

 CHRIST CENTRAL

WHO SHALL ASCEND  
THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD?

# HOLINESS

LEVITICUS

**GUIDEBOOK**





*Thanks to Caloundra, Gympie and Maroochydore  
Presbyterian Churches who developed the  
original Leviticus studies and a special thanks to  
Ming Ting who made various changes and additions.*



# Introduction to LEVITICUS

*“Entering the house of God to dwell with God, beholding, glorifying and enjoying him eternally, I suggest, is the story of the Bible, the plot that makes sense of the various acts, persons and places of its pages, the deepest context for its doctrines.”*

L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*

On the one hand, it is very natural to think of Leviticus in terms of the grace of the gospel. This is because of the many ways it speaks of ideas and concepts that find their ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus—sacrificial atonement, for example, or the priesthood. The book of Hebrews makes much of these connections, emphasizing again and again that Jesus is the Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14; 10:21), the one without any sin (Heb. 9:14; cf. 9:7), who offers himself as the ultimate sacrifice that cleanses all our sin (Heb. 1:3; 7:26–27; 9:12, 14, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14; 13:11–12) and therefore gives us confidence to draw near to God (10:19–22).

On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to think of Leviticus in terms of the grace seen in the gospel. This is because Leviticus is primarily a collection of laws, and it is common to view these laws as being disconnected from grace. This is tremendously unfortunate and a very different view of the law than the Israelites held. For example, the longest psalm in the Bible—Psalm 119—is a celebration of the Lord's law, something the psalmist longs for (Ps. 119:20, 40, 131) and delights in (Ps. 119:16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 143, 174). Significantly, the “law” he is speaking of included Leviticus!

The psalmist's love of the law should not surprise us. The law was given by the Lord to the Israelites in order to guide them in how to live as the “kingdom of priests and . . . holy nation” he had called them to be (Ex. 19:5–6). This in itself was actually an act of grace. In his kindness, the Lord gave his people these laws in order that they might know how to live properly in relationship with him, with one another, and with his world. No wonder the psalmist sings over it with joy! What is more, the law was given by the Lord

after he had redeemed the Israelites, not before (cf. Exodus 1–19 with Exodus 20–24). As a result, they were not to follow these laws in order to earn salvation from the Lord, but as the appropriate response of reverential love and worship to the Lord who had already redeemed them. This should sound very familiar to Christians, who are exhorted to live lives of wholehearted obedience as the only appropriate response to the amazing mercies of God found in Jesus (cf. Rom. 12:1 with Romans 9–11).

In order to read **Leviticus** well we must therefore remember these two things: (1) the many ways that Jesus has become the far greater priest who intercedes for us on the basis of his perfect and far greater atoning sacrifice; and (2) that obedience to God's law is not meant to earn his salvation but to be an appropriate response to the salvation he has so richly provided.

Where is the gospel in **Leviticus**? On every page.

From the *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Study Notes for Leviticus by Jay Sklar).

*“A closer study of Leviticus, however, provides the reader with remarkable insights into the character and will of God, particularly in the matter of holiness. Amongst the pagan Near Eastern nations, holiness was a state of consecration to the service of a deity, and often involved the practice of immoral rites. For the Hebrews, to be holy as God is holy required a close relationship of obedience and faith, and a manifestation in daily life of the high moral and spiritual qualities characteristic of God's nature as revealed in the Law. This same kind of holiness is demanded also of every believer in Jesus Christ.”*

L.R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (vol. 3; Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 9.

*“The primary theme and theology of Leviticus is YHWH's opening a way for humanity to dwell in the divine Presence.”*

L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* (New Studies in Biblical Theology #37).



1-7

RITUAL  
SACRIFICES



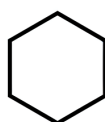
8-10

ORDINATION  
OF PRIESTS



11-15

LAWS ABOUT  
RITUAL PURITY



16-17

DAY OF  
ATONEMENT  
AND SACRIFICE



18-20

LAWS ABOUT  
MORAL PURITY



21-22

QUALIFICATION  
OF THE PRIESTS



23-27

RITUAL  
CALENDAR

# ① Who May Enter God's PRESENCE?

**Kick Off:** What are your thoughts or concerns in studying Leviticus this term?

## LEVITICUS 1-3

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 1:4*

**Big idea:** *The sacrificial system provided a way for Israel's sin to be atoned for, so that God's people could live in relationship with God as their holy King.*

### Understanding the story before Leviticus

God called to Moses from the burning bush at Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:4) to reveal His holy glory. God called to Moses from the mountain (Exodus 19:3) to reveal His awesome and fearful power (Exodus 19), making His gracious Covenant promise to Israel and giving them His Law. God called to Moses from within the cloud (Exodus 24:16) and he dwelt with God on the mountain alone for 40 days (Exodus 24:18) where God gave him the plans for the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle). The Tabernacle was where God would dwell in their midst (Exodus 25:8; 29:45-46). (See the map and diagrams on pages 30 and 31 for more information.)

When the tent is completed, in Exodus 40:35 we hear that the Glory of God enters and fills the tabernacle. This is now the dwelling place of God. The next verse comes as a shock.

*Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:35)*

The book of Exodus ends with God's people not able to live with God because He is so Holy and they are not! It is at this point that God calls to Moses from the tent of meeting (Leviticus 1:1) and creates a way for Israel's sin to be atoned (Leviticus 1-7), so God's people could live in relationship with God as their holy King. It is only in Leviticus 9:22-24 that God establishes this new way for His people to dwell with Him. Notice here: getting close to God requires an act of graciousness by God. Salvation is an act of God's kindness overcoming our guilt. The message of Leviticus is that Israel's God is Holy, and the one who makes them holy (Leviticus 21:8). With that background we turn to Leviticus 1.

### Read Leviticus 1:1-2

**1.** The majority of Leviticus follows the repeated introduction, "The LORD said to Moses" (e.g. 1:1; 4:1; 5:14; 6:8, 19, 24). What does this show about what kind of book this is? What do you hope to learn as we study Leviticus this term?

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**2.** The word "atone" literally comes from the two words "at one", and is found all throughout Leviticus! It means to become reconciled, by making amends, compensating, paying a price. Why is this so important in understanding our relationship with God?

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**Read Leviticus 1:3-17**

**3.** Chapters 1-7 describe the different sacrifices which regulated the relationship between God and his people. The entire sacrificial system was concerned with atoning for Israel's sin, and this first type of sacrifice reveals most of the key elements.

**a)** What is the main purpose or outcome of this sacrifice (1:4 & v9)?

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**b)** What do you think might be the significance of each of these actions?

