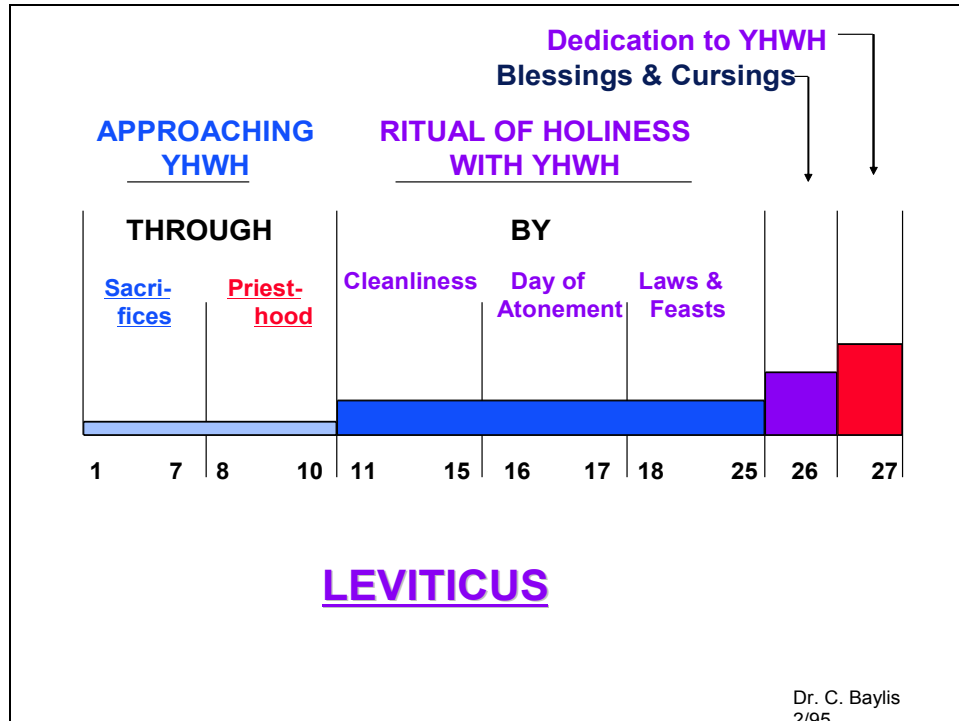


## CHAPTER 14

### LEVITICUS



### LEVITICUS<sup>1</sup>

#### The Tabernacle: Access to God

1. A Holy God: God is perfect.
2. Access to God: Means of satisfying man's sinful approach to a holy God.
3. Additional revelation required regarding the tabernacle so that the dwelling place of God is not defiled. Defilement will require that God abandon the temple.
4. Entry into the land would be accompanied by YHWH's presence, who would conquer on their behalf. Disobedience to that commission (uncleanness) would result in expulsion from the land and other curses. God would, however, use the curses to bring them back.

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<sup>1</sup> Many things in these notes have been derived from the class notes of Dr. Elliott Johnson, Dallas Seminary, BE courses in Leviticus both ThM and ThD program. Heretofore, this is a note of source and of thanks for the contributions that have been carried herein. Much of these notes have been revised and increased, but the influence of his notes and lectures are imprinted throughout.

### Outline of the Book

I. The process by which the people will draw near to YHWH and YHWH will draw near to the people. (1--10)

A. Through sacrifices (1--7)<sup>2</sup>

1. Sacrifices for fellowship. (1:1-3:17).

The offerings, the first three, were not for sin as much as they were to indicate the relationship with the holy God.

a. Burnt Offering: Approaching the Creator as a created being.

The burnt offering (chapter 1) was to gain favor with the holy God, with man pictured as a created being, who needed to be acceptable to his Creator. (e.g., 1 Sam. 7:9, 13:9 (Saul)).

b. Grain Offering: Thanksgiving for life.

The grain offering (chapter 2) represented that of an inferior being, who brought his superior a gift to indicate his subjection. Thus he would bring a gift, valuable, indicating how appreciative he was for life, thus a food offering. The one who offered it was grateful for each breath that his Superior had granted him.

c. Peace Offering: Thanksgiving for a benefit done on his behalf.

This was in essence a man giving thanksgiving for some great benefit that he had received.

2. Sacrifices for restoration of fellowship. (4:1-6:7).

The second class of offerings were those where the one offering had incurred some trespass or guilt, and thus was responsible for eliminating the sin before he could approach the holy God. Thus the sin and the guilt offering were provided to do exactly that.

a. Sin Offering

The sin offering (4:1-35) was for one who had done what God had restricted in one of His commands. These would be unintentional sins. These were sins accomplished because of human weakness, ignorance or passion. They were the opposite of sins done intentionally, i.e., sins done to object to the authority of the one giving the command.

