

Leviticus (3 or 4 lessons)

By Bob Young

LESSON #1—SURVEY OF LEVITICUS

Exodus closed with the building of a dwelling for God in the midst of his people. Leviticus continues that theme by explaining that God's presence among his people demands their holiness. The Holy King can only be present among the people of his kingdom (kingdom of priests) if they are holy people worshipping Him in a holy manner.

Here we see an important **definition of holiness**. In the context of Leviticus, holiness means to be separated from sin, to be set apart exclusively for the purposes and glory of the Lord God, and to follow completely the instructions God gives to govern the relationship reflected in worship.

These dimensions of holiness are reflected in the instructions about sacrifices; only unadulterated, perfect sacrifices are acceptable to God (1-7). The priests are set apart and must be without deformity (8-10), completely following specific instructions of the Lord. The distinction between the clean and the unclean (holy and unholy, acceptable in God's presence or not acceptable) is set forth in 11-15; these instructions have to do with food, bodily functions, skin diseases, and other contaminants such as mildew. In many cases, temporary separation from the camp of the Israelites was required until cleanness was restored. Often, reentry required sacrifices.

Consistent with the Sinai covenant, Israel was the earthly visible presence of God's kingdom. God, as king, administered all of Israel's religious, communal, and personal life to enable holiness. God's desire for a holy people is evident in the annual Day of Atonement which dealt with sin (16). Holy lifestyles involved regulations concerning blood, sexual relationships, and various life situations, all of which are made more emphatic with the repeated phrases, "be holy because I am holy" and "I am the Lord who makes you holy" (17-19). Also outlined are various punishments for sin, for the priests, for sacrifices acceptable and unacceptable, the Sabbath, Passover, celebration of the first fruits, Pentecost (Feast of Weeks), Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles (20-23). Everything presented to God must be holy (set apart) including the oil and bread of the Tabernacle, the elimination of blasphemers from the camp, and honoring God's provision with the Sabbath year and years of Jubilee (24-25).

Obedience will be rewarded (I am the Lord your God); disobedience punished. The final chapter of the book deals with things promised to the Lord—servants, animals, houses, and lands, with provision made to redeem those things (to give money instead of the item). The matters of this chapter deal with special circumstances and are above and beyond the designated sacrifices.

LESSON #2

God is holy

Biblical texts: 11:44-45; 19:1-2; 20:7-8; 21:8; 26:1-2, 11-13, 40-45

The sacrificial system, 1-10

- Overview of sacrificial system
- Sin offering, 4:1-5:13
- Guilt offering, 5:14-6:7
- Priestly regulations
- Nadab and Abihu, 10:1-20

Day of Atonement, Lev 16:1-34

- Overview of Old Testament feasts and sacred days
- Limited access to God
- Casting sins out of the camp
- The feast days were also Sabbaths
- Hebrews 10

Laws of holiness, 19:1-37

Read this chapter to see how each item relates to God's holiness

- Repetition of some parts of Decalogue
- Abuse of sacrifices
- Human dignity
- Compassion
- Imitation of God, developing godliness
- Justice
- Relationships
- Avoid idolatry and worship of other gods
- Purity
- Miscellaneous instructions related to the categories listed above

Obedience and disobedience, 26:1-13

Obedience

- Idolatry
- Exclusive relationship with God

Disobedience

- Violation of covenant
- Punishment
- Confession and return

LESSON #3

God's people are to be holy

Biblical texts: 18:1-30; 20:7-8; 22:31-33; 26:40-45

What is God's plan for sexuality? 18:1-30

Principles to be recognized: honor, dignity, purity

Protecting the lineage

Avoid idolatry

Avoid impurity

Consecration to God, 20:7-8

How does the text relate to the rest of the chapter? Does it summarize what goes before, introduce what follows, or both?

The first part of the chapter deals with idolatry and spiritism

The second part deals with relationships

Another summary in 20:22 focuses on keeping the decrees and laws of God

Sacrificial system, priests, unacceptable sacrifices, 22:31-33

Rules for priests, 21

Sacrifices, acceptable and unacceptable, 22:17-30

Can we understand the "why" of these instructions?

Restoring holiness to God's people, 26:40-45

Sin and impurity was always part of Israel's experience

Sin begins in the heart

The price of sin must be paid

Relationship with God is dependent on the covenant relationship (not law)\

—

LESSON #4

Special study of Nadab and Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-20

Analyzing the text, getting an accurate reading

What happened?

- Compare 10:3 with 22:31

What are the lessons for us today?