



**The Summit**  
Green Campus of Canton Baptist Temple

# **Resources for Your Life**

Leviticus  
23 Sessions

[www.thesummitgreen.com](http://www.thesummitgreen.com)  
[tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com)

## Resource Guide

This resource was compiled from the personal Bible study and blog entries created by Tom Hogsed, pastor of the Summit in Green. You can find the original blog entries at [www.tomhogsed.com](http://www.tomhogsed.com).

The **introduction** to this book has been written so the reader has a better understanding of the Biblical author, his purpose in writing, and important points to understand before reading.

Following the introduction, each new page represents a **verse by verse overview** of the Scripture passage. The best way to study is to first read the Scripture verses from your Bible relying on the Holy Spirit to provide understanding and then to support your understanding with the commentary written below.

At the end of each Scripture commentary, there is a short **prayer** written so the reader can personally apply what has been discovered; however, it is suggested that you also pray from your heart in response to God's Word.

Feel free to make your own personal notes in your Bible, on this page, or even in a journal.

If this resource has helped you or you have further questions, please send an e-mail to [tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com).

## Introduction to Leviticus

The word *Leviticus* stems from the Latin Vulgate word *leuitikon* and means "matters of the Levites." The book of Leviticus is specifically addressed to the children of Israel (1:1-2) and documents the priestly duties and ceremonies to be performed by the tribe of Levi (Levites), who were from the Aaronic priesthood; furthermore, the concluding verse of Leviticus reveals that the things written in this book were "...commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai" (Leviticus 27:34). Although the book of Leviticus is often overlooked by the modern-day worshiper, this writing would have been the very first book learned by a Jewish child because it was a revelation of how an individual could properly worship and obey God. Since the priests were the ones who assisted the nation of Israel in worshiping God, the Lord provided very specific instructions of how that worship was to take place. Until this point in the history of Israel, they knew how to worship God based only upon the history of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had quickly forgotten the ways of their fathers when they experienced hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1) which, ultimately, influenced the way that they worshiped. Instead of worshiping the one, true God they oftentimes were guilty of engaging in pagan rituals and worship of many gods; in fact, the golden calf incident (Exodus 32) is a glimpse into the religious tendencies of Israel. God wanted their disobedience and false worship to cease so He provided instructions in this book for proper worship. If Israel was going to be a nation set apart and used to bring the world's attention to God, they would need to change their ways.

The Israelites escaped from Egypt in 1445BC and the tabernacle was completed just one year after their exodus while they were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai (Exodus 40). The instructions in this book were probably given immediately following the completion of the tabernacle in the first month of the second year following Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 40:17). Within the pages of Leviticus, the following worship instructions are detailed: the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), the beginning of the priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). These instructions would radically define worship and help Israel determine whether their worship was acceptable to God or not. Although the worship guidelines were specific to Israel, reading and understanding them helps the modern-day believer process the holy character of God. A believer no longer follows these instructions because the New Testament abolished the Old Testament ceremonial law (Acts 10:1-16; Colossians 2:16-17) and the priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Even though the ceremonial law has come to an end (Hebrews 7-10), there is great value in seeing the divine nature of God in them. The book of Leviticus may not always be easy to comprehend in light of the culture in which it was written, but a careful study will provide a deeper love and respect for a holy God.

*Dear God, give me understanding of this book so that I might develop a greater love for worshiping You.*

## Leviticus 1:1-17

The children of Israel were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai where the tabernacle had been set up for the very first time (Exodus 40). Israel had agreed to obey the Lord and all His commandments (Exodus 19:8; Exodus 24:3-8), so He provided further detail into how they could worship Him properly. The presence of God had covered the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-38) and the Lord spoke to Moses (1:1-2) regarding five sacrifices the people could offer to Him in worship: burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), sin offerings (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The first three sacrificial offerings were completely voluntary (burnt, grain, peace) while the last two were mandatory (sin and trespass). These offerings would be a visible demonstration of an individual's heart condition, whether it was thankful or repentant. Even though sacrifices had been in operation since the time of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), it is not until this time in Israel's history when God provides further instruction regarding offerings and sacrifices. It is important to realize that these external offerings are meaningless without the proper attitude of the heart. David would later write, "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:16-17). Disingenuous sacrifices are discarded surrenders.

The burnt offering was a voluntary sacrifice consisting of an unblemished male from the individual's own flock (cattle, sheep, or goats - see Leviticus 1:10-17 for details of each animal type) which he would take to the door of the tabernacle (1:3). Before sacrificing the animal, the sacrificer would put his hand on the head of the animal which symbolized the sins of the person being transferred to the animal (1:4). This act was known as a substitutionary atonement which meant that the unblemished was being punished for the sin of the guilty. In reality, the animal being sacrificed could only temporarily cover or relieve guilt, but the eventual sacrifice of Jesus Christ permanently removed sin. Hebrews 9:12 reveals, "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His [Jesus Christ] own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." The person offering the sacrifice would then kill the animal and the priests caught the blood in a basin and would then sprinkle the blood on the altar (1:5). The slaughtering of the animal would have been a dramatic reminder of the consequences of sin, which is death. Following the sacrifice, the sacrificer would skin the animal (1:6a), cut it into pieces (1:6b), and wash the insides/legs with water (1:9a). The priests prepared the altar for sacrifice by building a fire (1:7) and laying the parts of the animal on the altar (1:8). God describes the burnt offering as a "sweet aroma to the Lord" (1:9). An obedient sacrifice from a truly repentant heart was pleasing to the Lord.

*Dear God, may my repentance not only be demonstrated on the outside but also on the inside.*

## Leviticus 2:1-16

More than a year had passed since the Israelites had been freed from Egyptian bondage by the miraculous hand of God (Exodus 12:29-51). They were now camped at the foot of Mount Sinai where Moses had received the Mosaic Law which included the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-21), civil/religious ordinances (Exodus 20:22-24:11), and ceremonial regulations for the tabernacle (Exodus 24:12-31:18). After receiving the Law, the Israelites set up the tabernacle where the presence of God would meet with the people (Exodus 40). Following the establishment of the tabernacle, God desired to define proper worship for the nation of Israel so He detailed the instructions for worshiping Him, which included the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). These instructions would radically define worship and help Israel determine whether their worship was acceptable to God or not.

Sacrifices/offerings were a major part of worship in Israelite culture and the Lord listed five offerings: burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), sin offerings (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The first three sacrificial offerings were completely voluntary (burnt, grain, peace) while the last two were mandatory (sin and trespass). Giving of these offerings was a visible symbol of inward worship of God. While the burnt offering (1:1-17) demonstrated the repentant heart of the sacrificer, the grain offering evidenced consecration and thankfulness to God. Of all the offerings mentioned in Leviticus, the grain offering is the only one which does not involve animal sacrifice; furthermore, this offering was typically performed alongside others such as the burnt offering. There were three variations of the grain offering described in Leviticus 2 depending on how it was prepared: uncooked flour (2:1-3), baked flour (2:4-13), and crushed or roasted fruitful grain (2:14-16). First, grain offerings prepared with *uncooked flour* were to have oil and frankincense poured on it (2:1). The offering was then to be brought to the priest who would take a handful of it and burn it on the altar as a memorial, which became a sweet aroma to the Lord (2:2). Since only a handful of the grain was burned, the rest of it would be given to the priests to provide for their needs (2:3). Secondly, grain offerings could also be prepared with *baked flour*. The instructions for preparing the baked flour were distinct depending on whether it was cooked in an oven (2:4), griddle (2:5-6), or covered pan (2:7-10). No matter what tool was used to cook the baked flour, yeast and honey (edible by themselves) were never to be used since they often symbolized sin (2:11). The grain offering was to also be salted (2:13). Apparently, salt was symbolic of loyalty and God's covenant relationship with Israel (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5). Last, grain offerings prepared with *crushed or roasted fruitful grain* (2:14) should include oil and frankincense (2:15). The priest would then take a portion of this offering and burn it as a memorial to the Lord (2:16). Although the grain offering is very distinct from all other offerings mentioned in Leviticus, the preparation and use of everyday utensils for this offering may indicate that it is a consecration of daily life to the Lord and thankfulness for His provision. The same God who delivered Israel from Egypt was worthy of their worship and praise.

*Dear God, I consecrate myself to You and am grateful for Your daily provision.*

## Leviticus 3:1-17

Leviticus is a book spoken by God and written by the hand of Moses so that the nation of Israel could engage in proper worship. The way that they worshiped and the God that they worshiped would distinguish them from all other nations around them. Rather than worshiping many gods, Israel worshiped the one, true God. Instead of participating in pagan rituals and ceremonies, Israel's worship would be defined by holiness and reverence for the God who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. The Law and commandments had been established (Exodus 19:1-24:18). The tabernacle would become the center of worship for the children of Israel (Exodus 25:1-31:18; Exodus 35:1-40:38) and be the place where God would dwell. God defined worship by outlining the following religious ceremonies and practical guidelines: the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). The first few chapters of Leviticus (1:1-7:38) discuss the five sacrifices/offerings used in worship: burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), sin offerings (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The first three sacrificial offerings were completely voluntary (burnt, grain, peace) while the last two were mandatory (sin and trespass).

The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin, the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart, and the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man. The peace offering was similar in nature to the burnt offering. An unblemished male or female (females were not used in a burnt offering) of the herd (a cow or bull) was to be offered before the Lord (3:1). The worshiper was to lay his hand on the animal's head (symbolized the sins of the person being transferred to the animal), slaughter the animal, and then the priests would sprinkle the blood around the altar (3:2). The fat of the animal was removed and burned on the altar as a sacrifice which was a sweet aroma to the Lord (3:3-5). If a sheep was offered instead of a cow or bull, the instructions for the offering were the same except the entire fat tail was to be burned with the fat of the sheep (3:6-11). It is interesting that Moses also writes that "...the priest shall burn them on the altar as **food**, an offering made by fire to the Lord" (3:11). The peace offering was meant to picture a meal being shared between God and the sacrificer. Sharing a meal implied fellowship or friendship amongst the participants. For the modern-day believer, Jesus Christ is our peace. Paul writes these words to the church at Ephesus, "For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups" (Ephesians 2:14-15, NLT). If a goat was used in the peace offering, the same procedures applied as was used with the sheep except that no fat tail was burned (3:12-16). At the conclusion of these instructions God says, "*This shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood" (3:17). This ordinance was given for the Israelites and God expected them to adhere to this commandment. Further into Leviticus, the reader discovers that the peace offering is accompanied by a meal where the worshiper's family would eat before the Lord (Leviticus 7:15). The shared meal was an intimate time of fellowship and thanksgiving for the blessings of the Lord. God had been faithful to the people of Israel and participating in this freewill offering would express the unique relationship between God and man.

*Dear God, thank You for giving me peace through Your Son, Jesus Christ. May our fellowship together be pleasing to You.*

## Leviticus 4:1-5:13

The book of Leviticus instructs the nation of Israel in the proper worship of the one, true God. Although Moses is writing the words, the Lord provides the specific guidelines for worshiping Him which include the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), the beginning of the priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). These instructions would radically define worship and help Israel determine whether their worship was acceptable to God or not. Following these worship guidelines would also set Israel apart from the pagan nations which surrounded them and guaranteed God's blessings on them as a nation. Three of the five offerings/sacrifices have already been discussed: burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), and peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36). These three offerings were voluntary but the next two, sin offering and the trespass offering, were mandatory. The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin, the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart, and the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man.

The sin offering (Leviticus 4:1-5:13) was offered for *non-defiant* sins; in other words, this offering was given when an individual was guilty of sin but had not committed it in direct rebellion toward God (4:1-2). A *defiant sin* is when a person knowingly and willingly enters into a sin with the intention of rebelling against God's known laws or commands, while *non-defiant sins* are not committed with an attitude of hatred or rebellion toward God. The sin offering was observed differently depending on who had committed the sin: the high priest (4:3-12), the nation (4:13-21), a leader (4:22-26), or a common individual (4:27-35). If the **high priest** was guilty of sin he was to bring an unblemished bull to the altar (4:3), lay his hand on the head of the bull (4:4a), and then kill it before the Lord (4:4b). Laying his hand on the head of the bull symbolized a transfer of the sin from the guilty to the innocent. The priest would then take some of the blood from the bull (4:5) and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord in front of the veil of the sanctuary (4:6). Sprinkling the blood seven times was a sign of the complete forgiveness of God since the number *seven* often represented completeness or perfection. Blood from the sacrifice was also to be placed on the horns of the altar and the remaining blood was to be poured into the base of the altar of the burnt offering (4:7). The fatty parts of the bull were to be removed and the priest would burn them on the altar (4:8-10). Since the offering was for the priest, the remaining parts of the animal could not be eaten and were to be disposed of outside the camp where they would be burned on a wood fire (4:11-12). The sin offering for the **nation** (4:13-21) was identical to the guidelines for the priest except that the elders of Israel would lay their hands on the head of the bull. When Israel followed these guidelines, atonement (covering) was made for sin and they were forgiven (4:20). When a **leader** of Israel offered a sin offering it was similar to the sin offerings of the priest and the nation except he was to offer a unblemished male goat whose blood would not be sprinkled in the holy place (4:22-26). When a **common person** offered a sin offering a female goat or lamb could be sacrificed in the same manner as a leader offered his sin offering (4:27-35). What types of sins require a sin offering? The Lord provides three examples of sins which would require a sin offering: withholding evidence (5:1), touching something classified as unclean (5:2-3), or a broken promise (5:4). When the offender becomes aware of his wrongdoing in one of these instances, a sin offering was required (5:5-6). If an individual was too poor to offer a goat or a lamb, two doves or pigeons could be used - one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering (5:7-10). An extremely destitute person was permitted to offer flour as a sin offering (5:11). No matter the person or manner of sacrifice, the sin offering made atonement for sin and brought forgiveness to the worshiper (5:13). God accepted the death of an animal as a payment for the sin committed, which was a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

*Dear God, thank You for providing forgiveness of sin through Your Son, Jesus Christ.*

## Leviticus 5:14-6:7

Since Israel had been in bondage to Egypt for hundreds of years (Exodus 1:1-12:36) and had become accustomed to seeing pagan worship, they needed clarification from God regarding obedience and acceptable worship. At the end of their first year of freedom (Exodus 12:37-18:27) God established the law (Exodus 19:1-24:18) in order to guide them in maintaining a proper relationship with God and man. The Lord also revealed the instructions for constructing the tabernacle, which would become the center of all religious activity for the nation of Israel (Exodus 25:1-31:18). After the tabernacle was constructed and completed (Exodus 35:1-40:38), the presence of God came to inhabit it and dwell among the people (Exodus 40:34-38). About a month following the completion of the tabernacle, God communicated to Moses the words which are found written in Leviticus, a book containing instructions and guidelines regarding the duties of the priests in the tabernacle as well as the requirements for acceptable worship. A major part of Israelite worship was the sacrificial system which included burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), sin offerings (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin, the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart, and the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man, and the sin offering was offered for *non-defiant* sins.

The final offering discussed in Leviticus is the trespass offering which, like the sin offering, was mandatory. The trespass or guilt offering was given to make restitution (5:14). In the case of a trespass offering given because of **damages done to the tabernacle** (5:14-16), the worshiper was to bring an unblemished ram from his flock (5:15) as well as make full restitution for the damages (5:16). Tabernacle damage was probably defined as misuse of elements used in sacrifices, mishandling meat from a sacrifice, or failing to offer a required offering or sacrifice. In addition to the full restitution amount for the damage, there was also a twenty percent fine paid to the priest, who would make atonement for the guilty (5:16b). In the case of a trespass offering given because an individual suspects that he may be guilty of **disobeying a revealed commandment of the Lord** (5:17-19), the worshiper was to bring an unblemished ram from his flock to the priest and the priest would make atonement for his suspected sin. In the case of a trespass offering given because of **damages done to another individual** (6:1-7), the worshiper would be required to make full restitution (6:4-5a) as well as pay a twenty percent fine (6:5b). Moses provides a list of damages in this instance, "Suppose one of you sins against your associate and is unfaithful to the Lord. Suppose you cheat in a deal involving a security deposit, or you steal or commit fraud, or you find lost property and lie about it, or you lie while swearing to tell the truth, or you commit any other such sin" (6:2-3, NLT). An unblemished ram was also to be brought to the priest who would make atonement for the sin (6:6-7). Upon completion of this offering, the worshiper would be forgiven. Those who worship God should constantly be searching their heart for sin. The words of David are relevant to carefully examining the heart for any un-confessed sin, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if *there is any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

*Dear God, search me and expose any wickedness in me.*

## Leviticus 6:8-7:38

The book of Leviticus was primarily written to instruct the Israelites in proper worship and to provide the priests with specific guidelines for assisting the people in worship. A major part of Israelite worship was the sacrificial system which included burnt offerings (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), grain offerings (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), peace offerings (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), sin offerings (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin, the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart, the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man, the sin offering was offered for *non-defiant* sins, and the trespass offering was given to make restitution for damages done (5:14-6:7). Each of these five offerings had already been described in detail from the perspective of the worshiper (Leviticus 1:1-6:7), but the Lord provided further instructions for the priests who were administering these sacrifices (6:8-7:38).

