

LEVITICUS

BACKGROUND

Preceded by important events:

Abrahamic Covenant

-Unconditional promise-God made to Abraham unilaterally

"I will bless you"

Redemption of Israel

Redeemed by blood--through faith--from Egypt

Freed from slavery--bought by God--They belong to Him.

Acceptance of the law Ex. 19:8

Became a nation

Identified as God's own people

Not a failure--it was the ratification of their national constitution

It was foolish of some to think they could do it in their own strength!

But it was the right response to God!

"Yes sir! Whatever you say!"

Josh. 24:14-27--it's the right commitment; but don't take it lightly!

At Sinai God revealed to His REDEEMED PEOPLE two essential parts of His program for Israel:

How does God want His people to live?

THE LAW--His standards of conduct for His people Ex. 19-24

How can God's people approach Him?

THE TABERNACLE--Way of access by which people can approach God Ex. 25-40

Demonstrates that sinful people can't get there on their own.

Shedding of blood required.

After Exodus, what historical book continues the story? Numbers

The law is revealed in summary in Exodus.

While the people remain at Sinai, God reveals *in greater detail* His regulations for their conduct and worship.

Leviticus contains that record.

PURPOSE AND THEME

As Exodus closes, the people of God are preparing to enter the land God promised them.

They have the law.

They have the tabernacle.

They're ready to go!

But there's a slight detour ahead!

The tabernacle has been established as their worship center,

God has just filled it with His glory

The presence of God presents some awesome problems

How does God want them to live?

Under what conditions may they approach Him?

Leviticus was written to answer these questions.

It reveals the principles by which God wants His people to live.

The law reveals the absolute holiness of God.

Similar to 1 John, Leviticus demonstrates that to enjoy fellowship with a holy God requires holiness (Amos 3:3; Lev. 19:2; 20:7, 26; Cf. 1 Jn. 1:5-7)
God explains how a holy people ought to live in the midst of a heathen world--their lifestyle should be distinct.

They should remain separate from the contamination of the heathen nations around them.

Leviticus reveals instructions for the priests in the exercise of their ministry.

It contains principles for daily living for a redeemed people.

The revelation of God's holiness made clear the unholiness of all people --even redeemed people!

The law could not permanently solve our sin problem!

Their sacrifices did not perfect those who brought them.

They were an acknowledgement of their sin (Heb. 10:1-4).

Leviticus was written to demonstrate

how SINFUL PEOPLE, REDEEMED BY BLOOD,
could MAINTAIN FELLOWSHIP with a HOLY GOD.

HOW GOD'S PEOPLE OUGHT TO LIVE TO CONTINUE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM

"Be holy, for I am Holy!"

- 1. WAY OF ACCESS TO GOD 1-10**
- 2. WALK BEFORE GOD 11-27**

THEIR WAY OF ACCESS TO GOD 1-10

The way of sinful, redeemed men to God (1-10) was through the offerings which they presented to God (1-7) and the ministry of their priests before God (8-10).

Law of the offerings 1-7

The offerings provided a basis for fellowship with God

5 offerings--each basically the same

Main difference was in the way they were offered and the specific significance of each offering to the person offering them.

People could choose the offering they felt suited their need.

First 3 offerings were voluntary and pleasing to God--for thanksgiving and fellowship

Burnt offering 1

Essentially an offering of worship.

God was worshiped because He had provided a covering for sin.

Various kinds of animals were allowed.

Meal offering 2 (Grain offering)

Only offering that didn't involve blood.

Offering of thanksgiving.

The worshiper, acknowledging what God has done for him in providing the atonement, praised Him for being able to participate in that provision.

Peace offering 3 (Fellowship offering; thank offering)

Worship was aroused by a conscience which was at rest.

The peace is a result of the Day of Atonement.

Offering was a public expression of gratitude because of the opportunity to enjoy complete fellowship with God, due to having found peace with Him.

Last 2 offerings--obligatory for restoration to fellowship after *unintentional* sin (4-6:7)

As in 1 John, exposure to God's holiness reminds redeemed people of their sin.

Sin breaks fellowship with God.

It was necessary for God to provide offerings to restore fellowship that's been broken.

Two offerings caused by unintentional sin were compulsory offerings that were not pleasing to God, but did provide for forgiveness of sin and restoration of fellowship.

Compare consequences of *intentional* sin (Heb. 10:26-28, 31)

-judgment must come!

Sin offering-4-5:13--dealt with forgiveness of sin

To restore fellowship with God after unintentionally disobeying Him.

Guilt offering-5:14-6:7- (Trespass offering) dealt with removal of guilt.

Specifically related to unintentional sin in the case of illegal gain.

This was normally manward and demanded that restitution of one-fifth more than the value gained be paid back to the offended party.

Regulations for the offerings 6:8-7:28

Specific instructions are given to the priests for offering each of the five kinds of offerings.

