

Notes & Outlines

LEVITICUS

J. Vernon McGee

LEVITICUS

WRITER: Moses

PLACE:

In the Book of Leviticus the children of Israel were marking time at Mount Sinai. The book opens and concludes at the same geographical spot, Mount Sinai, where God gave the Law. Exodus concludes with the tabernacle constructed and the glory of the Lord filling it. Leviticus gives the order and rules of worship in the tabernacle. The Hebrew word *Vayikrah* opens the book, and it means “and He called.” God moves into the tabernacle and speaks from there rather than from Mount Sinai. He calls the people to Him and tells them how to come. This is the exact meaning of the church — *ekklesia*, “called out ones.” The Lord Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27).

PURPOSE:

This is the one book that the critic is categorically convinced should not be in the Bible. Dr. John Haynes Holmes, the humanist, has said, “The Book of Leviticus is not fit to be in the Bible.” In contradistinction to this extremely biased opinion, others with equal scholarship find it to be a very important book. Dr. S. H. Kellogg called it the “greatest book” in the Bible. Dr. Albert C. Dudley called it “the most important book in the Bible.” Dr. Parker said, “Considered as embracing the history of one month only, this may claim to be the most remarkable book in the Old Testament.”

This book was given to Israel for direction in living as a holy nation in fellowship with a holy God. It was a code of law for the total well-being of Israel — physical, moral, and spiritual. Sacrifice, ceremony, ritual, liturgy, instructions, washings, convocations, holy days, observances, conditions, and warnings crowd this book. All of these physical exercises were given to teach spiritual truths. Paul states that “these things were our examples” (1 Corinthians 10:6).

Leviticus reveals Christ. Tyndale, in his *Prologue into the Third Book of Moses*, said, “Though sacrifices and ceremonies can be no ground or foundation to build upon — that is, though we can prove nought with them — yet when we have once found Christ and His mysteries, then we may borrow figures, that is to say, allegories, similitudes, and examples, to open Christ, and the secrets of God hid in Christ, even unto the quick: and can declare them more lively and sensibly with them than with all the words of the world.”

For us it gives the direction to God and instructions for spiritual worship. Worship would take on a new meaning if the average Christian properly appreciated the contents of this book. Worship for us today is no longer by ritual or in a specific place. To the woman of Samaria Jesus said,

...Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:21-24)

KEY: Holiness to Jehovah

MESSAGE: The message is twofold:

1. Leviticus teaches that **the way to God is by sacrifice**. The word *atonement* occurs 45 times.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. (Leviticus 17:11)

Atonement means to cover up. The blood of bulls and goats did

not actually take away sin. It covered over until Christ came to take away our sins.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (Romans 3:25)

2. Leviticus teaches that **the walk with God is by sanctification**. The word *holiness* occurs 87 times.

And ye shall be holy unto me; for I, the LORD, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine. (Leviticus 20:26)

God gave strict laws governing the diet, social life, and daily details involving every physical aspect of the lives of His people. These laws have a greater spiritual application to His people today.

Access to God is secured for the sinner through the shed blood of Christ.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But now once, in the end of the ages, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:25, 26)

Those redeemed by the blood of Christ must live a holy life if they are to enjoy and worship God.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20, 21)

COMMENT:

Leviticus is a remarkable book, as the contents are considered in the light of the New Testament. These suggestions are illustrative of this:

1. The five offerings which open this book are clear, crystal-cut cameos of Christ. They depict His hypostatical person in depth and His death in detail (chapters 1 — 7).

2. The consecration of the priests reveals how shallow and inadequate is our thinking of Christian consecration (chapters 8 — 10).

3. The diet God provided for His people was sanitary, therapeutic, and contains much spiritual food for our souls (chapter 11).

4. The attention given to motherhood is a further example of God's thinking concerning womanhood (chapter 12).

5. The fact that leprosy and its treatment are prominent in the heart of this book on worship, demands our attention. Those who have been given gracious insights into Scripture have found here a type of sin and its defiling effect on man in his relation to God. The cleansing of the leper finds its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ in a most unusual sacrifice — two birds (chapters 13 — 15).

6. The great Day of Atonement is a full-length portrait of the sacrifice of Christ (chapter 16).

7. The importance of the burnt altar in the tabernacle highlights the essential characteristic of the cross of Christ (chapter 17).

8. The emphasis on instructions concerning seemingly minute details in the daily lives of God's people reveals how God intends the human family to be involved with Him (chapters 18 — 22).

9. The list of feasts furnishes a prophetic program of God's agenda for all time (chapter 23).

10. The laws governing the land of Palestine furnish an interpretation of its checkered history and an insight into its future prominence. The nation Israel and the promised land are inter-

twined and interwoven from here to eternity (chapters 24 — 27).

Genesis: man ruined,
Exodus: man redeemed,
Leviticus: man worshipping.

EXODUS

Exodus offers pardon
God's approach to man
Christ is Savior
Man's guilt is prominent
God speaks out of the mount
Man is made nigh to God

LEVITICUS

Leviticus offers purity
Man's approach to God
Christ is Sanctifier
Man's defilement is prominent
God speaks out of the tabernacle
Man is kept nigh to God

OUTLINE:

- I. The five offerings and the law of them, Chapters 1 — 7**
 - A. Sweet savor offerings (person of Christ), 1 — 3**
 - 1. Burnt offering (Christ our substitute), 1**
 - 2. Meal offering (loveliness of Christ), 2**
 - 3. Peace offering (Christ our peace), 3**
 - B. Non-sweet savor offerings (work of Christ on cross), 4, 5**
 - 1. Sin offering (sin as a nature), 4**
 - 2. Trespass offering (sin as an act), 5**
 - C. Law of the offerings, 6, 7**
- II. The priests (all believers are priests), Chapters 8 — 10**
 - A. Consecration of priests, 8**
 - B. Ministry of priests, 9**
 - C. Restrictions on priests (death of Nadab and Abihu), 10**
- III. Holiness in daily life (God concerned with His children's conduct), Chapters 11 — 22**
 - A. Food of God's people, 11**
 - B. Children of God's children, 12**
 - C. Cleansing of leprosy, 13, 14**

- D. Cleansing of running issues, 15**
 - E. Great Day of Atonement, 16**
 - F. Place of sacrifice; value of the blood, 17**
 - G. Application of commandments to life situations, 18 — 20**
 - 1. Immorality** condemned (amplification of 7th commandment), 18
 - 2. Social sins** (application of commandments), 19
 - 3. Penalty** for breaking commandments, 20
 - H. Laws for personal purity of priests, 21, 22**
- IV. The holy holidays, Chapter 23**
- V. Laws and prophecies for the promised land, Chapters 24 — 26**
 - A. Lampstand, showbread, and death penalty for the blasphemer, 24**
 - B. Sabbatic year, year of Jubilee and law of kinsman redeemer, 25**
 - C. Conditions of blessing in the land (a prophetic history), 26**
- VI. Dedication and devotion — concerning vows, Chapter 27**

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Gaebelein, Arno C. *Annotated Bible*, vol. 1. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Goldberg, Louis. *Leviticus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.
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- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
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- Slemming, C. W. *These Are The Garments*. London, England: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1955.
- Slemming, C. W. *Thus Shalt Thou Serve*. Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1955.
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These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.



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