

LESSON 5: LEVITICUS

GROW University - Old Testament 101

Context

Historical:

Redemptive-Historical:

Theme

Yahweh is holy, and therefore His people must be holy, too.

- Holy: to be distinct, different, and ethically pure.

Outline With Pivotal Texts

- I. Leviticus 1-15 – LAW¹
 - A. Chapters 1-7: Offerings
 - B. Chapters 8-10: Obedience of Priesthood
 - C. Chapters 11-15: Separation from the Unclean
(“The Holiness Code;” what makes Israel distinct from other nations)
- II. Leviticus 16-17 – GRACE
The Day of Atonement
- III. Leviticus 18-27 – HOLINESS
Ethical Purity of the People & Religious Festivals

Theme Texts

- Chapters 1-7: Directions about how any ordinary Israelite is to bring offerings to God.

- A burnt offering (an atonement for sins)

_Read **1:3-5**.

¹ Notice that the flow of the book follows a real gospel train of thought: First, there are laws to tell the Israelites how they might approach Yahweh (part 1). But when they fail in their obedience, provision is made for them in the form of a substitutionary sacrifice (part 2). Then, from that position of forgiveness and grace, the people are called to live holy lives (part 3).

- Placing one's hands on the head: symbolized the transfer of the sinner's guilt onto the bull. Then the bull was killed for that person's sins.
- The rest of ch6-7: painstaking, tedious regulations about how to carry out these offerings.
 - Emphasis: How difficult it is for sinners to live with a holy God.
- Chapters 8-10
 - Personnel Roster:
 - *Moses*: the nation's first prophet and earthly leader (conveyed to the people what Yahweh had revealed to him).
 - *Aaron (Moses' brother)*: the nation's first high priest (lead the people into the worship of Yahweh).
 - *Nadab & Abihu (Aaron's sons)*: appointed to be Aaron's helpers and successors (Exodus 28:1).
 - Personnel Manual: Chapters 8-10 are all the regulations about how Aaron and his sons were to approach Yahweh in worship.
- 9:22-10:3
 - _Read **9:22-24**.
 - _Read **10:1-3**.
 - Offered "profane" fire: Fire, and worship, that Yahweh has *not* commanded, done in their *own* way, not according to the way that Yahweh has told them to worship.
 - So what happened to them?
 - In chapter 9, the offerings were devoured by the fire coming out of the tabernacle.
 - Here, Nadab and Abihu are the ones consumed by the fire!
 - **Application**: Worship is no game.
- Chapters 11-15, 18-27
 - Chapters 11-15 ("The Holiness Code"): Which kinds of foods the Israelites can or can't eat, or even touch.

_Read **11:44-45**

- Significance: the Israelites are to be holy because Yahweh is holy.
 - _Read **19:2**.
 - _Read **20:7-8**.
- To "consecrate" yourself: to set yourself apart as different, as holy.
 - _Read **20:26**.
 - _Read **21:8**.
 - _Read **22:31-33**.
- To "profane" God's name: to treat as common or ordinary or mundane that which is really special and distinct.
- **Q:** What makes certain things clean and therefore holy, and other things unclean and therefore unholy?
 - _Read **11:46-47**.
- A: Yahweh is giving them these commands so that in their every day lives they will be reminded again and again that they are a holy nation, a people set apart for the Lord.
- **Q:** Are we to still obey these laws?
 - A: No, we are not the nation-state of Israel under this covenant.

1 Peter 1:14-16, "as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; **15** but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, **16** because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"
- **Q:** If it's not with our food that we are holy, how then are we called to be holy? In what ways are God's people holy today?

Mark 7:18-23, "So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, **19** because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" **20** And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. **21** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, **22** thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. **23** All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

- A: Same principle // different manifestation: So we focus on and guard our hearts, so that we can be different in areas such as evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. ²
- External Markers under the New Covenant: (remind us of our uniqueness and special obligation to be ethically upright.)
 - Baptism
 - The Lord's Supper

- 16:1-34

Major Issue:

What's going to happen to Israel when they don't live up to this towering and impeccable holiness?

What will happen to us?

- A: The Day of Atonement: The one day of the year where God would provide a way by which everyone's sins could be forgiven, and the nation made holy again. On that day the high priest will go before Yahweh on behalf of the people to make reconciliation between them.
- **Q:** Why is reconciliation necessary?
- A: It's because Israel's sins have made a separation between them and Yahweh.

_Read **16:2**.

- The Most Holy Place: was the most inner part of the tabernacle, where Yahweh's very glory dwelt.

_Read **16:3-6**.

- First, Aaron must atone for his own sins.

_Read **16:11**.

² Now, we have a slight issue here. Can we just disregard all the commands in the Old Testament, by saying "That was for the nation of Israel then, and we are the Church today?" Would that also mean that the 10 commandments don't apply to us? Well, we need to understand the difference between two different types of laws in the Old Testament. There was **prescriptive law** and **descriptive law**. Prescriptive law was the bed-rock foundational law rooted in the very character of who God is, and that never changes. Descriptive law is the application of the prescriptive law to a given society. That can change as cultures change. We'll walk more about this in the class on Deuteronomy.

_Read **16:13-14**.

- Now he can represent and intercede for the people.
- First, he'll take two goats to the entrance.³
- One goat is used for a sin offering for the entire nation, and

_Read **16:15**

- The blood of the sin offering is for cleansing the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, and the altar which are defiled because of the people's sins (v16-19)
- The other will serve as a scapegoat.

_Read **16:21-22**.

- The people would all see their sins being transferred to the head of this goat, and watch as their sins were, metaphorically, taken away – never to be seen again!
- **Q:** Now, how often would Israel need to have this event?
- _Read **verses 29-34**.
- A: The ritual (Yom Kippur) was to be performed once a year.
- Typology*

Type:	Antitype:
The Day of Atonement	<u>The Cross</u>

Hebrews 7:23-27, "Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

³ Notice verses 7-10.

Hebrews 9:24-26, "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "

Hebrews 10:1, "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things..."

Conclusion

It is only as sinners justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ that we can ever make a run at living holy lives.

Application

1. Remember the story of Nadab and Abihu. Yahweh cares how he is worshipped.
 - A. Yahweh can only be worshipped through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:19-23, "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and having a High Priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. "

- B. God's word is the authority of worship, not our tastes.

2. Strive for holiness.

Hebrews 12:14, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord"