

HOLINESS



THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS



Written by Pastor Jesse Baker — September 2023

I believe it is more important for you and me to read Leviticus than it is for us to read the best Christian book ever published, because Leviticus has a quality and produces an effect that no book in the Christian marketplace can compete with. If we want to know the glory of God, if we want to experience the beauty of God, and if we want to be used by the hand of God, then we must live in the Word of God. — David Platt

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The original title of Leviticus in the Hebrew is **wayyiqrā**, which means “and he called” (Leviticus 1:1). From outside “the tent of meeting” (Exodus 40:35), God “called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent” (Leviticus 1:1). To “call means to speak in a loud and clear voice” (Gordon J. Wenham) and has the effect of ‘summoning’ a person (R. K. Harrison). The original title of Leviticus, “He called”, therefore marks the continuation of Moses’ ministry between God and Israel. “Leviticus should be considered a continuation of Exodus” (ESV Study Bible). In Exodus, God showed Moses where to worship him—in the tabernacle. In Leviticus, God will now show Moses how to worship him—through the sacrificial system. Exodus manifested the

presence of God to Israel, and Leviticus continues this narrative by inviting Israel into his presence.

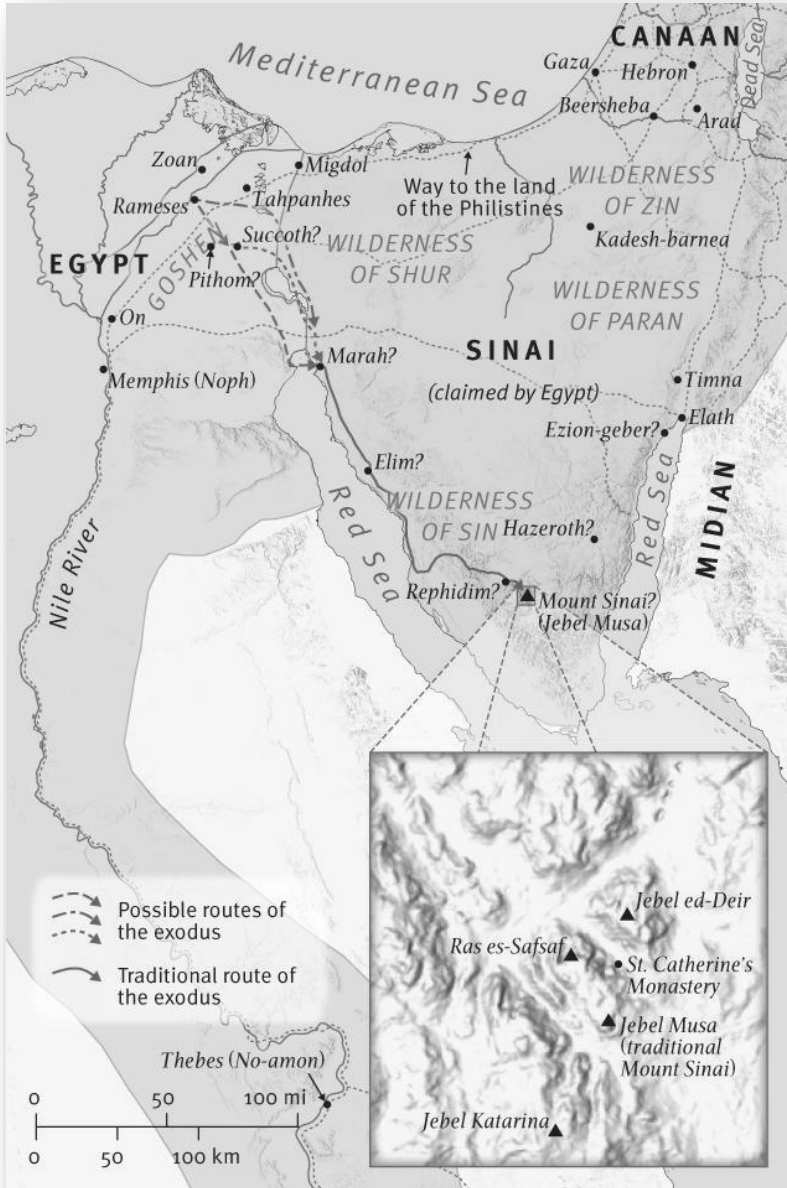
BACKGROUND

Leviticus takes place after the exodus from Egypt while the Israelites resided at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19). The book reports the words of God to Moses and his brother Aaron, but it never states when and how these words were recorded. The precise date that Leviticus was crafted is somewhat uncertain. While traditionalists argue Leviticus was written during the wilderness wanderings (1406—1230 BC), most critical scholars argue that it was crafted in the postexilic era (5th Century B.C.). The major objection to the critical view is that the worship of God in the Second Temple period is too dissimilar from Leviticus. “The book reflects the ideals of worship and holiness that were accepted in Israel from the time of Moses to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC” (R. C. Sproul).

