

Bible Reading Notes
Leviticus

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Leviticus 1

The tabernacle was completed at the end of Exodus and is ready for worship to begin. Leviticus is the worship manual for Israel. In it the Lord gives direction for how worship is to be done.

1:3 – burnt offering - According to Numbers 28:4-5 the burnt offering was to be offered daily by the priests.

1:9 – pleasing aroma to the Lord – This language points forward to the sacrifice of Christ, which is described with this language in Ephesians 5:2.

Leviticus 2

The grain offering was to be offered daily, immediately after the burnt offering.

2:3 – for Aaron and his sons - Unlike the burnt offering, the portion left over from the grain offering was to be given to the priests.

2:11 – honey – It is believed that the Canaanites used honey in their worship. This would be why the Lord instructs his people to not use it in their sacrifices.

2:13 - Salt = Preservative which symbolizes the eternal nature of the covenant.

Leviticus 3

The peace offering was a unique offering that culminated in a feast in which a portion of the meat offered was given to the family to enjoy together in the Lord's presence (7:11ff).

3:16 – Fat – was to be given entirely to the Lord since it was judged to be the best part.

3:17 – Blood – Blood was never to be eaten since it was the means of atonement (17:11-12).

Leviticus 4

The sin offering was to be brought for unintentional sins which would bring guilt upon the tabernacle.

4:2 – sins unintentionally – Even if one sins unintentionally they are still guilty of the sin. This sacrifice rebuts the false idea of sin being only a conscious intentional act. Whether sin is intentional or unintentional it is still sin.

Sin not only brought guilt and stain on the sinner but on the camp and the tabernacle, the place of God's dwelling.

Leviticus 5

Leviticus 5 continues to give directions for the sin offering from chapter 4. Starting in 5:1ff the context changes from sinning by doing something

contrary to the law to sinning by failing to do something required by the law.

The three possibilities of offerings outlined ensures that all Jews no matter their economic status would be able to bring sin offering.

Leviticus 6

Our reading today focuses on the priest's relationship to and portion of the various offerings.

Sacrifices were holy to the Lord – even the portions given to the priests. Even the ashes and blood were to be handled in holy ways. This section instructs the priests in those ways.

6:12 – fire kept burning – The burnt offering was to be made at dawn and twilight every day. The fire would continually burn consuming the two sacrifices.

Leviticus 7

Leviticus 7 provides supplemental material on the guilt offering and the peace offering.

7:11ff – The peace offering was a special sacrifice in that part was offered to the Lord and the other portion could be used for a festive meal.

7:20 – eats of the flesh...uncleanness – This principle is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 related to the Lord's Supper.

Leviticus 8

We finally come to the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests as directed in Exodus 29.

Note the repetition of “as the Lord commanded Moses.” All of this was done according to the Lord’s direction on Mt. Sinai.

8:33 – An OPC ordination service is considered long (two hours) but Aaron’s ordination service and process took seven days.

Leviticus 9

Chapter 9 gives the account of Aaron’s first service as the newly ordained high priest.

Aaron brought multiple offerings to make it clear that both Aaron and the children of Israel needed atonement that would only come through the shedding of blood.

Leviticus 10

The events of this chapter occurred on the same day as the ordination of Nadab and Abihu.

10:1 – had not commanded – Their great sin was to worship the Lord in a way he had not commanded. That’s why the fire and incense was unauthorized.

16:1-2 seems to imply that the brothers sought to take their incense into the Most Holy Place.

10:9 – Some believe that the actions of the brothers were due to their being drunk. That is not explicitly said in the text.

10:10-11 – The divine job description for priests.

10:16-20 would have taken place on the last (7th) day of the ordination process.

This whole chapter is a reminder of the need for a new priesthood – one not from the line of Aaron – who will faithfully do the work for God’s people – Hebrews 4:14-16.

10:17 – **not eaten the sin offering** – This was commanded by the Lord in 6:25-26.

Leviticus 11

Today’s reading begins a section that will go through chapter 15 making distinctions between “clean” and “unclean.”

