

Bible Study Course

Leviticus

Introduction

When we come to this book we find that God has taken another step forward. In Exodus we see Him saving and delivering a people, and establishing among them His Dwelling Place. In Leviticus, He speaks from within that dwelling place, in the midst of the people. God has, for the first time, taken up residence amongst a people. The problem which the book of Leviticus deals with is how a failing redeemed people may dwell in the presence of a Holy God, without being destroyed; how indeed they might fulfill His purpose for them to be His home

Technically, this book contains the order for priestly and Levitical service in all its aspects. The tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of God, in lieu of all the first born sons of Israel, and came to be known as “the Levites”. One family in particular, that of Aaron was set apart as priests. Once understood the book of Leviticus becomes one of the most helpful books in the Bible, dealing as it does with the basis for the service, worship and testimony of the people of God; the basis for their acceptance and continued standing before Him; what is, in, “the way of Holiness.”

Authorship and Date

We are not told about the writing down of the laws contained in this book but it is repeatedly stated that the laws were given through Moses. The phrase, “the Lord spoke unto Moses” is used about 30 times, and 20 of the 27 chapters begin that way. Verses such as Exodus 24:7 entitle us to suppose that either Moses wrote these laws, or that he personally supervised the writing of them.

Leviticus would have been written during the stay at the foot of Mt. Sinai, see Lev 18:3, and was written after the erection of the Tabernacle Lev 1:1

Key to the Book

The key is bound up with these phrases – “I am the Lord thy God” (21 times), “before the Lord” (60 times approx), “Unto the lord” (80 times approx), and the opening phrase “And the Lord called” – Lev 1:1

The key is the standing of the people of God before Him. Firstly the basis upon which he can call them to be His people, to become partakers of the divine nature, to be His dwelling place – the basis upon which He can continue with them. Secondly it addresses the basis of their relationship to Him, their service unto Him, and their acceptance, etc.

Outline of the Book

The heart of the whole book is chapter 16 – “the Day of Atonements”. This gathers up all else from beginning to end, in itself, the one great annual atonement for all the sins of the whole people.

We find a threefold division in this book:

- I. Sacrifice 1:1 – 6:7
- II. Meditation 6:8 – 10
- III. Sanctification 11 – 27
 - a) Separation from all uncleanness 11 – 15
 - b) The rights of the Lord, positive holiness 17 – 27

I. Sacrifice

- a) Note first the order. It is quite different to what works out in practice. The burnt offering precedes the others in revelation, although in actual fact, we come to God first as trespassers and sinners.
- b) The Burnt Offering, the Meal Offering and the Peace Offering are linked together.
 - i. The Burnt Offering - “Christ our substitute and representative – dying in our place for what we should have done – the will of God from the heart.”

The Lord wants all not part; the fire on the altar consumes everything, reducing it to ashes. See Romans 12:1 – 2

- ii. The Meal Offering – “Christ our Substitute and representative – dying in our place for what we should have been – sinless”
True, perfect, humanity. No leaven, no honey, always salt. Flour, oil, frankincense – priests to eat part of this. Eph 4
- iii. The Peace Offering – “Christ our substitute and representative – dying in our place for what we should have known – peace with God and unity with all His people.”
Worship, oneness, and fellowship – all take part. See Eph 2:13 – 22 cp. 1 Cor 12, Rom 1- 16

c) The Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering are linked together.

- i. The Sin Offering – “Christ our substitute for what we have been by nature and practice – sinners.”
Sins of commission - this includes all sin knowingly committed.
- ii. The Trespass Offering – “Christ our Substitute for what we have not done, thus sinning against God and man.”
Sins of omission - this includes all sin unconsciously committed

II. Mediation

Note the importance of the priest’s function (garments, anointing, salt). He symbolises service. Notice also that the Lord Jesus is THE Mediator, our High Priest, and fulfils the type. Nevertheless, we also as His people, under Him and with Him are all priests unto God. See Heb 9:11-15, 1 Peter 2:4-5

III. Sanctification

We come now to practical sanctification. Lev 11: 44 – 45 cf. 15:31

Firstly, separation from all uncleanness. It deals with food, clean and unclean. There is a need for discrimination and circumspection. It also deals with the natural birth and forbidden relationships for marriage. This speaks of the need for the cross to deal with all aspects of our natural life – natural affections and relationships etc. The Cross must deal with all our links to the old creation. Provision is also made for leprosy, symbolic of sin, in persons, garments, and houses.

Secondly, the Rights of the Lord – Positive holiness. How often we meet the phrase “I am the Lord”. Everything is linked with our relationship to Him.

We see also in the Sabbatical system, the Seventh Day, the Seventh Week, the Seventh Month, the Seventh Year, Seven Weeks of Years, the Rest and Sanctification of the Lord.

In the year of Jubilee we see everything returning, and there is restitution and liberation, the Land belonging to the Lord Himself. Lev 25:23

Message of the Book

We have been called to the dwelling place of God and God has made provision for us to be there.