Law of the priesthood 8-10

Sets the standards for the function of the priests

Ordination of priests 8

Inception of priestly function 9

Judgment of Aaron's sons (10) demonstrated that there could be no deviation from God's revealed instructions

When Nadab and Abihu tried to change the procedure, they were killed.

THEIR WALK BEFORE GOD 11-27

After the way of access to God is described, they are given specific laws which tell them how to conduct themselves in daily life in order to maintain fellowship with a holy God.

Laws of purification 11-16

Demonstrate God's demand for holiness and cleanliness.

Includes day of national purification--Day of Atonement (16)

Animals 11

Some animals are clean to eat, while others are not (1-23).

Some animals may be touched, but others may not (24-47)

Childbirth 12

Laws regarding purification in childbirth are established.
Mother and child are both considered unclean until the time and procedure for cleansing are fulfilled.

Leprosy 13-14

Procedure to determine when there is leprosy is defined.

Regulations affecting lepers are established, along with a method for purification in the case of healing.

Hygiene 15

Regulations for personal hygiene are presented.

Regulations for men 1-18

Regulations for women 19-30

These regulations must be followed so that God's dwelling place will not be defiled.

Means of purification 16 -Day of Atonement

National purification was ordained to occur once each year on the Day of Atonement.

It provided the means to cleanse God's people from their sins.

Laws of sacrifices 17

Strict rules are presented for offering sacrifices.

Necessity of sacrifices 17:1-9

Sacrifices must all be offered at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Necessity of blood 17:10-16

The people are not to eat the blood of animals for it belongs to God.

They are also prohibited from eating any animal which died by itself or was killed by another beast.

Laws governing personal relationships 18-22

For people in general 18-20

Moral laws 18

God's people were to maintain pure moral and sexual relationships.

General conduct 19

In their dealings with one another they were to be holy and thus reflect God's holiness.

Penalties 20

The penalties established for certain offenses were intended to help them see the importance of maintaining separation from anything that might defile them.

Their lifestyle was to be totally different from that of other nations.

For the priests 21-22

Separation 21-22:16

Priests were to maintain the highest of standards and to remain separate from anything which might defile them. 21:1-9

The high priest was to maintain even stricter standards. 21:10-15

No man with a blemish could serve as a priest, nor could any priest perform priestly functions while he was unclean. 21:16-22:16

Offerings 22:17-33

Not only were priests to separate themselves; they were also to see that their offerings were perfect. 22:17-30

In summary a holy God must be represented in a holy way by a holy people. Nothing less would be acceptable. 22:31-33

Laws governing worship 23-24

Times of worship 23 –designation of their feast days

First four feasts look forward to significance of Christ's 1st coming.

Last three feasts look forward to significance of Christ's 2nd coming.

Elements of worship 24:1-9

Conditions for worship 24:10-23

Laws governing the land 25

Controlled the use and distribution of the land

Sabbatical year 25:1-7

The land was to be given a year of rest after six years of production.

They were not to harvest any crops the resting land might produce during that year, though they could eat it, and allow their animals to eat it.

Year of Jubilee 25:8-55

After seven sabbatical years had passed, they were to declare an additional Year of Jubilee.

During that year any property bought in preceding years was to be returned to the family from which it had been bought.

Slaves were to be set free.

These rules prevented the oppression of the poor and reminded them that they were all servants of God.

The principles of familial redemption, support of poor brothers, and kinsman-redeemer, were all introduced.

Laws of divine dealings 26

Principles for God's dealing with Israel

Blessing and cursing determined by their response to God's law

God is to be given preeminence in their lives (1-2)

Blessing follows obedience (3-13)

Cursing follows disobedience (14-39)

Restoration follows confession (40-46) = 1 John 1:9

Promise to Abraham reconfirmed

Law of vows 27

Evaluations (assessing value to things given by vow to God) 1-25

Limitations 26-34

Nothing can be vowed to the Lord that is the firstborn, or that is a thing devoted to the Lord, or that is part of the tithe. All these things already belong to Him.

The vow must give Him something that is not already set apart for His use.

The commands God gave to Moses are now complete

Obedience to God's commands will provide the redeemed children of Israel fellowship with their God.

The history of Israel continues to demonstrate how Israel has responded to His instructions, as well as the consequences of that response.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH THE LAW?

We too are redeemed by blood--through faith

God has revealed His holiness to us also

Fellowship with a holy God demands holiness (1 Jn.)

When we obey God, we enjoy fellowship with Him and His blessing

When we disobey Him, He disciplines us

When we confess our sin, He cleanses us and restores fellowship

Israel learned that they could not play games with God and not be hurt--NEITHER CAN WE!

Israel owed God everything--their lives offered to Him should have been a continual way of saying thanks to God. How much more gratitude should we show Him?