

Background:

Title:

The name of the book “**Leviticus**” is taken from the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew, and means “**pertaining to Levite**” or priests.

Author: Moses

Date:

It was written immediately after the book of Exodus and probably after the building of the Tabernacle. **Leviticus** starts with, “Then the Lord called to Moses....”

Note concerning the Date and Authors:

In 1929, a discovery at Ras Shamra, the ancient archaeological site at Ugarit, has helped to show (contrary to the assertions of some theologians) that the Pentateuch could have been written by Moses around 1400 B.C. Terminology in use at Ugarit during the 15th century B.C. parallels that of **Leviticus**. Terms such as ‘burnt offering,’ ‘whole burnt offering,’ ‘trespass offering’ and ‘peace offering’ appear in Ugaritic literature. All the external evidence that has been found is in full accord with internal evidence for Mosaic authorship.

Time Span: About one month.

To Whom Written:

Specifically to the Levites, but also to the Israelites in general.

Summary:

The book of **Leviticus** is concerned mainly with the ministry of the priests (“the sons of Aaron”) in the Tabernacle. After the covenant at Sinai, it was essential to ensure and maintain a relationship with God. This was achieved through the many sacrifices and worship ordinances. The soul brought into fellowship must have a means of maintaining that relationship. These detailed instructions are designed to show the holiness of God, and the holiness He requires of His people. The book of **Leviticus** reveals that our enjoyment of God’s presence is based upon our trust in Him and our obedience to His Word. Obedience brings us into harmony with his holy nature, and brings peace. The word ‘peace’ is mentioned more times in **Leviticus** than in any other book of the Bible.

Given in the day of types and shadows, **Leviticus** teaches us the sinfulness of sin and that true holiness can be found only in the Messiah. In that respect, **Leviticus** is a schoolmaster who points us to Christ (see Gal 3:24-25).

How wonderful it is to know that we serve such a great God, that He would design and construct such wonderful sketches, types, and blueprints to give knowledge and hope to His people. It is equally wonderful to consider that we are not only called to be ‘children of God,’ but also, ‘joint heirs with Christ’ and priests! Truly, it is no small thing to be a Christian.

LEVITICUS

Making a Holy People

Key Text: **Lev 20:26**

You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

Theme:

- I. There are two main parts of Leviticus:
 - A. Approaching God (1-16). Emphasis is mediation. All the divine instruction about sacrifice and priests culminate on the Day of Atonement.
 - B. Abiding with God (17-27). Emphasis is consecration. When brought near, the blessings and benefits could be maintained.
- II. The Purpose or Scope of the Book
 - A. To show God is holy, man is sinful.
 - B. To show God can maintain His holiness, yet expose man’s sinfulness.
 - C. To show how a sinful people can approach a holy God.
 - D. To give a manual of laws concerning sacrifices and ordinances of worship.
 - E. To keep Israel a holy nation.



Book
Look
at the

Sermon Outline

God Came Down

Introduction:

How do you go about reading a book? Authors write books to be read from the front to the back. First the preface, then Chapter One and so on until you reach the last page. Most of us are guilty, however, of occasionally turning to the end of a book first to see how the plot resolves. We are impatient readers. We don't let the story unfold in its own time. We want to know "who dunnit" right away.

Unfortunately, that is exactly how we read our Bibles. All of us are far more familiar with the New Testament than with the Old. We've already read about Christ. We've already learned how God deals with man's sin. We understand a great deal about the nature and personality of God.

In fact, so familiar are we with the "ending" of the Bible, it is difficult for us to comprehend that there was a time when God's people were in the dark about many of the things we take for granted. Think for a moment about the Israelites during the time of Moses. They didn't know many of the things we would consider basic to a relationship with God. They hadn't read about a "Messiah". They didn't know how to worship God. They didn't even know God's name!

Exodus is the "chapter" in the Bible that begins to educate people about God. Here God reveals some fundamental facts about Himself: His name, His attributes, His concern for those He has chosen and how He is to be worshiped. A basic theme of **Exodus** is God's desire to be known. God comes down in this book to reveal Himself to man. In many ways, the rest of the Bible is simply a continuation of what God begins to do in the book of **Exodus**.

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Outline:

I. God Wants Man to Know Him

- A. You Will Know that I Am the Lord Your God
 - 1. In the book of **Exodus**, God acts 14 times so that people will know that He is the Lord. (6:7; 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4, 18; 16:6, 8, 12; 29:46.)
 - 2. He wants the people of Israel to know he is the Lord.
 - 3. He also wants the Egyptians to understand who he is.
- B. Visual Symbols of God
 - 1. The burning bush (3:1)
 - 2. The pillar of cloud and fire (13:21-22)
 - 3. At Mt. Sinai (19:16-19)
- C. The Tent of Meeting
 - 1. 12 out of 40 chapters deal with the Tabernacle.
 - 2. **Exodus** stresses the Tabernacle because it is here that God reveals Himself to His people
 - 3. **Read Ex 29:42-46**
- D. God Came Down
 - 1. On three occasions, God "comes down" in **Exodus**.
 - 2. Each occasion marks a significant point in the book, and reveals something significant about God.

