

Highlights in the Book of Leviticus

- Key Thought:** God's call for holiness. The Lord proclaims worship regulations, instructions and feasts pointing to His holiness and the need for a Savior. Much of the theology of Leviticus is clarified in the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews.
- Book Name:** Name of the Hebrew book is Wayiqara – meaning to “call out” it comes from the first word in the Hebrew text which is translated “And He cried out.” In the book the Lord cries out to Moses giving him the commands and regulations of worship. The Greek name from which we get the name Leviticus means “about the Levites.”
- Key Passages:** Lev. 11:44a 'For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and **you shall be holy; for I am holy.** ... (c.f. Lev. 11:45; 29:2; 20:7; 20:26; 21:6-8)
- Lev. 17:11** 'For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'
- Lev. 16 – Description of the day of atonement – 16:22 “The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”
- Lev. 23 – Eight feasts of the Lord summarized
- Author:** Moses (Lev 1:1)
- Historical Context:** God delivered the contents of Leviticus to Moses while the people stayed at Mt. Sinai. From the time Moses received the 10 commandments until the people departed Sinai to start their wilderness wanderings was about 1 year (c. 1446 B.C.) (Num 10:11-12).

Devotional Questions: (Go through the tables in connection with the questions below)

1. In general terms, what purposes do you think the offerings of Lev. 1-7 served? What does this tell us about how God deals with us today? *The remind us of sin and the need to restore fellowship with God. They serve to show that only God is holy and that we need a mediator to be in His presence. The voluntary offerings point to how we are to love God and seek fellowship with Him.*
2. Look at the key passages listed above concerning holiness. What reasons does God give for being holy ourselves? What are the implications of this for daily living and the need for salvation?
It is God's nature to be holy and He has called us to fellowship with Him, therefore we must be holy. We cannot do this on our own. We are therefore called to die to ourselves and put on the new man daily. (Eph 4:23-24, Col 3:10, 2 Cor 4:16)
3. How does Leviticus 17:11 help us understand the need for the Cross? (See also Heb 9, exp. V. 12).
A Blood sacrifice was required to make atonement and only Jesus blood was pure enough to pay for our sins.
4. In light of the call to holiness, what applications do you see in the various laws in chapters 17-21. Some verses for discussion: 18:20, 22; 19:9-10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 28, 32, 34, 20:9 and any others that jump out. How can we understand these in light of Gal 3:24-25.
Note, the idea is one of what it takes to be a holy people. We often tolerate disrespect of elders (19:32), but make legalistic stands against externals (e.g. tattoos (19:28)). In communicating what it takes to be holy, the law teaches we cannot do it on our own. It is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ (Gal 3:24-25). We are called to live holy, not judgmental lives in the power of the Spirit. We all stumble (Jas 3:2), but the Lord is gracious as the sacrifices and festivals point out.
5. Consider each of the Feasts of Israel and their significance. What does this tell us about God's plan of salvation? What does that mean for each of us? *God always planned for our salvation through Jesus Christ (see Rev 13:8). The festivals point to God's provision through Jesus Christ. The details are so precise it cannot be dismissed as a coincidence. They also show us the fellowship God desires and show the cost for our salvation and the future rest we can expect in Him.*

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Outline of Leviticus

- I. The Five Major Offerings (1:1-7:38)
 - A. Description of the Offering (1:1-6:7)
 - B. The Priestly Service for the Offerings (6:8-7:38)

See the table below for the offerings
- II. The Beginning of the Tabernacle Worship (8:1-10:20)
 - A. Consecration of Aaron and His Sons (8:1-36)
 - B. Divine Acceptance of the First Worship (9:1-24)
 - C. Inappropriate Worship (Nadab and Abihu) (10:1-7)
 - D. Explicit Instructions for the Priests (10:8-20)
- III. Laws of Purity (11:1-15:33)
 - A. Food (11:1-47)
 - B. Purification After Childbirth (12:1-8)
 - C. Cleanness and Skin Diseases (13:1-46)
 - D. Mildew (13:47-59)
 - E. Cleansing From Skin Diseases (14:1-32)
 - F. Cleansing Houses From Mildew (14:33-57)
 - G. Uncleanness From Emissions (15:1-33)
- IV. The Day of Atonement (16:1-34)
- V. Laws of Personal Holiness (17:1-22:33)
 - A. The Sanctity of Blood (17:1-16)
 - B. Laws of Sexual Morality (18:1-30)
 - C. Miscellaneous Laws & Penalties (19:1-20:27)
 - D. Special Holiness for Priests (21:1-22:23)
- VI. Sabbath and Seven Feasts of the Lord (23:1-24:9)

