms the third introductory part. It presents before us an account of a sort of a model one- day- service in accordance with Jesus proclamation in his inaugural service. It takes place in Capernaum. By his service reported in this part, Jesus assures that by his saving service of proclaiming the good news in word and deed he frees men and women from the bondage of Satan and makes them enter the Kingdom of God. Miracles and signs testify to his words. At the next daybreak he asserted: “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose. So he continued proclaiming the message in synagogues of Judea” (4,43-44). Lord Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God (Acts 28,31). The subsequent account of Jesus service (Lk 5,1-24,53) is illustrations, explanations and expansion of the service Jesus drew up in his inaugural service (4,16-30). 4,16-30 occupies the central position among the three introductory parts. Jesus whole service is in fulfillment of what is written in the sacred scripture (Old Testament) about him.

As a result of Jesus proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God in word and deed to various sections of the poor in Galilee sinners believed in him. He called together the repentant sinners to become his disciples and missionaries of the good news (5,1-11.27-32). He chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles (Lk 6,12-16). First among them is Simon/ Peter. Thus he started calling together a community that was to become the Church and laid its apostolic foundation. This is a very important act of Jesus Galilean service of the kingdom of God. And in his sermon on the level place Jesus taught the fundamental laws for the formation and future of the community composed of the apostles together with a great crowd of disciples and a great multitude of people and all those who hear him (6,17-49). Jesus exercise of his authority over Sabbath and the law (scripture) infuriated the Jewish leadership. In spite of their opposition he went on proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God along with the company of the twelve and the women, who dared to provide for him and follow him (8,1-3). Already while continuing his service of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God in Galilee Jesus repeatedly said that he is moving towards his suffering-death-resurrection in Jerusalem (9,21.43-45). At his transfiguration the same destiny of his was spoken of by his Father and Prophets Moses and Elijah (9,30-31). On all these occasions Jesus continued to teach about the self-denial and suffering involved in discipleship (e.g., 9,23-50).

#### 5.2.4 9,51-19,46: Second Part of Jesus Service – In His Travel from Galilee to Jerusalem (Travel Narrative – TN)

Lk 9,51 solidly justifies designating Lk 9,51-19,46 as ‘Travel Narrative’ (TN). Having finished his service in Galilee, “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9,51). The prophetic phrase “set his face” bears two indications: (i) once Jesus leaves Galilee, he will not return to it. According to Luke’s account, hereafter never does



Jesus return to Galilee. (ii) Jesus goes to Jerusalem also to pronounce his judgment against the city. And Jesus actually did so (19,41-44). Once Jesus set his face to Jerusalem he was steadily on the way to Jerusalem until he entered the Temple there (19,46). His travel to Jerusalem culminates with his entry into the Temple (19,46). In between 9,51 and 19,46 there is a considerable number of 'travel notes,' which remind the readership that they are with Jesus on the way to Jerusalem. According to Luke's Gospel, this travel section is the central section of the geography of Jesus service. Hence it is also justifiably called 'the central section.'

The professed goal of Jesus travel is Jerusalem, and the evident purpose of his travel to Jerusalem is his ascension ("to be taken up": 9,51; 24,50-52). "It is necessary that the Messiah should suffer... and enter into his glory" (Lk 24,26). Already at his twelfth year he had said in the Temple of Jerusalem: "... I must be in my Father's house" (Lk 2,49). The phrase "in my Father's house" means also 'in my Father's business,' and, "with the inmates of my Father's house." What he said in the Temple at his twelfth year is symbolically realized by his straight entry into the Temple at the end of his travel to Jerusalem for his ascension. He fulfilled the same when "he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven" (Lk 24,51). Jesus travel from Galilee to Jerusalem is his pilgrimage to his Father's house.

Jesus travelled to Jerusalem as the divine teacher, the king and Savior. He travelled as the Savior, who gave the kingdom of God to all those, who acknowledged what God did in him and believed in him. During the travel to Jerusalem he taught about the kingdom of God, the urgent need of repentance (12,54-13,235), discipleship (for e.g., 9,57-62; 10,38-42;14,25-35), the way and mode of missionary journey (10,1-24), prayer and the mode of prayer (11,1-13). It is in the travel narrative that the word 'disciple' occurs the biggest number of times within Luke's Gospel. In the very beginning of the travel narrative there are indications that Jesus will be received and rejected at the end of his travel.

#### The First Letter of John

A comparison of the language and theology of the Gospel of John with those of the First Letter of John prompts biblical scholarship to infer that the latter was written sometime around A.D.100 by someone of the Johannine school. Ancient letters were marked with the names both of the author and the recipient/s besides the formal salutation. But 1 John lacks these formalities. It is written as the author's own direct communication of what he has to convey to the recipient. The author relies on the authority of his own personal experience. 1 John sounds like a meditation on God's love that is revealed to the world in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. This letter has been written as an encyclical letter to the Churches of Asia Minor. It is aimed at enabling them to overcome the internal disturbance caused by the false teachings propagated in them in their early years. The author writes to them: "I write these things to you concerning those who would deceive you" (1 Jn 2,26). Some among them, who once were members of these Churches, denied that Jesus was the Christ (1 Jn 2,22), who "has come in the flesh is from God" (1 Jn 4,2), and "is the Son of God" (1 Jn 4,15). They did not obey Jesus Christ's commandments (1 Jn 4,2). They claimed privileged knowledge about Jesus, and that they did

not have sin (1 Jn 1,8.10; 2,4). The author hints at them as liars who deceive themselves (1 Jn 2,8.10), and calls them antichrists (1 Jn 2,18). They, who do not love “in truth and action” a brother in need, love neither God nor brethren (1 Jn 2,9.11; 3,10-18; 4,20). The seeds of the thoughts of the false teachers mentioned herein developed in later years to become the seeds of Gnosticism, a false teaching of some members of the Church.

The purpose of the First Letter of John is this: correct the misconceptions, particularly those regarding Jesus Christ, and deepen the knowledge and raise the consciousness of the Christian communities of Asia Minor of their Christian faith, spirituality and social life. In order to achieve his aim, the author summarily presents the gist of the whole of his Christian experience in the following realities: life (1,2), fellowship (1,3.6-7), light (1,5), righteousness (2,29), love (4,7-8), belief/faith (5,1-13) and truth (5,6). The author has given comparatively more theological attention to the following realities of Christian life experience – belief, love, fellowship and life. By belief he means believing that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (1,1.5) and confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (4,1-8).

The revelatory statement “God is love” is a unique feature of 1 John. We find it in no other book of the Bible. It is the most beautiful and incomparable definition of God. The original source of mutual love is God, who is love itself. 1 John reminds us that only a lifestyle that inseparably interconnects our divine sonship and moral life can do justice to the twin commandment ‘believe in Jesus Christ and live in brotherly love.’

We may tentatively divide 1 John according to the topics treated. 1,1-4: Introduction; 1,5-2,17: life of fellowship with God by means of life in the light; 2,18-29: reject antichrist and live a life of true belief in Christ; 3,1-24: be children of God and do right by loving brothers and sisters; 4,1-21: discerning the spirits and fulfilling the belief by love; 5,1-12: true belief conquers the world and guides life; 5,13-21: conclusion: sin and eternal life.

### **Model Questions**

1. What for shall any of the people of Israel bring a male without blemish from the herd to the entrance of the tent of meeting? (a) For acceptance before the Lord (b) as atonement for him (c) to slaughter it (d) for burnt offering
2. How many times do phrases such as, as the Lord commanded / has commanded / so I am commanded occur in Leviticus 8? (a) 8 (b) 7 (c) 5 (d) 10
3. You shall not omit from your grain offerings the salt of the covenant with your God. Chapter and verse in Leviticus? (a) 2,14 (b) 2,12 (c) 2,13 (d) 6,16
4. You must not eat any blood whatever. Where in the Bible are these words of the Lord written? (a) Lev 12,10-14; Genesis 4,10; Acts 15,19 (b) Lev 7,26-27; Genesis 9,4; Acts 15,28-29 (c) Lev 17,23-24; Genesis 10,14; Acts 15,27-28 (d) Lev 7,10-14; Genesis 10,4; Acts 15,26-27
5. Who led forward the bull of sin offering at the priestly consecration of Aaron and his sons (a) Aaron and his sons (b) Moses (c) Aaron (d) Moses and Aaron

6. Who laid their hands on the second ram that Moses brought?  
(a) Moses      (b) Aaron      (c) Aaron and his sons      (d) Moses and Aaron
7. Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and eat it there. Who said to whom?  
(a) the Lord to Moses      (b) Moses to Aaron      (c) the Lord to Aaron and his sons  
(d) Moses to Aaron and his sons
8. On the eighth day Moses summoned      (a) Aaron and his sons      (b) Aaron  
    (c) the elders of Israel      (d) Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel
9. Before the Lord the priest shall put oil on the head of the one to be cleansed  
(a) to cleanse him      (b) as the sign of his cleansing  
(c) to make atonement on his behalf      (d) to indicate that he has been cured
10. The disease that is not mentioned in Lev 14,54-57:  
(a) itch      (b) sore      (c) swelling      (d) spot
11. The Old Testament passages, which mention the priestly order of Abijah  
(a) 1 Chronicles 31,2; 2 Chronicles 24,10      (b) 1 Chronicles 24,10; 2 Chronicles 31,2  
(c) 1 Chronicles 31,10; 2 Chronicles 21,3      (d) 1 Chronicles 34,10; 2 Chronicles 24,2
12. The title first used for Jesus in Luke's Gospel  
(a) Jesus      (b) Son of the Most High      (c) Son of God      (d) Lord
13. Zechariah was serving as priest      (a) in the Temple of the Lord      (b) before God  
    (c) in the sanctuary of the Lord      (d) before the Lord
14. What Mary said last to the angel Gabriel sent by God  
(a) Here, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word  
(b) How can this be?      (c) How can this be, since I am a virgin?  
(d) Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word
15. The Lord God of Israel had promised to our ancestors  
(a) a Savior      (b) Covenant      (c) the blessing to serve him      (d) mercy
16. David was the son of      (a) Nathan      (b) Jesse      (c) Obed      (d) Boaz
17. Therefore consider whether the ..... in you is not darkness  
(a) brightness      (b) eye      (c) light      (d) lamp
18. The words 'Blessed' and 'Woe' occur .... times each in Jesus sermon on a level place  
(a) 3      (b) 4      (c) 5      (d) 6
19. The Lord's Prayer Jesus taught his disciples is in Luke's Gospel  
(a) 11,1-4      (b) 11,2-4      (c) 11,3-4      (d) 11,4

20. Jesus addressing his disciples 'my friends' is written in Luke's Gospel  
 (a) 11,5-6            (b) 12,4            (c) 11,4            (d) 12,5
21. If we say that we have no sin,            (a) we lie            (b) we do not do what is true  
 (c) we deceive ourselves            (d) the truth is not in us
22. If we say that we have not sinned, what is not in us            (a) truth            (b) light  
 (c) eternal life            (d) his (Jesus) word
23. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from  
 (a) all sins            (b) all unrighteousness            (c) all unclean            (d) all untruth
24. In a person who loves his brother or sister there is no cause for  
 (a) darkness            (b) darkness of eyes            (c) blindness            (d) stumbling
25. The pride in riches comes not from            (a) little children            (b) children of God  
 (c) whoever loves a brother or sister            (d) the Father
26. Everyone who confesses the Son has ..... also            (a) the Father            (b) the life  
 (c) the Holy Spirit            (d) the anointing
27. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from  
 (a) above            (b) God            (c) heaven            (d) not from antichrist
28. God is love: 1 Jn            (a) 4,7.13            (b) 4,9.17            (c) 4,8.16            (d) 4,8.18
29. Where in 1 Jn do other ancient authorities read *your* in the place of *our*?  
 (a) 1,4            (b) 1,14            (c) 4,14            (d) 2,4
30. 1 Jn 2, 7 refers to a new commandment. John's Gospel .... refers to a new commandment.  
 (a) 13,14            (b) 14,13            (c) 13,34            (d) 14,33
31. Which parts of the slaughtered male from the sheep or goats for a burnt offering shall the priest turn into a smoke on the altar?  
 (a) the entrails and the legs  
 (b) the entrails and the legs and the suet            (c) its parts and the entrails and the legs  
 (d) its parts, its head and its suet, and the entrails and the legs

32.