11:44 – **be holy** - Israel was to be holy (set apart) as the Lord is holy. This was to be seen in their distinctive lifestyle that was different than the Gentiles. The distinctions between clean and unclean would be an ongoing reminder of this call.

Once the church is no longer distinctively Jewish, the food laws are done away with (Acts 10).

Leviticus 12

12:5 – sixty-six days – The additional time needed for purification is probably due to a daughter's potential uncleanness in her monthly cycle and in giving birth herself.

12:8 – This was the sacrifice that Joseph and Mary brought for her purification (Luke 2:24).

The tabernacle is complete – worship can begin. Now the Lord gives direction for how that worship is to be done.

Leviticus 13

Leviticus 13 has directions for dealing with leprosy.

Leprosy in Moses's day was different from modern

Hansen's Disease and was used as a broad term for many serious and less serious skin disorders.

13:45-46 – Leprosy was considered serious in that they could impact the whole camp and so precautions were necessary.

It was also used by God as a symbol of sin.

13:47-59 – Disease in clothing. Examples of this would include mold or fungus.

Leviticus 14

Leviticus 14 gives direction for the reception of a former leper back into the camp.

The process is given twice, the normal process and then once again for those who were poor.

This is the process that Jesus has in mind when he told healed lepers to present themselves to the priests – Luke 5:14

14:7 – the release of the bird was symbolic of the release of the person from their state of uncleanness.

14:10 – Log of oil = less than a pint – about ½ a pint

14:33ff – Directions for an infection inside a home. This will only apply after Israel settles in the Promised Land.

14:34 – I put a case – God does not shrink back from taking sovereign responsibility.

Leviticus 15

Even though there is a sacrifice for the unclean person (vv. 15, 29,30), being ceremonially unclean is not the same as sinning. One could be ceremonially unclean and yet commit no sin.

15:16-24 deals with natural secretions. These do not require an offering. The others in the chapter do because they imply having a disease.

15:31 – Gives the reason for the concern about uncleanness. Uncleanness in the camp has a result of defiling the tabernacle and so must be dealt with. Any who were unclean were therefore not allowed in the tabernacle court.

Nothing in this chapter should lead you to believe that sex or the sexual organs are bad from a biblical perspective. God created both and both are good. The concern seems to focus on the discharge that the Lord viewed as unclean for his people.

Leviticus 16

16:1 – This is a reference back to Leviticus 10. Nadab and Abihu’s sin must have involved entering the Most Holy Place.

16:8 – Azazel – This term is made up of two Hebrew words – “goat” and “depart” or Scapegoat. First the priest must make atonement for himself and then he is able to make atonement for Israel. This is why a perfect mediator was needed who had no sin himself.

16:29 – Afflict yourself – typical language for fasting. The entire ceremony points forward to Christ.

Leviticus 17

17:1-9 – The concern here is to prevent idolatry. So, the blood of any animal fit for a sacrifice must be brought to the tabernacle. This rule is lessened once they move into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 12:15-16).

17:10-16 – Prohibition against eating blood was because it was the blood of the sacrifices that made atonement for Israel.

Leviticus 18

18:1-23 - Deals with sexual sins that God's holy people are to avoid. This is one way that Israel was to be set apart from the practice of the nations around them.

18:5 – This verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12.

18:24-30 – These abominations are what was the cause of the nations being cast out of the Promised Land and will result in Israel being cast out as well.

Leviticus 19

Today's reading is the Lord's direction to his people as to what it means to be holy as the Lord is holy (**v. 2**). Holiness is to be seen in how we treat our neighbor.

Notice the refrain **"I am the LORD"** that is seen throughout the chapter.

19:18 – The second great commandment according to Jesus in the gospels (Matthew 22:39).

Israel was to be set apart from the nations in their conduct. Even the commands of not cross breeding cattle or mixing seed (**v. 19**) are meant to remind Israel of the Lord's call to holiness.

Peter quotes **v. 2** in 1 Peter 1:16 to call Gentile Christians to holiness. The specifics of what holiness looks like is different, since we are no longer under the ceremonial law requirements, but the command to be holy in our conduct is no different than for Israel.