**i.** The animal had to be "without defect" (v3)

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**ii.** It had to be presented "at the entrance to the tent of meeting" (v3)

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**iii.** The person bringing the sacrifice had to lay their hand on the animal's head before it was killed (v4)

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**iv.** The animal's blood was splashed against the altar (v5)

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**v.** The entire animal had to be burned up (v9)

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**4.** Imagine what it would have been like to offer this sacrifice regularly. How does this help you to feel the seriousness and high cost of your sin?

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**Read Romans 3:25 & Hebrews 10:1-4, 8-10**

**5. a)** How is Jesus' death on the cross like the Old Testament sacrifices?

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**b)** How is Jesus' death on the cross unlike the Old Testament sacrifices?

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**6.** How does a deeper appreciation for Jesus' sacrifice to atone for your sins encourage and strengthen you as you live for him this week?

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## PRAYER

Pray for one another in your group and thank God for the atoning death of Christ, and for everything that means.

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# ② Approach God by SACRIFICE

**Kick Off:** What are some of the things that could make people feel they can't draw close to God? Are there times you feel closer to God than others? What do you make of that?

## LEVITICUS 4-7

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 4:35*

**Big idea:** *The sacrificial system provided a way for Israel's sin to be atoned for, so that God's people could live in relationship with God as their holy King.*

### Understanding the unfolding story

Chapters 1-7 deal with how sinners can be consecrated so they can dwell with the Holy God. Chapters 1:1 to 6:7 cover rites addressed to the Israelite people, while chapters 6 and 7 address priestly duties in relation to these offerings.

Chapter 4 marks a shift in focus. God's instructions are now less about the animal being sacrificed but the person making the sacrifice. In particular, it's about how the sacrifices deal with each person's sin and guilt, and what it produces – forgiveness. (For more detail, see article "Sacrificial System" on page 37.)

**1.** *"Sin is whatever God says is evil. It is whatever is inconsistent with the righteousness of God. Sin may be either ignorant or willful; active or passive. We can sin even when we don't intend to."* What can be challenging about accepting this?

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### Read Leviticus 4:1-31

**2.** What are the scenarios being considered in each of these sections?

Leviticus 4:2 .....

Leviticus 4:3 .....

Leviticus 4:13 .....

Leviticus 4:22-23 .....

Leviticus 4:27 .....

**Read Leviticus 4:32-35**

**3. a)** What do you make of the people having to lay their hands on the animal being sacrificed? v33 (note: in the original language it literally means pressing down heavily on the animal)

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**b)** What message is being communicated by the death of the animal?

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**c)** What message is being communicated by the priest's handling of the animal's blood?

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**d)** What message is communicated by the whole animal being burned?

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**4.** What results from this ritual according to v35. What does that mean? And what does that teach us about sin, and the cost of being made right with God?

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**5.** What does Hebrews 9:22 tell about the topic we are discussing?

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Leviticus teaches us that we are all stained by sin - sins we have done intentionally or unintentionally. The guilt from this sin bears on us like a heavy weight, and separates us from God. But more than that, God revealed to Moses (and us!) in the tent that there is a solution for sin - atonement by blood. It is an exceedingly costly price, because it always involves death. But God is determined to make a way to reconcile us to him. To make his people holy so they can live with a holy God.

**Read Isaiah 53:4-6.**

**6.** How does knowing all this help us see our need for Jesus and his precious sacrifice?

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**7.** When we don't feel close to God, what do we need to remind ourselves?

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## PRAYER

In your group prayer time share prayer requests and pray for one another. Praise God for the blood of Jesus that washes away every sin.

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# ③ The Need for a Faithful PRIEST

**Kick Off:** What do you think when you hear the word "priest"? What images or stereotypes come to mind?

## LEVITICUS 8-10

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 9:22-24*

**Big idea:** *Atonement requires a faithful priest to be the mediator between our Holy God and us.*

### Read Leviticus 8:1-9

**1.** This chapter describes the ordination of the priests, who operated the tabernacle. They represented God to the people and represented the people to God.

**a)** The phrase "as the LORD commanded" is repeated throughout this passage. Why was it so important to follow God's commands in this ceremony?

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**b)** The priests undergo several rounds of consecration and purification. Why was it important that the priests be holy and pure?

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### Read Leviticus 9:1-7

**2.** Chapter 9 describes the very first service in the tabernacle!

**a)** As a bit of fun, how was that first service different from the way we do "church" today?

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**b)** One significant difference between "church" then and now is that we no longer have priests who make sacrifices to God on our behalf. Which begs the question – why did the Israelites need priests then? Why couldn't God have taught them how to offer sacrifices for their sin themselves?

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**Read Leviticus 9:22-24**

**3.** We cannot miss how incredible it is that following those very first sacrifices, God's glory appears to the people, and fire miraculously came out to consume the offering! Why is this significant?

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**Read Leviticus 10:1-3**

**4.** It is no coincidence that the story of Nadab and Abihu comes right after the high moment of God's revealed glory at the end of Leviticus 9. What does it reveal about Nadab and Abihu's attitude, and the importance of respecting God's holiness?

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**Read Hebrews 4:14-16**

**5. a)** How is it possible that we are able to approach God's presence without being consumed, despite our sinfulness?

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**b)** How does this passage help you appreciate Jesus as your great high priest? How might you relate to him differently this week as a result?

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**PRAYER**

Pray for each other in the group, and thank God that Jesus is our perfect high priest.

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# 4 The Need for Ritual CLEANSING

**Kick Off:** When do you feel most "clean" or "unclean"?

## LEVITICUS 11-15

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 15:31*

**Big idea:** *As God's holy people, called to reflect God's holiness while living in this broken world, Israel had detailed laws about maintaining ritual cleanliness.*

This section of Leviticus deals with laws relating to clean and unclean objects and activities, and how the Israelites were to deal with them. It is important to remember that these laws related to ritual purity, not moral purity. That is, they mostly dealt with brokenness in the world and in our bodies, rather than sinfulness. (See the article "Rituals, Ceremonies and Sacrifices in Leviticus" on page 34 and "Understanding: Holy, Clean and Unclean" on page 36 for more helpful information.)



**Chapter 11: Clean & unclean food**

**Chapter 12: Purification after childbirth**

**Chapter 13: Skin diseases & moulds**

**Chapter 14: Cleansing from skin diseases & moulds**

**Chapter 15: Unclean discharges**

**1.** What do you think is the difference between being ritually unclean and morally unclean?

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**Read Leviticus 11:43-47 and Leviticus 15:31**

**2.** What reasons are given in these verses to explain the need for these cleanliness laws?

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**Read Leviticus 11:1-40**

**3. a)** What would it have been like to live with these kinds of regulations? What would it be like to live that way now?

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**b)** How would these kinds of regulations help you be mindful of:

**i.** God's holiness?

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**ii.** The fact that you belonged to a special people and a holy nation?

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**iii.** God's other commands for moral purity in every aspect of life?