**Law of the Burnt Offering** (Leviticus 6:8-13). No part of the burnt offering was to be eaten by anyone involved in the sacrifice so the Lord informed the priests concerning the disposal of the ashes, the fire, and attire of the priest. The burnt offering would remain on the altar all night and the fire was to be kept burning (6:8-9). In the morning, the priest was to put on linen garments, gather the ashes, and put them beside the altar (6:10). The priest would then remove the linen garments, put on other attire, and carry the ashes to a clean place outside the camp (6:11). There is a great emphasis on keeping the fire burning, which probably pictured God's readiness to receive a worshiper's repentance (6:12-13). **Law of the Grain Offering** (Leviticus 6:14-23). The words found here are similar to the instructions given for the grain offering in Leviticus 2:1-16. No further details are provided; however, it is revealed that Aaron and his sons were to give a morning and evening grain offering on behalf of their family (6:19-23). Since the offering was for themselves, it was not to be eaten (6:23). **Law of the Sin Offering** (Leviticus 6:24-30). This sacrifice would be eaten by the priest who offered it and any males of his household (6:26, 29). Anyone who touched the flesh of the sacrifice must be holy (6:27a). If blood from the sacrifice was found on the priest's garments, they were to be washed and then the bowl used to wash the clothes was to be broken or thoroughly cleansed (6:27b-28). **Law of the Trespass Offering** (Leviticus 7:1-10). The trespass offering was to be sacrificed in the same place as the burnt offering, which was on the north side of the altar (7:2a). The blood of this sacrifice was to be sprinkled all around the altar by the priest (7:2b) and the fat of the animal was to be burned on the altar (7:3-5). The flesh of the animal could be eaten by the priest as well as any males in his household (7:6-10). **Law of the Peace Offering** (Leviticus 7:11-36). If this offering was given as a means of thanksgiving, the worshiper would offer unleavened cakes (7:11-12) as well as leavened bread (7:13). One of each kind of bread was to be given to the Lord and it would belong to the priest (7:14). The flesh offered in this sacrifice was to be eaten the same day of the offering (7:15). If the peace offering was given to fulfill a vow, "...the meat must be eaten on the same day the sacrifice is offered, but whatever is left over may be eaten on the second day. Any meat left over until the third day must be completely burned up. If any of the meat from the peace offering is eaten on the third day, the person who presented it will not be accepted by the Lord. You will receive no credit for offering it. By then the meat will be contaminated; if you eat it, you will be punished for your sin" (7:16-18). When meat was consumed, both the meat and the worshiper had to be ceremonially clean or they would be cut off from the people, which meant death (7:19-21). This section concludes with some instructions prohibiting the consumption of fat and blood (7:22-27) as well as providing further instructions for the priests' share of the offerings (7:28-36).

*Dear God, may my sacrifices be acceptable in Your sight.*

## **Leviticus 8:1-9:24**

The first seven chapters of Leviticus instructed the priests as well as the worshipers in the five offerings/sacrifices acceptable to God in worship. The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), the sin offering was offered for *non-defiant* sins (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and the trespass offering was given to make restitution for damages done (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). Since the priests were intimately involved in assisting the worshipers in their offerings, they needed to be consecrated to God before the people so God commanded Moses to "Bring Aaron and his sons, along with their sacred garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of bread made without yeast, and call the entire community of Israel together at the entrance of the Tabernacle" (8:1-3, NLT). When everyone was gathered, Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water and first clothed Aaron, the high-priest, with the priestly garments which were described in Exodus 27:1-28:43 (8:6-9). Then as a sign of being set apart for use in the tabernacle Moses anointed the furniture, the utensils, and priests (8:10-12). Moses also clothed Aaron's sons in their priestly garments (8:13). Following these rituals, three sacrifices were offered as a part of this consecration ceremony: a bull for a sin offering (8:14-17), a ram for a burnt offering (8:18-21), and a ram for a fellowship offering (8:22-29). Moses played the part of the priest in administering these sacrifices while Aaron and his sons were seen as the worshipers. The sin offering was given on behalf of Aaron and his sons and the laying of hands on the bull symbolized a transfer of sins from the sinner to the innocent sacrifice. The burnt offering was identical to the one described in Leviticus 1. The fellowship or peace offering was offered and the blood from the ram was smeared on the lobe of Aaron and his sons' right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot (8:22-24). This represented their commitment to listen to the word of God, serve Him faithfully in the tabernacle, and live holy lives. After the sacrifices had been made, Aaron and his sons were anointed with oil and blood (8:30) and then ate the flesh from the ram of the fellowship offering (8:31-32). Following the meal they would enter a seven day confinement in the tabernacle, which would complete their days of consecration (8:33-36).

On the eighth day Aaron and his sons began performing their priestly duties. Aaron was to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself (9:1-2) followed by four offerings for the children of Israel: a sin offering, burnt offering, peace offering, and grain offering (9:3-4). Moses gathered all the congregation of Israel together and offered the sacrifices for himself and the people as the Lord had commanded (9:5-21). Aaron raised his hand toward the people, blessed them, entered into the tabernacle with Moses, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people (9:22-23). "And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it*, they shouted and fell on their faces" (9:24). The fire consuming the offerings meant that God had accepted their sacrifices and the people were joyful that they had pleased the Lord.

*Dear God, thank You for allowing me to come before You and worship.*

## **Leviticus 10:1-20**

Within the pages of Leviticus Israel's worship of the one, true God was clearly defined so that they would know how to maintain a proper relationship with God and man. Leviticus is neatly divided into four sections so that the worshipers and the priests would understand what God required in worship: the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), the beginning of the priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). The five sacrifices/offerings were discussed in Leviticus 1:1-7:38 and then God provided instructions for consecrating the priests as they assisted the people in worship (Leviticus 8:1-9:24). The guidelines were very specific and the Lord expected both the priests and the worshipers to abide by them or else they would face His judgment (see Leviticus 8:35).

Following the consecration of the priests, their ministry began as they would conduct all of the sacrifices outlined in Leviticus 1-7. On that very first day of priestly ministry Aaron and his sons began performing their duties, but Nadab and Abihu (Aaron's oldest sons) "...each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them" (10:1). Although the specifics of the situation are not given, Aaron's two sons did something which violated the commands that the Lord had outlined for them concerning the incense (see Exodus 30). The prohibition of alcohol in Leviticus 10:8-9 may also indicate that Nadab and Abihu had administered their duties while intoxicated. As a consequence for their disregard of the Lord's instructions, God sent fire to consume them (10:2). Moses quickly reminded Aaron that those who come near the Lord were to be holy and reverent (10:3). Rather than defend the actions of his sons, Aaron submitted to the Lord's requirements and "...held his peace" (10:3b). Aaron's two eldest sons were carried out of the camp (10:4-5) and he was instructed along with his two younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, not to mourn the loss of Nadab and Abihu (10:6-7). The actions of Aaron's two older sons were a stern reminder about the seriousness of approaching God flippantly. The Lord then spoke directly to Aaron, which is the only occurrence of God speaking directly to Aaron rather than through Moses, and commanded that the priests' judgment never be clouded by alcohol because they were to conduct themselves in a holy manner (10:8-11). In an effort to prevent further judgment, Moses gave instructions to Aaron and his sons regarding the portions of the sacrifices given to them to eat (10:12-15). In response to this judgment, Moses carefully examined the actions of the priests and discovered that they had burned the entire body of a goat from the people's sin offering rather than eating it as prescribed (10:16-18). Aaron heard the charge against his two sons and responded that he had not eaten the sacrifice because he was not sure if the Lord would have accepted it in light of everything that had occurred (10:19). When Moses heard the response of Aaron, he seemed to identify with Aaron's grief and therefore did not push the issue (10:20). This entire circumstance demonstrated the importance of following God's instructions and never deviating from them. Failure to obey and reverence the Lord would have devastating consequences on those who ignored them.

