

LEVITICUS

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**NEXT
LEVEL**  **ONLINE**

— OZARK CHRISTIAN COLLEGE —

SESSION 1: Approaching Leviticus

Opening Thoughts

- What if I told you we were going to study the one book...
- Today: WHY and HOW

Why I love Leviticus:

1. God makes himself _____ here in Leviticus.
2. Leviticus is central to God's _____ with Israel.
3. Leviticus helps us know, appreciate, and follow _____.
4. Leviticus is a largely _____ resource.

How to Read Leviticus Well

- Literarily –
- Historically –
- Canonically –
- Personally –

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What are your previous experiences with Leviticus? What are your expectations as you begin studying it this time?
2. Were you surprised by any of the facts/descriptions about Leviticus in this video? Which ones, and how does this new information influence your approach to the book?
3. Why is it important to read Leviticus "literarily, historically, canonically, and personally"? Which of these do you feel comes most natural to you? Which comes least?
4. How would you describe what God is doing in your life in this season?

SESSION 2: Drawing Near to God (Leviticus 1-7)

Opening Thoughts

- The New Testament on "Jesus died (as an atoning sacrifice) for our sins" –
- The first quarter of Leviticus is all about sacrifices, so we're going to devote two sessions to it.

General Reflections on Levitical Sacrifices

- God invites us _____ into his _____.
- Drawing near to _____ must not be taken _____.
- _____ provides sacrifices of " _____ " as our way back in.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. James 4:8 instructs us to "draw near to God and he will draw near to you." If someone asked you *how* to actually do this, what would you tell them?
2. Similarly, if a nonbeliever asked you to explain the common claim that "Jesus died for our sins," how would you break this down?
3. If you have not read through Leviticus 1-7, do so. If (or when) you have, what is your general impression of these chapters? What details stand out to you? What do you hope is explained in the next session?
4. Why might it be important to understand all the aspects of "atonement" rather than just focusing on one thing and ignoring or forgetting the rest?

SESSION 3: Sacrifices of Praise (Leviticus 1-7)¹

The Big Five (Sacrifices) –

(1) Whole Burnt Offering (2 Sam. 24, 2 Chron. 19)

- Details
- Meaning:

(2) Grain/Cereal Offering

- Details
- Meaning

(3) Peace/Fellowship Offering

- Details
- Meaning

(4) Sin/Purification Offering

- Details
- Meaning

(5) Guilt/Reparation Offering

- Details
- Meaning

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Describe what you think it would be like to actually offer a sacrifice to God. Think through the various steps and try to imagine what you would be seeing, smelling, saying, thinking, etc.
2. Which of the sacrifices do you find most personally meaningful today? Why that one?
3. Think about the different aspects of a relationship with God that the different sacrifices impact or express. Where does your own relationship to God need attention?
4. What did you learn in this session that you hope to remember? What is the cost of forgetting?
5. How do these sacrifices help you really understand the significance of Jesus Christ?

¹ Recommended resources for further study: *Leviticus* by Jay Sklar; *The Book of Leviticus* by Gordon Wenham; *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?* by L. Michael Morales

SESSION 4: The Glorious Arrival of God's Dangerous Presence (Leviticus 8-10)

Taking in the Word – What does it say?

- Ordination of Aaron and sons (Leviticus 8)
- YHWH's Glorious Arrival (Leviticus 9)
- Death of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)

Interpreting the Word – What does it mean?

- Lots of meaningful symbolic details...
- Main point: Yahweh has FINALLY found an appropriate place to dwell with his people.
- But even so...

Hearing the Word – What do we do with this today?

- Almost everything about this text *previews* what is to come –
 - o The High Priest previews the _____ Priest. (Hebrews 4-5, 8-10; 1 Tim 2:5)
 - o The priesthood of some previews the priesthood of _____. (1 Peter 2:4-9; Rev 5:9-10)
 - o The priesthood of some previews the leadership of _____. (Eph 2:19-22, 3:4-5, 4:11-13; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- So what do we do with this?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Have you ever looked forward to an event that did not go as you anticipated? Tell the story.
2. If you could be present at 2-3 Old Testament events (other than this one), which would you choose? Why? How do you think your worship would be impacted by having been present?
3. Same questions for this event. What would it have been like? How do you think your worship would be impacted by having been present?
4. Why was the action of Nadab and Abihu such a big deal? What difference does this story make for how you live your life?

SESSION 5: Clean and Unclean (Leviticus 11-15)

Taking in the Word – What does the text say?

- Regulations for Animals for Food (11)
- Regulations for Childbirth (12)
- Regulations for Skin Diseases (13-14)
- Regulations for Bodily Fluids (15)

Interpreting the Word – What does it mean?

- Two clues from the text:
 -
 -
- Two key principles:
 - Respect the _____.
 - Remember the _____.

Hearing the Word – What do we do with this today?