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Perhaps even more remarkable than the various types of uncleanness is the fact that God always provides procedures which allow the Israelites to be cleansed. Chapter 14 describes an elaborate ritual after which a person with a "defiling skin disease" can be restored to the community.

**Read Leviticus 14:1-18**

**4.** What does this tell us about God, that he always provides a means of cleansing and restoration?

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**Read Mark 7:18-23 and Acts 10:27-28**

**5.** Why are these cleanliness laws no longer binding on Christians today?

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*If you have more questions on whether Christians are supposed to follow all Old Testament laws, Tim Keller's article on page 32 may be helpful.*

**6.** Given that Christians no longer need to observe these cleansing laws, how can we remember that following Jesus occurs in the little details in every part of our lives?

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**Read Gal 3:26-28**

Although the food and cleanliness laws of Lev 11-15 were designed to restrict interactions between Israel and the Gentiles, the New Testament reveals that God's ultimate plan was to break down the dividing walls (Eph 2:14-15). Holiness is now defined by being in Christ alone! Anyone on earth, regardless of status or eating habits, can be a child of God through faith in Christ. What a fulfillment and revolution Jesus brings!

**7. a)** How should Gal 3:26-28 impact the way we see and love our church family?

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**b)** How does Gal 3:26-28 impact the way we share the gospel?

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**PRAYER**

Share your prayer requests, and thank God for the way in which Christ purifies us and undoes all the brokenness in us and in the world.

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# 5 The Need for ATONEMENT

**Kick Off:** What do we mean when we call someone a scapegoat? What is an example?

## LEVITICUS 16-17

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 16:30*

**Big idea:** *The stain and power of sin are removed when the high priest enters God's presence to make atonement by blood.*

### Read Leviticus 16:1-2

1. What is the significance of the "Most Holy Place"? Why can the high priest only enter once a year (as noted in verse 34)?

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### Read Leviticus 16:6-19

2. a) What does the High Priest make atonement for on the annual Day of Atonement?

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b) What does this reveal about God and His salvation?

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### Read Leviticus 16:20-22

3. What does the ritual of the scapegoat communicate about what the Day of Atonement achieves?

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**Read Psalm 103:8-12**

The Psalmist beautifully records the preciousness of God not only forgiving Israel's sin but also removing it far from them. Most of us (or all of us, I imagine!) have not had our sin symbolically removed by an animal, and if not for Jesus, we would still be trapped in our past and present sin.

**4.** Because of Jesus, God no longer remembers your sin. What does that mean for you?

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**Read Hebrews 9:1-15**

**5. a)** What are the similarities between the Day of Atonement and the death of Jesus?

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**b)** What are the differences between the Day of Atonement and the death of Jesus?

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**Read Leviticus 17:8-14**

**6. a)** What special role is blood reserved for in the sacrificial system?

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**b)** Why is misusing blood by eating it (verses 10, 12, 14) or by wrongly shedding it (verse 4) such a serious offence?

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Just like the food laws of Leviticus 11, these ceremonial laws concerning blood are no longer binding on Christians, because they pointed towards Jesus, who has now fulfilled them.

But if the blood of animals was to be so honoured, how much more the precious blood of Christ, which he willingly gave for us!

**7.** What confidence does that give us, that the very blood of Christ was shed for us?

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## PRAYER

Pray that God would help us remember that Jesus is our perfect once-for-all sacrifice. Thank God that because of the blood of Christ, our sin has been removed far away from us, so that are now free to submit to a better power – the grace and love of Jesus.

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# ⑥ The Need for SEXUAL HOLINESS

**Kick Off:** When have you found yourself doing something simply because others around you were doing the same thing? Why do you think we do this?

## LEVITICUS 18

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 18:5*

**Big idea:** *Our sexuality is a good gift from God. God's commands about sex are given so that human relationships can flourish as His design for the world is honoured.*

### INVESTIGATE & APPLY:

#### Read Leviticus 18:1-5

**1.** Why are God's people forbidden from living in the same way as the Egyptians and Canaanites?

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**2.** In what ways is it easy for Christians to simply embrace the practices of the culture around us without giving it much thought?

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#### Read Leviticus 18:6-10

**3.** Verse 6 gives a summary command about sexual integrity within family relationships, which is then spelled out in more detail in verses 7-18. Why would these commands have been particularly important for the people of Ancient Israel? Are they still important today?

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#### Read Leviticus 18:19-30

**4.** How do the sexual practices prohibited throughout this chapter make people "defiled"? How are they contrary to God's design for human sexuality? (see Gen 2:24)

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**5.** Passages in the Bible such as these are commonly used to make the point that God hates sex, and that Christians are prudish and backwards. In what ways does this chapter actually do the opposite and elevate our view of sex as God intended?

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**Read Ephesians 5:1-8**

**6.** The call to sexual holiness is just as important for New Testament Christians as it was for ancient Israel (if not more!). However, different reasons are given for why they are to be holy. How does the gospel now motivate us to live holy lives?

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**PRAYER**

In your group prayer time share prayer requests and pray for one another. Ask God that our motivation to pursue holiness will always be grounded in the grace of Jesus.

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# 7 Be Holy FOR I AM HOLY

**Kick Off:** When you're playing a sport or a board game, are you someone who likes playing by all the rules? Why or why not?

## LEVITICUS 19-22

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 19:1-2 and 22:31-32*

**Big idea:** *To live in God's presence God's people must be holy. Our holiness must ultimately be found outside of ourselves in the person and work of Christ.*

### Read Leviticus 19:1-8

1. What does it mean that God is holy? Why is it necessary for his people to be holy?

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When the word "lord" is capitalised in the Old Testament, it is the translators' way of referring to God's revealed name in Exodus 3.

*Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"*

*God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:13-14*

The Bible can refer to God as "God", or "the Lord"; but when we read "LORD", God is using his personal name, "I am who I am" (or YHWH in Hebrew), which always carries meaning, because his name is a statement of his unchanging and promise-keeping character.

2. The phrase "I am the LORD" appears more than 15 times in Leviticus chapter 19! What is the significance of this?

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### Read Leviticus 19:9-18

3. How do these commands to live justly in our relationships with others relate to God's holiness?

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**4.** Jesus would later quote Leviticus 19:18 as the second of the greatest commandments! In what way is that verse a summary of this entire chapter?

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**Read Leviticus 19:31-37**

**5.** Can you think of some expressions of injustice in our community or world that we can be indifferent about? How does the message of this chapter help to re-shape our attitude?

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**6.** Quickly skim over chapters 21 and 22. Why is it so important for the priests and the offerings that they make to be holy?

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**7.** How does Jesus fulfil the role of the priests in an ultimate sense? What difference does this make for us as we try to live holy lives before a holy God?

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## PRAYER

In your group prayer time share prayer requests and pray for one another. Ask God to help us treat others in ways that are holy and pleasing to God, just as Christ has done for us.