*Dear God, may I approach You in holiness and reverence.*

## Leviticus 11:1-47

Within the pages of Leviticus the nation of Israel is provided with specific regulations and instructions which would become the foundation for establishing proper worship of God. The book is neatly divided into four areas including offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and the guidelines for individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). Each of these areas would help Israel understand worship of the one, true God and distinguish them from pagan worship which surrounded them. The five sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38) were forms of worship before God and enabled the worshiper to approach the Lord with a repentant or thankful heart. The priests were the ones who assisted the worshiper in offering their sacrifices and God commanded that they be consecrated to Him prior to performing their duties in the tabernacle. The instructions for dedicating the priests are found in Leviticus 8:1-10:20. The next area of Leviticus centers on helping Israel define those things considered unclean (Leviticus 11-16). While *clean* means acceptable to God, *unclean* refers to those things which are considered unacceptable in the sight of God. Defining clean and unclean would provide tangible ways for Israel to distinguish between the two. The Lord speaks to Moses and tells him to inform Israel concerning clean/unclean foods (Leviticus 11), uncleanness in childbirth (Leviticus 12), uncleanness in disease (Leviticus 13-14), uncleanness in human discharges (Leviticus 15), and cleansing of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

Leviticus 11 outlined foods which were clean/unclean and these distinctions were given regarding animals on the land (11:1-8), animals in the water (11:9-12), birds (11:13-19), and insects (11:20-23). Although this passage of scripture mostly lists those things which could not be eaten by the Israelites, Deuteronomy 14:3-20 serves as a parallel passage and lists animals which were edible: animals on the land (Deuteronomy 14:3-8), animals in the water (Deuteronomy 14:9-12), birds (Deuteronomy 14:13-19), and insects (Deuteronomy 14:20-23). When both of these passages are closely examined, the following land animals were acceptable to eat: ox, sheep, goat, deer, gazelle, roe deer, wild goat, mountain goat, antelope, and mountain sheep. All other land animals were not to be eaten by Israel. Animals living in the water could be eaten only if they had both fins and scales (11:9-12), but all other seafood was considered unclean. A list of birds which the Israelites were forbidden to eat is detailed in Leviticus 11:12-19. Flying insects were not edible with the exception of the locust (11:20-23).

Not only did eating a forbidden animal make a person ceremonially unclean, but also coming in contact with a dead carcass of an unclean animal (11:24-28). Anyone who touched an unclean animal's carcass would need to wash and then they would remain unclean until evening (11:24-25). Being unclean prohibited an Israelite from worshiping or conducting normal interaction with the community. The uncleanness could even extend from the carcass of small animals to another object if it was touched by the carcass (11:29-38). In many cases an object would need to be destroyed if it was touched by the carcass (11:33-35); however, certain compromises would be made in this situation such as when a dead carcass fell into a well or onto dry seed (11:36-38). Although clean animals were allowed to be eaten, a clean animal which died on its own was not permitted to be eaten or touched (11:39-40). Touching a clean, dead animal would render the worshiper unclean until they had washed and the evening came. All of the requirements concerning clean and unclean animals reminded the nation of Israel that they were God's people, whose worship should be distinguishable from pagan nations. God had delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and He now desired them to be holy as He was holy.

*Dear God, help me to obey You even when it seems mundane. I desire to be holy as You are holy.*

## Leviticus 12:1-14:57

The first two sections of Leviticus discussed the five sacrifices/offerings used in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38) and the consecration of priests, who assisted the people in worship (Leviticus 8:1-10:20). The third section (Leviticus 11:1-16:34) is a discussion of what was considered unclean (unacceptable to God) in worship. Unclean foods (Leviticus 11), uncleanness in childbirth (Leviticus 12), uncleanness in disease (Leviticus 13-14), uncleanness in human discharges (Leviticus 15), and cleansing of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) were the areas where guidelines were given by God to Moses. God defined uncleanness for the Israelites so that they could remain distinct from pagan nations surrounding them and be holy before Him (11:44-45). After establishing the difference between clean and unclean foods (Leviticus 11), the Lord spoke to Moses regarding the uncleanness of a mother following childbirth (Leviticus 12). Following the birth of a male child, the mother remained ceremonially unclean seven days (12:1-2) and then on the eighth day the newborn child was to be circumcised (12:3), which was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). The mother would remain unclean 33 additional days after the circumcision, which was a total of 40 days that she would not be able to enter the sanctuary or touch sacred items (12:4). If the mother gave birth to a daughter she would be unclean for 80 days following the birth (12:5). It is not apparent why there was a longer time of uncleanness for the birth of a daughter. Whether the child born was a male or female, when the time her uncleanness expired she was to offer a burnt offering (Leviticus 1) and a sin offering (Leviticus 4:1-5:13) with the assistance of the priest (12:6). The priest would offer these sacrifices before the Lord and the new mother would be declared clean (12:7-8).

Leviticus 13 discusses the role of priests in diagnosing, treating, and cleansing skin diseases in worshipers. Although priests were not considered doctors, they did serve as the ones who helped prevent contagious diseases from spreading. Whenever a suspicious spot appeared on a person's skin, he was to be brought to the priest who would examine the spot and determine whether the spot was a disease (13:1-2). If the spot was diseased, the priest would declare him unclean (13:3); however, if a diagnosis could not be made, the man would be isolated for seven days and then reexamined (13:4-8). Any spread of the spot to other areas would result in a diagnosis of a disease and the man or woman would become unclean (13:9-11). The word *leprosy* appearing throughout this passage is probably not only limited to the disease of leprosy, but also rashes, measles, smallpox, or scarlet fever. In some cases the body would turn white from the disease after a few weeks, but this meant that the skin was healing and he would be declared clean by the priest (13:12-17). Guidelines are also given concerning boils (13:18-23), burns (13:24-28), sores on the head or in the beard (13:29-37), and various other skin diseases (13:38-46). Attention was also given to the garments worn by those infected with contagious skin diseases, whether they were to be burned or washed (13:47-59).

Leviticus 14 discusses the cleansing ritual associated with healed lepers. The priest would meet the healed leper outside the camp and perform a purification ceremony on him (14:1-7). The one being purified was to wash their clothes, shave, and bathe before returning to camp where they would remain outside their tent for seven days (14:8). They would need to shave, wash their clothes, and bathe once again before being declared ceremonially clean (14:9). On the eighth day a trespass, sin, burnt, and grain offerings were to be made by the priest on behalf of the worshiper (14:10-20). Guidelines are also provided for those worshipers who may be too poor to offer the commanded sacrifices (14:21-32). The concluding thoughts in this section deal with handling a house which has been plagued with mildew (14:33-57). Why was the establishment of these guidelines important? Establishing these guidelines would not only prevent disease from spreading throughout the nation of Israel, but also serve as a tangible reminder that a person must be clean to worship God.

*Dear God, may my heart be clean so that my worship will be acceptable in Your sight.*

## Leviticus 15:1-33

Leviticus is a book which was written so that the nation of Israel would come to understand acceptable and unacceptable worship before a holy and righteous God. The Lord desired the worship and lifestyle of the Israelites to be distinct from the pagan nations surrounding them and the words contained in this book provide specific guidelines in four areas: offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). Uncleanness in worship is currently being discussed and Moses refers to several areas that the children of Israel need to consider such as clean/unclean foods (Leviticus 11), uncleanness in childbirth (Leviticus 12), uncleanness in disease (Leviticus 13-14), uncleanness in human discharges (Leviticus 15), and cleansing of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). A discussion of uncleanness would assist the priests as well as the worshipers separate holy from unholy. In Leviticus 15 the Lord provides some laws concerning bodily discharges by men (15:1-18) and women (15:19-30).