See Table Below For the Feasts

(Note: some include the Sabbath as a “feast” of Israel. This would make 8 feasts in Lev. 23. If the Sabbath is not considered a feast, then there are 7, which is consistent with the significance of the number 7 for the Sabbath and the Sabbatical year (see Lev. 25))
- VII. Laws for Living in the Land
 - A. Identical Laws for the Stranger and the Israelite (24:10-23)
 - B. Laws of Land Use and Provisions for the Poor (25:1-55)
 - C. Warnings Against Apostasy (26:1-46)
 - D. Redeeming Persons and Property Dedicated to God (27:1-34)

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The Five Major Offerings (c.f. Heb 7:27 and 10:11)

Offering	Description	Instructions	Purpose/Highlights
Burnt Offering	1:1-17	6:8-13	Unblemished male offered by one's own free will (1:3), Picture of substitution for sin, blood sacrifice, It is a "whole" burnt offering-nothing remains. The fire burns constantly and the ashes are taken outside the camp to a "clean place" – picture of sin being removed. (Note provisions for the poor 1:14-17)
Grain Offering	2:1-16	6:14-23	Voluntary act of worship, a portion burned and the rest (grain or bread) given to priests. 2:11-16, both leaven and honey forbidden. Salt is required with the burnt portion. From 2:13, "salt of the Covenant of your God". Per BKCOT, p. 177 – Salt was considered indestructible by fire and may refer to an eternal covenant (Num 18:19; 2 Chron 13:5). Per Keil & Delitzsch – salt is used in covenants of the Middle East and conveys strength and purity. A salt covenant cannot be dissolved (K&D v. 1 p. 518-519)
Peace (Fellowship) Offering	3:1-17	7:11-38	Voluntary, Unblemished male or female from the herd, eaten by the one making the offering-hence a picture of "fellowship" with God.
Sin Offering	4:1-5:13	6:24-30	4:1-2 to make atonement for a specific unpremeditated sin, the fat portions are burned on the altar and the majority taken outside of the camp and burned in a clean place, person must do this when the sin becomes known to him (confession). Provisions for the poor (5:7-13) With each offering, there is the promise of God's forgiveness (4:26, 31, 35, 5:10)
Guilt (Trespass) Offering	5:14-6:7	7:1-10	a.k.a Trespass or Restitution offering. Restitution for unpremeditated sin (5:14-19), restitution for premeditated sin (6:1-7) Whether to the Lord or to the individual, restitution is the value plus 1/5. (c.f Lev. 22:14; 27:13,15, 19, 27, 31 and Num 5:7) Forgiveness promised (5:13, 16, 18)

The Feasts of Leviticus 23

Feast	Verses	When	Purpose	Typical Significance
Sabbath	23:3	Last day of the week	Rest – Keep day set apart to the Lord	Sabbath Rest for God's people looks forward to the future rest (Heb 4:9-11)
Passover	23:4-5	14 th of Nisan (March/Apr)	Commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt	Christ our Passover (1 Cor 5:7)
Unleavened Bread	23:7-8	15 th -22 nd of Nisan	Commemorate hurried flight from Egypt.	Sanctification, holy living of a redeemed people (1 Cor 5:6-8)
First Fruits	23:9-14	16 th of Nisan	First fruit of the barley harvest – promise of God's future provision.	Resurrection of Jesus – the "first fruits" 1 Cor 15:20-23
Weeks (Pentecost)	23:15-22	6 th of Sivan (3 rd Month)	Dedicate to God the end of the wheat harvest	Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2) – the reaping of the Lord's harvest
Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	23:23-25	1 st of Tishri (7 th month) (Sept/Oct)	To set the 7 th month apart as a sabbatical month.	Probable: Trumpets announce the start of the completion of God's program with Israel (Isa 18:3, 7; 27:12-13; Joel 2:15-32; Rev 8:2-9, 14)
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	23:26-32	10 th of Tishri	To make atonement for the sins of the people (Holiest day of the year for the Jewish people)	Substitutionary atonement of Christ for our sins (Isa 53:6; 1 Cor 15:3;
Tabernacles	23:33-44	15 th -22 nd Tishri	Commemorate God's protection in the wilderness & rejoice in the completion of all harvests.	Probable: Kingdom rest and prosperity of Israel in millennium (Zech 14:16 (feast in millen.); Ezra 3:4; John 1:14; Rev 21:3)