Leviticus 20

This chapter continues to describe what it means for Israel to be set apart (holy) from the nations around them.

Leviticus 20 deals with serious violations of God's law, with emphasis on the penalty, most often death. The examples are focused on worshipping false gods, engaging in pagan practices, and sexual immorality.

20: 2 – Molech – Ammonite god which required child sacrifice.

20:9 – Jesus refers to this in Mark 7:10.

Leviticus 21

Leviticus 21 gives God's directions on what it means for the priests to be holy, which is a higher standard than the people since they work in the tabernacle.

21:6 – Bread of their God = the Bread of the Presence in the Holy Place of the tabernacle.

Leviticus 22

This chapter is a continuation of directions, mainly to the priests, concerning "the holy things."

22:3 – Holy things – would include the Bread of the Presence and the portion of the offerings that were designated for the priests.

22:17ff – God gives more detail on the kinds of sacrifices that are and are not acceptable to him.

22:23 – **Freewill offering** – was not mandated by God; it was strictly voluntary by Israel and so the criteria are less stringent.

Leviticus 23

This chapter gives a summary of the holy convocations Israel was to follow throughout the year.

The **Passover** and **Firstfruits** both took place in March/April.

The **Feast of Weeks** was in late Spring.

The fall period was another time of convocations with the **Feast of Trumpets** (late September), **Day of Atonement** (September/October) and the **Feast of Booths** (October).

This calendar was designed to help Israel remember the great works the Lord had done for them.

Leviticus 24

After dealing with two reminders of the tabernacle Moses deals with two legal issues.

24:10-16 – Case of blasphemy. Up to this point the Lord had not given a penalty for this sin. The penalty shows how serious the sin was to the Lord.

24:17-22 – These verses are giving directions to the judges of Israel and are designed to limit the penalties that could be imposed.

24:20 - There is no reason to believe that this was understood to allow a man's eye to be gauged out if he injured another man's eye, etc. It is more likely that the judges were to establish a value to the injury and not impose a penalty that was greater than that value.

In Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus reminds us that **vv. 17-22** were never meant for personal situations or retaliation but for legal situations.

Leviticus 25

God's directions in today's chapter is to ensure that justice prevails in Israel. The laws of jubilee and redemption are given to prevent a family from falling into perpetual poverty and hopelessness.

Vv. 1-7 – The Sabbath principle as applied to the land. The Lord's land needed rest as much as the Lord's people.

Vv. 8ff – The context for the Year of Jubilee was that the land belonged to the Lord and could not be permanently sold (v. 23). Every fifty years it would revert to the original owners

Vv. 47-55 – Even non-Jews living in the land were required to keep these laws.

Praise the Lord today that He is a God of justice who cares for the poor and oppressed. Does your thinking reflect the Lord's?

Leviticus 26

In today's reading the Lord lays out the consequences for Israel for their obedience or disobedience.

The context is the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. The Lord of the covenant pronounces the blessings that he will give Israel if they are faithful and the curses that will come if they are unfaithful.

Sevenfold – occurs multiple times in the section on the curses of the covenant. Seven is the number of completeness in Scripture. Their judgment will not be partial but complete for their unfaithfulness.

26:40-45 – Even after great sin that brings great judgment, the Lord will still restore Israel if they will repent.

Sometimes our sin brings great consequences, but repentance brings great forgiveness.

Leviticus 27

This chapter deals with the practice of vows made to the Lord involving primarily the tabernacle.

27:1-8 – The case of someone who dedicates himself or a family member to service at the tabernacle. Only Levites could serve there so the Lord gives directions for the redemption price one could pay to fulfill their vow.

Most of the rest of the chapter deals with vows related to giving an animal, your house, land, etc.

27:26-27 – Firstborn of man or animals cannot be dedicated to the Lord since they already belong to him (Exodus 13:2).

27:28-29 – **Devoted thing** – Something devoted to the Lord for destruction such as in the case of war and the destruction of the enemies of Israel. These could not be redeemed.