

PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE

LEVITICUS

RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SEPARATION

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Leviticus comes from a Greek word meaning "pertaining to the Levites". The priests were taken from among the Levites, and therefore had a special relationship with God. They ministered in His presence in the Tabernacle. One cannot enjoy a special relationship with God without experiencing special responsibilities before God. In a New Testament sense, all Christians are priests; therefore, Leviticus can teach us much by way of typology about our role as God's ministers.

God used Moses to write the Book of Leviticus concerning the subject of holiness. The word "holy" is used 80 times in only 27 chapters. God is holy! Man is exceedingly sinful! How can unholy man have an ongoing relationship with a holy God? We find the answer in Leviticus.

Genesis spoke of RUIN THROUGH SIN
Exodus spoke of REDEMPTION THROUGH A SACRIFICE
Leviticus speaks of RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SEPARATION

There are several special words that appear in the book of Leviticus:

Blood-mentioned over 75 times
Holy - mentioned over 80 times
Priest - mentioned over 175 times
Atonement - mentioned over 45 times

To help understand Leviticus, one should study the New Testament Book of Hebrews.

OUTLINE for LEVITICUS

I. COMING TO GOD - SIN MUST BE CLEANSED

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3. Peace Offering	3:1-17; 7:11-34
4. Sin Offering	4:1-5:13; 6:24-30
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BRIEF COMMENTARY ON LEVITICUS

I. COMING TO GOD - SIN MUST BE CLEANSED

CHAPTERS 1 - 10

SACRIFICES - GOD'S PROVISIONS Chapters 1 - 7

There were five offerings described and detailed. Each prefigured Jesus Christ in some way.

1. Burnt Offering 1:1-17; 6:1-13

This was the first offering every day among the Israelites. This is a symbol of Christ on the Cross for us (see Hebrews 10:10-14).

2. Meal Offering 2:1-16; 6:14-23

The meal offering speaks of the perfect character and life of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 4:15).

3. Peace Offering 3:1-17; 7:11-34

The person who offered the Peace Offering received some of it in return. This spoke of the peace that existed between the giver and the One to whom the sacrifice was offered (see Ephesians 2:14-17).

4. Sin Offering 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30

This foreshadowed Christ as the sin-bearer, for He took our sins upon Himself (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

5. Trespass Offerings 5:14-19; 7:1-10

The Trespass Offering speaks of our individual sins. This prefigured Christ providing pardon for the trespasses committed against God.

These offerings are about Jesus! Someone has rightly said that the Bible is a Him book, for the Old and New Testaments are all about HIM! I once talked to a man who had sinned greatly. He asked me, "Pastor, is there any way for me to come home to God?" What a joy it was to remind him that the way is Jesus.

SERVANTS - GOD'S PRIESTS CHAPTERS 8 - 10

1. Dedication 8:1-36

See Leviticus 8:10-13. The Priests and the Tabernacle were anointed. As God's priests today, we have been given (anointed by) the Holy Spirit. We are to WALK in the Spirit. We are to be FILLED with the Spirit. We are not to GRIEVE the Spirit. We are not to QUENCH the Spirit. We must depend upon the Holy Spirit in order to do spiritual work.

2. Duty 9:1-24

The duty of the priest was to serve before the Lord in the Tabernacle. As God's "priests" in the New Testament church age, we are to serve faithfully before the Lord in our daily activities. Access and service to God are possible only when an acceptable sacrifice has been offered (see 9:24). This sacrifice was a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Downfall 10:1-20

To alter God's instructions is to displease the Lord. Nabad and Abihu offered unauthorized fire before the Lord. God's instructions should have been carried out to the letter. This is a very important lesson in our day. Some people refer to the spirit of God's message but disregard the "letter" of what He said. It is true that the Spirit gives life and the letter kills, but it is also important to remember that God did not give his servants permission to change and alter his Word and instructions.

There is yet another important lesson for us in this passage. One must be careful following great spiritual victories since it is at this point that Satan often attacks. After mountaintop experiences, spiritual pride and relaxed awareness can lead to disaster.

Each Christian is a priest before God and must obey God in order for his or her work to be acceptable. Claiming the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer, many Christians say they can do whatever they wish. Actually, being a priest before God requires that one be

accountable to God. We do not have a right to act outside obedience to God's Word. After all, to be a Christian is to surrender to Christ as Lord (see Romans 10:9-10).

II. LEAVING THE WORLD - SEPARATION MUST BE COMPLETE

CHAPTERS 11-27

HOLY PRACTICES Chapters 11 - 15

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|-----------------------|----|
| 1. Regarding Food | 11 |
| 2. Regarding Bodies | 12 |
| 3. Regarding Clothing | 13 |
| 4. Regarding Homes | 14 |
| 5. Regarding Contacts | 15 |

God was teaching his people a principle through these various laws. The people of God were to live differently than people in the world. They were to follow God's directions daily so that they might learn to be responsive at a moment's notice.

Some years ago a barge was being released from a dock. Two sailors were standing on the deck near the front of the vessel. The barge was pulling away when the captain, standing on the bridge, noticed that one of the cables had not been released. He shouted to the two men, "Duck, quickly." Both men immediately fell on their stomachs, face down upon the deck of the barge. Instantly the cable snapped and came whizzing across them, just inches from their heads. Had they not obeyed the captain's orders, they would have been sliced in two by the broken cable. The sailors had been through rigorous training to learn to be obedient. Some of the training had seemed redundant and unnecessary. Rising from the deck of the barge each could see how learning to be obedient to commands had paid off in real life. A moment's hesitation and death would have been certain. Being trained to obey orders had saved their lives. We must obey God in the little things as well as the larger things. By doing this, we will avoid a tragedy in our lives later on.