II. God Reveals Himself

- A. The Burning Bush
 - 1. God comes down in the burning bush.
 - 2. **Read Ex 3:5-15**
 - 3. What we learn about God from this event: God is holy (5-6); God is compassionate (7-10).
- B. Mt. Sinai
 - 1. God comes down at Mt. Sinai.
 - 2. **Read Ex 19:14-25**
 - 3. What we learn about God from this event: God is holy (16-19); and God requires a holy people.
- C. Moses
 - 1. God comes down to Moses.
 - 2. **Read Ex 33:18-23; 34:5-8**
 - 3. What we learn about God from this event: God is holy; God longs to be known; the attributes of God (34:6-7).

Conclusion:

- 1. God is still the Invisible God in Exodus.
- 2. Only with the coming of Jesus does God become visible.

With the coming of Jesus, we have seen the very face of God. Jesus could claim that anyone who had seen him had seen the Father, that he and the Father were one. One of his followers would later rejoice that God "made his light to shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Co 4:6).

Christ in Leviticus

The sacrificial system of worship made it possible for God's people to draw near to Him. All the sacrifices represent different aspects of Christ, the Lamb of God, giving Himself as a sacrifice for sinners. The major sacrifices are listed below:

1. **Burnt Offering: 1:1-17; 6:8-13; 7:8.** The one who offers the sacrifice comes as a "worshiper" who had already been reconciled to God by first presenting the sin and the trespass sacrifices. The sacrifice was completely burned to ashes on the altar. It typified the death of Christ as being a complete and perfect act of obedience to the will of God (1Pe 1:19). It was designed to teach us that we, too, are to offer our best to God, and that we are to be completely consumed in obedience (cf Heb 9:26; 10:14; 1Jn 1:7; Ro 12:12).
2. **Meal Offering: 2:1-16; 6:14-23; 5:11-12; 23:9-22.** The "fine" flour or unleavened bread was offered with salt, oil and frankincense. Every meal offering pointed to Christ's daily consecration of all His works to the Father (Jn 17:19).
3. **Peace Offering: 3:1-17; 7:11-36; 19:5-8; 22:21-25.** The fat of a sheep, ox or goat was burned as "a sweet savor unto the Lord", then the remainder was eaten. This offering was shared in fellowship with God, the priest, and others. Christ is "our Peace" offering who stands as our representative before the Lord. He alone makes peace for us with God (Eph 2:14-15; 5:2). Promised (Jn 14:27). Purchased (Col 1:20). Preached (Eph 2:17).
4. **Sin Offering: 4:1-35; 5:1-13; 6:24-30.** This offering is required first in the "line of offerings" for it deals with sins against God. Burnt, peace, meal and drink offerings were of ancient usage, but the sin and trespass offerings were new in Israel. These sacrifices impressed upon the mind that it was sin that had removed man from fellowship with God. Christ is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1:29, 36). He is the "sin-offering" (Heb 9:1-10:18; 2Co 5:21; 1Pe 1:18-20; 2:24; Matt 20:28).
5. **Trespass Offering: 5:14-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-7.** This offering was required of all Israelites. It made restitution and satisfaction for sins against another person or against God. Acts of sin were specifically listed which needed atonement. A lamb or a ram was sacrificed for these particular sins. In the New Testament, God's claim on ourselves and our services are never fully paid (by ourselves). Even if we did all that was commanded we are still "unprofitable servants." Jesus Christ is our trespass offering and our satisfaction. Only in the Cross will men be justified (Is 53:10; Ro 3:21-27; 2Co 5:14-21; 1Jo 2:2; 4:10; Col 2:13-14).

Major Lessons

1. **God is a holy God.** There is no sin, fault, or imperfection in His nature.
2. **Those who approach God must be holy.** The worshipper must be holy as God is holy. No access to Him can be obtained unless holiness or the covering of sin can be acquired. (11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7-8, 20:24-26.)
3. **God has not left man to devise his own plan of achieving fellowship with Him.** God alone gives man the way to holiness, and the means of dealing with sin. Throughout all of **Leviticus**, it is revealed how God in His grace accepts the death of a substitute as payment for the penalty of sin.
4. **The seriousness of sin is emphasized.** The blood sacrifice, the detailed instruction, and the special mediators (priests) all underscored the cost of sin in man's relationship with God and others. Sin cannot be overlooked.
5. **Blood is the means of atonement.** The life of the flesh is in the blood and it is the blood that makes us one with God. (17:11)
6. **Man must also be concerned with his fellowmen.** If one is in fellowship with God, he will love those whom God loves. (19:18, 24)
7. **The rights of others must be respected.** The people of God had a responsibility not only to their brethren, but to strangers. It was a general principle of mercy to all men.

