

LEVITICUS

The Way of Holiness

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Authorship

Leviticus is the third book of the Pentateuch (5 books) which Israel called the Torah or the Book of Moses. It gets its name from the Levites, those who are born in the tribe of Levi. Moses is named as the author of this book **56** times within the book.

B. Relationship to the Other Books of the Bible

Leviticus builds on the foundations of Genesis and Exodus.

Genesis	the separation of man from God through the fall
Exodus	the redemption of man by God through the blood
Leviticus	the fellowship of man with God through the atonement

While Leviticus is seldom studied by Christians, it is of great value. It reveals the absolute **holiness** of God and the exceeding sinfulness of man. It further provides an advance picture of Christ's **atoning** death as well as a civil law for Israel which is the foundation of much civil law today.

The importance of Leviticus to the Christian can be seen in the table below. Leviticus has the same relationship to Exodus as the Epistles do to the **Gospels**.

EXODUS	LEVITICUS
Redeemed by the blood	God dwells with His people
God speaks from Mt. Sinai	God speaks from the tabernacle
Fellowship based on deliverance	Walk of fellowship – separation

GOSPELS	EPISTLES
Redeemed by blood of Lamb of God	God dwells in believers
God speaks from without – Jesus	God speaks from within – Holy Spirit
Fellowship based on redemption	Walk of fellowship – sanctification

II. THE WAY TO HOLINESS: **SACRIFICE**

A. The Offerings (1-7)

Leviticus gives to us a detailed picture of the sacrificial system God commanded to be instituted in Israel. It was precise, even rigid, because it was given for the purpose of instilling in them some important basic truths:

1. The holiness of God
2. The seriousness of **sin**
3. The necessity of dealing with spiritual issues addressed by the sacrifices
4. The requirement of shed **blood** for remission of sin

(BKC [OT] p. 168)

Rituals for Levitical Offerings								
		DEDICATORY			COMMUNAL	EXPIATORY		
		BURNT	GRAIN	DRINK	FELLOWSHIP	SIN	GUILT	
REFERENCES		(Lev. 1:3-17; 6:8-13)	(Lev. 2; 6:14-23)	(Num. 15:1-10; Lev. 23)	(Lev. 3; 7:11-36)	(Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30)	(Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10)	
SACRIFICIAL RITUALS	Worshiper's Actions	PRESENTATION: Selection of Offering	Bull (1:3), male sheep (1:10), male goat (1:10), or dove or young pigeon (1:14)	Grain or barley could be prepared in one of five ways: 1. Basic flour with oil; incense mixed with the part burned on the altar 2. Oven-baked cakes/wafers mixed or served with oil 3. Griddle-baked cakes, with oil 4. Pan-baked cakes 5. If <i>firstfruits</i> : crushed heads of new grain	With a bull-1/2 hin With a ram-1/3 hin With a lamb-1/4 hin (Note: one hin = ca. 1 quart)	Bull, lamb, or goat, male or female (3:1, 6, 12) (In freewill offering, minor imperfections were permitted in animal, 22:23)	1. Young bull (for priest or nation) 2. Male goat (for tribal leader) 3. Female goat or lamb (for layperson) 4. Dove, young pigeon (for poor person) 5. Flour (1/10 ephah) (for very poor)	Usually a ram (a male lamb in the case of a cleansed leper or defile Nazirite)
		LAYING ON OF HANDS	1:4 (except for bird) (see under "Sin offering")			(3:2, 8, 13-see "Burnt offering")	Sinner's identification with animal or subsequent symbolic transfer of sin and legal transfer of guilt	Confession (Num. 5:7) apparently accomplished by laying on of hands
		SLAYING OF ANIMAL	Done by worshiper except that a bird was killed by the priest (cf. 1:15)			At sanctuary entrance (see "Burnt offering")	1. At sanctuary entrance for priest/nation 2. North of altar for others (see "Burnt offering")	North of altar (Lev. 7:2)
		PREPARATION OF OFFERING	Skinning, dismembering, washing (cf. 1:6, 12, 16-17)	Worshiper normally prepared in advance. Priest separated a memorial portion for burning on the altar				

