

Notes for Leviticus study:

“Leviticus / And He called”

English & Latin name

Hebrew name translated

Out of the 5 books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), Leviticus is the central document solely dedicated to instructions to make Israel holy. The very center of God's will which flows from His own essence and character is holiness. His children, in whom dwells His Holy Spirit, will hunger and thirst for His holiness (true and perfect righteousness and mercy). Why holiness? It is the substance of freedom. That's why there is no law against the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23b)

As you peruse this book, observe and note the structure and genre as well as the contents. It is all very intentional and there is much insight to be gained towards understanding and growing in holiness to the glory of God and benefit for ourselves and our neighbors.

Introduction to Leviticus

Taken from http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=258:

Leviticus is largely a code book, a book of regulations. If any book of the Old Testament could be called a “book of the law” surely the Book of Leviticus is such. The book is filled with regulations.

That so elaborate a ritual looked beyond itself we cannot doubt. It was a prophecy of things to come; a shadow whereof the substance was Christ and his kingdom. We may not always be able to say what the exact relation is between the type and the antitype; but we cannot read the Epistle to the Hebrews and not acknowledge that the Levitical priests “served the pattern and type of heavenly things;” that the sacrifices of the law pointed to and found their interpretation in the Lamb of God; that the ordinances of outward purification signified the true inner cleansing of the heart and conscience from dead works to serve

the living God. One idea **--HOLINESS--** moreover penetrates the whole of this vast and burdensome ceremonial, and gives it a real glory even apart from any prophetic significance.

Problems some people have with Leviticus

Leviticus is boring, it is not exciting enough.

Our culture has concluded that anything which is not entertaining is not worth listening to. The media has the task of grabbing a person's attention, of taking them from whatever they are doing and setting their eyes and their minds on the printed page or the television screen. They do this in competition with other media, trying to do the same thing. And so we have come to the conclusion that we deserve to have all communication be entertaining and exciting.

In most (not all) cases the level of drama and hype is directly related to the irrelevance of what we are watching. You have to spice up the kinds of things we see in the media because they have little value, other than entertainment. On the other hand, the greatest and most significant communications of history have not been particularly entertaining. The Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, or the Constitution of the United States are not written to entertain us. If we want to be entertained we turn to writings which begin, “once upon a time,” and end “happily after.” If we want to be informed about things vital to the present and to eternity, we most often must set aside our desire for entertainment.

How many people go to the public library and check out the city code book for entertaining reading? No one does, but they do read the city codes very carefully if they plan to build a house. The California Driver's Manual is not great entertainment either, but anyone who wants to get their driver's license had better study it well.

The Book of Leviticus is a book of regulations, regulations concerning how men are to relate to God and to their neighbors. Failure to observe these regulations can lead to **death**, and has eternal implications. Thus, the very form and content of the Book of Leviticus, which in the past may have caused us to avoid the book, is that which signals us to the vitally important communication from God which is contained in this book. No law book should be taken lightly, especially one which comes from God.

Leviticus is too difficult to understand.

Thus we need the Spirit of God to enable us to comprehend the truths of God which are otherwise impossible to fathom or to accept.

The level of difficulty of understanding Leviticus (or any other Scripture, for that matter) is not without purpose. God never “casts His pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6). The richest truths of the Word of God seldom lie on the surface, for all to see. They have to be “mined,” as it were, showing our love for God and our diligence to know His will. As Proverbs puts it,

“Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:2-6).

The wisdom of God is for those who diligently seek it. That is precisely what the psalmist did with regard to the law of God (Ps. 119). Let us determine to do likewise.

Also, I must say that our preoccupation with the relevance of any text of Scripture points out that Christians today are far too “relevancy oriented.” We are very pragmatic in our orientation. We are not very interested in truths that do not immediately and practically relate to our lives. This is similar to the thinking of the ancients, who thought that the sun must rotate around the earth, rather than the earth around the sun. Preachers are told to introduce their sermons by addressing some “felt need” and then to show how the truth of the text meets that need. The whole orientation thus is around self, and not God. Enough! I must protest.

We smile (sometimes) at the little child’s foolishness, who, when given a quarter, spends that quarter for immediate gratification. He goes out and buys a candy bar, rather than to deny himself an immediate pleasure in order to obtain something far better in the future. When we come to the Bible, we are far more interested in finding candy than we are in learning those truths and those principles which will put us in good standing in the future. Let us determine that we will study Leviticus (as well as other Scripture) for what God has for us in it, whether or not it immediately addresses and soothes some need. In a day when warmth and fuzziness is held at a premium I must tell you that God’s word often does not promise us a “warm fuzzy.” It is high time that we began to orient ourselves to God, and not insist that God orient Himself and His word to us.

Leviticus is for all God’s people at all times in every place

Leviticus makes a great deal of some distinctions. Much of the Book of Leviticus is devoted to distinguishing between what is “clean” and “unclean,” and that which is “holy” from that which is “profane.”

Leviticus does not press the distinction between ceremonial holiness and civilian holiness. While Leviticus does press the distinctions between clean and unclean, holy and profane, it does not press the distinction between the sacred and the secular. Holiness should be seen in the tabernacle and the sacrifices, and in the fields and workplace.

OUTLINE:

[Personal Holiness]

1. Primary requisite for holiness – sacrifices acceptable to the Lord (chs.1-7)
2. Primary agent for holiness – a priest acceptable to the Lord (chs.8-10)
3. Requirements for holy / healthy living
 - a. diet (ch.11)
 - b. self examination (chs.13-15)

[Communal Holiness]

- c. Day of Atonement (ch.16)
 - d. Sanctity of Blood (ch.17)
 - e. sexual purity (ch.18)
 - f. social responsibility (ch.19)
 - g. capital punishment (ch.20)
 - h. celebrations centered on God's salvation (ch.23-25)
 - i. obedience (ch.26)
 - j. recognizing and appreciating what belongs to the Lord (ch.27)
- Holiness is the Lord's primary character out of which His love and power flow. It is still His primary objective for His people through all generations. Holiness leads to healthy minds and hearts, healthy lives, and healthy communities.

The Necessity and Centrality of Holiness

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matt.5:8

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” Heb.12:14

- “Holy” or some form of the word appears 87 times in the book.
- There are many commands to discern the clean from the unclean. The priests were to continually practice this way of thinking, using the knowledge base revealed in the Law of the Lord so that they could lead and serve the people in creating a holy and healthy community where the Lord could dwell in freedom and power without breaking out against His people.

<p>Sections in Leviticus – the first couple of sections describe the vertical aspect of becoming holy; the last three delineate the horizontal constitution. As you work out each section, identify the purpose of holiness. This will help you understand the greatness and power of holiness, why the heavenly host praise the Almighty with “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.”</p>	<p>Understanding Holiness (What does the section teach about holiness)</p>	<p>Personal Application to formulate worldview and self-concept</p>
	<p>These 2 columns are to be done on your own. I’ve done the first section to provide an example.</p>	
<p>I. The Sacrifices (ch.1-7) The five offerings which open this book are clear, crystal-cut cameos of Christ. They depict His hypostatical (the one personality of Christ in which His two natures, human and divine are united) person in depth and His death in detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Burnt Offering B. Grain Offering C. Fellowship Offering D. Sin Offering E. Guilt Offering 	<p>Holiness begins with an offering to God that pleases Him – in essence, bringing about reconciliation. Without a sacrifice, there is no atonement for sin and thus people will still be in a state of hostility towards God. Also evident in the instructions is the need to identify with the sacrifice.</p>	<p>Although God’s love is unconditional, God is holy and His acceptance of people is very conditional. If God is going to accept me, I must have a sacrifice according to His requirements [namely Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.] And I must find my identity in this Sacrifice which is most holy.</p>
<p>II. The Priesthood (ch. 8-10) The consecration of the priests reveals how shallow and inadequate is our thinking of Christian consecration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. washing and clothing B. anointing with oil C. atoned for and drawn near by sacrifices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blood on rt. ear lobe, rt. thumb, and rt. big toe D. complete dwelling with the Lord 		

