

Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture

Lessons from Leviticus

Good morning church and welcome to week 7 of our sermon series entitled...

Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture

I have heard a lot of positive feedback about the reading, and I'm encouraged that so many of you are participating. I'm sure the past few days have been a challenge as we read through Leviticus.

Leviticus is one of those books that most Christians lament reading and honestly avoid as much as possible. But...

In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Duane Lindsey writes.

The Book of Leviticus was the first book studied by a Jewish child; yet is often among the last books of the Bible to be studied by a Christian. However, a book referred to about 40 times in the New Testament should be of great significance to every Christian.¹

Therefore, we accept the exhortation of **Mark Rooker of Southeastern Seminary when he says,**

It behooves the New Testament believer to give more attention to this book, for we base our eternal destinies on the one of whom Leviticus loudly speaks.²

Leviticus is a tough read until we realize just how much of the book points us to the SAVING WORK OF CHRIST!

Our goal this morning is to unpack Leviticus and see what lessons we have learned through our reading.

¹ Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Leviticus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 165). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Rooker, M. F. (2000). [Leviticus](#) (Vol. 3A, p. 22). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Let me **overview the book** first...here is another chart for you...

OVERVIEW OF LEVITICUS

FOCUS	WAY TO GOD				WALK WITH GOD				
DIVISIONS	<i>Chapters 1-7</i>	<i>Chapters 8-10</i>	<i>Chapters 11-15</i>	<i>Chapters 16-17</i>	<i>Chapters 18-20</i>	<i>Chapters 21-22</i>	<i>Chapters 23-25</i>	<i>Chapters 26</i>	<i>Chapters 27</i>
	Approach thru Offerings	Represented by Priests	A Purified People	Day of Atonement	Holy People Practical Guidelines	Holy Priests Practical Guidelines	Holy Worship Chronological Observances	Just Recompense	Vows
PLACE	MOUNT SINAI								
TIME	ONE FULL YEAR								
KEY VERSE	19:2 "You shall be holy for I the LORD your God Am Holy"								
THEME	HOLINESS								

When you see the book laid out like this it helps you to see how Leviticus connects to the New Testament.

Now I want us to see **three lessons** from the book.

1. God is Holy

Leviticus 19:2 (NKJV) — 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'

The holiness of God is a **constant theme** in the book, as a matter of fact it is mentioned **over 50 times**. I suspect that **God wanted His people** to catch this truth!

When we speak of the **holiness of God**, we are trying our best to **describe...**

- The very nature of God.

What we mean by **nature is essence**. God is holy and all that He says and does is holy. You **cannot separate** God from His holiness. His holiness **extends to all of His attributes**.

- The complete and utter purity of God.

He is **untarnished by sin**. He is completely **spotless**. Without **blemish**. And all of that without having to **conform to a standard of holiness, as a matter of fact He is the standard**.

A concept that is **hard for us to grasp** as we have **never experienced** anything here on earth completely holy.

A.W. Tozer states...

We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The nature of man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.³

How true! We wouldn't even know anything about His holiness had **He not revealed Himself** to us in the Scriptures.

- The "otherness" of God

What we mean is that God is **completely different** or **distinct** from everyone and everything. God is **absolutely separate** from all His creation. Nothing in creation, including His redeemed children are holy like Him. **He stands alone**.

However, let me remind you that **Jesus shares His holiness**, because He is and always was God. **He shares the very nature of God**.

³ A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, Harper San Francisco, c.1961, page 104

Philippians 2:5–6 (NKJV) — 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

Even in His humanity Jesus was completely holy.

Hebrews 7:26–27 (NKJV) — 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.

Finally, before we press on, I must remind you that as His children we share in His holiness. Not because we are holy, but we have been made holy through the imputation of His holiness.

Paul explains well in...

Philippians 3:8–9 (NKJV) — 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Although He has imputed His righteousness to us, we are still not like HIM!

God is Holy!!!!

2. God's Way for Sinful Men to have Fellowship a Holy God

Interesting is the placement of Leviticus in the Pentateuch. In the closing few verses of Exodus you find God calling out to Moses from the tabernacle and in the opening verse of Numbers you find God speaking with Moses inside the tabernacle. What changed?

Leviticus is the answer. In this book God had given the people the way to have fellowship with a Holy God. Here's an overview...