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# 8 Remember God's GRACE

**Kick Off:** What is one of your favourite annual events, and what does it celebrate? OR, what is an annual event that you wished we celebrated?

## LEVITICUS 23-25

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 23:28*

**Big idea:** *God appoints regular occasions of celebration and worship for his people so that their lives and labours might be anchored in his work of redemption.*

### Read Leviticus 23:1-14

1. Why is the Sabbath mentioned before all the other feasts and celebrations in chapter 23?

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### Read Leviticus 25:1-7

2. Is there a connection between the Sabbath year and the Sabbath day? Why was each occasion so important for God's people?

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3. How does taking time to rest demonstrate that we're trusting and depending upon God?

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4. Quickly skim through chapter 23. (On page 38 there is an overview of all the festivals given to Israel to observe.) Which of the annual festivals were marked by joy? Which were meant to be times of mourning and repentance?

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All of a sudden, the flow of God's instructions is interrupted by a short narrative of an event. As always, there is intention and meaning behind this.

**Read Leviticus 24:10-23**

**5.** What is the significance of what takes place here? How should we read them from our point in redemptive history?

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**Read Leviticus 25:8-18**

**6.** What was the purpose of the Year of Jubilee? Can you see the gospel foreshadowed in any aspects of the celebration?

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**7.** What regular occasions of celebration and worship has God given to his people now that Christ has come? In what ways should we perhaps take them more seriously?

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**PRAYER**

In your group prayer time share prayer requests and pray for one another. Thank God for the way he has built rhythm into our worship and celebration of what he's done for us.

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# 9 For You Have Been REDEEMED

**Kick Off:** How do you usually respond when someone doesn't do something that they said they would do for you?

## LEVITICUS 26-27

**Key verse:** *Leviticus 26:12*

**Big idea:** *God remains faithful to us as His people even when we are unfaithful to Him.*

### Read Leviticus 26:1-13

**1.** How is the danger of idolatry different for us today than it was for the people of Ancient Israel? In what ways is it the same?

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### Read Genesis 3:8-9 & Revelation 21:3-4

**2.** Compare these passages with God's promise in Leviticus 26:11-12. Why does the Bible often describe the believer's ultimate hope in this way?

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### Read Leviticus 26:14-26

**3.** How do we reconcile the picture of blessings and curses in this chapter with our understanding of God's good and gracious character?

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Despite God's clear words on what the outcomes of obedience or disobedience would be, Israel would choose to repeatedly reject God in the years to come. Eventually, every curse in this chapter came true, and God's people ended up being exiled from his presence. God's dwelling was no longer with his people.

## Read Leviticus 26:40-45

**4.** How would this passage have given hope to God's people in exile, suffering the consequences of their disobedience?

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God's covenant with Abraham was marked by physical circumcision, but Leviticus ends with God speaking about a time when the hearts of his people would be circumcised (Leviticus 26:44)! While in exile, the prophet Ezekiel recorded these words given to him by God:

*"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God." Ezekiel 36:24-28*

**5.** God fulfilled his promises in Leviticus and Ezekiel when Jesus gave to each believer the Holy Spirit, who cleanses us and gives us a heart that wants to follow God. How should this motivate us today?

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At the beginning of this term, we saw that one of the main themes in Leviticus was how an unholy, unclean people could possibly live with a holy and pure God. And this book ends, perhaps strangely to us, with a list of rules on how to redeem what belonged to God. About this, Michael Morales writes:

*"Chapter 27 serves not only to keep the book from ending negatively with the divine threats of chapter 26; it brings out the theme of redemption... Israel has been redeemed by and therefore already belongs to God. [We are reminded] of the high cost of redemption, along with the gravity of what it means to belong to God."*

**6.** What does it mean for you that because of all God has done, we now belong to him?

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**7.** As you reflect on our study of Leviticus this entire term, what are some precious truths you have taken away from it?

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## PRAYER

Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group. Thank God for his faithfulness, despite our unfaithfulness, and that because of Jesus, we have been made holy and fit to live with our loving and holy God forever.

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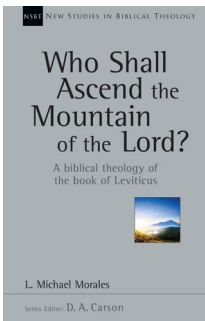
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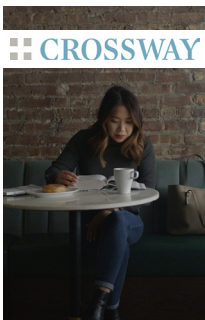
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# Extra Reading, Listening or Watching

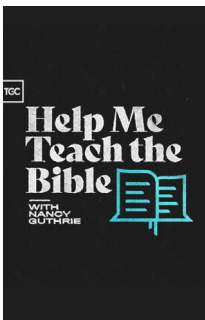


## ***Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*** by L. Michael Morales

*"There are many excellent books on Leviticus, which has been something of a cottage industry of late. Few studies, though, place Leviticus in so rich a biblical context, and few point so clearly to Christian uses of the book. Aspiring students of Leviticus would do well to begin here."*--Peter J. Leithart, First Thing.



## Crossway article on ***'Why Study the Book of Leviticus'***



## ***'Help Me Teach the Bible Podcast'*** Interview with Jay Sklar on Leviticus



## **10min video where Tim Keller speaks on *'Discovering the Gospel in Leviticus'*** Interview with Jay Sklar on Leviticus