GENRE

Leviticus is considered “utopian literature”, for it describes how people live in an ideal society. It explains the ideal commonwealth, social practices, and leadership structures. Leviticus also includes a

manual for worship, narrative, law codes, health regulations, and a liturgical calendar (ESV Study Bible). It is a handbook for building a holy society.



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THEOLOGY

1. The Holiness of God

Holiness is the overarching theme of Leviticus. The word “holy” (**qā•dôš**) means “pertaining to being unique and pure in the sense of superior moral qualities and possessing certain essential divine qualities” (DBL Hebrew). “A variety of concepts are included in the idea of God’s holiness: wholly otherness, separateness, and ethical purity” (Jerry E. Shepherd).

**I am the Lord your God;
consecrate yourselves and
be holy, because I am holy.
Do not make yourselves
unclean by any creature
that moves about on the
ground. I am the Lord who
brought you up out of Egypt
to be your God; therefore
be holy, because I am holy.
— Leviticus 11:44-45**

Since the holy Lord is present in Israel (Exodus 40:34; Leviticus 1:1), the people must confront their sin and impurity and pursue personal holiness and sanctity. The whole purpose of Leviticus is to “give us the legal foundation of holiness in the totality of our lives in order to make all life holy” (R. J. Rushdoony). For this reason, Leviticus can pave the way for helping us understand our call to be a set apart society of heaven on earth (1 Peter 1:14-16 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

2. The Presence of God

The theological focal point of Leviticus is the presence of God in the midst of Israel. R. C. Sproul observed that:

- Leviticus teaches that God, the holy one of Israel, is the source of perfect life, that he loves his people, and that he desires to dwell among them. In this we see a foreshadowing of the incarnation, when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).
- Leviticus teaches us that God is the source of life and wholeness. For this reason, everything associated with death stands in opposition to God and his purposes. To come close to the presence

of God is to find life in all its moral perfection; to move away from God is to enter the domain of death and slavery.

I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk with your heads held high. — Leviticus 26:13

I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts. — Psalm 119:45

3. The Atonement of Jesus

The sacrificial system in Leviticus also foreshadows the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the perfect sacrificial lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). His death is the ransom for many (Mark 10:45). His blood cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). He is the perfect high priest who has ascended to the heavenly tabernacle to offer his own life (Hebrews 9-10). Through the tearing of the veil at his crucifixion, his death opened the way for

all believers to enter the presence of God (Matthew 27:51 and Hebrews 10:19-20).

Leviticus outlines the invitation from God to Moses to enter the presence of God in the tent of meeting. The symbolic rituals of Leviticus create a path for Israel and God to live together in peace—a powerful expression of God’s holy and gracious mercy. — Tim Mackie

INTERPRETATION

Understanding the Law

The Reformers believed that there is a threefold distinction in the Law of God. William Perkins

(1558—1602), the Prince of Puritans, made these important points:

The law in general, is that part of God's Word, which commands things just, honest, and godly, and being thus conceived, it is threefold: ceremonial, judicial, and moral.

- The ceremonial law is that part of God's Word, which prescribed to the Jews, ceremonies, rites, and orders, to be performed in the worship of God. This law is laid down in the books of Moses, especially in Leviticus.
- The judicial law is that part of God's Word, which prescribed ordinances for the government of the Jews' commonwealth, and the civil punishment of offenders. The ceremonial law concerned the Jews only. The judicial law did indeed principally concern them, but yet so far forth as it tends to the establishing of the moral law, having in it common equity, it concerns all people, in all times and places.

What the moral law is, I will describe in three points:

- Firstly, it is that part of God's Word, concerning righteousness and godliness, which was written in Adam's mind by the gift of creation; and the remnants of it be in every man by the light of nature, in regard whereof, it binds all men.
- Secondly, it commands perfect obedience, both inward in thought and affection, and outward in speech and action.
- Thirdly, it binds to the curse and punishment everyone that fails in the least duty thereof, though but once, and that in thought only: 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them' (Gal. 3:10).

The sum of the moral law is propounded in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which many can repeat, but few do understand.

That we may further conceive aright the moral law, we must make a difference between it and the gospel, for the gospel is that part of the Word which promises righteousness and life everlasting to all that believe in Christ.

Applying Leviticus Today

Here is a seven-step method that teaches how to interpret and apply Leviticus.

