



Leviticus: The Teaching of the Priests

Leviticus 1-14

The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Structure of Leviticus¹⁴

Part 1: The Laws of Acceptable Approach to God: Sacrifice (1-17)

- I. The Laws of Acceptable Approach to God (1-7)
 - a. Laws of approach to God when in fellowship
 - b. Laws of approach to God when out of fellowship
 - c. Laws for administering offerings
- II. The Laws of the Priests (8-10)
 - a. The consecration of the priesthood
 - b. The ministry of the priesthood
 - c. Failure of the priesthood
- III. The Laws of Israel regarding Purity (11-15)
 - a. Laws concerning clean and unclean food
 - b. Laws concerning childbirth
 - c. Laws concerning leprosy
 - d. Laws concerning discharge
- IV. The Laws of National Atonement (16-17)
 - a. Laws concerning national cleansing through the Day of Atonement
 - b. Laws concerning the location of sacrifices
 - c. Laws concerning the use of blood

Part 2: The Laws of Acceptable Walk with God: Sanctification (18-27)

- I. The Laws of Sanctification for the People (18-20)
 - a. Laws of sexual sins
 - b. Laws of social order
 - c. Laws of penalties
- II. The Laws of Sanctification for the Priesthood (21-22)
 - a. Prohibited practices for the priests
 - b. People prohibited from the priesthood
 - c. Sacrifices prohibited of the priesthood
 - d. The purpose of the Laws of the priesthood
- III. The Laws of Sanctification in Worship (23-24)
 - a. Laws of sanctified feast of worship
 - b. Laws of sanctified elements of worship
 - c. Law of the sanctified name of God
- IV. The Laws of Sanctification in the Land of Canaan (25-26)
 - a. Laws of sanctification in the Land of Canaan
 - b. Results of obedience and disobedience in the Land
- V. The Laws of Sanctification Through Vows (27)
 - a. The special consecrating of acceptable things
 - b. Things excluded from consecration
 - c. The conclusion of Leviticus

¹⁴ Nelson's Complete Book of Maps and Charts, pp. 41-42



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Part 1: The Laws of Acceptable Approach to God: Sacrifice (1-17)

The first seventeen chapters of Leviticus deal with laws related to how Israel is to be a Holy Nation with regard to their worship of God at the Tabernacle. The nation is to be a people completely sacrificed and acceptable to God.

The Laws of Acceptable Approach to God (1-7)

The five types of sacrifices the Israelites were to make include:

1. Burnt offering (1:3-17)
2. Grain offering (2:1-16)
3. Peace offering (3:1-17)
4. Sin offering (4:1-35)
5. Guilt offering (5:1-6:7)

The first three offerings are regularly made by a person who is in fellowship with God: Burnt, Grain and Peace.

The last two types of offerings are made when a person is out of fellowship with God because of sin: guilt and sin.

Laws of approach to God when in fellowship

Burnt Offering

When a burnt offering was made it would follow a specific pattern:

1. Bringing of the offering - Offerer
2. Hand-leaning - Offerer
3. Slaughtering of the animal -
4. Splashing of the blood – Sons of Aaron
5. Flaying of the skin – Sons of Aaron
6. Dissecting – Sons of Aaron
7. Washing
8. Burning – Sons of Aaron

The burnt offering was to be a very costly sacrifice that represented the offering of oneself completely and totally to YHWH. One could not appropriately offer this sacrifice unless one was prepared to follow God wholeheartedly such as Noah (Gen 6:9; 8:20) and

For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

--Romans 3:22-25



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Abraham (17:1; 15:6) See Psalm 51:17-19 where a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart leads to an acceptable burnt offering (v.19)

The burnt offering is given propitiate (satisfy) the wrath of God against the sinful condition of the human heart. Jesus is the only “full, perfect, and sufficient, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” (BCP)

Grain Offering or Loyalty Offering

The purpose of the offering is to remind the Lord of the covenantal relationship with the offerer and YHWH. Where as is the person (Heb: *adam*) who offers the burnt offering, it is the soul (Heb: *nepes*) that offers the loyalty offering. It is the offering of ones soul as a pleasant aroma to the Lord. Souls are by nature “ego-centric”. In making the offering, a person demonstrates to the Lord that they are YHWH centered.

Fellowship Offering

The Fellowship offering is related to intimate communion with the Lord. The leaning on the offering, symbolically identifies the animal with the offerer. Thus, the animal takes the place of the offerer as a substitute. The animal gives his life for the offerer. The egocentric and complacent portions (the fat) of the heart are consumed on the altar as an acceptable sacrifice.

This offering is made on occasions of thanksgiving and making of a vow of dedication to the Lord. Fellowship with the Lord comes when a person destroys their egocentric nature.

Laws of approach to God when out of Fellowship

Sin Offerings and Guilt offerings

The sin and guilt offerings were for inadvertent and intentional sins. Both carried a cost to the sinner and put a person, the priest or the entire congregation out of fellowship with the Lord. Appropriate sacrifices must be made to restore fellowship.



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The Laws of the Priests (8-10)

The consecration of the priesthood

The ordination of Aaron and his sons demonstrates the universality of sin. Even those who minister in the tabernacle of the Lord are sinners needing forgiveness and atonement.

It is interesting the contrast with Moses and Aaron. Moses offers sacrifices for Aaron and his sons but not for himself.

The idea of personal holiness comes to mean one's ability to dwell in the presence of God. Barriers to personal holiness are sin, uncleanness and egocentricity. Holiness in a matter of the heart and requires mediation through costly personal and communal sacrifice.

Failure of the priesthood

Nadab and Abihu are two sons of Aaron that fail to take the holiness of God seriously. They demonstrate by their inappropriate fire that they disregard the Holy. The calling to be a priest in the temple is not a light one. They are to carry out their duties with exacting precision in accord with the command of the Lord. Sin is a serious matter.

Mediators of God's covenant are not permitted to deviate from God's message or actions as they lead the people of God into a relationship with God.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

--1 Timothy 4:16