

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY OF

LEVITICUS

The Bible's third book outlines the work of the Hebrew priests and a way of holiness for the nation of Israel. Named for the Levites (from the tribe of Levi, one of Jacob's 12 sons) who served as priests and caretakers of the tabernacle and temple, Leviticus is among the more difficult Bible content for modern readers.

LEVITICUS OVERVIEW

At Mt. Sinai, the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron concerning the service of the priests in the tabernacle and the conduct of the people at all times: "Be holy, for I the LORD am holy."

The time and place of the book are both one: it all took place during the year that Israel camped before Mt. Sinai - about 1400 B.C. No movement in location or change of time is recorded in its 27 chapters.

KEY WORD IN LEVITICUS — HOLY

Holy means "sanctified" (over 100 times). The key thought is "You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). Holiness for ancient Israel involved both sacrifice for sin and separation from sin. Chapters 17-27 are mostly a list of laws called the "holiness code".

These include. . .

- abstaining from fat and blood (17:1-16; 3:17; 7:22-27)
- maintaining sexual purity, the seventh commandment (18:1-23; 20:10-22).

cont.



CURRENT SERIES

- other commandments of the Decalogue are repeated in Leviticus 19: don't make graven images (v. 4); don't blaspheme God's name (v. 12); keep the Sabbath (vv. 3, 30); honor parents (v. 3); don't murder (vv. 17, 18); don't steal (vv. 11, 13, 35, 36); don't lie (v. 11). The first commandment is repeated about every other verse (16 times) with the words 'I am the Lord your God'; the tenth, "You shall not covet", is implied (v. 17a).
- the great "love one another" command of Jesus Christ, first found here (19:18)
- holiness for the priesthood (chs. 21, 22)
- a time and a place: "Keep my Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary" (19:30; 26:2)
- rewards for obedience and seven-fold chastening for disobedience; the covenant promise for repentance (ch. 26); regulations of vows, values, and tithes (ch. 27)

3 HISTORICAL EVENTS

1. the inauguration of tabernacle service, with the appearance of God's glory and fire (ch. 9, esp. vv. 23, 24)
2. the untimely deaths of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons who offered strange fire before the Lord (10:1, 2ff.)
3. the arrest and stoning of a man who blasphemed the Lord's name (24:10-23)

APPLICATION

Three basic questions form this section.

What does this story tell us about God?

What we see over and over again in the pages of Leviticus is that God is holy. He is set apart, He is different than any thing else. With this distinction He sets himself apart from all other gods - there is none like Him.

What does this story tell us about humanity?

Humanity is in need of direction. God's laws are there to provide us with a map for holy living. God's people are to be set apart - different than the rest of the world.

How do we apply this to our lives?

The Law was meant as a guide book for holiness. God desires us to live a holy and clean life.

However, it seems so overwhelming to keep every single one of these commands. Jesus simplified it for us when he said. . .

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matt 22:37-40

For further reading look up. . .

Romans 2-5
Galatians 2-5
Ephesians 2:14-16

WHAT IS MY STORY? (THOUGHTS):