1. Affirm the inspiration and helpfulness of Leviticus (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. Affirm that Leviticus is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44; Matthew 5:17).
3. Determine what the text from Leviticus means in its original context.
4. Notice the similarities between Leviticus and the New Testament.
5. Identify the principles that apply to both ancient and modern contexts.
6. Consider what the New Testament teaches about each principle.
7. Apply the principle to your life.

PRAYER

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leviticus Study Guide 1

I. A HOLY SACRIFICE • 1—7

1. BURNT OFFERING • LEVITICUS 1:1-17

Opener • What is your favourite aroma?

Study • Read Leviticus 1:1-17

1 • Israel entered a covenant relationship with God (Exodus 19:5-6). What did Israel promise God, their king (Exodus 19:8, 24:3 and 24:7)?

• How long did they keep their covenant vow (Exodus 32:1-4)?

2 • Rather than walking in freedom under their new king (Psalm 119:45), Israel broke the covenant and made themselves unholy (Exodus 20:1-6). How does this set the scene for Leviticus (see Introduction: Theology)?

3 • The Lord descended on Mount Sinai twice in Exodus (Exodus 19:16-20 and 24:15-17). Each time, the Lord called Moses and gave him laws. How is this pattern repeated in Exodus 40:34-38 and Leviticus 1:1-2a?

- What is different about this theophany?

In biblical times, a king who entered into covenant relationship with a people would give them laws that helped them to know how to live as members of his kingdom. The Lord does the very same in Leviticus: he gives covenant laws to his covenant people so that they can be faithful members of his covenant kingdom. — Jay Sklar

4 • The Lord has summoned Moses to speak a new set of laws to a covenant-breaking Israel (Leviticus 1:2b), concentrating firstly on the sacrificial laws (Leviticus 1-7). What are the five types of sacrificial offerings?

5 • In Leviticus 1:2b-17, the focus is on the “burnt offering” (1:3). The word for “burnt offering” is ‘ō·lā(h) which means “that which goes up” (BDB). The burnt offering was a costly sacrifice for it was entirely consumed and went up in flame on the altar. What are

the origins of the burnt offering (Genesis 8:20; 20:22; 22:13)?

6 • Why did the offering have to be “without defect” (Leviticus 1:3)? Would a voluntary gift with flaws be considered pleasing in God’s sight (Malachi 1:7-8)?

• What is the danger of half-hearted and second-rate worship in the covenant kingdom of God?

7 • Why does the offeror have to lay their whole hand “on the head of the burnt offering” for the sacrifice to be acceptable (Leviticus 1:4; see also 16:21)? Clue: Isaac Watts highlights what going on in his lyrics about the sacrifice of Christ:

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of [Jesus],
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

8 • The priests were skilled butchers and rôtisseurs who had to follow strict patterns of preparation for the sacrifice to be made acceptable (Leviticus 1:6-8). What does this teach about the character of God (1 Corinthians 14:33 and 14:40)?

9 • What does “blood” in Leviticus 1:5 represent (Deuteronomy 12:23 and Genesis 9:4)? Consider also Hebrews 9:22.

Either we will die for our sin and we will be separated from God forever, or a sacrifice will die for our sin. — Allan Moseley

10 • There were three types of burnt offerings: offerings from the herd, the flock, and the cage (Leviticus 1:3-9; 1:10-13; 1:14-17). Why do you think there were three types of offering? Clue: Think about the socio-economic reality of Israel (Deuteronomy 15:1-11).

11 • God does not eat food (Ps. 50:13) but does find pleasure in the aroma of a burnt offering (Leviticus 1:9, 1:13 and 1:17). How does the “pleasing aroma” of cooking your favorite meal help you identify with the pleasure of God in the sacrifice?

The last act, burning the offering on the altar, symbolizes the extinction of the offeror's worldly values, which simultaneously functions as a soothing aroma to the Lord. — Nobuyoshi Kiuchi

Gospel →

The Sacrifice of Christ

As the burnt offering was a pleasing aroma to God, so Christ became such a sacrifice for all who put their trust in him. “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2). Christ’s whole person was offered up on the cross like a burnt offering. In our place, his body was totally consumed by fire on the altar. What we sinners earned by sin he experienced by divine wrath. But in his broken body, Christ experienced the totality of destruction that we sinners deserve. This is the gospel: All who identify themselves with the death of Christ, by placing their penitent hands on his head, are made alive through his blood. His sprinkled blood restores our broken relationship with God (Leviticus 17:11).

Just as the worshippers needed to come themselves and lay their hands on the sacrifice, rather than rely on any surrogate to make the offering on their behalf, so no one else can trust in the Saviour for you. Neither your parents nor your minister can stand in for you. You must yourself lean upon Christ, and Christ alone, in order to be accepted by God. — Philip H. Eveson

- Have you leaned on Christ alone to be declared acceptable before God? Reflect and celebrate:

My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly thine!
— Ray Palmer (1808-1887)

2. GRAIN OFFERING • LEVITICUS 2:1-16

Opener • What do you love to receive as a gift?