Concerning male bodily discharges, there are two different kinds mentioned: unnatural discharges from the male sexual organ (15:2-15) and natural discharges from the male sexual organ (15:16-18). *Unnatural discharges* caused by a sexually transmitted disease (probably gonorrhea) would render a man ceremonially unclean (15:2-3). Since the discharge from the organ is highly contagious, anything or anyone who touched the discharge also became unclean and needed to follow specific guidelines for becoming clean again (15:4-12). After the cleansing had taken place, the individual had to wait seven days and then on the eighth day offer a sin offering and burnt offering (15:13-15). He would then be declared ceremonially clean by the priest. *Natural discharges* from the male sexual organ such as a nocturnal emission of semen or an emission during intercourse would only render a man unclean until the evening (15:16-18). He would just need to wash his body in water before becoming clean again.

Concerning female bodily discharges, there were two different kinds mentioned: her monthly period (15:19-24) and any unnatural discharge possibly caused by disease (15:25-30). A woman's *natural discharge* would happen once a month and make her unclean for seven days (15:19); furthermore, anyone or anything that touched a woman during this time would need to be washed and remain unclean until evening (15:20-24). *Unnatural discharges* from a woman would make her unclean until the discharge had cleared up (15:25). Anything or anyone she touched would also become unclean until they washed and the evening had come (15:26-27). After the discharge had cleared up the woman would remain unclean seven more days and on the eighth day offer a sin offering and a burnt offering before being declared clean by the priest (15:28-30).

These laws of uncleanness in bodily discharges would have been a regular reminder to Israel concerning the importance of approaching God with absolute reverence and purity. God did not want His people to come before Him with any type of bodily impurity, whether it was natural or unnatural. Although some may consider these guidelines strict, the people of Israel were learning that worship of God was a serious matter and anyone who approached Him flippantly would be judged (15:31-33). These outward signs of clean/unclean would hopefully remind people that they were also to be pure in heart when they worshiped Him.

*Dear God, help me to stay pure in my body and in my heart.*

## Leviticus 16:1-34

The Lord expected the nation of Israel to worship Him with an internal holiness as well as an external purity. The book of Leviticus details how an Israelite worshiper can maintain external purity so that they are able to freely worship God in the tabernacle. Guidelines in four areas are given to those who would worship the one, true God: offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). In the section regarding uncleanness in worship there are instructions given concerning clean/unclean foods (Leviticus 11), uncleanness in childbirth (Leviticus 12), uncleanness in disease (Leviticus 13-14), uncleanness in human discharges (Leviticus 15), and cleansing of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The cleansing of the tabernacle, called the Day of Atonement, occurred once a year and was designed to cover the sins of Israel. Although the nation of Israel observed sacrifices and religious rituals throughout the year, defilement still remained in the worshipers and in the tabernacle, whether intentional or unintentional. The establishment of the Day of Atonement was given following the rebellion and death of Aaron's two sons (16:1), Nadab and Abihu, who approached the Lord in an unacceptable manner (Leviticus 10). Leviticus 16 would provide proper instructions for the high priest's entrance into the presence of God.

A quick overview of this chapter will give the reader a fuller understanding of the Day of Atonement: the preparation of priests and animals for the ceremonies (16:3-5), a summary of the ceremonies (16:6-10), a detailed description of the ceremonies (16:11-28), and the establishment of the Day of Atonement (16:29-34). The **preparation** began with a warning Moses was to give to Aaron, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat" (16:2). First, Aaron was to bring the blood of a young bull as a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering (16:3). According to Leviticus 16:5, two goats were to be taken from the congregation of Israel for the sin offering and one ram was to be taken as a burnt offering. Of the two goats, one would be used for a substitutionary atonement (16:15-19) and the other would be used as a scapegoat (16:20-22). Next, he was to wash himself and then dress in the described attire (16:4). The **summary** of the ceremonies provided brief descriptions of the major elements such as the sin offering of a bull being offered for the high priest and his house (16:6) and the sin offering of the two goats for Israel which included the selection of the substitute and scapegoat by casting lots (16:7-10).

The **detailed description** provides further instructions for the Day of Atonement. First, the high priest was to offer a bull as a sin offering for himself and his family in order to be cleansed from sin before he made an offering for the people (16:11). The high priest would then enter the holy place three times. During his first entrance into the holy place the high priest would burn incense on the coals, which would create a cloud of incense over the mercy seat (16:12-13). This smoke cloud would have guarded the high priest from gazing upon the glory of God, which would have resulted in death. On his second entrance into the holy place the high priest would take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it on the front cover of the mercy seat and then seven times before the mercy seat (16:14). The high priest's third entrance into the holy place caused him to bring the blood of the goat which was used for a substitutionary atonement for the sins of the people (16:15-17). Following the cleansing rituals of the holy place, the high priest would perform a cleansing ritual for the altar (16:18-19). At the conclusion of the cleansing of the holy place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, the live goat would be brought and Aaron would lay both of his hands on the goat's head while confessing the sins of Israel (16:20-21a). The goat would then be sent into the wilderness, which pictured the sins of the people being carried away by another (16:21b-22). The ultimate fulfillment of this picture was realized when Jesus Christ bore the sins of mankind and became the atoning sacrifice for sin (see Isaiah 53; 2 Corinthians 5:21). The high priest would then cleanse himself (16:23-24a) and offer a burnt offering for himself and the people (16:24b-25). The one who released the scapegoat would also cleanse himself (16:26). The bodies of the bull and the goat whose blood was used to cleanse the holy place were to be burned and the man who burned the carcasses cleansed himself (16:27-28).

The things written regarding the Day of Atonement were to be observed once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month (16:29a). This day was to be accompanied by fasting and abstaining from work because it was a solemn day (16:29b-31). The Day of Atonement found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who offered Himself once for all. "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

*Dear God, thank You for Jesus Christ, who became the sacrifice for sin once for all.*

## **Leviticus 17:1-16**

Leviticus 17 begins the last section of a book which details how an individual could properly worship and obey God. Thus far in Leviticus instructions have been given concerning the five sacrifices observed in worship (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), the beginning of the priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), and the specifics of uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34). Leviticus 17-27 provides guidelines for maintaining individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). If Israel was going to be pleasing to God and distinct from pagan nations surrounding them, they would need to carefully follow all the worship guidelines in this book. In this section relating to individual holiness, Moses writes about sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). Failure to obey these instructions given by God would result in judgment, but obedience would bring blessing (Leviticus 26).

In Leviticus 17 there are two requirements given in relation to sacrifices and eating meat: the commandment to sacrifice only at the tabernacle (17:1-9) and the commandment against eating blood (17:10-16). Sacrifices were not to be offered any other place than at the door of the tabernacle of meeting (17:5-7). Any sacrifice made outside of the tabernacle would invite God's judgment on that individual and remove him from the people (17:3-4, 8-9). Offering sacrifices in the tabernacle would also ensure that Israel would not be tempted to make offerings to false gods, as was the practice of pagan nations (17:7). The second requirement relating to sacrifices and eating meat was that the Israelites must abstain from eating blood since the "life of the flesh is in the blood" (17:10-12). Blood is special to God since it signifies life and abstaining from eating it evidences a respect for life. Furthermore, blood was used to make atonement for sin and therefore sacred to God as the element which symbolizes forgiveness or covering of sin. Anyone who would eat blood was to be cut off from the people. Moses also writes concerning the blood of animals that are killed while being hunted. If a hunter caught an animal, the blood was to be poured out and covered with dust because blood represented life (17:13-14). If someone eats an animal that died naturally or had been killed by another animal, his clothes needed to be washed and then he would need to bathe (17:15). He would remain unclean until evening (17:15). Refusal to wash his clothes or bathe after consuming an animal of this type would result in him being found guilty (17:16). This process was necessary because the blood had not been drained naturally.

Ultimately, blood was not to be consumed because God chose it as the element by which a sinner is forgiven. The shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross brought life to all who would believe in Him as the atoning sacrifice for sin. Blood was sacred and to be respected by the worshiper. Any violation of these requirements would result in the judgment of the individual.

*Dear God, thank You for providing life to the sinner through the blood of Jesus Christ.*

## Leviticus 18:1-30

In this final section of the book of Leviticus (Leviticus 17:1-27:34), Moses writes concerning issues of individual holiness including sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). Each of these issues was important to remaining pure before God and offering acceptable worship to Him. Disobedience in any of these areas would render the worshiper unclean and cause him to be in danger of God's judgment. Leviticus 18 provided vivid instructions regarding sexual practices among the nation of Israel. Many of the pagan nations surrounding Israel included immoral, sexual behavior in their religious ceremonies, but God demanded that the Israelites remain distinct in their worship (18:1-5). Rather than allowing their flesh to rule sexual behavior, the people of Israel would need to remain pure and abide by God's commands in order to worship Him properly.