(BKC [OT] p. 169)

		DEDICATORY			COMMUNAL	EXPIATORY			
		BURNT	GRAIN	DRINK	FELLOWSHIP	SIN	GUILT		
SACRIFICIAL RITUALS	Priest's Actions	MANIPULATION OF BLOOD	1. Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against sides of the altar (1:5,11) 2. Bird's blood drained out on side of altar (1:15)			Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against sides of the altar (3:2, 8, 13)	Ritual varied according to the position of the worshiper (but involved "sprinkling" rather than "splashing" of blood), the occasion of sacrifice, or the type of animal (e.g., different if a bird)	Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against the sides of the altar (7:2)	
		INCINERATION ON ALTAR	All the animal burned on the altar (1:8-9, 12-13, 15, 17)	Memorial portion burned on the altar by the priest (all was burnt if it was the priest's own offering)	Entire libation poured out to the Lord at the sanctuary (Num. 28:7)	Choice viscera (including "fat tail" of sheep) burned on altar	Choice viscera burned on the altar	Choice viscera burned on the altar	
		DISTRIBUTION OR DISPOSAL OF CARCASS	Priest's dues	Skin (7:8)	Accompanying burnt offering: the priest ate unburned portion		Breast of animal was to be "wave offering" and eaten by priests	Priest received carcass of offering by leader or layperson	Priest received carcass
			Worshiper's portion	None	Accompanying fellowship offering: the worshiper ate unburned portion, but a small portion went to the priest		Communal meal for the worshiper's family at proper time and place		
	Remainder	Bird's crop to ashpit (1:16)			Remainder burned	Carcass burned outside the camp for priest or nation			

The Meaning of the Offerings

OFFERING	MEANING	PICTURE
Burnt	Consecration of the one bringing offering	Christ offered himself completely (Heb. 9:14) and without blemish (Heb. 4:15) as a fragrant offering to God. (Eph. 5:2)
Grain	Consecration of possessions and labor	Christ was the “grain of wheat that dies and gives life.” (John 12:24)
Fellowship (Peace)	Reconciliation with God	Christ is our peace offering providing fellowship with God. (Rom. 5:1)
Sin	Expiation of the sin of one making offering	Christ took the believer’s sin (John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21) and died in the sinner’s place. (Mark 10:45)
Guilt (Trespass)	Restitution for the trespass	Christ is our trespass offering, also atoning for the damage of sin. (Col. 2:13-14)

B. The Priests (8-10)

1. Aaron anointed High Priest
2. Aaron’s sons anointed as priests

C. The People (11-17)

1. Clean food (11)
2. Clean bodies (12)
3. Clean clothes (13)
4. Clean houses (14)
5. Clean contacts (15)
6. Clean nation (16)

In order to provide a temporary covering for the sin of the nation and to point them to the ultimate means by which they could be made clean before God, the Lord gave to them

D. The Day of Atonement.

On this day, once a year, the High Priest sacrificed a bull for his own sin. The congregation brought two goats – one for sacrifice and one to be a “scapegoat.”

The bull and one goat were slain and blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. The High Priest laid hands on the scapegoat and confessed the sin of the nation. The goat was then led away into the wilderness.

In this way, a temporary **covering** (atonement) was provided for sin. But this was merely an advance picture (a “**type**”) of the once and for all atonement that would be made for the sin of the world.

Hebrews 9:1–15

Christ is both our High Priest and the **sacrifice**. Christ made one sacrifice instead of two because He had **no sin** of His own for which atonement was needed.

The scapegoat is a picture that our sin has been carried away, as far as the east is from the west.

Lev. 17:11 and Heb. 9:22b would make wonderful verses for memorizing!

Leviticus 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.’

Hebrews 9:22b ...without shedding of blood there is no remission.