Study • Read Leviticus 2:1-16

1 • The word for “grain offering” is *min·ḥā(h)* which often translated as “gift”, “present” or “tribute”. Explore these scriptures to understand the meaning of *min·ḥā(h)*: Genesis 32:13, Judges 3:15, and 2 Kings 17:3.

2 • Why do you think the *min·ḥā(h)* is translated as “grain offering” in Leviticus 2:1-16?

3 • The “grain offering” had to be of “the *finest* flour” and be infused with “oil” and “incense” (2:1-2b). What do these three ingredients have in common (Revelation 18:13-14)?

• Why are these ingredients a noble tribute to God, the king of the covenant?

4 • The Lord describes the “offering” as a “memorial portion” (Leviticus 2:2a). ‘The offering is for the purpose of *reminding the LORD* that the offeror is a loyal member of the covenant kingdom’ (Jerry E. Shepherd). If God remembers his covenant with sinners, what does he chose to forget (Hebrews 8:12)?

5 • Under the old covenant kingdom, a portion of the tribute was “most holy” and distributed to support the ministry of the priests (Leviticus 2:3, 2:10 and 6:16). Those who are members of the new covenant are also to provide for the sustenance of their ministers (1 Corinthians 9:13-14 and Galatians 6:6). Do you make dedicated sacrifices to support the work of your pastor?

6 • What are the three ways the grain offering could be prepared (Leviticus 2:4-7)?

• Where does this preparation for worship begin—in the tabernacle or the home?

Even the poorest of persons could offer a home-made flat cake or a

wafer of bread as a sacrifice to God, and come to know him more fully in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:35). — R. K. Harrison

7 • The “tribute” is broken into two parts: the “memorial portion” is burned on the altar and the “rest of the grain offering belongs to [the priests]” (Leviticus 2:8-10). How did Jesus, “the bread of life”, become both a sacrifice and a meal (Isaiah 53:5 and Mark 14:22)?

- “Grain must be ground to make bread” (Isaiah 28:28). How was the body of Jesus crushed to become the finest grain offering (Mark 15:22-24)?

8 • What ingredients must not be included in the grain offering (Leviticus 2:11-13)?

- Salt is a preservative. Why do you think Israel had to “season all their grain offerings” with salt (Leviticus 2:13; see also Numbers 18:19 and 2 Chronicles 13:5)?

- Disciples of Jesus are “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13) and ‘living sacrifices’ (Romans 12:1). How do we

offer our bodies as salt-infused tributes to God (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15-16; Colossians 4:6)?

• List three areas of your life that are lacking salt:

a.

b.

c.

Disciples are salt. The world is an altar. Humanity and the world are to become a single great offering to God. As we offer ourselves in obedient, suffering self-sacrifice, we become the seasoning on a cosmic sacrifice that makes it well-pleasing to God. — Peter Leithart

9 • What is the grain offering of firstfruits (Leviticus 2:14-16 and 3:10)?

• How does this offering foreshadow the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20)?

Gospel →

The Bread of Life

Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, the ultimate grain offering (John 6:32-35). He is the “kernel of wheat” that “falls to the ground and dies” and “produces many seeds” (John 6:24). In his love for us, he offered himself as a tribute on our behalf and was ‘crushed for our iniquities’ (Isaiah 53:5). He entered the furnace of affliction that we deserved to enter and suffered death to bring us to God. Walter Kaiser writes, “As the grain was bruised and crushed to make the sacrifice for the ancient Israelite, so the living Bread was bruised and crushed for all who would believe.” His was the perfect grain offering sacrifice and by his falling kernel he has established forever the new covenant.

• Jesus said, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever” (John 6:51). How do we eat this saving bread?

Consider this quote by J. C. Ryle:

The meaning is that the soul of the man who feeds on Christ by faith, shall never die. There is no condemnation for him. His sins are put away. He shall not be hurt by the second death. — J. C. Ryle

Prayer •

3. FELLOWSHIP OFFERING • LEVITICUS 3:1-17

Opener • What was your most memorable meal?

Study • Read Leviticus 3:1-17

1 • The word for “fellowship offering” (šě•lēm) is closely related to the Hebrew word for “peace” and “well-bring” (šālôm). The fellowship offering is thus a “sacrifice for alliance or friendship” (BDB) and is often translated as “peace offering” (ESV). In essence, the fellowship offering was a communion meal that had the purpose of “making, renewing, and practicing covenant relationships” (NIVBTSB). What do we learn about the fellowship offering from Exodus 24:5-11, Genesis 31:51-54 and 1 Samuel 9:12-25?