A sexual behavior that would not be tolerated in Israel was the sin of *incest* (18:6-18). Although many circumstantial situations are given in these verses, the principle is clearly stated in Leviticus 18:6, "You must never have sexual relations with a close relative, for I am the Lord" (NLT). They were to abstain from incestuous relationships because God demanded sexual purity among His people. Any Israelite involved in incest would be in violation of God's revealed commands, making their worship unacceptable to God. Worship of God and disobedience to God cannot co-exist. A couple more laws for sexual behavior were given in Leviticus 18:19-23. First, a man was not permitted to have sexual intercourse with a woman while she was having her menstrual cycle (18:19). Secondly, adultery would not be tolerated in Israel (18:20). Any man involved in a sexual relationship with another man's wife would become defiled. Next, Leviticus 18:21 reads, "Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the Lord" (NLT). Since this section is dealing with immoral sexual behavior, this verse was probably a prohibition of parents offering their children as temple prostitutes, as was customary in pagan worship. Another sexual behavior that would not be tolerated among the Israelites was the sin of homosexuality (18:22). Moses writes, "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin" (NLT). The last sexual behavior that would not be permitted in Israel was the sin of bestiality, which was the practice of a human being having sexual relations with an animal (18:23). All of these practices were a violation of God's intention for sexual behavior. The requirements for sexual behavior are clear. Moses emphatically states, "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways" (18:24, NLT). The Canaanites were the ones God would drive out of Israel's land and any Israelite who disobeyed these commands would encounter the same fate as these pagan people (18:25-30). The nation of Israel was to commit themselves wholly to God and His ways if they wanted to be blessed by God.

*Dear God, keep me sexually pure.*

## **Leviticus 19:1-37**

The book of Leviticus is neatly divided into four areas of proper worship before God: offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). All that is written in Leviticus comes directly from the mouth of God and recorded by the hand of Moses, who then gave these guidelines to the nation of Israel. If Israel wanted to maintain a proper relationship with God and each other, they would need to carefully follow those things written in this book. In this final area concerning individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34), a number of issues are mentioned including sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). Leviticus 19 primarily focuses on holy living in relationships between family and friends. The way a person interacted with friends and family revealed much about an individual's holiness and the Israelites were to strive to be holy because God is holy (19:1-2). Children could maintain a proper relationship with their parents if they would revere or respect them (19:3a). Honoring one's father and mother is the fifth commandment given in the law and was imperative to the structure of any society (Exodus 20:12). Also, an individual could maintain a proper relationship with God if he would keep the Sabbath (19:3b), not worship idols (19:4), and observe the peace offering according to given instructions (19:5-8). God also established the principle of gleaning, which was leaving the corners of the fields and fallen grapes for the poor to harvest (19:9-10).

In Leviticus 19:11-18 Moses writes concerning some general principles which promoted good relationships between neighbors. Stealing (19:11a), lying (19:11b-12), and cheating/robbing (19:13) would not be tolerated among the people of Israel. Mistreatment of the disabled (19:14), injustice (19:15), gossip (19:16), hatred/bitterness (19:17), and vengeance (19:18) were not to characterize the people of Israel. Instead, loving your neighbor as yourself was to be the guiding principle in all of their relationships (19:18b).

Leviticus 19:19-37 reveals some various regulations. Leviticus 19:19 prohibits mixing certain things, which may have been a pagan practice and Israel was to remain distinct. Leviticus 19:20-22 requires punishment of a man who commits adultery with a betrothed slave. This is an exception to the death penalty which was required for adultery in most cases (20:10). Leviticus 19:23-25 required that the Israelites not eat from fruit trees for four years after entering the Promised Land. The fruit from the first three years was considered unclean and the fruit of the fourth year was to be offered to the Lord. They were permitted to eat the fruit in the fifth year. Leviticus 19:26-31 specifically names several practices from which the Israelites were to abstain because they were associated with pagan practices of their culture. Many of these practices were closely related to worship of false gods. Leviticus 19:32-34 requires Israel to respect the elderly (19:32) and resident aliens (19:33-34). These two groups of people were not to be mistreated. Leviticus 19:35-36 required honesty in conducting business with others. Although there are numerous guidelines given in this passage, the nation of Israel was expected to know and obey them. Obedience to these principles would evidence holiness before God and others.

*Dear God, keep me holy in my relationships with others.*

## **Leviticus 20:1-27**

In the last of four sections in the book of Leviticus, Moses writes concerning maintaining individual holiness. Several issues are mentioned under the section of individual holiness including sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). In this particular passage, God instructs Moses and nation of Israel concerning penalties for breaking the law. Most of the crimes mentioned in this chapter are punishable by death. Why such a harsh punishment for the crimes mentioned? God wanted Israel, His chosen people, to understand the seriousness of sin. Proper punishment for sin was necessary to prevent others from committing the same crimes. Throughout the scriptures the death penalty was reserved for the most heinous crimes such as premeditated murder (Exodus 21:12), kidnapping (Exodus 21:16), disrespect for parents (Exodus 21:17), adultery (Leviticus 20:10), homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13), blasphemy (Leviticus 24:13-16, 23), and idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:6-10).

Several crimes punishable by death are specifically mentioned in Leviticus 20. First, any individual who offered their child as a sacrifice to the false god, Molech, was to be stoned with stones (20:1-3). The death penalty would also include anyone who hid their eyes from such a crime (20:4-5). Another crime which was to be punished by death was necromancy, which was a summoning of the spirits (20:6, 27). Persistent rebellion and disrespect for parents was to be punished by putting that child to death (20:9). Adultery (20:10), incest (20:11-12, 17), homosexuality (20:13), polygamy (20:14), bestiality (20:15-16), and intercourse during a woman's menstrual cycle (20:18) were to be punished by putting the offenders to death. Other forms of incest are mentioned in Leviticus 20:19-21 but the punishment seems to be barrenness instead of death.

The teaching on capital crimes ends with God commanding the Israelites to obey all of the instructions which had been given to them by the mouth of Moses (20:22). Obeying the Lord's commandments would keep them distinct from the pagan nation that currently inhabited the Promised Land (20:23-24). The concluding verses of Leviticus 20 remind the people of Israel that God had set them apart from all other nations to make them a holy people as He was a holy God (20:25-26). Disobedience to His ways would not be tolerated. Prior to giving His law, God had told the nation of Israel, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6).

*Dear God, may I walk in Your ways and obey Your commandments.*

## **Leviticus 21:1-22:33**

The book of Leviticus provides the Israelites with specific details on how they can properly worship the one, true God. Four areas of worship are discussed throughout the book including offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). Obedience in these areas would bring God's blessings upon the nation of Israel, but disobedience would result in the judgment of God upon the individual. The guidelines of proper worship found in the pages of Leviticus would also distinguish Israel, God's chosen people, from all the other pagan nations surrounding them. Individual holiness, the current area being studied, helped each person maintain a pure heart before God and others. Individual holiness includes topics such as sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). Leviticus 21-22 provide instructions for the priests, those who assisted the Israelites in worshiping God. These standards for priests were high because God expected them to model holy conduct before the nation of Israel.

Several matters of conduct are defined for the priests in these chapters. First, priests were to avoid touching dead bodies except in the case of a close relative such as a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or virgin sister (21:1-4). Priests were also to keep themselves separate from understood pagan rituals of the culture (21:5-6). There were restrictions on who priests could marry. Prostitutes and divorced women were not to be taken as a wife by priests (21:7-8). If the priest's daughter became a prostitute, she must be burned by fire in order to maintain purity of the home (21:9). Leviticus 21:10-15 simply restates the instructions just given. In the next several verses, the Lord speaks to Moses and demands that any priest who assists the worshiper with sacrifices must not have any physical deformities (21:16-24). Deformity in the priest may distract the worshiper and would not represent the wholeness of God. Although a physically deformed priest could not help in matters of sacrifices, he was permitted to eat of the holy and most holy food from the sacrifices (21:22).