The only way that God’s dwelling place can be built is by way of the Burnt Offering, by clear separation, and by giving the Lord His rights. Nevertheless we meet the problem of an old nature, of indwelling sin, of failure and error. For all this the Lord has made wonderful provision in the death of the Lord Jesus. Thus we find that Christ crucified for us and as us is the foundation of God’s dwelling place, His eternal home, and all the spiritual building work in charge of the Holy Spirit in connection with it.

Note carefully that God always speaks with us from out of the Tent of meeting. We must therefore bring all to the door.

Summary of Contents

I. Sacrifice 1 - 7

- 1. The Burnt offering 1; 6:8 – 13

Without blemish – presented alive – slain before the Lord – laying on of hands – all consumed by fire

2. The Meal Offering 2; 6:14 - 23

Fine flour, oil and frankincense – no leaven – shared by priests – consumed by fire

3. The peace Offering 3; 7:11 - 18

Without blemish – presented alive – laying on of hands – priests sprinkled with blood – fat burned – shared by offerer

4. The Sin Offering 4:1 – 5:13; 6:24 - 30

Without blemish – blood sprinkled – fat burned on Altar – carcass burned without the camp – Atonement and Forgiveness

5. The trespass offering 5:14 – 6:7; 7:1 – 7

Without blemish – restitution, Atonement and Forgiveness

II. Mediation 8 - 10

1. Consecration of the priests 8

Their cleansing, clothing, anointing, offerings, separation

2. The sacrifices of the high priest 9

Note this was the first time a high priest had offered sacrifices.

3. The failure of Nadab and Abihu: presumption and disobedience. 10

Strange fire and terrible judgment.

III. Sanctification 11 - 27

i. Separation from all uncleanness

- a) Clean food – clean and unclean animals 11
- b) Child birth 12
- c) Leprosy 13
- d) The Leper's Offering 14
- e) Uncleanness 15
- f) Day of Atonement 16

ii. The Rights of the Lord

a) Positive Holiness

- i. Sacrifices acceptable to God; drinking of blood prohibited 17
- ii. Forbidden degrees of marriage 18
- iii. Laws and penalties default 19 – 20
- iv. Regulations for priests and sacrifices 21 – 22

b) The Rest and Satisfaction of the Lord

1. Feasts of the Lord

- i. The Sabbath – 7th day 23:1 – 13 (remember the figure 7 speaks of fullness, or completeness)
- ii. The Passover – 14th day of first month 23: 4 – 5
- iii. Unleavened Bread - 15th to 21st days of 1st month 23:6 – 8
- iv. First fruits – 16th day of 1st month 23: 9 – 14
- v. Pentecost (Weeks) 6th day of 3rd month 23:15 – 22

N.B. 7 weeks completed from offering of First fruits

- vi. Trumpets – 1st day of 7th month 23:23 – 25
 - vii. Day of Atonement – 10th day of 7th month 23: 26- 32
 - viii. Tabernacles – 15th to 21st days of 7th month 23:33 - 44
2. Oil for the lamps, and the showbread 24:1 – 9
 3. Penalty for blasphemy 24:10 – 23
 4. The Sabbath (7th) year, and Year of Jubilee (50th) 25: 1 – 55
 5. Blessings and Curses 26:1 – 46
 6. Vows and offerings 27:1 - 34

Recommended books

Law of Offerings

Leviticus

Notes on Leviticus

Andrew Jukes

Andrew Bonar

C.H. McIntosh

Halford House Tapes

Questions

1. What is the central chapter in the Book of Leviticus?
2. What does the “Day of Atonement,” chapter 16, teach us about the work of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 9: 1 -28)?
3. Write out a list of the passages, which mention “the door” of the tent of meeting. What does this teach you about worshipping and serving the Lord?
4. Read Leviticus 17:10 – 14. What does this tell you about the death of Christ?
5. Chapters 13 – 14 deal with leprosy. Do you think this means anything spiritually for the people of God today?
6. What do we learn about God’s attitude to those who consult spirits and mediums from Lev 19: 31; 20:6, 27:7
7. What are the Feasts of the Lord, as mentioned in Chapters 23 – 25? (Give references) How are these feasts fulfilled in the New Testament?
8. Write a paragraph stating how Aaron, in his duties, and also by the garments that he wears, shows us something about Jesus Christ. (Compare Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10; 7: 20; 10:22)
9. What lessons can Christians learn from the strange fire mentioned in 10:1, 27
10. How is God’s attitude towards Israel shown in the following places: -
 - a) Lev 10: 3
 - b) 20:24 – 26
 - c) 22: 31 – 33
 - d) 25:38
11. Read the food laws in chapter 11. Can you find anything there that could instruct Christians about their spiritual food?
12. In chapters 18 – 21 we are given some lessons in morality and justice. Do you think that these are good standards – if so why? (Write a paragraph on this.)