

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

“The Call to Holy Fellowship”

AUTHOR: Moses – “The Lord Spoke to Moses” [x33]

TITLE: The English title comes from the Latin Vulgate title (*Liber Leviticus*) which comes from the Greek Septiugent title (Λευιτικῶν) meaning “relating to the Levites.” Jews titled it “the Lord called” (1:1)

• Genesis God Chose Israel – Exodus God Redeemed Israel – Leviticus God Called Israel to Fellowship

DATE: 1444 B.C. (2 years after the Exodus) – Written over a month of time (Ex. 40:17, Num. 1:1) just after Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and met with God at the tent of meeting (1:1, 27:34; cf. Ex. 34:28).

AUDIENCE: The nation of Israel who had been delivered from Egypt and were preparing to go to Canaan.

PURPOSE: To instruct God’s people about being holy as their God is holy (11:44-45, 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8).

- Laws given to God’s chosen (Genesis) and redeemed people (Exodus). They reflect *not* how to become a child of God (justification), but how to live as a child of God under the Old Covenant (sanctification).
- Leviticus has impacted the Jewish religion more than any other book in the OT. It was the first book taught to Jewish children, and over half the commentary of the Talmud centers around this book.

BACKGROUND: These are important historical and theological issues that impact the book of Leviticus.

1. God made a covenant with Abraham to give him land, seed, and blessing. (Gen 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8)
2. Jacob (Israel) and his sons went to Egypt during a famine where they multiplied greatly in number.
3. Israel became enslaved under Pharaoh. God delivered the nation by 10 plagues & the Red Sea crossing.
4. After the Exodus, God led the nation to Mt. Sinai where He gave them His Law.
5. Genesis-Deuteronomy is known as the “Law” or the “Torah”, which means “the teaching.”
6. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers all begin in Hebrew with “וְ” which means “and then.”
7. Exodus 19:2-Numbers 10:11 occurs at Mount Sinai, where the Lord called Israel to camp. (2 years)

KEY TERMS: These terms are repeated in Leviticus and are crucial to understanding the book.

- “holy” [x92] to be set apart – God is set apart from all things, His people are to be holy as He is holy
- “sin” [x102] people transgress God’s commands which reflect His character; direct offense against Him
- “blood” [x87] the life of people is sustained by blood; sin requires death (17:11; Hebrews 9:22)
- “atone” [x52] to cover the guilt of a sinner bringing reconciliation with God by expiation (removal of sin; sin defiles, sacrifice purifies) and propitiation (satisfaction of wrath; animal dies in place of the offender)
- “priest” [x192] one who intercedes between God and man; normally associated with offering sacrifices
- “offering” [x387] what the worshiper brings to God to express devotion, thanksgiving, devotion
- “to the Lord” [x91] offerings are not just dead ritualistic acts, they are worshipful gifts to God Himself
- “pleasing aroma” [x17] smell of offerings represents the tangible faith of God’s people, which pleases Him

OUTLINE OF LEVITICUS: THE BOOK OF BLOOD

Holy Practices – The Offerings (Ch.1-7)

Holy Priests – The Mediators (Ch. 8-10)

Holy People – The Distinctions (Ch. 11-15)

Holy Pardon - The Day of Atonement (Ch.16-17)

Holy People – The Distinctions (Ch. 18-20)

Holy Priests – The Mediators (Ch. 21-22)

Holy Practices – The Feasts and Sabbath (Ch. 23-25)

Holy Pledge – Blessings, Cursings, Vows (Ch. 26-27)

1:1-7:38 – Holy Practices – The Offerings

1:1-17 – Burnt Offerings

2:1-16 – Grain Offerings

3:1-17 – Peace Offerings

4:1-5:13 – Sin Offerings

5:14-6:7 – Guilt Offerings

6:8-7:38 – Laws for the Offerings

8:1-10:20 – Holy Priesthood – The Mediators

8:1-36 – Consecration of the Priests

9:1-24 – Work of the Priests

10:1-20 – Punishment of the Priests

11:1-15:33 – Holy People – The Distinctions

11:1-11:47 – Food Regulations

12:1-8, 15:1-33 – Private Uncleaness

13:1-14:54 – Public Uncleaness

16:1-17:16 – Holy Pardon - The Day of Atonement

17:1-9 – The Place of Sacrifice

17:10-16 – The Law of Blood

18:1-20:27 – Holy People – The Distinctions

18:1-30 – The Law of Sexual Activity

19:1-36 – The Law of Loving Your Neighbor

20:1-27 – The Laws Concerning Serious Sins

21:1-22:31 – Holy Priests – The Mediators

23:1-25:55 – Holy Practices – The Feasts and Sabbaths

23:1-3 – The Sabbath

23:4-5 – Passover

23:6-8 – Unleavened Bread

23:9-14 – First Fruits

23:15-22 – Pentecost

23:23-25 – Trumpets

23:26-32 – Day of Atonement

23:33-44 - Tabernacles

26:1-27:34 – Holy Pledge – Blessings, Cursings, Vows

26:1-46 – Blessings and Cursings

27:1-34 – Laws for Taking Vows

Book of Shadows

“Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” **Colossians 2:16–17**

“Since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.” **Hebrews 10:1**