<p>III. Laws for Holiness (ch. 11- 20)</p> <p>A. Foods (11)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The diet God provided for His people was sanitary and therapeutic, and contains much spiritual food for our souls. <p>B. Childbirth (12)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention is given to motherhood and is a further example of God's thinking concerning womanhood (chapter 12). <p>C. Defilement of one's dwelling</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prominence given to leprosy and its treatment, in the heart of this book on worship, demands our attention. Why is there this extended section on leprosy? Those who have been given gracious insights into Scripture have found here a type of sin and its defiling effect on man in his relation to God. The cleansing of the leper finds its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ as typified in a most unusual sacrifice of two birds (chapters 13–15). If you and I would escape the defilement of sin in this world, we need to know a great deal about the death and resurrection of Christ and the application of it to our lives. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Infectious Skin diseases (13) b. Clothing (13) c. Cleansing (from skin diseases and mildew in house or clothing) (14) d. Bodily discharges (15) <p>D. The Day of Atonement (16)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The great Day of Atonement is a full-length portrait of the sacrifice of Christ that brings man into the Holy of Holies (chapter 16). <p>E. The Blood (17)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The importance of the burnt offering altar in the tabernacle, highlights the essential characteristic of the cross of Christ (chapter 17). Jesus, in shedding His blood on the cross, gave His all to purchase the redemption of His people. 2. Life identity, typified by the blood, is the MOST SIGNIFICANT, POWERFUL, element of the sacrificial system. <p>F. Holiness in the private and public sector</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The emphasis in this book of instructions concerning seemingly minute details in the daily lives of God's people reveals how God intends the human family to be involved with Him (chapters 18–22). God wants to get involved in your business, in your family life, in your social life. Let us beware lest we shut Him out of our lives. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sexual Relations (18) b. Being holy in all aspects of life (19) c. Punishments (20) d. The Priest's Family (21) 		
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<p>IV. Celebrations (23-25) The list of feasts furnishes a prophetic program of God's agenda for all time</p> <p>A. Sabbath: God's program has nothing to do with fleshly works. 1. Matt. 11:28-30</p> <p>B. Passover and Unleavened Bread: God's program begins with the blood of the Lamb and forgiveness of sins. 1. John 1:29, 6:33</p> <p>C. Firstfruits: God's program produces resurrected lives led the Holy Spirit 1. I Cor. 15:23</p> <p>D. Feast of Weeks: God's program is carried out not by individuals but His collective body, the church 1. Acts 2:1-4 2. John 15:26</p> <p>E. Feast of Trumpets: God's program will, at an appointed time, raise the bodies of all believers 1. I Cor. 15:50-57</p> <p>F. Day of Atonement: God's program will bring resurrected people, [body, soul, and spirit] into His most intimate presence (the Holy of Holies). 1. Rom.3:25 2. Heb.9 and 10</p> <p>G. Feast of Tabernacles: God will ultimately dwell with His people in a new, powerful, and eternal way (Rev.21-22) 1. John 1:14 2. Zechariah 14</p>		
<p>V. Laws for the Health and Prosperity of the Land</p> <p>The laws to govern the land furnish an interpretation of its checkered history (contemporary culture) and an insight into its future prominence (deliverance into freedom). There are a lot of prophecies in this book. The nation Israel and the Promised Land are intertwined and interwoven from here to eternity (chapters 24–27).</p> <p>A. Punishment for Blasphemy (3rd Commandment) and murder (24:10-23)</p> <p>B. Obedience and Disobedience (26)</p> <p>C. Offerings and Redemption (27)</p>		

Summary and synthesis:

When God calls us to Himself, He calls us to be holy as He is holy. This is central and primary to our lives. We must not overlook and marginalize in any way this imperative.

- † What is holiness to the Lord?
- † What are the essential elements of holiness?
- † Where does holiness begin?
- † What are its fruits?
- † How does God sanctify people?
- † How can we more closely partner with God in helping our family and church become holy to the Lord?

Morning notes:

- ✠ daily sacrifices = daily taking up the cross, dying to sin and self
 - 1:4 – putting the hand on the head of the sacrifice is the worshipper identifying with the sacrifice.
 - The worshipper would see that he / she is slaughtered then placed on the bronze altar to be consumed by the flames.
 - The substitutionary sacrifice would die then be vaporized; this is a picture of a true worshipper of God being made holy.
 - This is the call to all disciples – be a living sacrifice; dying daily and living by the Spirit rather than the flesh.
 - Necessary for whole living; God desires and intends whole living.
 - God has made a living Way to be holy so that we can truly love Him and each other and be a part of His redemption in making communities holy, beginning with our own families.
- ✠ “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Matt.27:46
 - Jesus identifying with us and being our substitute.