

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 Israelites, the PASSOVER, PENTECOST, and TABERNACLES, four other yearly festivals and 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, spiritual grace, as well as the outward, 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. 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)

The Five Major Offerings of Leviticus:

- **Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1)**
 - Voluntary offering and a pleasing aroma to the Lord
 - Only offering to be totally consumed on the altar; nothing eaten. Indicates a complete surrender, total consecration to God.
 - First offering mentioned by name in the Bible (Genesis 8:20)
 - Most common of the offerings mentioned in scripture (197 times)
 - A bull, or male sheep or goat, turtledoves or pigeons
 - Speaks of Christ's complete surrender and sacrifice (Philippians 2:8)
- **Grain Offering (Leviticus 2)**
 - Voluntary offering and a pleasing aroma to the Lord
 - Only offering made without the shedding of blood
 - Offering of fine flour, no leaven, firstfruits
 - Indicates a living sacrifice
 - Christ gave Himself as a living sacrifice continually doing the will of the Father. He calls us to be living sacrifices as well. (Romans 12:2)
- **Peace Offering (Leviticus 3)**
 - Voluntary offering and a pleasing aroma to the Lord
 - Male or female animal from the herd or flock
 - Only offering in which the priest and the offerer could eat of the sacrifice
 - Indicates fellowship or communion
 - Christ made peace with God on the behalf of man (Ephesians 2:13-17; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20)
- **Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)**
 - Required offering; not a sweet savor
 - Dealt with unintentional sin of a priest (required a bull), a leader (required a male goat) or a common person (required a female goat or lamb; doves or pigeons; fine flour dependent on what they could afford)
 - Indicates payment for the sin nature
 - Christ atoned for our fallen sin nature on the cross and satisfied the wrath of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)**
 - Required offering; not a sweet savor
 - Dealt with particular unintentional sins
 - Required atonement + restitution for the sin = a ram + one-fifth the cost in shekels
 - Indicates forgiveness of committed sins
 - Christ paid for our individual sins in His death on the cross (Heb. 10:12-14)

Now, when we come to God through Jesus, we must do so in reverse order. Notice the following table with the offerings given in reverse order and their application explained.

Trespass Offering

Recognize the guilt and our need for forgiveness of our sins (1John 2:2)

Sin Offering

Acknowledge the power of Christ that can conquer our sin nature (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Peace Offering

Through the cross, Christ opened the way for true fellowship with God (1John 1:3)

Grain Offering

Through His obedient life, Christ shows us how to be a living sacrifice for God (Romans 12:1)

Burnt Offering

We find the greatest blessing in being fully consumed in our commitment to God (Phil. 2:17)

Leviticus 1-7 September 9, 2020

Lev 1:

What is the significance of the Lord instructing Moses to bring sacrifices of only male animals w/out defects?

Lev 2:

Why was no yeast allowed the altar grain offering? (see also Matthew 16:6) (leader note: yeast grows exponentially as does sin...also mold grows!)

Lev 3:

How is the repetitive description of "*aroma pleasing to God*" meaningful?

Lev 4:

Compare this chapter with sin infecting our community today and ways we can we heal together.

Lev 5:

What laws if violated must lead to restoration plus a penalty amount? (Lev. 5:14-16) What is the restitution or penalty percentage?

Lev 6 and 7:

Discuss the rules and guidelines of the 5 offerings. How are these offerings commingling with the importance of community obedience and health?

Reflection:

Can we relate breaking the law and bending the rules to current day events?

Do we make time to thank our Lord for His help and instruction; and for those here on Earth who help us?

The Lord commanded that no fat or blood be consumed (3:17), how can we commit to healthy eating habits? Should we consider fasting? Discuss benefits.

How can we be Holy (separated, devoted) by distinguishing ourselves from the world we live in?