

## LEVITICUS

Author: Moses

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The Greek version of the Septuagint (270 B.C.) has given the title of LEVITICUS (PERTAINING TO LEVITES) to the third book of the Pentateuch (also known as the Torah), and the name has been retained in almost all the modern versions. The book primarily deals with the laws and regulations of the Levites, the priestly tribe of Israel. In Hebrew, this third book of the TORAH is termed Vayikra meaning "*And He called,*" which is the first word in the book, and which, as in preceding cases, became the running title to the whole.

Leviticus contains an account of the ceremonies to be observed in the sacrifices and offerings; the consecration of priests, together with the institution of the three grand national festivals of the Jews, the PASSOVER, PENTECOST, and TABERNACLES, with a great variety of other ecclesiastical matters. Although this book may be considered a manual for priests (who were from the tribe of Levi), it was not only for the priests. All the Israelites were to know and keep the law.

Leviticus centers around the theme of holiness. This concept of the holiness of God, and how people can acceptably approach Him and remain in continued fellowship with Him. The only way to God is through blood sacrifice, and a close walk with God is only through obedience to His Laws. The Hebrew root word for holy appears 152 times in Leviticus.

The whole sacrificial system of the Hebrew law was intended for a people already brought into covenant with the living God, and every sacrifice was assumed to have a vital connection with the spirit of the worshipper. A Hebrew sacrifice, like a Christian sacrament, possessed the inward and spiritual grace, as well as the outward and visible sign. One may have come in devout obedience to the voice of the Law, with little more than a vague sense that his offering in some way expressed his own spiritual wants, and that the fact that he was permitted to offer it, was a sacramental pledge of God's good will and favor toward him. The lessons conveyed in the symbols of the altar point ahead to the *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29), converged with more or less distinctness toward *the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world* (Rev. 13:8), *Who was to come in the fullness of times* (Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10) that He might fulfill all righteousness, and realize in the eyes of people the true sin-offering, burnt-offering, and peace-offering (Calvary).

**Chapters 1-17** describe in detail how sinful people can approach a holy God—through **sacrifice**. By giving offerings and sacrifices of what they had, the Israelites showed their devotion to God. **Chapters 18-27** deal primarily with the **sanctification** of the people of Israel as a whole through ceremonial and moral holiness. It tells how God's people can go on living in right relationship with Him. Rules listed in these chapters range from proper sexual conduct to kind treatment of handicapped people. Included is a verse that Jesus quoted, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (The New Testament refers to or quotes Leviticus about 90 times.)

**Key verse: 20:26** "*And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.*"

## Leviticus Outline

- I. Types of Offerings (1:1 – 6:7)
  - A. The Burnt Offerings (Ch. 1)
  - B. The Grain Offerings (Ch. 2)
  - C. The Peace Offerings (Ch. 3)
  - D. The Sin Offerings (Ch. 4:1 – 5:13)
  - E. The Trespass Offering (5:14 – 6:7)
- II. Laws of the Offerings (6:8 – 7:38)
- III. Consecration of the Priest (Chs. 8 – 10)
  - A. Investiture of the Priests by Moses (Ch. 8)
  - B. Offerings Presented by Aaron (Ch. 9)
  - C. Nadab and Abihu's Sacrilege (Ch. 10)
- IV. The Clean and the Unclean (Chs. 11-15)
  - A. Clean and Unclean Foods (Ch. 11)
  - B. Purification after Childbirth (Ch. 12)
  - C. The Diagnosis of Leprosy (Ch. 13)
  - D. The Cleansing of Leprosy (Ch. 14)
  - E. Purification after Bodily Secretions (Ch. 15)
- V. The Day of Atonement (Ch. 16)
- VI. Laws Concerning Sacrifice (Ch. 17)
- VII. Laws Concerning Personal Conduct (Ch. 18-22)
  - A. Laws of Sexual Purity (Ch. 18)
  - B. Laws of Everyday Life (Ch. 19)
  - C. Punishment for Gross Offenses (Ch. 20)
  - D. Conduct of the Priests (Ch. 21, 22)
- VIII. The Feasts of the LORD (Ch. 23)
  - A. The Sabbath (23:1-3)
  - B. The Passover (23:4, 5)
  - C. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:6-8)
  - D. The Feast of Firstfruits (23:9-14)
  - E. The Feast of Weeks (23:15-22)
  - F. The Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25)
  - G. The Day of Atonement (23:26-32)
  - H. The Feast of the Tabernacles (23:33-44)
- IX. Ceremonial and Moral Legislation (Ch. 24)
- X. The Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee (Ch. 25)
- XI. Blessings and Cursings (Ch. 26)
  - A. The Blessings for Obedience to God (26:1-13)
  - B. The Curses for Disobedience to God (Ch. 26:14-39)
  - C. Restoration through Confession and Repentance (26:40-46)
- XII. Vows and Tithes (Ch. 27)