The peace offering provided the worshipper with an opportunity to celebrate this state of divine well-being with family and friends. It was ‘a kind of religious party, where priests and worshippers enjoyed a

sumptuous meal in the presence of God'. — Philip Everson

2 • The priest must “splash the blood” of the sacrificial victim upon the altar, for it was the life and blood of another that made atonement for sin (Leviticus 3:2, 3:8 and 3:13). Imagine watching this graphic scene. What emotions might you experience?

- Do you experience the same emotions when you reflect upon the pouring of Christ’s blood upon the alter of Golgotha, the cross (Matthew 26:28)?

3 • The burnt offering to God was to be a “male without defect” (Leviticus 1:3). How is this different to the fellowship offering (Leviticus 3:1 and 3:6)?

- Why do you think this offering is less strict? Clue: Think about the purpose of the offering (Leviticus 7:15).

4 • There is second difference of the burnt offering in compared to the fellowship offering: no provision was made for the poor to present birds. Was this lavish meal

intended to exclude the poor (Deuteronomy 12:17-18)?
Discuss.

5 • What parts of the fellowship offering are to be burned on the altar and not consumed by the people (Leviticus 3:3-4, 3:9-10 and 3:14-16)?

• The fat, which also included the tissues that it covered, was prohibited to the Hebrews for food (Leviticus 3:17 and 7:23). How did this help Israel glorify God with their bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? Clue: Consider the health effects of eating too much animal fat.

Holiness in Leviticus is symbolized by wholeness. — Gordan Wenham

• These parts of the animal burned on the altar represent something of the offeror being destroyed. What is “fat” a metaphor for in the Bible (Psalm 73:7 and 119:70)?

6 • Even though eating “the fat” was outlawed in the commonwealth of Israel, it was an expression that symbolised the best of something (Genesis 45:18). The fat that represents our worst represents the best of the

sacrificial victim. The effect of this offering was “an aroma pleasing to the LORD” (Leviticus 3:5 and 3:16). What did this sacrifice remind Israel? Consider the quotes below:

Animal sacrifice reminded the people of the costly nature of reconciliation with God. — Philip Everson

The burning of fat signified the mortifying of our corrupt affections and lusts, and the burning up of them by the fire of divine grace. — Matthew Henry

7 • The burning of fat is described as a “food” offering (Leviticus 3:11 and 3:16). The word food is not used because the Lord is ‘hungry.’ It rather shows that the offering functioned like a meal, one in which the Lord, the priests and the offerors all enjoyed together. In the Bible, sharing a meal often functioned to confirm a covenant relationship (Genesis 26:28-30). After the

Israelites had entered a covenant relationship with the Lord, the leaders of Israel went up Mount Sinai to appear before him and to eat a meal (Exodus 24:9-11). In short:

The fellowship meal was a way for Israelites to honour the Lord by giving him the very best of their meat, as well as to reaffirm and celebrate the covenant relationship they enjoyed with him and with one another. — Jay Sklar

- How do we reaffirm our covenant relationship with God (Luke 22:14-20 and 1 Corinthians 10:17)?

- List three things you could do to help keep this covenant commitment:

a.

b.

c.

Gospel →

The Communion Meal

The worshiper in Leviticus was invited to be a guest and enjoy the festive meal of God. Likewise, in the communion meal, the believer is invited to feast upon the blood and body of the lamb of God.

- What are we warned about before participating in this communion meal? Compare 1 Corinthians 11:27 with Leviticus 7:20.

- The Teacher of Ecclesiastes offers us wisdom on how we should approach the communion meal (Ecclesiastes 5:1). How might we 'guard our steps' before we feast with God and each other?

Prayer •

Thou hast prepared for me a feast;
and though I am unworthy to sit down as guest,
I wholly rest on the merits of Jesus,
and hide myself beneath his righteousness;
When I hear his tender invitation
and see his wondrous grace,
I cannot hesitate, but must come to thee in love.
By thy spirit enliven my faith rightly to discern
and spiritually to apprehend the Saviour.
While I gaze upon the emblems of
my Saviour's death,
may I ponder why he died, and hear him say,
'I gave my life to purchase yours,
presented myself an offering to expiate your sin,
shed my blood to blot out your guilt,
opened my side to make you clean,
endured your curses to set you free,
bore your condemnation to satisfy divine justice.'

- The Valley of Vision

4. SIN OFFERING • LEVITICUS 4:1-5:13

Opener • What have you learnt from Leviticus so far?