- Chapters 1-7: Ritual (Offerings)
- Chapters 8-10: Mediator (Priests)
- Chapters 11-15: Regulations (Clean vs. Unclean)
- Chapter 16: Day of Atonement

Everything led **to and culminated in the Day of Atonement**. This day was unlike any other day in the life of the nation. And God gave **very specific** instructions. We won't take the time to look at every detail but **here is quick rundown...**

- Aaron's linen clothes (not usual priestly garments)
- Bull offered for Aaron's sins (so he can perform his duties)
- Cloud of smoke over the mercy seat (God's presence)
- Sprinkling of the bull's blood for atonement for Aaron's sins
- Casting of lots over the goats (sacrifice & scapegoat)
- Cleansing of the Tabernacle
- Move outside the tent
 - Placing sins on the scapegoat
 - Leading the scapegoat away into the wilderness
- Washing & changing clothes of Aaron
- Washing & changing clothes of the one who lead away the scapegoat
- God's final instructions: annual observance, purpose, sabbath

The Day of Atonement was so that **priest and the nation could be restored and maintain fellowship with a Holy God and continue to worship in His presence in a Holy Sanctuary.**

But it also **foreshowed and anticipated a greater, permanent cleansing of God's people, which would be accomplished by a better priest, who offered a better sacrifice.**

The better priest and sacrifice is **Jesus**, which the book of Hebrews references very clearly. Let's examine three of them...

- Jesus is a better priest

Hebrews 7:26–28 (NKJV) — **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. **28** For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

- Jesus is a better sacrifice

Hebrews 9:11–12 (NKJV) — **11** But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. **12** Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

- Jesus opened the Holy Place for Us

Hebrews 10:19–22 (NKJV) — **19** 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.

God made away for us to have fellowship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. And He is the only way...

John 14:6 (NKJV) — **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

3. God Expects His People to Live Holy Lives

While the **first half** of the book dealt with the **Way to God**, the **second half** has to do with **Walking with God** or sanctification.

When we read all the **laws and prohibitions in Leviticus**, we are overcome by all that was **demanded**. There were laws concerning every aspect of life.

- Proper and improper relationships
- Dietary expectations
- Cooking instructions
- Clothing specifications
- Rituals to keep

And this list is **not specific and doesn't represent everything** God expected from His people. If I was to list everything you would be **exhausted just listening** to it and yet, God expected His people to keep them perfectly.

Usually there are **two questions** that I'm asked regarding all these rules and regulations.

- **Why? Why give them all these expectations?**

We get our **answer** in...

Leviticus 20:7–8 (NKJV) — 7 Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 8 And you shall keep My statutes and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

His expectation **flows out of His own holy character**. God wills that His people be **holy like He is holy**. Although we are not holy like Him in essence, we need to be **holy in our character and conduct**.

Remember holy means to be **separate**. God's statutes and laws were about making His people **different than those who surrounded them**.

Leviticus 20:24 (NKJV) — 24 But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples.

He had chosen them to be His people and He didn't want them **conforming to and behaving like the other nations** around them. Therefore, He gave them the standards to live by and expected that they would.

Just read **chapter 26**.

The second question is...

- **Do these apply to us today?**

The answer to this question **isn't as simple** as you might think, and I want to make sure that I'm very **careful** in my answer. My desire is **not to confuse** anyone but to be as clear as I can be.

From reading the New Testament I can **without any hesitation** tell you that all the **ceremonial and dietary laws** mentioned in Leviticus and the Old Testament **do not apply** to us as New Testament believers.

We don't have to offer **sacrifices**, keep **festivals**; practice **rituals** and we can eat **BBQ and seafood**.

Galatians 3:24–25 (NKJV) — 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

We are free in Christ! He Himself said,

Matthew 5:17 (NKJV) — 17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Does that mean all the law is abolished? Do we not have **any obligation to obey the law of the Old Testament?**

I would say we do. Why?

- **First, certain laws in the Old were repeated in the New.**

Here are **two examples**...

Idol worship is forbidden... **1 John 5:21 (NKJV)** — *21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

Honoring your parents... **Ephesians 6:1–2 (NKJV)** — *1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:*

- **Secondly, I must remind you that we are all under the Law of Christ.**

Galatians 6:2 (NKJV) — *2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

What exactly is the law of Christ? It is the **law of love. Jesus took...**

Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV) — *18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.*

And apply it to us...

Matthew 22:36–40 (NKJV) — *36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Thus, when you think of the **moral and civil law** of the Old Testament... **Don’t steal, don’t kill, don’t lie**, etc. we would have to say that we are bound to obey if we’re walking in the Law of Christ! After all it would be **unloving to steal, kill and lie.**

Peter applies this truth to us...remember **God Expects His People to Live Holy Lives...**

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV) — 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** 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.”

I'll close with this convicting quote by Warren Wiersbe...

Whatever else the professing Christian church may be known for today—great crowds, expensive buildings, big budgets, political clout—it's not distinguished for its holiness. Bible-believing evangelical Christians make up a sizable minority in the United States, but our presence isn't making much of an impact on society. The salt seems to have lost its saltiness, and the light is so well hidden that the marketplace is quite dark.⁴

CONCLUSION:

What is your response?

God is Holy

God Provided a Way for Sinful Men to have Fellowship a Holy God

God Expects His People to Live Holy Lives

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*Be Holy*](#) (p. 7). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.