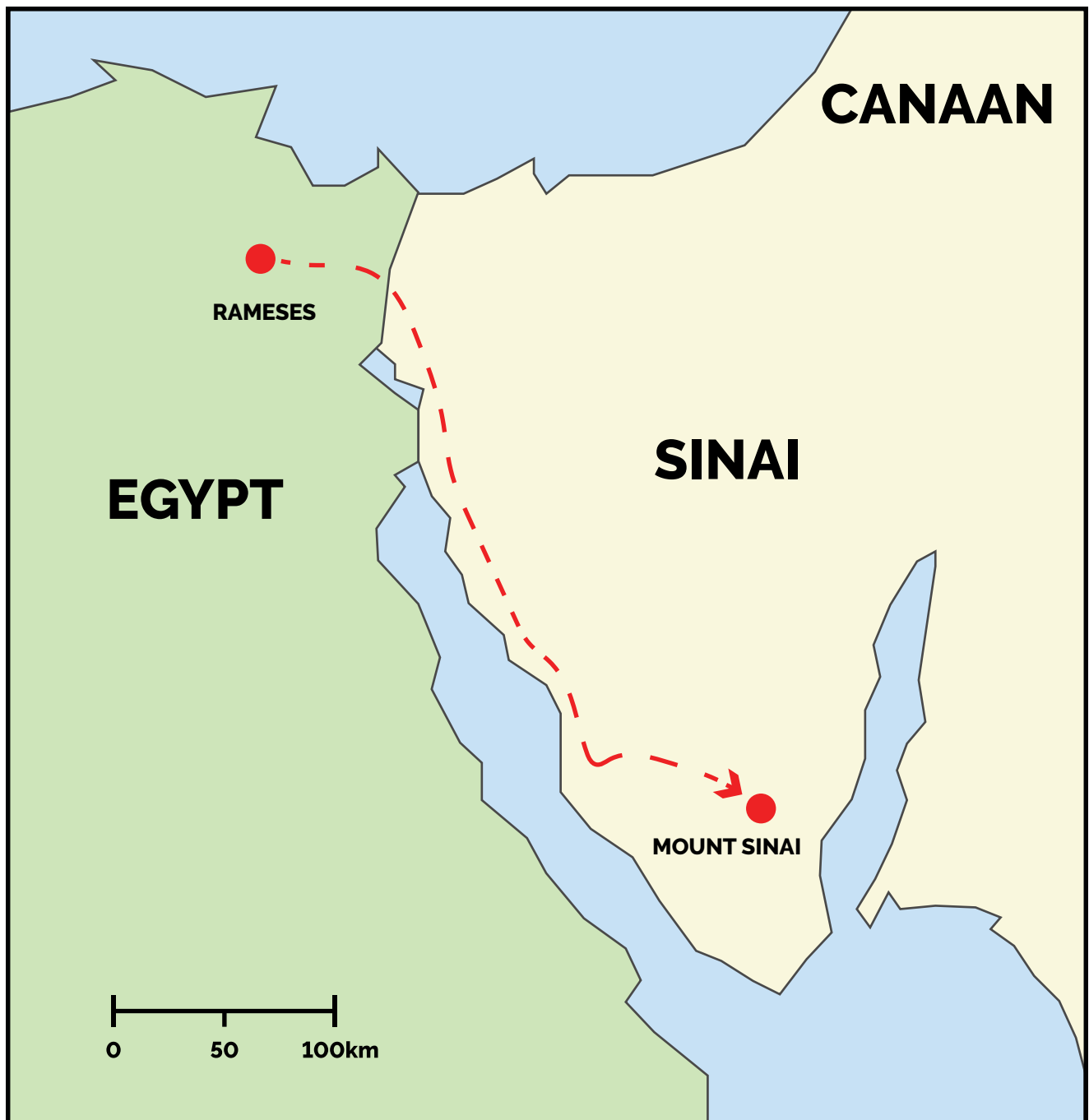
## The Bible Project Video on ***'The Book of Leviticus'***



# The Setting of Leviticus

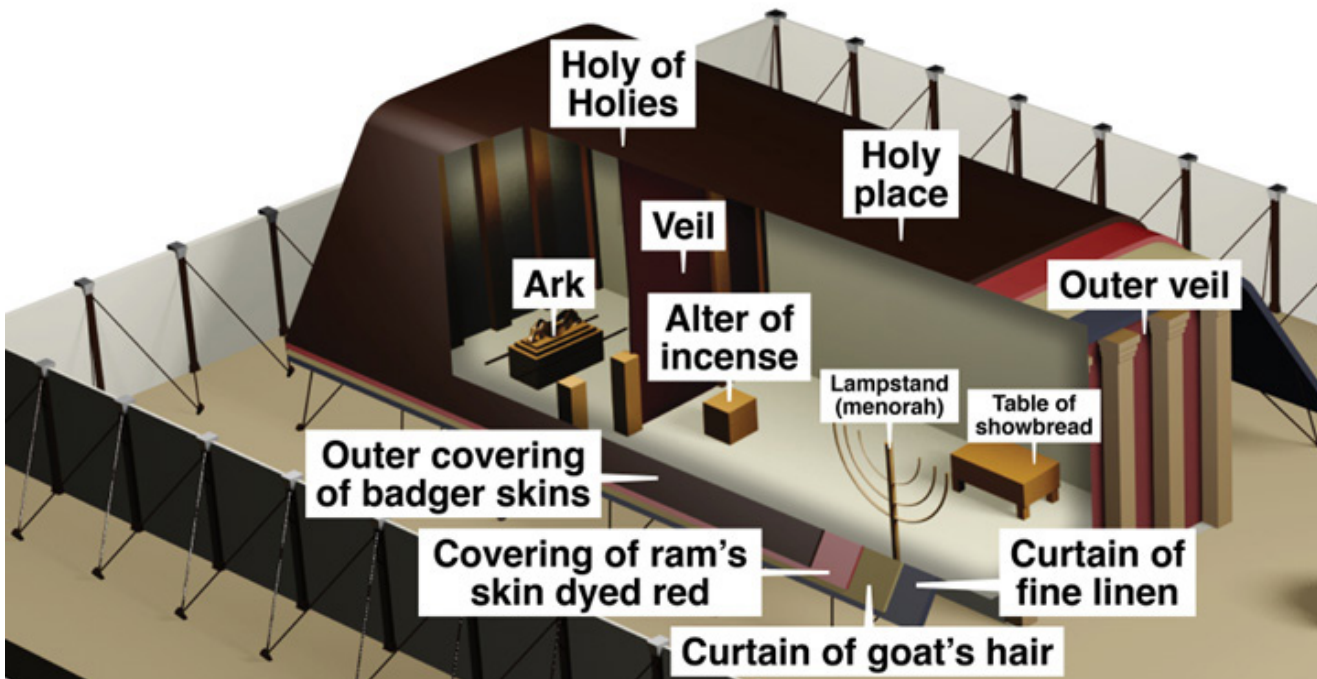
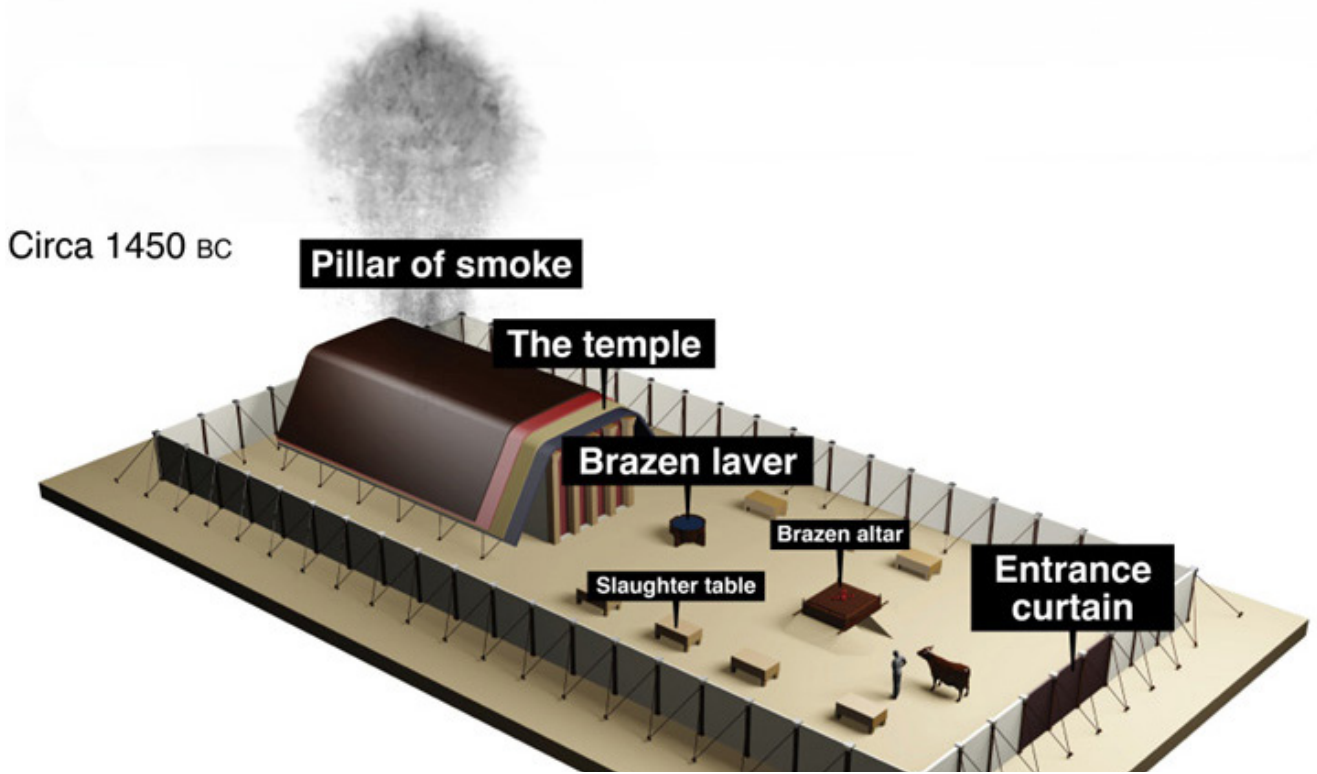
*c. 1446/1260 b.c.*