HOLY PEOPLE Chapters 16 - 20

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| 1. Day of Atonement | 16-17 |
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One day a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the people. This was a high and holy day in the life of the God's people. The high priest was to first make atonement for his own sins and only then could he make atonement for the people.

The blood was very important because life was in the blood. The pouring out of blood spoke of the life that had been given for the sins of the people. Sin requires a death penalty. That is what God told Adam in the Garden of Eden and it has never changed. All of the sacrifices of the Old Testament were a mere foreshadowing of the coming sacrifice of the Son of God. The day Jesus died he was the high priest offering His own blood for our sins. He fulfilled the role of the eternal High Priest.

The people were told to handle blood in a careful manner. This was not only to protect the people from diseases which were borne in the blood, but was to create a respect for the blood which would be more fully understood following Calvary.

2. Denying Wrongful Lust 18

Sexual sin is a terrible offense to God. We see this in the judgment which God brought upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. This most intimate of all human relationships was to be confined to marriage. How desperately our generation needs to learn this truth. Sexually transmitted diseases, like AIDS, are beginning to ravage our world. Unless there is repentance, more serious problems are sure to come.

3. Details of Moral Behavior 19

God is not just concerned with how we act on Sunday in Church, He is God all the time! He is concerned about every area of our lives. We are to be devoted to Him in the totality of our existence.

4. Divine Punishments for Sin 20

Sin never goes unpunished. A person must face judgment for his sin, or he must have someone face his judgment for him. There is only one person who was worthy and willing to face God's judgment for our sin - Jesus Christ! Jesus did not just wink at sin and forgive it with a wave of His hand. He bore our sins in untold agony at Calvary.

HOLY PRIESTS Chapters 21 - 22

The next two chapters deal with special instructions for the priests. One is not given blessings and honors from God without having an equal level of responsibility.

1. Social Offenses 21

2. Sacred Offerings 22

HOLY FEASTS Chapter 23

There were seven holy feasts each year among the people of Israel. Each had special significance for each one prefigured a New Testament truth. Naturally the people of the Old Testament did not understand the full meaning of these feasts in a New Testament sense. By faith, they were to obey God in the practice of these annual feasts.

1. Passover - Salvation 23:1-4
1st month, 14th day

This speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, for the sins of the world. Salvation was made possible through the blood of the Lamb.

2. Unleavened Bread - Separation 23:6-8
1st month, 15-21 days

This speaks of the separation of the believer from sin and the world. One cannot think about bread without remembering that Jesus is the Bread of Life (see John 6:35). Removing the leaven speaks typologically of the separation of sin from our lives. Jesus is the pure bread which gives life to the recipient.

3. Firstfruits - Security 23:9-14
1st month, 17th day

This speaks of Jesus as the firstfruits of all who shall be raised from the dead. Jesus has risen, overcome death and knocked the end out of the grave. Our security is found in our relationship to the One who overcame death, hell and sin!

4. Pentecost - Spiritual fullness 23:15-22
50 days later

This speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit which took place at Pentecost (see Acts 2) and the fullness of the Spirit available to every child of God (see Ephesians 5:18).

5. Trumpets - Signal 23:23-25
7th month, 1st day - New Year's Day

This speaks of the trumpet which shall be sounded when the Lord shall call His people to Himself (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16). The Feast of Trumpets also illustrates the Lord's trumpet call to battle. Until He comes, He calls us to unite in service that we might please Him, the Captain of our salvation.

6. Atonement - Spotlessness 23:26-32
7th month, 10th day

This speaks of the forgiveness which God has made available through the blood of His Son.

7. Tabernacles - Sitting 23:33-44
7th month, 15-21st days - Finale

This speaks of the saints coming into the kingdom with our Lord. We shall be seated with Him in Heaven.

HOLY SUCCESS Chapters 24 - 27

1. Judgment of the Unholy 24; 26:14-46

2. Joy of the Holy 25; 26:1-13; 27

a. Sabbatical year 25:1-7

This was a law which provided rest to the land every seven years. The land belonged to God and was not to be destroyed through over use. Just as God expected man to rest one day out of seven, he expected the land to be given rest one year out of seven.

This law reminds us that God is concerned about the ecology of His earth. The ecology should not be an issue advanced by the secular humanists. We must not allow them to act as though they thought up the idea of caring for the Land. This came from the heart of God and the responsibility belongs primarily to His people!

b. Jubilee year 25:8-55

The year of Jubilee was to be held once every 50 years. During this year, slaves were freed and land went back to the original owner. The purpose was to keep the rich from abusing the poor and to remind the people that everything belonged to God. It was a year of joy and foreshadowed the freedom and release the Christian would find in Christ.

Leviticus closes in chapter 27 by speaking on the importance of vows. We must be careful to fulfill our vows to God and to take seriously everything God has told us to do. Even though we Christians live in a day of grace, we should never take lightly our responsibility to make commitments to the Lord and keep them. In fact, we should be even more serious about such vows. After all, we are serving out of love for the Lord (see John 15:10) rather than under the Law of the Lord!