

LESSON 16: LEVITICUS 1-7; 11-15; 17-24

JANUARY 18, 2012

OVERVIEW

- . Leviticus – A Summary
- . The Offerings – Leviticus 1-7
- . The Purifications – Leviticus 11-15
- . The Holy Life – Leviticus 17-24

LEVITICUS – A SUMMARY

- . Leviticus – the third of the five books of the Pentateuch
 - . The first four books of the Pentateuch are intended as a continuous story
 - . Although most of Leviticus serves as a handbook for priests, there are two historical narratives that link the end of Exodus with the beginning of Numbers
 - . Chapters 8-10 deal with the installation of the priests coupled to the story of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu
 - . The story of the execution of the blasphemer in Chapter 24
 - . The laws of Leviticus seem to have been given to Moses while the people were encamped at Sinai
 - . The fourth book of the Pentateuch, Numbers, picks back up on the Israelites march towards Canaan
- . Leviticus means “of the Levites”
 - . Jews also refer to this as “the book of the priests” and “the law of the offerings”
 - . Why were the Levites the designated tribe of the priests?
 - . Exodus 4:10-16; 7:1-2; 32:25-29
- . The theme of Leviticus
 - . The theme of holiness ties together the material of Leviticus
 - . Holiness is to be a characteristic of God’s people
 - . “Be holy because I am holy” – Leviticus 11:44-45
 - . “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy”
Leviticus 19:2
 - . “Be holy because I am the Lord your God”
Leviticus 20:7-8, 26; 21:8,15,23; 22:9,16,32
 - . Although Leviticus deals with ceremonial laws that no longer have direct bearing on us or the way we worship, its chief concern is holiness, which remains the goal of every Christian
 - . The most frequently repeated words in Leviticus, “The Lord said to Moses” are mentioned thirty-four times

- . The use of Leviticus in the New Testament
 - . Jesus referenced Leviticus many times throughout his ministry (Matthew 19:19; 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27)
 - . Paul quotes Leviticus in Romans, Galatians and 2 Corinthians
 - . Peter references quotes from Leviticus in 1 Peter
 - . Leviticus laid down the earthly laws needed to attain the level of holiness God desired
 - . We will also see throughout the balance of the Old Testament the Israelites struggle to achieve this level of holiness
 - . Leviticus also lays out in great detail the sacrificial system put in place to seek Atonement, because of the Israelites inability to achieve this level of holiness
 - . The good news of the gospel is that now, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the perfect sacrifice, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit that allows us to achieve the very level of holiness the Israelites couldn't achieve
- . The outline of Leviticus
 - . The offerings – Leviticus 1-7
 - . The priests and their ministry – Leviticus 8-10
 - . The purifications – Leviticus 11-15
 - . The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 16
 - . The Holy Life – Leviticus 17-25
 - . Rewards and punishments – Leviticus 26
 - . Regulations for offerings vowed to the Lord – Leviticus 27

THE OFFERINGS – LEVITICUS 1-7

- . Five types of offerings described in these chapters
 - . Sacrifices or offerings described first from the worshippers point of view Leviticus 1:1 – 6:7
 - . Offerings are then repeated from the priests' perspective – Leviticus 6:8 – 7:36
 - . These five types of offerings have much in common
 - . Profound recognition of human sinfulness
 - . Need for repentance
 - . The principle of substitutionary atonement
- . The burnt offering – Leviticus 1:1-17; 6:8-13
 - . The purpose of the offering is to make atonement for sin
 - . This section provides the worshipper with instructions on how to present, rightly, whatever blood offering he has available
 - . Two points should be particularly noted
 - . First, the worshipper was to lay his hand on the head of the offering
 - . This was a symbolic way of transferring sin or guilt to the animal, which was then killed in the sinners place
 - . Second, the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar – proof of the death of the victim