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<sup>2</sup> The basic structure and definition of these sacrifices are derived from Dr. Elliott Johnson's notes on the Book of Leviticus, Dallas Theological Seminary.

b. Guilt Offering

The guilt offering (5:1-6:7) was an offering for specific sins such as perjury, robbing God, deception of companions, swearing falsely, violence, and fraud. These sins required restitution, confession, compensation and finally the sacrifice. Note also that these were sins not done with a “high hand”, that is against the authority or separateness of the covenant or Covenant God.

3. Summary of sacrifice procedure (6:8—7:38).

The remainder of this section (6:8-7:38) deals with the precise process whereby these five sacrifices are to be handled.<sup>3</sup>

B. Through priesthood (8--10)

Now the topic moves to the requirements for priests. Here the original priests are being ordained. The text details the sacrifices and ritual for their ordination.

1. The ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests. (8:1-36).

The ordination of Aaron and his sons and their obedience is detailed.

2. The institution of the sacrifice by the priests. (9:1-24).

Now on the eighth day after the priests had remained closeted up for seven days, the sacrifices were instituted for themselves and the people. The chapter closes with the Glory of the LORD appearing to the people and they respond with praise. This is indicating the proper response of the people to God's commands results in a worshipful fellowship.

3. EXAMPLE: The importance of priestly propriety in the sacrifices and in personal life to regard the holiness of YHWH. (10:1-20).

Frequently in literature, the narrative is inserted to indicate what happens when the previous instructions are not carried out. This is the case of Nadab and Abihu, Aarons sons, as they bring in strange fire (fire not commanded) to the LORD. They die. Further the priests are commanded to keep themselves holy by neither touching the dead bodies nor mourning for them. Had they done that they also would have been struck down for not reverencing YHWH and His acts and his instructions to the priests to not profane themselves. Further in this section the

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<sup>3</sup> An interesting reference to this is in the case of Eli's sons (1 Sam. 2:15) who ate the fat which was designated for God alone (7:24-25). This particular case of Eli's sons was a death punishment as it was done with a defiant heart (treating what is holy as common).

personal life of a priest is stressed. Since he is the one who is to have contact with the holy God for the people, he over all must remain clean.

## II. YHWH's demands on the people (11--24)

The second section of the book now moves into the daily lives of the people. They were to be separate (holy) as compared to all the neighboring nations and particularly those that they would replace in the land of Canaan.

### 1. Separation (11-15)

Their dietary restrictions were to be different. Some of these restrictions were for healthful reasons. Some were for cleanliness. Some were strictly for a separation sign. Lack of morality, dietary faithfulness and cleanliness would insure a sick and diseased society. Thus this section outlines dietary restrictions, impurity and uncleanness due to discharges<sup>4</sup>, birth,<sup>5</sup> etc. and leprosy<sup>6</sup>.

### 2. Cleansing (16—17)

This section covers the Day of Atonement, whereby the lives of the people would be cleansed once a year, thereby allowing their access to God for another year. Also in the section is a requirement that the people sacrifice their animals at the specific place requested by the Lord, i.e., the tabernacle. Sacrifices which the people offer on their own outside the tabernacle would be abominations.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Holiness (18—23)

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<sup>4</sup> Note here that this is the Law regarding the woman with a hemorrhage in Luke 8:43.

<sup>5</sup> Note that Mary keeps this in Luke 2:22, and in fact, also note that she was poor based on the type of sacrifice she offered according to Lev. 12:6.

<sup>6</sup> Note the Law regarding leprosy (14:2) and its cleansing. This is referenced by the Lord in Mark 1:44. There is no record that any Israelite (Naaman was a Syrian) was ever cleansed of leprosy until the Lord did it and utilized this Law. (Miriam was struck with leprosy as a curse and it was reversed in Numbers).

<sup>7</sup> The Day of Atonement was the basis of the appeasement of the wrath of God where the New Testament word "propitiation" or "Mercy" (ἱλασθηριον) - Leviticus 16, Exodus 39, Rev. 3:25 (same word), Heb. 2:17, 9:5 (same word), Romans 5ff. The mercy seat was used only on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Hebrews 9 discusses the entering of the holy place once for all. The entry into the holy place was the Day of Atonement, the national cleansing. This theme is the main focus of Christ's sacrifice. The "blood of bulls and goats" refers to the Day of Atonement, which is the only offering that combined both of them.

The third part of the second section of the book deals with the actual morality of the people with respect to their holy God.