The book of Exodus finishes with Moses and Israel having constructed and assembled the tabernacle at the base of Mount Sinai. The book of Leviticus primarily records the instructions the Lord gives to Moses from the tent of meeting, but also includes narrative of a few events related to the tabernacle.



# The Tabernacle

FAITHLIFE/LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE



# Making Sense of Scripture's 'Inconsistency'

BY TIMOTHY KELLER

I find it frustrating when I read or hear columnists, pundits, or journalists dismiss Christians as inconsistent because “they pick and choose which of the rules in the Bible to obey.” Most often I hear, “Christians ignore lots of Old Testament texts—about not eating raw meat or pork or shellfish, not executing people for breaking the Sabbath, not wearing garments woven with two kinds of material and so on. Then they condemn homosexuality. Aren't you just picking and choosing what you want to believe from the Bible?”

I don't expect everyone to understand that the whole Bible is about Jesus and God's plan to redeem his people, but I vainly hope that one day someone will access their common sense (or at least talk to an informed theological adviser) before levelling the charge of inconsistency.

First, it's not only the Old Testament that has proscriptions about homosexuality. The New Testament has plenty to say about it as well. Even Jesus says, in his discussion of divorce in Matthew 19:3–12, that the original design of God was for one man and one woman to be united as one flesh, and failing that (v. 12), persons should abstain from marriage and sex.

However, let's get back to considering the larger issue of inconsistency regarding things mentioned in the Old Testament no longer practised by the New Testament people of God. Most Christians don't know what to say when confronted about this issue. Here's a short course on the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament.

The Old Testament devotes a good amount of space to describing the various sacrifices offered in the tabernacle (and later temple) to atone for sin so that worshippers could approach a holy God. There was also a complex set of rules for ceremonial purity and cleanness. You could only approach God in worship if you ate certain foods and not others, wore certain forms of dress, refrained from touching a variety of objects, and so on. This vividly conveyed, over and over, that human beings are spiritually unclean and can't go into God's presence without purification.

But even in the Old Testament, many writers hinted that the sacrifices and the temple worship regulations pointed forward to something beyond them (cf. 1 Sam. 15:21–22; Pss. 50:12–15; 51:17; Hos. 6:6). When Christ appeared he declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19), and he ignored the Old Testament cleanliness laws in other ways, touching lepers and dead bodies.

The reason is clear. When he died on the cross the veil in the temple tore, showing that he had done away with the need for the entire sacrificial system with all its cleanliness laws. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for sin, and now Jesus makes us clean.



**Tim Keller** (MDiv, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; DMin, Westminster Theological Seminary) is founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Manhattan, chairman of Redeemer City to City, and vice president of The Gospel Coalition. He has authored numerous books, including *The Reason for God*. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children.



The entire book of Hebrews explains that the Old Testament ceremonial laws were not so much abolished as fulfilled by Christ. Whenever we pray “in Jesus name” we “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19). It would, therefore, be deeply inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible as a whole if we continued to follow the ceremonial laws.

### **Law Still Binding**

The New Testament gives us further guidance about how to read the Old Testament. Paul makes it clear in places like Romans 13:8ff that the apostles understood the Old Testament moral law to still be binding on us. In short, the coming of Christ changed how we worship, but not how we live. The moral law outlines God’s own character—his integrity, love, and faithfulness. And so everything the Old Testament says about loving our neighbour, caring for the poor, generosity with our possessions, social relationships, and commitment to our family is still in force. The New Testament continues to forbid killing or committing adultery, and all the sex ethic of the Old Testament is re-stated throughout the New Testament (Matt. 5:27–30; 1 Cor. 6:9–20; 1 Tim. 1:8–11). If the New Testament has reaffirmed a commandment, then it is still in force for us today.

The New Testament explains another change between the testaments. Sins continue to be sins—but the penalties change. In the Old Testament sins like adultery or incest were punishable with civil sanctions like execution. This is because at that time God’s people constituted a nation-state, and so all sins had civil penalties.

But in the New Testament the people of God are an assembly of churches all over the world, living under many different governments. The church is not a civil government, and so sins are dealt with by exhortation and, at worst, exclusion from membership. This is how Paul deals with a case of incest in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 5:1ff. and 2 Cor. 2:7–11). Why this change? Under Christ, the gospel is not confined to a single nation—it has been released to go into all cultures and peoples.

Once you grant the main premise of the Bible—about the surpassing significance of Christ and his salvation—then all the various parts of the Bible make sense. Because of Christ, the ceremonial law is repealed. Because of Christ, the church is no longer a nation-state imposing civil penalties. It all falls into place. However, if you reject the idea of Christ as Son of God and Saviour, then, of course, the Bible is at best a mishmash containing some inspiration and wisdom, but most of it would have to be rejected as foolish or erroneous.