Key Words of the Book

- A. Holiness (87 times)
- B. Sin & uncleanness (194 various forms)
- C. Blood — form of cleansing (89 times)
- D. "Offerings" and "sacrifice" (91 times)
- E. Direct messages from God (103 times)

Outline

Small Group Study

I. The Approach to God (1-16)

- A. The Sacrificial Ordinances (1-7)
 - 1. Burnt offerings (1)
 - 2. Meal offerings (2)
 - 3. Peace offerings (3)
 - 4. Sin offerings (4-5:13)
 - 5. Trespass offering (5:14-6:7)
 - 6. Special instruction to the priests (6:8-7:38)
- B. The Priestly Ordinances (8-10)
 - 1. Consecration of Aaron and his sons (8)
 - 2. Commencement of priestly duties (9)
 - 3. Correction of Aaron's sons (10)
- C. The Ordinances of Purity (11-15)
 - 1. Concerning food (11)
 - 2. Concerning childbirth (12)
 - 3. Concerning leprosy (12-14)
 - 4. Concerning sex (15)
- D. Ordinances for the Day of Atonement (16)
 - 1. Preparation of Aaron (16:1-10)
 - 2. Preparation of the priests (16:11-14)
 - 3. Preparation of the people (16:15-19)
 - 4. Preparation of the scape-goat (16:20-22)
 - 5. Offerings completed (16:23-28)
 - 6. Sacredness of the day (16:29-34)

II. Continued Fellowship With God (17-25)

- A. Holiness -- A Requirement for the People (17-20)
 - 1. Purity in regard to food (17)
 - 2. Purity in regard to marriage (18)
 - 3. Purity in regard to conduct (19)
 - 4. Impurity punished (20)
- B. Holiness -- A Requirement for Priests (21-22)
- C. Holiness of the Feasts (23)
 - 1. The Sabbath (23:1-3)
 - 2. The Passover & unleavened bread (23:4-14)
 - 3. The Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (23:15-22)
 - 4. The Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25)
 - 5. The Day of Atonement (23:26-32)
 - 6. The Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-44)
- D. Holiness of Ceremonial and Judicial Rites (24)
- E. Holiness of Sacred Years (25)
 - 1. The Sabbatical Year (25:1-7)
 - 2. The Year of Jubilee (25:8-55)

III. The Conclusion and Special Ordinances (26-27)

- A. The Blessings and Cursings (26)
 - 1. Necessity of a holy relationship (26:1-2)
 - 2. Blessings of obedience (26:3-13)
 - 3. Cursing for disobedience (26:14-39)
 - 4. God is faithful (26:40-46)
- B. The Special Ordinances (27)
 - 1. Vows (27:2-25)
 - 2. Exclusions from vows (27:26-29)
 - 3. The tithe (27:30-33)

Warm-up:

1. When you were a child, what annual event did you look forward to? Why was this event special?
2. If you could create a **new** annual event what would it be?
3. How do you react when you see blood?
 - a. turn pale
 - b. panic
 - c. throw up
 - d. faint
 - e. no reaction
 - f. hurt for the one bleeding
 - g. want to help
 - h. becoming thirsty

Look at the Book

Hebrews 10:1-18

1. Why couldn't the sacrifices of the bulls and goats take away sins?
2. What was the purpose of all the sacrifices under the law if they could not remove sins?
3. Why would Christ be the remedy for sins?
4. What is the difference between the old sacrificial system and the new sacrifices? (11-14)
5. Give an explanation of verse 14. In what sense are Christians already perfect, and at the same time being made holy (or perfect)?

Looking Closer

Hebrews 10:1-18

1. What actions of worship remind you of God's mercy and love? How are these actions important to you?
2. What do some people substitute for the sacrifice of Christ? Explain your answer.
 - a. a feeling of being saved
 - b. the ritual observance of New Testament statutes
 - c. works of merit
 - d. other men's philosophy
 - e. physical blessings
3. If I were to describe my life in relationship to Christ's sacrifice I would have to say that I . . .
 - a. am still relying on Old Testament sacrifice
 - b. am without a sacrifice
 - c. do not need a sacrifice
 - d. wish I had a sacrifice
 - e. am waiting for a sacrifice
 - f. am rejoicing over His sacrifice
 - g. am growing to appreciate His sacrifice more and more
4. What evidence have you seen that God is making you a holier person?

Looking Around:

Go around the group. Let everyone share how they could be helped to live a holier life.