Study • Read Leviticus 4:1-5:13

1 • The word for “sin offering” (khatta’t) comes from the Hebrew verb khata, which means “sin” or “missing the mark,” which means violating the standards of God. Furthermore, the “sin offering” is sometimes translated as “purification offering” because its purpose was purification and cleansing of sin or general impurity.

Sin and uncleanness make a person unfit to be in God’s presence and also pollute the sanctuary, making it impossible for God to dwell there. The sin offering is designed to cope with this aspect of sin by purifying the sanctuary. — R. C. Sproul

- Why was the sin offering prescribed to situations that did not result from sin (Leviticus 12:1-8 and Numbers 8:5-8)?

- God showed the people the need not only for a sacrifice that would remove the wrath of God (propitiation), but that would also remove the polluting effects of sin (expiation). Association with disease (Leviticus 14:1-13) and death (Leviticus 21:1) contaminate us before God. What does this teach us about the nature of sin?

2 • What type of sin does this section of Leviticus cover (Leviticus 4:2)?

- What is the opposite of “unintentional” sin (Numbers 15:30)?

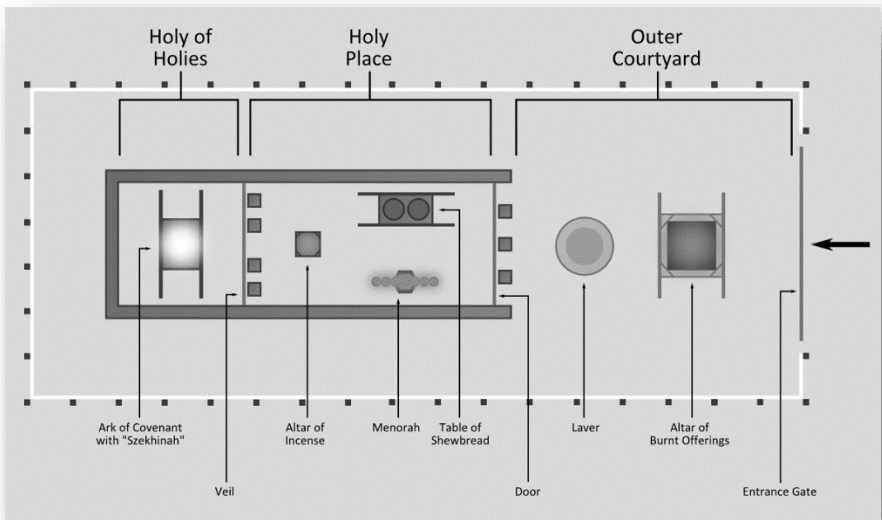
- Why do we often fail to admit our sins of ignorance? How might we take responsibility for them when they are brought to light?

3 • Why was the unintentional sins of “anointed priests” consider a serious offence (Leviticus 4:3)?

• Reflect upon the seriousness of the offence:

a. What was the sacrificial victim (Leviticus 4:3)? What does the number seven represent (Leviticus 14:7)?

b. What sacred furnishings needed to be purified (Leviticus (4:6-7)? What do you think they represent?



4 • While the fatty portions are all burned on the altar of burnt offering, the remainder of the bull's carcass—its skin, flesh, and other entrails—was taken outside the

camp and burned (Leviticus 4:12). How does this act prefigure the crucifixion of Jesus (John 9:17)?

- Why did Jesus suffer “outside the camp” (Hebrews 13:11-12)?

5 • The priests are to make atonement for Israel when the whole nation unintentionally sins (Leviticus 4:13). What is an example of an unintentional sin of Israel (Joshua 9:1-27)?

6 • The more important the person or group is in society, the more serious the case, and, therefore, the more expensive the offering (4:13-14, 4:22-23, 4:32-33, 5:7 and 5:11). In the sight of God, the guilt of sin varies depending on the ranks and responsibilities of the offender. What are offices in the church of Jesus Christ?

- What does James 3:1 teach about the concept of proportional guilt?

7 • The blood of the sin offering for the “anointed priests” (Leviticus 4:3-12) was taken inside the Holy Place of the tabernacle. The blood of the sin offering for the “ruler”

(4:22-26) was brought to the altar outside the Holy Place. The impurity of religious leaders, those who led sacrificial worship, was more serious than the impurity of secular leaders, those who oversee the law. Why do you think purity of priests came before the purity of politicians in the commonwealth of Israel?

8 • What four violations make people unclean according to Leviticus 5:1-4?

a.

b.

c.

d.

• How did the people deal with these sins (Leviticus 5:5-6)?