1. Laws for the people. “LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF” (18:1-20:27).

They were not to act like the immoral people of the surrounding nations, nor the nations that they replaced. Thus they were to respect their relatives with regard to marriage. They were neither to have intercourse with other's wives, animals, nor others of the same sex. They were to reverence the poor, not sacrifice children and other requirements that were characteristic of one who would follow YHWH. In 19:18 the commandment of “Love thy neighbor as thyself” is given. This, of course, is a summary of all that has gone before in the commandments regarding brothers.

In short, the command to “love” was that man was to imitate the love of God; that is, he looked out for his brother at his own cost, as God did. Thus all these sexual laws were taking advantage of another (brother or sister) for one's own gratification at their cost. However, some were additionally abominable since they went against the very creative design of YHWH (homosexuality, bestiality).

- a. Sexual warnings: God warns them not to practice the abominable customs of the lands from which they came (Egypt) or to which they are going (Canaan) (18:1-30).
  - 1) Introduction to warning not to adopt customs of past pagans (Egypt) or future pagans (Canaan). (18:1-5).
  - 2) God warns against incest with relatives, either by blood or by vow (18:6-18).
  - 3) Illicit sexual unions outlined (18:19-20).
    - a) during menstruation (18:19)
    - b) with brother's wife (18:20).
    - c) with Molech (18:21)
    - d) homosexuality (18:22)
    - e) bestiality
  - 4) Summary of illicit sexual unions: God is impartial and Israel will be removed from land as the pagans before them (18:24-28).
- b. Show reverence (holiness) toward God (19:1-8)

In this short introductory section, God points out that their vertical (worship) acknowledgment of God must be one of the utmost respect and carefulness to His commandments.

- 1) Introduction: God is holy, thus the people must be holy. (19:1-2).
  - 2) Reverence for father and mother is indicative of a relationship to God as He has appointed them as authority over children (19:3a).
  - 3) Reverence for Sabbaths indicates a pure reverence for the uniqueness of God, for there is no natural relationship between keeping of the Sabbath and human wisdom (19:3b).
  - 4) The making of idols shows a disregard for the self-revelation of God (19:4).
  - 5) In regard to offering peace offerings, one must follow the prescription specifically or it shows a disregard for God (19:5-8).
- c. Imitate God's love by looking out for one's brother (19:9-18).
- 1) Provide food for the poor and the alien (19:9-10).
  - 2) Reject theft and deception for personal gain (19:11).
  - 3) Reject indicating the blessing of God on one's selfish purposes (19:12).
  - 4) Always give a man what is due him and never take what is your neighbor's with regard to material or non-material items (19:13).
  - 5) In the case of the helpless physically (blind, deaf)) one must regard them as God has regarded the helpless (19:14).
  - 6) Judgment of others should not be made on the basis of material or non-material items (rich or poor) but should always be made as God judges, fairly (19:15).
  - 7) Testimony with regard to one's brother should always be for his benefit honestly (19:16).
  - 8) Vengeance: Hating an Israelite is a violation of God's instructions, if he sins then he should be reprov'd, without incurring a sin by having a vengeful heart, nor grudges (19:17-18).
2. Priestly laws regarding the carefulness of the holiness of God. (21:1-22:33).

The priests were to be careful in their daily life that they did not defile themselves. The priests especially were to take care that they did not defile themselves since they were set apart specially to minister in the tabernacle. They were not to even bury their father and their mother, which the common person was supposed to do, even though it would defile him. Our Lord makes use of this in Luke 9:52ff. to show that those who follow Him are not to even bury their father and mother, as the priest of the Old Covenant was not to do.

3. Laws regarding the keeping of days and feasts. (23:1-23:44).

This part is a delineation of all the feasts and their keeping. The people were not to miss the feast, and were to respect their holy days with all their heart.

Finally in this section is a narrative of one who curses the Name. This, of course, is one who is, in his daily life, objecting to the holiness of YHWH. He is brought forward and stoned.

4. Law regarding the lamp and the bread of the sanctuary (24:1-9)

The people were to provide the oil for the lamps and the bread for the offering which should be eaten by Aaron and his sons.

5. EXAMPLE: The importance of the people regarding God as holy and following the Law (24:10-23).

Again in closing off this section, there is an example given of a man who disregards the holiness of God by breaking the Law, particularly regarding the Name of God and its use.

In this example, the son of an Israelite woman (Egyptian father) blasphemes God's Name and is executed by the people as God has commanded.

III. The requirements of the land. (25:1-27:34).

The land becomes a subject for the remainder of the book. When they get to the land, there will be indications of their obedience and disobedience. If they obey, they will be blessed; if not, cursed.