- Let New Testament texts and themes inform our hearing.
 - Consistently _____ literal application. (Mark 7, Acts 10, Romans 14-15).
 - Consistently _____ the call to holiness in ethical (relational) terms.
- Don't miss the main point...

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What do you think is the weirdest part of these chapters?
2. What is something you heard in the video that you found persuasive and helpful?
3. What is something you heard that you're not quite sure about—either you don't understand or you aren't sure you agree? Talk through these things together.
4. What relevance do the two key principles have for your own walk with Jesus?

SESSION 6: Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

Overview of the Day of Atonement

- Commanded (16:1)
 - o Timing – *not* whenever you want (16:2)
 - Preparation – animals and clothes (16:3-5)
 - Offerings (16:6-25)
 - Cleanup – clothes and carcasses (16:23-24, 26-28)
 - o Timing – 10th day of 7th month (16:29-33)
- Done as commanded (16:34)

Closer Look at the Offerings

- Sin offering for self
 - o Sin offering for people and place
 - Scapegoat sent away
 - o Burnt offering for self
- Burnt offering for people

Key Insights

- Looking closer –
 - o Everything contaminated now _____.
 - o Scapegoat as *visual representation*...
 - o The people now _____ in his presence.
- Looking ahead –
 - o Better _____ (Hebrews 7:23-28)
 - o Better _____ (Hebrews 9:1-14, 23-24)
 - o Better _____ (Hebrews 9:15-28; 10:11-18)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Reread Leviticus 16 and imagine you are there in ancient Israel. Think specifically about what you would *smell* at different points as the day's events unfolded (first if you were Aaron, then if you were just a normal Israelite worshiper). How does this change the way you read the story?
2. What was the point of the different offerings? Why did one goat die and the other one did not?
3. Read Hebrews 7-10 and note connections to the Day of Atonement. How does studying the actual Day of Atonement help you better appreciate the gospel?

SESSION 7: Watch Your Worship (Leviticus 17)

Understanding the Word (then)

- Restrictions for Acceptable Sacrifices (17:1-7)
 - o Two restrictions: _____ and _____.
 - o Two ways to take this and how to choose...

- Restrictions for Blood (17:8-16)
 - o Rules: offer or drain but do not drink
 - o Rationale:

Hearing the Word (now)

- Above all, this is a _____ check.
 - o Ceremony alone...
 - o Two dangers:
 - Syncretism –
 - Convenience –

- What about *your* worship?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. If you read this text before the session, what did you think?
2. How would you explain this text if a friend asked you what it meant and why it is in the Bible?
3. Have you ever been tempted to worship a goat-demon? Just kidding. What are some ways we “mix” worship of God with devotion to idols in our own day?
4. Backing up a bit: In a world where people don’t bow down to statues, how do we know when something has become an idol?
5. In what ways have you slipped into expressions of worship that are more about convenience than devotion? What will you do about this?

SESSION 8: Sanctify Your Sex (Leviticus 18)

Framing

- Who _____ is...
- _____ we are...
- How to _____...

Content

- Sex is *not* like this –
 - o Religion and sex
 - o Why so negative?
- Sex is *for* marriage –
 - o Exclusiveness and Expansion
 - o Matter of worship
 - o Degree of difference

Context

- Sex as a holy thing (in God's presence)
- Genesis 1-2
 - o Elements –
 - o Bigger picture –

Conclusion

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What do you believe the Bible teaches about sex? Where did you get your ideas from, and how confident are you that they are accurate?
2. What do you make of our current culture's sexual confusion? Where do you think the confusions and controversies come from? How have you engaged them so far?
3. What difference does it make to get the proper "framing" for reading this text?
4. Do you agree with DeFazio's observations about this text and Genesis 1-2? Why or why not?

SESSION 9: Laws and Reasons to Keep Them (Leviticus 19-20)

What do we find here?

What should we make of them?

- Rules or...
- Burden or...
- Customs or...

What can we learn from them?

- Because God is not like other gods, we are not like other people.
- Because God is Ruler of all, God rules over *all*.
- Because God is the author of life...
 - o Disobedience brings...
 - o Obedience increases...

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Do you have any prior experiences or memories associated with these chapters? Where do they come from and how do they influence your engagement with the text today?
2. What were you thinking and feeling as you heard these chapters read aloud?
3. How are you more prone to frame up these laws: rules/burden/customs or wisdom/gift/revelation? How does this make a difference?
4. Read back through this portion of Leviticus a couple times and ask the Spirit to draw your attention to some part that you need to hear. Why do you think your attention was drawn there? What will you do in response?

SESSION 10: No Exceptions (Leviticus 21-22)

Exposition of the Word

- Priestly Rules (21)
 - o Details:

 - o Meaning: Priests are not exempt from the call to holistic holiness!