In Leviticus 22 the Lord gave Aaron regulations for the priests to remain ceremonially clean while performing any of the priestly duties (22:1-2). Any priest who performs duties while unclean was to be "cut off" from the presence of the Lord (22:3). Leviticus 22:9 indicates that performing priestly duties while unclean could result in death. The Lord listed some of the things that would make a priest unclean, but also described how he could again become clean (22:4-8). Some of the things which would render a priest unclean were skin disease, contact with a dead body, having an emission of semen, touching an unclean animal, or touching someone who is ceremonially unclean. God also provides further instructions regarding the people within the priest's household who were able to eat of the sacred offerings made by worshipers (22:10-13). Anyone who ate of the sacred offering but was not permitted to do so was required to make restitution and then pay an additional twenty percent (22:14-16).

The concluding verses of Leviticus 22 define acceptable and unacceptable sacrifices. If a burnt offering (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), peace offering (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), or any special offering was made to the Lord, the animal must be without defect (22:18-21). Any defect or deformity in an animal used for sacrifice would not be accepted (22:22-25). Furthermore, animals younger than seven days were not be used as a sacrifice (22:26-27) nor should a new mother be offered as a sacrifice (22:28). The Lord also reminds the priests that a thanksgiving offering was to be offered properly and the entire sacrificial animal was to be eaten on the same day it was offered (22:29-30). Obedience to these instructions was to be observed because God had delivered them from Egypt and expected them not to profane His name through disobedience (22:31-33).

*Dear God, You've delivered me from sin and now I pray that You would make me obedient to Your ways.*

## Leviticus 23:1-44

Individuals who were a part of the nation of Israel could remain holy and pure before God by obeying the guidelines set forth in such matters as sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), and behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22); however, there were also ways that the nation as a whole could remain right with God, which were expressed in celebrating religious festivals. These national expressions of worship were detailed in Leviticus 23 and include the Sabbath (23:3), Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:5-8), Feast of Firstfruits (23:9-14), Feast of Weeks (23:15-22), Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25), Day of Atonement (23:26-32), and the Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-44). Each of these feasts were an appointed time when Israel was to come together to publicly display their worship of God. If Israel wanted to maintain a proper relationship with God they would need to celebrate these festivals according to the instructions given by God.

Although the Sabbath is the only weekly display of worship, the mentioning of it reminded the Israelites that they were to work six days and on the seventh day they were to rest (23:3). The command to keep the Sabbath was established in God's initial creation and then repeated as a part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). The rest of the celebrations were to be observed yearly. Here is a listing of the Feasts and some details concerning each one:

**Feast:** The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:4-8)

**Date:** 14th of the first month, March/April on the Jewish calendar, at sunset the Passover begins (23:5). Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th of the first month and ended on the 21st (23:6)

**Purpose:** The Passover celebrated God's delivering of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread served as a reminder of Israel's quick departure from Egypt and their related hardships

**Feast:** Feast of Firstfruits (23:9-14)

**Date:** 16th of the first month, which would have been celebrated as a part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

**Purpose:** The first part of the barley harvest was to be brought to the priest (23:9-11) along with a burnt, grain, and drink offering (23:12-13) as a consecration of the entire harvest to God.

**Feast:** Feast of Weeks/Harvest or Pentecost (23:15-22)

**Date:** The 50th day after the Sabbath preceding the Feast of Firstfruits, which would have been around the 6th of May/June (23:15-16)

**Purpose:** This was a dedication of the wheat harvest to the Lord by offering special sacrifices (23:17-20). The sacrifices would sanctify Israel and ready her for a new season of work. Celebrating this feast also reminded Israel to care for the poor if it was in their ability to help (23:22)

**Feast:** Feast of Trumpets or Rosh Hashanah (23:23-25)

**Date:** the first day of the seventh month, September/October (23:24)

**Purpose:** Trumpets were blown on this day as a special reminder that the Day of Atonement was approaching. The day of this feast was to be a day of rest and special offerings/sacrifices were to be made (23:25; Numbers 29:1-6)

**Feast:** Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (23:26-32)

**Date:** 10th day of the seventh month

**Purpose:** This day was appointed as a time to cleanse the nation and tabernacle from sin. Full details are given in Leviticus 16. Israel was to afflict themselves (probably fasting), abstain from work, and offer sacrifices on this day of cleansing.

**Feast:** Feast of Tabernacles, also Booths or Ingathering (23:33-44)

**Date:** 15th day of the seventh month and celebrated for 8 days (23:33-34)

**Purpose:** A feast of thanksgiving for God's provision of harvest for the year, but also a celebration for God's protection of the Israelites during the 40 years in the wilderness when they dwelt in tents. As a remembrance of this time of wandering in the wilderness, the nation of Israel was to live in tents for seven days.

*Dear God, help me to often reflect on the good You have done in my life and rejoice in Your work.*

## **Leviticus 24:1-23**

The book of Leviticus is clearly a guidebook for the nation of Israel to maintain proper worship of the one, true God who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and would soon give them residence in the land of Canaan. God wanted to ensure that the Israelites would not be influenced or involved in worshiping other gods like many of the nations that surrounded them so the words written in Leviticus revealed what was expected from them. Issues significant to Israel's worship were contained in this book and included matters such as offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). Since Leviticus 17 Moses had been writing concerning how a person could maintain holiness and purity before God. The topics he addressed with the nation of Israel regarding their holiness were sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24), and laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25).

The first nine verses of Leviticus 24 discuss ceremonial regulations relating to the care of items in the tabernacle such as the golden lampstand (24:1-4) and the bread (24:5-9). Moses had already detailed the design (Exodus 25:31-39), construction (Exodus 37:17-24), and location of the golden lampstand in the tabernacle (Exodus 40:24-25) and these verses were a reminder that the golden lampstand was to be fueled continually by pure oil of pressed olives. This was important since this golden lampstand provided light in the holy place. Instructions were also given concerning the bread which was placed on the table of shewbread in the tabernacle. Although the table of shewbread is discussed in Exodus 25:23-30, Leviticus 24:5-9 reveals that there were to be twelve loaves of bread divided into two piles of six (24:6). In front of each pile, incense was to be burned as a memorial offering (24:7). The bread was to be replaced each Sabbath and given to the priests for them to eat in the holy place (24:8-9).

Leviticus 24:10-23 provides some additional moral regulations for the people of Israel as well as some reminders concerning issues which have already been mentioned. In order to warn against the sin of blasphemy, a historical example is given involving an Israelite, whose mother was an Israelite and father was an Egyptian, who blasphemes the name of the Lord and curses (24:10-11a). In this situation, the blasphemous act was either wishing a curse on someone else in the name of the Lord or simply cursing God. The punishment in this case was a little confusing since the blaspheming man was of mixed descent. Instead of punishing the man immediately, he was brought before Moses and they took him into custody until the mind of the Lord regarding this matter was shown to them (24:11b-12). When the mind of the Lord was revealed in this circumstance the man was taken outside the camp and those who heard his blasphemy laid their hands on his head, probably as witnesses against his crime, and he was stoned (24:14, 23). This example of blasphemy was to serve as a stern reminder that speaking against the name of the Lord or using His name flippantly would not be tolerated in Israel (24:15-16). Leviticus 24:17-22 reminded the people of Israel that the punishment should fit the crime. If a man takes the life of another, his life should be taken from him (24:17). The rest of the crimes mentioned in verses 18-21 were to be repaid according to what was taken from the innocent party. These laws would be the same for a stranger living in Israel as well as a citizen of Israel (24:22). The nation of Israel would exist by God's ceremonial and moral code of conduct. These commandments were not meant to be restricting but freeing. When the people obeyed, they would experience the blessings of God.

*Dear God, may my obedience lead to Your blessings in my life.*

## Leviticus 25:1-55

Leviticus was a guidebook for Israel to worship the one, true God. The words written in this book gave a clear testimony of what was expected from worshipers in order to maintain a right relationship with God and others. Throughout this book, Moses writes the words given to him directly from God and there are primarily four topics discussed: offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). These four areas provided a standard of conduct for the nation of Israel and the priests who assisted them in worshiping God. It was imperative for Israel to obey the laws which were established in Leviticus so that they could experience an uninhibited relationship with God.