Gospel →

Confession and Forgiveness

The acknowledgement of sin and awareness of guilt are the two ingredients of a humble and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). Likewise, it is with a remorseful faith that we look to Jesus Christ, our perfect sin offering. The Apostle John says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

God’s forgiveness is not cheap. It comes at a price—the death of a substitute. In Christ, ‘through his blood’, we have ‘the forgiveness of sins’ (Colossians 1:14). — Philip Eveson

- How might you deal with your sin today (1 John 1:7-9)?

In “Life Together”, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of

the unexpressed it poisons the whole being of a person. In confession the light of the Gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. All that is secret and hidden is made manifest. It is a hard struggle until the sin is openly admitted. But God breaks gates of brass and bars of iron (Psalm 107:16). Since the confession of sin is made in the presence of a Christian brother, the last stronghold of self-justification is abandoned.

- Sin wants to remain alone and confession to another believer helps us to live in the light. Who could help you break the stronghold of sin in your life?

Prayer •

5. GUILT OFFERING • LEVITICUS 5:14-6:7

Opener • Have you ever been in debt with no ability to repay? How did you feel?

Study • Read Leviticus 5:14-6:7

1 • While the focus of the sin offering was purification, the purpose of the guilt offering was restitution. The reality is that sin places a person in debt. How did Jesus depict sinners as debtors toward God (Matthew 6:12 and Luke 7:41-42)?

2 • The word “unfaithful” (ma’al) in Leviticus 5:15 is also translated “a breach in faith” (ESV) or “displays infidelity” (LEB). What does Numbers 5:6 and Joshua 7:1 reveal about the effect of sin in our covenant relationship with God?

Followers of Jesus are in a covenant relationship with God—the new covenant in Christ—and

any sin we commit is unfaithfulness to that covenant. — Allan Moseley

3 • The people of Israel were commanded not to trespass against God by disturbing his “holy things” (Leviticus 5:15). These holy things include the ark, the incense, the table, the shewbread, and the sacrifices to the Lord. How did Achan show infidelity in concern to the “holy things” of God (Joshua 7:10-26)?

- How did the people in the day of Malachi unintentionally rob God (Malachi 3:8-9)?

4 • What payment needed to be made to cover the debt of sin against God (Leviticus 5:15-16)? How is this a deterrent to breaking faith?

- What deters you from being unfaithful to Jesus?

- What standard does Jesus expect of us (Matthew 5:48)?

5 • The law reminded Israel to show respect to God by showing respect to his property (Leviticus 5:15-16). What

is the Lord's holy property under the rule of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)?

- How might we harm God's property (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:18)?

6 • The people of Israel were “held responsible” for all sin—known and unknown (Leviticus 5:17). This exhorted Israel to avoid sin at all costs. How does God put their hearts at ease (Leviticus 5:18-19)?

- We too are exhorted to avoid sin at all costs (Jude 23). But the reality is that we will often fall short and ‘defile’ ourselves, knowingly and unknowingly. Despite our shortcomings, why should we rest at peace in Christ (Hebrews 10:12)?

7 • The people of Israel were also called not to trespass against their neighbours (Leviticus 6:2). What are the three examples provided in Leviticus 6:2-3?

a.

b.

c.

- Why are such actions unacceptable in the covenant family of God (1 Corinthians 12:26)?

- How do we fight against these trespasses under the reign of Jesus (Galatians 5:22, Romans 12:17, Ephesians 4:32, Philippians 4:8 and Titus 2:10)?

8 • If sinners got away with their crime, what prompted them to admit their wrongdoing (Psalm 90:8 and 101:5)?

- What were the Israelites called to do once their “guilt” was exposed (Leviticus 6:4-7)?

Gospel →

Our Guilt Offering

In Leviticus 5:4-6:7, the guilty offered a “ram” (male sheep) to pay the penalty for their sin. Later in the Old Testament, Isaiah spoke of the Suffering Servant, a man who would become “a lamb that is led to the slaughter” to become an “offering for guilt” (Isaiah 53:7 and 53:10). The Suffering Servant is none other than Jesus Christ: the one who paid the debt we owe to God. Paul said,

“You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13-14). God has forgiven us all our trespasses so that we have a perfect standing before him. How do you feel knowing that all your trespasses are nailed to the cross?

**My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I
bear it no more, Praise the Lord,
praise the Lord, O my soul! —
Horatio Spafford**

True Repentance

In the Bible, sin must not only be confessed to God but also to those whom we have trespassed. How does Jesus illustrate true repentance in these two passages?

a. Matthew 5:23-24

b. Luke 19:8-9

True spirituality involves a proper posture to the Lord, as well as to those around us (Matthew 22:37-40). — Jay Sklar

Prayer •

6. REGULATIONS • LEVITICUS 6:8-7:38

Opener •

Study • Read Leviticus 6:8-7:38

1 • The fire on the altar must be “kept burning” (Leviticus 6:9, 6:12-13). What do we learn about the “fire” from the Bible?

a. Exodus 3:2

b. Exodus 19:18

c. Ezekial 1:4

d. Daniel 7:9-10

e. Hebrews 12:29

f. Revelation 22:5

- What does the fire on the altar represent?
- God is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. Which person of the Trinity is symbolised by fire (Isaiah 4:4 and Acts 2:3)?