So where does this leave us? There are only two possibilities. If Christ is God, then this way of reading the Bible makes sense. The other possibility is that you reject Christianity’s basic thesis—you don’t believe Jesus is the resurrected Son of God—and then the Bible is no sure guide for you about much of anything. But you can’t say in fairness that Christians are being inconsistent with their beliefs to follow the moral statements in the Old Testament while not practising the other ones.

One way to respond to the charge of inconsistency may be to ask a counter-question: “Are you asking me to deny the very heart of my Christian beliefs?” If you are asked, “Why do you say that?” you could respond, “If I believe Jesus is the resurrected Son of God, I can’t follow all the ‘clean laws’ of diet and practice, and I can’t offer animal sacrifices. All that would be to deny the power of Christ’s death on the cross. And so those who really believe in Christ must follow some Old Testament texts and not others.”

*From <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/making-sense-of-scriptures-inconsistency>*

# Rituals, Ceremonies and Sacrifices 'in Leviticus'

BY JUSTIN TAYLOR

How do we sort through some of the foreign concepts we find in Leviticus?

Moses uses unclean, clean, and holy differently than we use these terms today. With "unclean" and "clean," for example, most modern readers are tempted to think of that which is "non-hygienic" or "hygienic." In Leviticus, however, these words do not refer to hygiene at all. Rather, they refer to "ritual states." (The word "holy" is also used in many contexts to describe a ritual state.) Understanding the concept of ritual states is very important to understanding Leviticus as a whole.

In Leviticus there are three basic ritual states:

- the unclean
- the clean, and
- the holy.

On the one hand, these categories guide the community with reference to the types of actions a person may (or may not) engage in, or the places that a person may (or may not) go. Those who are unclean, e.g., may not partake of a peace offering (7:20), while those who are clean may (7:19). (A modern analogy might be that of registering to vote: a person who is "registered" may vote, whereas a person who is "unregistered" may not.)

There is an important distinction between "ritual states" and "moral states." One who is in the ritual state of holiness is not necessarily more personally righteous than a person who is simply clean or unclean (just as a person who is "registered" to vote is not necessarily more righteous than a person who is not).

Though they are distinguished, we should be careful not to separate them: Even though ritual states and moral states are different, the ritual states also seemed to represent or symbolise grades of moral purity. The highest grade of moral purity was that of the Lord himself, who was "holy" and who dwelt in the "Holy of Holies." By constantly calling the Israelites to ritual purity in all aspects of life, the Lord was reminding them of their need for also seeking after moral purity in all aspects of life (20:24-26).

Another challenge in Leviticus is knowing how to interpret and apply the rituals and ceremonies. In particular, how should the individual acts and objects that make up a ritual be understood? Answering this question can be difficult, for the simple reason that Leviticus rarely explains what various ritual actions or objects mean. (One of the few exceptions is 17:11, where sacrificial animal blood is said to be the "life" of the animal.) Some help is provided, however, by asking questions about the general function(s) and the specific function(s) of the ritual.

Generally speaking, rituals may function in several ways: e.g.,

- to address aspects of the human condition (such as impurity or sinfulness),
- to serve as a way for the offerer to express emotions or desires to the Lord, and
- to underscore various truths about the Lord or the human condition.



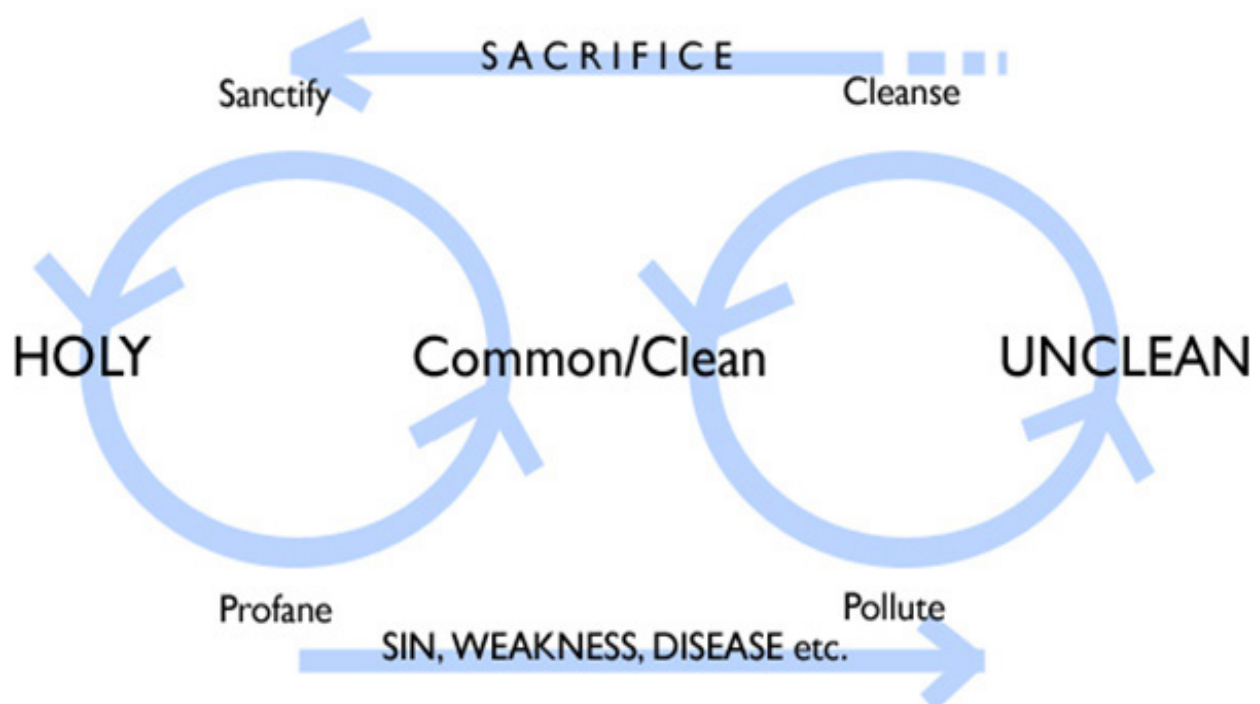
# Understanding: Holy, Clean & Unclean

## SUMMARY OF PAUL BLACKHAM

Paul Blackham created a helpful table in his Book-by-Book series. Here is just a quick rendition:

HOLY	CLEAN	UNCLEAN
LORD God, heaven, new creation, Garden of Eden, Tabernacle, Tabernacle furniture, anointed priests, sacrificed animals	Israel (the congregation), the camp, ordinary equipment/utensils, a clean Israelite, clean animals	Outside of Israel, outside of the camp, defiled & decaying buildings, defiled equipment, unclean animals, unclean Israelites, Gentiles (who have not joined Israel), hell, disease, death, devil

Some have used a different diagram to help understand the distinctions of holy, clean, unclean. Here is a rendition of what was used in the New Bible Commentary's Leviticus commentary (with Gordon Wenham as a guide):



From: <https://thesentone.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/uncleanness.jpg>

# Sacrificial System

SOURCE: CSB STUDY BIBLE, CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE (HOLMAN, 2017), STUDY NOTES, PAGE 160.