IV. THE WALK OF HOLINESS: SEPARATION

A. Holy people (18-20)

B. Holy **priests** (21-22)

C. Holy feasts (23)

1. Weekly – the Sabbath
2. Annually – 7 feasts

The charts on the following pages attempt to summarize the seven feasts, their instructions, meaning for Israel, and the astonishing parallel in the life and ministry of Christ which gives the feasts great significance for Christians.

FEAST	INSTRUCTIONS
Passover	14 th day of 1 st month a male lamb was killed and its blood applied to the doorposts. Flesh of the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs with loins girded.
Unleavened Bread	Began immediately after Passover on 15 th which was declared a Sabbath. Unleavened bread eaten for seven days. Holy convocation on 1 st and 7 th day.
First Fruits	16 th day of 1 st month (day after the Sabbath) a sheaf of the first fruits of the barley harvest brought to the Lord accompanied by a burnt, grain, and drink offering.
Pentecost	50 days after First Fruits, a “new grain” offering of loaves of flour baked with leaven were offered.

Trumpets	1 st day of 7 th month the two silver trumpets were blown. These two trumpets were normally used for the calling of the assembly and the journeyings of the camps. (Num. 10:1-10)
Day of Atonement	10 th day of 7 th month the High Priest sprinkled blood of bull and goat on Mercy Seat in Holy of Holies.
Tabernacles	15 th day of 7 th month they were to dwell in huts made of tree limbs for seven days.

FEAST	MEANING FOR ISRAEL
Passover	Deliverance from bondage in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb.
Unleavened Bread	The holy walk God desired for His people.
First Fruits	The first fruits of our labor belong to the Lord.
Pentecost	Celebrated the ingathering of the wheat harvest .
Trumpets	The equivalent of New Years Day.
Day of Atonement	Temporary covering for sin .
Tabernacles	Completion of the harvest and remembrance of wilderness dwellings .

FEAST	LIFE OF CHRIST
Passover	Christ is the Lamb of God. He died as the Passover lambs were being slain. (1 Cor. 5:7)
Unleavened Bread	Christ was without sin.
First Fruits	Christ arose the day after the Sabbath as the first fruits of the resurrection . (1 Cor. 15:23)
Pentecost	Christ sent the Holy Spirit to begin the gathering of the harvest . (Acts 2)
Trumpets	Christ will rapture the church at the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-52) and regather Israel to their homeland. (Ez. 37)
Day of Atonement	Christ, the sin offering, will appear to Israel who will look on Him whom they pierced and be saved. (Zech. 12:9-14)
Tabernacles	Christ will dwell with His people during the millennial age. (Ez. 37:24-27; Rev. 20:4-6)

FEAST	CHRISTIAN SIGNIFICANCE
Passover	Christ is our Passover. (1 Cor. 5:7)
Unleavened Bread	The saved are to immediately begin a holy walk with God. (1 Cor. 5:8)
First Fruits	Christ remains the first fruits of the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:23)
Pentecost	The Church of Jews and Gentiles are the two

	loaves with leaven made into one body. (1 Cor. 12:13)
Trumpets	The promise of our rapture and God's continued purpose for Israel. (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Ez. 37)
Day of Atonement	All Israel shall be saved. (Rom. 11:26)
Tabernacles	The Millennial Kingdom of Christ in which we shall reign with Him. (Rev. 20:4-6)

D. A Holy Land (25-27)

Warren Wiersbe summarizes these three chapters saying, "The economic system in Israel was based on three fundamental principles:

1. God owned the land and had a right to control it. (25:23)
2. God owned the people, because He had redeemed them from Egyptian bondage. (vv. 38, 42, 55)
3. The Jews were a family ("your brother," NKJV) and should care for each other. (vv. 25, 35–36, 39, 47)

Joshua and the Jewish army conquered the land of Canaan, but it was God who assigned their inheritance (Joshua 13–21). The people "possessed" the land and enjoyed its products, but God owned it and determined how it would be used.

Lev. 27:30 declares to us "And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord."

A summary of the truths of Leviticus is found in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."