The influences of the Holy Spirit are enlightening, warming, comforting and corrective. He also consumes our sin and purifies hearts. — Family Worship Bible Guide

• The presence of the Holy Spirit burned on the altar. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit burns from within those who believe the gospel (1 Corinthians 6:19). Just as the priests ensured the continuous burning of fire on the altar, how do we be sure not to quench the internal fire of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)?

2 • Why was it important for Israel to remember that the perpetual flame of God's presence was with them?
Explore these scriptures:

a. Isaiah 43:2-5

b. Jeremiah 1:8

- How does it make you feel knowing that the presence of God is forever with those who believe (Matthew 28:20)?

3 • The fire on the altar “must not go out” (Leviticus 6:12). God was letting his people know that his atonement and forgiveness of sin were always available. What does this tell us about the nature of God?

- How does the perpetual access to atonement fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:25 and 1 John 1:9)?

4 • God gave these laws to Israel before the perpetual fire was lit. The fire was lit on the altar in Leviticus 9:24. How was the fire lit?

- The ability to make atonement for sin was impossible apart from the free gift of divine fire. Our hearts are an altar for a life of self-sacrifice (Romans 12:1). How is the altar in our hearts lit (Ephesians 2:8)?

- What does this “gift” from God enable us to do?

a. Acts 1:8

b. John 16:7-14

c. Romans 8:9

d. Galatians 5:22-23

e. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

The fire on the altar reminded God's people of access to God's presence, atonement for sin, and God's supernatural activity. May we not allow the fire to go out in our lives. Let us keep the fire burning. Let us keep going into God's presence in prayer, keep seeking God's forgiveness for daily sin, and keep depending on his power. "Fire must be kept burning on the altar

continually; it must not go out” (Leviticus 6:13). — Allan Moseley

5 • After the burnt offering (Leviticus 6:8-13), we are reintroduced to the grain offering (Leviticus 6:14-23), the sin offering (Leviticus 6:24-30), the guilt offering (Leviticus 7:1-10), and the fellowship offering (Leviticus 7:11-21). How did God make special provisions for the priests (Leviticus 6:16, 6:29, 7:6, and 7:32-34)?

- God made special provisions for the descendants of Aaron and the whole tribe of Levi to make their living from the sacrificial system. This pattern is repeated in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 9:13-14). How should we treat our church leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-18)?

- What church leaders are worthy of “double honour” (1 Timothy 5:17)?

- List three ways you can support those who labour to ‘teach the nations’ (Matthew 28:19):

a.

b.

c.

6 • The people of Israel were not only to depend upon God's presence and provide for their worship leaders, but they were also to guard their holiness. How did the people of protect the purity of worship (Leviticus 7:19-21; see also Isaiah 52:11)?

- Paul applied this principle from Leviticus in 2 Corinthians 6:17. What unclean things are we to separate ourselves from today (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)?

- What happens to churches if they do not separate themselves from the world?

Gospel →

Our Ultimate Sacrifice

Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrificial system (Leviticus 7:37-38). The “burnt offering” was consumed completely on the altar. Jesus gave up his whole body on the cross and became a fragrant offering before God. The “grain offering” signified thanksgiving and dedication to God.

Jesus expressed thanksgiving to God and completely dedicated himself to his Father. The “sin offering” satisfied the wrath of God against sin. Jesus satisfied the wrath of God against us by dying once-and-for-all on the cross for our sins. The “guilt offering” involved making restitution and paying back the debts we owed to God. Jesus forgave us all our trespasses on the cross and erased our certificate of debt. The “fellowship offering” expressed peace with God. Jesus made peace with God possible for us through the blood of his cross. God never meant for the old sacrificial system to be permanent. It existed to prepare for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Let us then not “trample the Son of God under foot” by treating his finished work flippantly (Hebrews 10:29).

- God commanded his people to respect all the elements in the sacrificial system. How much more reverence should we give to the sacrifice of God himself in human flesh?

- What is your key takeaway from the last six studies in the book of Leviticus?

Prayer •

Were some watcher or holy one from the bright world above to come among us for a time with the power to diagnose the spiritual ills of church people, there is one entry which I am quite sure would appear on the vast majority of his reports:

Definite evidence of chronic spiritual lassitude; level of moral enthusiasm extremely low. — A. W. Tozer

 **HOLINESS** LEVITICUS