The final topic of discussion in the book of Leviticus was the matter of individual holiness, which described proper behavior in areas such as sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24) and, finally, the laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25). Two special years are mentioned in Leviticus 25: the sabbatical year (25:1-7) and the year of jubilee (25:8-55). The sabbatical year took place every seventh year in the history of Israel. They were to work on their land for six years, but on the seventh year they were to let the land rest (25:1-5). Planting, harvesting, and pruning were not permitted during the seventh year. Allowing the land to rest for a year would allow the soil to be revitalized. The Israelites were, however, permitted to eat whatever the land produced naturally during the seventh year (25:6-7). The sabbatical year was also a time when all debts were forgiven (Deuteronomy 15:1-11) and slaves were released (Deuteronomy 15:12-18).

The year of jubilee took place every fiftieth year (25:8-10a). Moses described the year of jubilee saying, "Set this year apart as holy, a time to proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live there. It will be a jubilee year for you, when each of you may return to the land that belonged to your ancestors and return to your own clan" (25:10, NLT). The Israelites would rest from their labor and return to the land that belonged to their ancestors (25:11-13) during this year. There were rules concerning buying and selling of land in relation to the year of jubilee and they mainly centered on making sure the price was fair according to how many harvests were left until the next jubilee (25:14-17). The more harvests, the higher the price of the land. God also wanted the nation of Israel to rely on His provision during the seventh year when they would not plant or harvest (25:18-22). If they obeyed God and followed God's laws, He would provide a large harvest in the sixth year that would continue to provide into the eighth and ninth year (25:21-22).

Various laws were given regarding the buying and selling of land. Since God had given the land to the nation of Israel, they were only stewards of it; therefore, the land was never to be permanently sold (25:23). If an Israelite fell on hard times and had to sell a part of his land, a close relative was to buy it back for him or maybe he would be able to buy it back at a later time; however, if it was not able to be purchased back, the land would be returned to him in the year of jubilee (25:25-28). There were two exceptions to the land being returned in the year of jubilee. A house in a walled city could be purchased only a year from the sale and would not be returned in the year of jubilee (25:29-31). Another exception to this rule was that the Levites always had the right to buy back a house that was sold in one of the towns given to them (25:32-34).

God also gives some instructions concerning the poor (25:35-38) and slaves (25:39-55). If a man became poor, others were obligated to help him without charging interest for the money that they had lent him (25:35-38). The poor were to be treated with respect and compassion during their time of struggle (25:43). If a man became poor and sells himself into slavery, fellow Hebrews were not to treat him as a slave but as a hired servant (25:39-40). In the year of jubilee, that servant was to be freed to return to his family (25:41-42). The Israelites were permitted to purchase slaves from the nations surrounding them, but they were to never treat their fellow Hebrews as slaves (25:44-46). Any Israelite who falls on hard times and sells himself into slavery could be bought back by a family member or they could even redeem themselves if they became prosperous (25:47-53). If a Hebrew was still considered a slave during the year of jubilee, he was to be released along with any of his family members who were also in slavery. Israel was once a slave to Egypt and God had delivered them, so the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee were visible expressions of the freedom that Israel had experienced through God's mercy.

*Dear God, thank You for having mercy on me and I now pray that You would help me to show that same mercy to others.*

## **Leviticus 26:1-46**

One of the major themes throughout Scripture is blessing for obedience and judgment for disobedience; therefore, it is not surprising that the book of Leviticus concludes with specific blessings and curses for those who obey/disobey God's laws. Leviticus is a guidebook for proper worship of the one, true God and anyone who followed its instructions would be rewarded but anyone who disregarded the laws written in it would face the judgment of God. These words, given by God and written by Moses, were part of God's plan to make Israel His "...own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth...a kingdom of priests...a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5). Obedience was the key factor in Israel becoming these things. The blessings for obedience (26:3-13), curses for disobedience (26:14-39), and instructions for repentance (26:40-45) are outlined in Leviticus 26.

The chapter begins with a reminder that Israel should not make any idols or carved images for themselves as an object of worship because God alone would be their God (26:1). The Sabbath was to be observed and the sanctuary was also to be revered by Israel (26:2). Doing these things would symbolize Israel's submission to God. If Israel would obey that which was written in the law they would experience the following blessings: rain and abundant harvests (26:3-5), peace and protection in the land (26:6-10), and God's presence would dwell with them (26:11-13). The words, "I will live among you, and I will not despise you. I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people" (26:11-12, NLT) was God's way of promising an intimate relationship with Israel.

What if Israel decided to live in disobedience to God (26:14-15)? The following curses would be unleashed on disobedient Israel: terror from disease, famine, and enemies (26:14-17); drought and no harvest (26:18-20); predatory animals (26:21-22); more disease, oppression by enemies, and famine (26:23-26); and total collapse of the nation and captivity (26:27-39). Of course, each one of these curses was designed to turn Israel back to God but if they did not respond to God's judgment, another curse would be sent to them. It is obvious that the curses would become more severe if Israel continued to turn her back on God and disregard His ways.

Since God is patient and merciful, He reminded Israel that these curses could be removed if they would confess their sin (26:40-45). True humility and repentance on the part of Israel would be recognized by God. This provision of repentance evidences God's great love for His people, even when they have disobeyed. God does not rejoice in the punishing His people, but He uses discipline to turn them back to Him.

*Dear God, thank You for blessing me when I obey and disciplining me when I disobey.*

## **Leviticus 27:1-34**

In this concluding chapter of Leviticus, it is important to review the four overriding topics which comprise the book of Leviticus and provide a standard of worship for the nation of Israel. God told Moses to write concerning offerings/sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38), priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20), uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34), and individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34). Each of these sections covered numerous laws, which would become the foundation for worship of the one, true God. Here is a brief listing of each topic and the laws discussed under each one:

### **Offerings/Sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-7:38)**

Five offerings/sacrifices were discussed as a part of Israel's religious system. The burnt offering symbolized forgiveness of sin (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13), the grain offering pictured a consecrated and thankful heart (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23), the peace offering was given to celebrate fellowship between God and man (Leviticus 3; 7:11-36), the sin offering was offered for *non-defiant* sins (Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and the trespass offering was given to make restitution for damages done (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10).

### **Priestly duties (Leviticus 8:1-10:20)**

This section describes the beginnings of the Aaronic priesthood. Since the priests were intimately involved in assisting the worshipers in their offerings, they needed to be consecrated to God before performing any religious duties. This ceremony is described in Leviticus 8:1-9:24. There is also a stern warning to the priests about the seriousness of their duties, which is described in the incident of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10).

### **Uncleanness in worship (Leviticus 11:1-16:34)**

The Lord speaks to Moses and tells him to inform Israel concerning clean/unclean foods (Leviticus 11), uncleanness in childbirth (Leviticus 12), uncleanness in disease (Leviticus 13-14), uncleanness in human discharges (Leviticus 15), and cleansing of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

### **Individual holiness (Leviticus 17:1-27:34)**

The final topic of discussion in the book of Leviticus was the matter of individual holiness, which described proper behavior in areas such as sacrifice and food (Leviticus 17), sexual behavior (Leviticus 18), relationships to friends and family (Leviticus 19), capital punishment (Leviticus 20), behavior of priests (Leviticus 21-22), religious festivals (Leviticus 23), ceremonial/moral regulations (Leviticus 24) and, finally, the laws regarding special years (Leviticus 25).

These instructions were given to Moses as a part of the law he received on Mount Sinai and Israel would be blessed if they obeyed (Leviticus 26:3-13), but cursed if they chose to disregard God's laws (26:14-39).

Leviticus 27 tends to feel like an addendum to the book of Leviticus since the blessings/cursings for obedience/disobedience have already been defined; however, this chapter probably ties in with the curses since the Israelites would likely make thoughtless vows during these times. This chapter primarily focuses on the handling of vows, gifts, and tithes dedicated to the Lord. If a person vows himself to the Lord, that individual would give an offering to the sanctuary treasury according to his or her age (27:1-8). Vows could also be fulfilled by giving an offering in the form of an animal (27:9-13, 26-27). Houses (27:14-15) and lands (27:16-25) could be given to the priests in order to fulfill a vow; however, items already dedicated to the Lord could not be used to make a vow (27:28-29). A tithe (tenth) of the land would automatically be the Lord's, but if a man wanted to redeem his tithes he would need to add twenty percent (27:30-31). If a man tithed of his flock, the tenth animal to be born would belong to the Lord, whether it was healthy or unhealthy (27:32-33).

The book of Leviticus ends with these words, "These are the commands that the Lord gave through Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites" (27:34).

*Dear God, may the words of Leviticus remind me of the importance of obedience.*