

# Leviticus

## Summary

The book of Leviticus presents a powerful message about worship. *Who* we worship, *how* we worship, and the *way* our lives should be transformed by our worship is central to the book of Leviticus. Many people avoid this book of the Bible because they find it boring or irrelevant to modern life. This is a huge mistake! When we read Leviticus and glean its wisdom, we will discover that there are many lessons to be learned for our lives today as followers of Jesus Christ.

## Author

The book of Leviticus, as well as the rest of the first five books of the Bible that form the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), have been attributed to Moses.

## Date

The most common date given for the writing of Leviticus is the middle of the second millennium B.C., most likely c. 1446 to c. 1406, depending on the dates that Moses lived.

## Primary Characters

God, who is holy in every way (Leviticus 1-27)

The priests of Israel (Leviticus 1-17)

Aaron, the first High Priest and his sons (Leviticus 8-10)

The people of Israel who are called to holiness (specifically Leviticus 18-27)

## Historical Moments

Directions for Observing the Five Primary Offerings (Chapters 1-7)

The Call, Ordination, and Ministry of Aaron and His Sons as Priests (Chapters 8-10)

Laws to Help God's People Stay Holy and Pure (Chapters 11-15)

The Day of Atonement (Chapters 16-17)

Moral Laws and Directions that Lead to Holiness (Chapters 18-25, 27)

The Blessings for Obedience and Curses for Disobedience (Chapters 26)

## Major Theological Themes

**God Is Holy** - God, the Maker of heaven and earth, is holy, pure, and set-apart. His holiness is such a core part of who He is that He calls His people to live and walk in a holiness that reflects His character and heart.

**We Are Called to Holiness** - The holiness of God becomes a standard for all who seek to follow Him. Though we can never fully reach the standard of our God's pure holiness, it must be what we aspire to and strive for.

**Jesus Is the Fulfillment of God's Holiness** - Veiled to the ancient world, but clear to Christians today is the reality that Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of all that is needed to make sinful people holy. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice, which removes the need for any more animal sacrifices. Jesus is our ultimate joy, which removes the need for the various festivals of the Old Testament. Jesus is our Mediator, which makes the need for human priests obsolete.

**It Is Possible for Sinful People to Draw Near to a Holy God** - Though our sin is great and God's glorious holiness is beyond our comprehension, God has made a way for His wayward children to be able to come home to Him. In the ancient world, people drew near through sacrifices, festivals, and priests (mediators). Today, Jesus replaces all of these; He has become the one and only way for sinful people to draw near the God who is *holy, holy, holy* (Isaiah 6:3).

## Lessons Learned from Leviticus

**"I Am So Glad I Don't Have To Do That Anymore!"** - The book of Leviticus showed three primary ways to draw near to God. People offered sacrifices as a sign of the greatness of

their sin and their need for God's forgiveness. Jesus has come as the final sacrifice and we no longer have to offer any other offerings to receive God's forgiveness. The people observed festivals as a way to draw near to God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father, and He makes access available to all who receive Him. The people needed to go through a priestly class of people to come near to God. Jesus is now our final High Priest. We can come directly to God through Him and do not need a human intermediary. Every time you read Leviticus (and you should read it), find yourself saying, "Jesus, thank you for coming, for living a sinless life, for dying on the cross for my wrongs, and for rising again. Thank you that we do not need to offer sacrifices to receive Your love. We praise You that You bring us so much joy that observation of festivals is no longer necessary. I rejoice that I can come to the Father through You, Jesus, and I never need to go through a priest or any other mediator."

**Jesus Is Present Through the Whole Bible** - We see Jesus all through the Bible, but with great clarity in the book of Leviticus. Jesus can be seen in the whole sacrificial system. These foreshadow and point to Jesus, who is the Lamb of God, and who takes away the sins of the world. He is the final and atoning sacrifice. Jesus is also the perfect and final High Priest. We can see Him foreshadowed in the priestly system of Leviticus and the Old Testament. These point to Jesus as the ultimate Mediator between people and God.

**Holiness and Pure Lives Are Expected by God** - Our daily holiness does not save us. We are saved by grace through Jesus alone. But, God does call His people to live in holiness, to seek holiness, and to shine the light of holiness in a profane and sinful world. The book of Leviticus is filled with examples and reminders of God's holy plan for His children.

**Celebration Should Be Regular and Normative** - Though the festivals of the Old Testament and Leviticus are not required for modern-day followers of Jesus, they stand as a reminder of the value and importance of celebrating and remembering the goodness of God. Each time we partake of communion, celebrate baptism, share fellowship with God's people, worship, or gather with other believers to celebrate God's goodness, the Lord takes delight. He loves when His children learn to celebrate His goodness.