

**Wilderness Period:
The Law of Israel *Leviticus 1:1-27:34***

Leviticus is the third of the five books of Moses. Its name is from Levi, the tribe of Priests. Leviticus is a book of the law and especially the law for the priests, who were the sons of Levi.

When the book of Exodus closed Israel was camped at the base of Mt. Sinai and the Tabernacle was standing at Mt. Sinai.

Genesis you will recall is the book of beginnings. Exodus is the book of redemption from Egypt and Leviticus is the book of the law of Israel. In Exodus God said **"Let my people go to serve me."** (*Ex 5:1; 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3* etc.) Notice in ***Exodus 10:25-26*** that Moses said to Pharaoh, **"...Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord..."** Moses then says that all the cattle must go because, **"...We know not with what we must serve the Lord our God."** Moses knew they were going but he didn't know what they were going to do when they got there. The book of Leviticus tells them what to do to serve the Lord. Leviticus gives Israel the instruction concerning the worship and sacrifices of the tabernacle.

These instructions were given to Moses during a period of some 50 days. ***Exodus 40:17*** states the erection of the tabernacle was the 1st month, 2nd year, 1st day. ***Numbers 10:11*** records they moved from Sinai the 20th day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year. This was a period of one month and 20 days or 50 days.

I- Key Words & Phrases:

The overriding thought in Leviticus is, **"Be ye holy for I am holy."** ***Lev 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:26.***

God calls His people to be a holy people. Holy means a separated people set-aside for His purpose. Within this also is the holiness of life. He gave them the law to live by and as an approach Him.

"Priest" occurs 190 times.

"Holy", and its related terms, occur 152 times. 20% of OT occurrences of holy are in Leviticus.

"Unclean" and its related terms occur 132 times, which is 50% of OT occurrences.

"Blood" occurs some 85 times.

"Clean" and its related terms occur 74 times, 35% of the OT occurrences.

"Atonement" occurs 45 times.

"Sacrifice" occurs 40 times.

"Profane" occurs 14 times, 66% of the OT occurrences.

Leviticus contains the sacrifices and offerings of the temple, the instruction concerning the priests and the law of clean and unclean. In this brief study our goal is to become familiar with the sacrifices, the annual feasts of Israel, the Day of Atonement, as well as the Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee.

**II- Law Concerning Sacrifices
and Offerings: *Lev 1-7***

The Law concerned the offerings that the people were to bring to the tabernacle for various purposes.

a- Burnt Offering: ***1:2-9*** This offering signified the atonement and consecration.

b- Meal Offering: ***2:1-2*** This offering signified thanksgiving.

c- Peace Offering: ***3:1-17; 7:11-15*** This signified fellowship.

d- Sin Offering: **4:1-35** This spoke of reconciliation. It is an offering for sins known and unknown.

e- Trespass Offering: **5:1-7:10**. The trespass offering signified the cleansing from guilt.

These offerings were to restore fellowship with God, to remove the guilt of sin, and to give praise and thanksgiving to God as they worshipped Him.

The sacrifices give us a picture of Calvary in typology. The burnt offering shows Christ's offering Himself without spot or blemish. The Meal offering shows the purity of life and the sweet fragrance of His life. The Peace offering emphasis is on the reconciliation of the cross. The Sin and Trespass offerings give us a picture of our past, present and future sins forgiven.

III- Law Concerning the Consecration of the Priest: Lev 8-10

The law gave instructions concerning the priest that served the tabernacle. Three things were done to the priest. They were washed, **8:6**, clothed **8:7ff**, and anointed **8:24ff**. This office was one that required strict observance of the law. (See **Lev 9**)

IV- Law Concerning Clean and Unclean: Lev 11-15

God taught the Israelites about their diet and purification of the unclean in this section of Leviticus.

The law of purification after childbirth is found in **12:1-8**. You will recall Mary went to the temple for this purification with the Messiah and Simeon saw him. The Law of Leprosy is in **13:1-14:57**.

V- Law Concerning the Day of Atonement: Lev 16

This day, Yom Kippur, is when the nation of Israel made a national

sacrifice for their sins. The high priest would enter the Holy of Holies only one day a year to offer sacrifices for atonement. This was the most solemn day of the year for Israel.

The high priest would first make a sacrifice for his sins. Then he would take two goats for the sacrifice. The lots were cast and one goat was selected for sacrifice, **16:8-10, 15-17**. The other one was to be turned loose in the wilderness as the "Scapegoat." **16:20-22**.

These two together give us a picture of the coming Messiah who would make atonement with His blood and also carrying away our sins.

Someone has said that Atonement is best described and understood as AT-ONE-NESS with God. With the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement the sins of Israel were covered for another year. Christ however entered the holy place in heaven and offered this sacrifice once and for all. (See Hebrews for a NT companion book.)

VII- Law Concerning the Annual Feasts: Lev 23

a- Feast of Passover: **Lev 23:4-5** This commemorated the exodus out of Egypt and the passing over of the death angel. This pictures redemption and is the only annual feast day that predates the Law.

b- Feast of Unleavened Bread: **Lev 23:6-8** The next thing after redemption should be a consecrated walk. The feast of unleavened bread pictured getting the sin out of our life.

c- Feast of Firstfruits: **Lev 23:9-14** This feast looked forward to the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christ.

d- Feast of Pentecost: **Lev 23:15-22** Pentecost occurred 50 days after Firstfruits. Pentecost means 50. This looked forward to the church.

STEP 5

e- Feast of Trumpets: **Lev 23:23-25** A picture for us of the rapture of the church. We are waiting on the trumpet now. (See **1 Thess 4:16**.)

f- Day of Atonement: **Lev 23:26-32**. We have previous looked at this in **Lev 16**.

g- Feast of Tabernacles: **Lev 23:33-44** This commemorated the wilderness wandering of Israel and was a reminder to them from which they had come. It also looked forward to the restoration of Israel.

VIII- Law Concerning the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years: 25

Once very 7 years the ground was to be left untilled to rest. **25:2-7**. This was known as the Sabbatical year, a year of rest for the land.

Once every 50 years they were to celebrate the year of Jubilee. **25:10** The slaves were liberated, debts forgiven, land was restored to the original owner or his heir. A general restoration took place.

Leviticus concludes with blessings and warnings in **Lev 26** and law concerning vows in **Lev 27**.

Moses and Israel now have a greater understanding of who God is and what he required of them. God has given them laws and instructions about approaching him and worship. God is revealing Himself to the nation and preparing for Messiah to come.

Application to Life's Steps:

1- God's requirement for His people has not changed. He still calls us to be a holy people.

2- Understanding the offerings of Israel helps us to fuller appreciate the sacrifice of Christ.

3- The day of atonement adds new insight into our sin bearer as a one time offering.

4- The annual feast days of Israel show us that the coming of Messiah was pictured many ways prior to His coming.

5- The Sabbatical year shows that God is concerned with the way that we use the natural resources He has given us.

Retracing our Steps:

1- What did God require the nation of Israel to be? **"Be ye _____ for I am _____."**

2- What were the five offerings?

- 1- _____
- 2- _____
- 3- _____
- 4- _____
- 5- _____

3- What three things were done to the priests?

- 1- _____
- 2- _____
- 3- _____

4- On the day of Atonement what happened to the two goats?

5- Atonement can be best described as _____.

6- What were the seven annual feast of Israel?

- 1- _____
- 2- _____
- 3- _____
- 4- _____
- 5- _____
- 6- _____
- 7- _____

7- What happened every 7 years? _____

Every 50 years? _____