NAME	REFERENCE	ELEMENTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Burnt Offering	Lv 1; 6:8-13	Bull, ram, male goat, male dove, or young pigeon without blemish. (Always male animals, but species of animal varied according to individual's economic status)	Voluntary. Signifies propitiation [turning divine wrath] for sin and complete surrender, devotion, and commitment to God.
Grain Offering Also called Meal. or Tribute. Offering	Lv 2; 6:14-23	Flour, bread, or grain made with olive oil and salt (always unleavened/no yeast); or incense.	Voluntary. Signifies thanksgiving for firstfruits.
Fellowship Offering Also called Peace Offering, includes (1) Thank Offering (2) Vow Offering, and (3) Freewill Offering	Lv 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 12:6-8	Male or female animal without blemish - as follows: bull for high priest; male goat for king; female goat or lamb for common person; dove or pigeon for slightly poor; tenth of an ephor of flour for the very poor.	Mandatory. Made by one who had sinned unintentionally or was unclean in order to attain purification.
Sin Offering	Lv 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 12:6-8	Male or female animal without blemish - as follows: bull for high priest; male goat for king; female goat or lamb for common person; dove or pigeon for slightly poor; tenth of an ephor of flour for the very poor.	Mandatory. Made by one who had sinned unintentionally or was unclean in order to attain purification.
Guilt Offering	Lv 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6; 14:21-18	Ram or lamb without blemish.	Mandatory. Made by person who had either deprived another of his rights or had desecrated something holy. Made by lepers for purification.

The offerings in chapters 1-3 are organised according to the animal being sacrificed, and usually begin with an expression like, "If his offering is ..." In chapter 4 the material is organised in accordance with the social categories, from the high priest to the common Israelite. The introductory formula is, "If \_\_\_\_\_ sins ..." The expression, "a soothing aroma," frequently found in chapters 1-3 is but seldom found in chapters 4 and 5 (4:31). The term "atonement," on the other hand, is found but once in the first 3 chapters of Leviticus (1:4), but 9 times in chapters 4 and 5. The terms "guilt" and "guilty" are not found in chapters 1-3, but are each found 9 times in chapters 4 and 5. Chapters 1-3 are more concerned with the process of the sacrifice, while chapters 4-6 have more emphasis on the product of the process— forgiveness (not found once in chapters 1-3, 8 times in chapters 4 & 5)."

— Bob Deffinbaugh, 2014, bible.org

# Lord's Appointed Festivals

SOURCE: NIV ZONDERVAN STUDY BIBLE, ED D A CARSON (ZONDERVAN, 2015), STUDY NOTES, PAGE 229

APOINTED FESTIVAL	REFERENCE	TIME OF YEAR OLD T.	TIME OF YEAR MODERN	SIGNIFICANCE CELEBRATED	SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
Burnt Offering (1) Weekly Sabbath	<b>OT:</b> Ex 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Lv 23:3; Dt 5:12-15 <b>NT:</b> Mt 12:1-14; 28:1; Lk 4:16; 6:1-11; 14:1; Jn 5:9-18; Act 13:42; Col 2:16; Heb 4:1-11	7th day of every week	Same	Rest as sign of covenant (Ex 31:12-17)	No work for people or animal
(2) Passover  <b>and</b>  Unleavened bread	<b>OT:</b> Ex 12:11-14; Lv 23:5; Num 28:16 <b>NT:</b> Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-26; Lk 22:7-20; Jn 2:13; 11:55; 1 Cor 5:7; 11:23-28; Heb 11:28  <b>OT:</b> Ex 12:15-20; Lv 23:6-8; Num 28:17-25; Dt 16:1-8 <b>NT:</b> Mk 14:1, 12; Act 12:3; 1 Co 5:6-8	1st month (Aviv/Nisan) 14th day (1 day)  15th - 21st days length: 7 days	March/April  [2nd Passover is one month later, Num 9:10-11]	Exodus from Egypt	No regular work on days 1 and 7; males go to the sanctuary
(3) Firstfruits of barley  <b>and</b>  Firstfruits of wheat	<b>OT:</b> Lv 23:9-14 (cf. Ex 23:16; 34:26)  <b>OT:</b> Lv 23:15-17 <b>NT:</b> Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20-23	Day after the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread week.  Day after the Sabbath 7 weeks later (see festival of Weeks [Pentecost])	March/April  May/June	Dedication of barley harvest to the Lord  Dedication of the wheat harvest to the Lord	Must not eat any of the new crop until after dedication  No regular work on this day
(4) Weeks (Pentecost)	<b>OT:</b> Lv 23:15-22; Num 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12 <b>NT:</b> Acts 2:1-4; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8	3rd month (Sivan); 7 weeks after Unleavened Bread week.	May/June	Dedication of the harvest to the Lord	No regular work on this day; males go to the sanctuary
(5) Trumpets	<b>OT:</b> Lv 23:23; Num 29:1-6	7th month (Ethanym/Tishri); 1st day of the month	Sept/Oct	New Year (agricultural)	No regular work on this day
(6) Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	<b>OT:</b> Lv 16; 23:26-32; Num 29:7-11 <b>NT:</b> Rm 2:24-26; Hb 9:7-14; 9:23-10:4, 19-22	7th month Ethanym/Tishri); 10th day of the month	Sept/Oct	Making atonement for sins of priests and people	No work on this day; deny (afflict) oneself, fasting
(7) Tabernacles (Booths) (Sukkoth)	<b>OT:</b> Lv 23:33-36, 39-43; Num 29:12-38; Dt 16:13-15 <b>NT:</b> John 7:2, 8, 11, 14, 37-38	7th month (Ethanym/Tishri); 15th day of the month; length: 8 days	Sept/Oct	Harvest	No regular work on 1st and 8th days; males go to the sanctuary
[Not in Leviticus] (8) Purim	OT: Esth 9:18-32	12th month (Adar)	Feb/March	National deliverance in times of Esther	Day of joy, feasting, and giving gifts
[Not in Leviticus] (2) Dedication (Lights) (Hanukkah)	<b>NT:</b> John 10:22	9th month (Kislev); 25th day of month; length: 8 days	Nov/Dec	Restoration of the temple and dedication of the alter (165/164BC)	Days of joy and gladness