A. The requirements of the Sabbath year<sup>8</sup> and the Year of Jubilee (25).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Note that the follow up to the failure to keep this requirement is detailed in 26:32-35,43 where it declares that the Sabbath years that they do not observe will be recovered by God when they go into exile. Thus Israel did not observe any Sabbath years while they were in the land (490 years = 70 Sabbath years) and thus they were in exile for 70 years.

Thus, in chapter 25, the subject is the treatment of the land in the Sabbath year<sup>10</sup>, and in the year of Jubilee. The people are to treat each other properly with respect to the land. Then if one becomes poor and needy and loses his land, he will have a chance to get it back.<sup>11</sup> They essentially need to handle an Israelite properly and fairly with his right and ability to own his promised land.

B. Blessings and Cursings for Obedience and Disobedience (26).<sup>12</sup>

In chapter 26, then the blessings and cursings are laid out. They will occupy the land if they obey, if not, it will be unoccupied. It is interesting to note that they are returned to the land on their repentance and on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant, not the Mosaic. The Mosaic was broken by the people, but the Abrahamic was not dependent on their obedience.

C. Dedication to the Lord (27)

The last chapter gives the valuation of items and people who make vows and consecrate things to the Lord. This is for the purpose of insuring that people pay their vows and consecrations properly so that due respect is made for a holy God.

The book closes with a summary statement that these are the Laws which God gave to Moses at Sinai.

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<sup>9</sup> The return of land in the year of Jubilee was on the basis that the land belonged to YHWH and was a gift to the people. Thus there should be no reluctance to give land back or to profit from it since YHWH had ultimate control of it.

<sup>10</sup> Note that this is not an argument for the later practice of letting a piece of land go fallow for a year to rest so that it would produce more crops. The whole sense of this is not that God had insight into science (though He clearly did), but that God was miraculously doing something man could not bring about on His own. If this was duplicable then the pagans would have practiced it and gained the benefits without knowing YHWH.

<sup>11</sup> Note that some of these passages form the basis of evaluation in the Book of Ruth (cf. 25:25,47).

<sup>12</sup> This chapter is one of the most used by future authors (and historical characters). David (victory over Goliath) and Jonathon (victory over the Philistines) both rely on 26:6-8. The point being that it was always God, and not their righteousness or personal strength that gave them victory. If they forgot that then they would be cursed. If they remembered they would be blessed. The blessing sequence of 'war', 'famine' and 'pestilence' (or death) is utilized throughout the Old Testament and also in the New (Rev. 6 in Seals #2, #3, #4).



Purpose: The real issue is the problem of a holy God being in daily fellowship with His people who are continually defiled and certainly not the same in holiness. If man is to do this, then He must continually acknowledge that His God is holy, and thus must approach Him with appeasement for the difference in holiness. This consists of set apart priests, who operate through sacrifices meant to acknowledge and provide for this difference. Then as the nation walks, it must represent their Sovereign in a holy walk.

Sacrifices (1--7)

<u>Offering</u>	<u>Worshipper</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Material</u>	
<b><u>Burnt</u></b>	Created Being	Desire	Gain Favor	Sweet savor	animal	
<b><u>Meal</u></b> (cereal)	Needy creature	Grateful for breath	Thanks	Sweet savor	Grain	
<b><u>Peace</u></b>	Beneficiary	Thanks for peace, or general or for a specific period of blessing	Thanks	Sweet savor	animal, only animal sac. not making atonement	Only sac. eaten by lay worshipper
<b><u>Sin</u></b>	Sinner	Sin done not in a spirit of rebellion <sup>13</sup>	Restore relationship		animal	
<b><u>Guilt</u></b>	Sinner	perjury, robs God, deception, false vow, violence, fraud	Restore relationship		animal	1. Confess 2. Restore property 3. compensate for injury 4. Sacrifice

Note: A note of thanks and of source is recognized here to Dr. Elliott Johnson for providing much of the basis of these notes and this chart. While they have been revised by this professor, the contribution by Dr. Johnson is major.

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<sup>13</sup> Rebellion or “Intentional sin”: This was sin done in a purposeful rebellion (cf. 5:15) against the law or the lawgiver’s authority. Typically called the ‘sin with a high hand’ and resulted in excision from the community, normally in death. Since the intentional sinner had rejected the covenant, and since it was only in the covenant that there was forgiveness, the sinner had rejected the means of forgiveness. This was present in 1 Samuel 2:25, Numbers 15:29, 30. Hebrews 10:26 refers to this sin when the Hebrew Christians were considering rejecting the revelation through Christ to return to nation Israel who had rejected Christ. The author expresses the consequences of the “willful sin”, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”