- . The grain offering – Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23
 - . Because no blood was shed in this offering, it is not a sin offering – rather an offering of thanksgiving
 - . A portion of this offering was burned on the altar as a memorial portion
 - . The remainder was kept by the priests as part of their regular food ration
- . The fellowship or peace offering – Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-21
 - . Similar to the burnt offering in that it involved an animal, the confession of sin, the sprinkling of blood and the burning on the great altar
 - . Different in that only the fat and kidneys were burned, not the entire animal
 - . The rest was eaten by the worshippers
 - . This was a sin offering
 - . However, because of the fellowship meal, the emphasis was on the state of peace existing between God and the worshipper
- . The sin offering – Leviticus 4:1-5, 13; 6:24-30
 - . Probably the most common of all the offerings
 - . It was for those who sinned inadvertently or by mistake
- . The guilt offering – Leviticus 5:4-6; 7:1-10
 - . An offering for damage done to another person or his property or for the sin of Neglect
 - . This offering was not a substitute for making the wrong right
 - . In addition to this offering to cleanse one of their guilt, there were provisions set up for restitution in full
- . Principles involved
 - . Anyone could present an offering
 - . Although there were strict rules on how offerings were to be made, there were no limitations on who could make them
 - . Each sacrifice involved a cost to the worshipper
 - . Each of these sacrifices involved a willingness on the part of the worshipper to give up something
 - . Only the best was to be offered
 - . Real emphasis on offering up the very best that one had to give

THE PURIFICATIONS – LEVITICUS 11-15

- . This section dealing with purification laws, had three purposes
 - . The laws were intended to separate the religious practices of the Jews from those of the surrounding heathen nations
 - . The laws were an outward way of reminding the people they had to be separated from the world and connected to God
 - . The laws were designed to physically protect them and keep them healthy

- . The purification laws had seven different groupings
 - . Clean and unclean food – Leviticus 11
 - . Health precautions were a huge part of the basis for these rules
 - . There's also an emphasis on keeping our bodies pure and holy by watching what we put in it
 - . Purification after childbirth – Leviticus 12
 - . This is not to be misinterpreted as the Jews regarding procreation or childbirth as sinful
 - . A time for isolation and recuperation after childbirth was a wise Precaution
 - . Regulations about infectious skin diseases – Leviticus 13:1-46
 - . The priests functioned somewhat like today's public health officials and were responsible for the health of the community
 - . Isolating people with infectious diseases was essential in the close quarters of these encampments
 - . Regulations about mildew – Leviticus 13:47-59
 - . Another regulation designed to maintain a healthy environment
 - . Cleansing from infectious skin diseases – Leviticus 14:1-32
 - . The examination and cleansing ceremonies reflect both the seriousness of the disease and the miracle of the healing
 - . Cleansing from mildew – Leviticus 14:33-57
 - . The cleansing of a house from mildew was rigorous
 - . If the home couldn't be cleansed it needed to be destroyed
 - . Discharges causing uncleanness – Leviticus ~~14~~ 15
 - . Two types of emissions discussed
 - . Pathological – though diseases not discussed
 - . These required a sin offering in addition to washing
 - . Sexual – this required washing but not a sin offering, implying that sex between a husband and wife was not sinful
- . Jesus words about clean and unclean
 - . Jesus' ministry emphasized that whatever enters our bodies does not determine our inward cleanliness, rather what comes out of our mouth reveals the condition of our heart
 - . Jesus' teachings, in light of the laws laid out in Leviticus, were considered radical and blasphemous

THE HOLY LIFE – LEVITICUS 17-24

- . These chapters are a collection of various laws governing the normal daily life of the Israelites
 - . These are laws against drinking blood – Leviticus 17
 - . Laws against unlawful sexual relations – Leviticus 18

- . Punishments for various sins, starting with nine that require the death penalty
Leviticus 20
- . Rules for the personal lives of priests – Leviticus 21-22
- . Unacceptable sacrifices – Leviticus 22
- . Yearly feasts – Leviticus 23
- . Rules for governing the oil and bread used in the Tabernacle – Leviticus 24

NEXT LESSON IS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2012: LEVITICUS 8-10