- Ritual Precision (22)
 - o Details:

 - o Meaning: God will not accept half-hearted worship!

Application of the Word

- Who is exempt from the call to holistic holiness?

- Positional authority is no _____ of whole-hearted devotion.
 - o Beware of...
 - o Bear the...

- The condition of our hearts is revealed by the quality of our _____.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Who (or what type of people) are you most prone to excuse from the call to holiness? Why?
2. To what extent do you consider yourself a "spiritual leader"? Who in your life looks to you for spiritual example and guidance? How does acknowledging this make you feel?
3. In what ways have you noticed yourself "bending the rules" or thinking God's command doesn't apply to you? Why do we do this? Why do you? What are you going to do about it?
4. Do you believe that our hearts are revealed (perhaps exposed) by what we do? What does this say about the condition of your heart?

SESSION 11: Why Pick and Choose? (Leviticus 18-22)

Review...and Objections!

- "Rituals, rules, and hierarchy, oh my!"
- Picking and choosing...

Categories for framing Levitical decrees

1. Some are _____. (18:3-5, 24-28; 20:22-24)
2. Some are _____. (19:19, 23-25, 30; 20:25-26)
3. Some are _____.

Principles (how to tell which are temporary)

1. Check the Apostolic Teaching (i.e., the *New Testament*)
2. Think through the laws with patience and care.

Case Studies

- Decrees against "homosexuality" (18:22; 20:13; cf. Romans 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:9)
- Leviticus 19:19, 26-32

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What objections have you felt as you have studied Leviticus? How have you processed those? Which ones are resolved and which are still up in the air?
2. Have you ever been accused of "picking and choosing"? How did you (or would you have) defend yourself against this accusation?
3. Explain in your own words the three categories from the video. How do you find this helpful for making sense of Levitical laws?
4. What challenges do you foresee in trying to discern which OT laws apply today? How can you proceed wisely even amidst such challenges?

SESSION 12: Consecrate Your Calendars (Leviticus 23)

What?

- Sabbath Day

- Israel's major festivals
 - o Passover (*Pesach*)

 - o Pentecost/Weeks (*Shavuot*)

 - o Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*)

- Day of Atonement

Why?

1. Whatever dominates your _____ defines your mindset.
2. What regulates your _____ rules your life.
3. Looking back to look ahead...

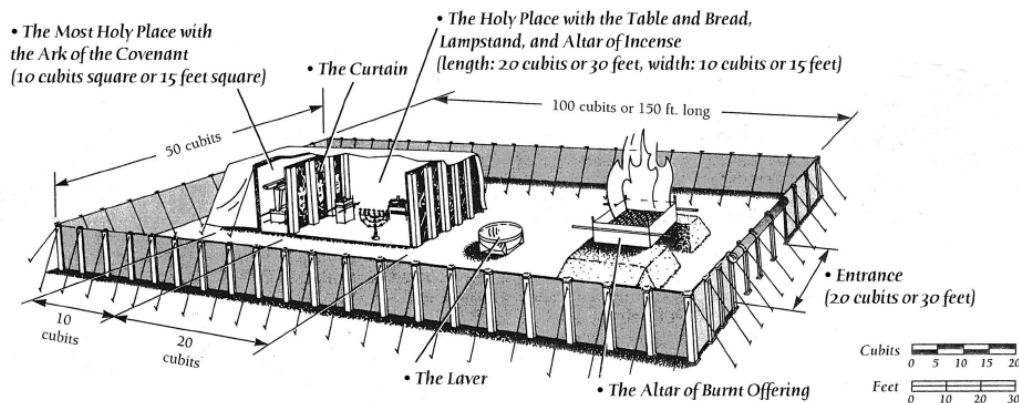
How?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What did you know about Jewish festivals before studying Leviticus 23? Where did you learn these things? What did you learn that you find interesting or important?
2. If you could only attend one of the ancient festivals, which would you choose? Why?
3. What past events do you think about the most (probably more than you realized until thinking about it)? How do these memories shape you today?
4. How well do you know the following: biblical history? church history? *your church's* history? Which of these do you feel most compelled to learn more?
5. How can you organize your calendar to draw attention to God's saving story and presence?

SESSION 13: Every Moment Holy (Leviticus 24)

Visualizing the Tabernacle



What the text says:

- Oil and Bread (24:1-9)
- Blasphemer Dead (24:10-23)

What does this mean for us?

- Just as God's blessing is continual, so also is the call to holiness.
- There is never a moment when God's name is not to be revered.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What times and places (during the day, week, month, or year) do you find it easier to be a godly person? When do you find it more difficult? Why?
2. What encouragement do you find in knowing that you are always in God's presence?
3. In what ways does this knowledge make you second guess how you live in some situations?
4. To what degree do you revere God's name? How do you know? What will it look like to take the name of God with utmost (and perhaps increasing) seriousness?

SESSION 14: Laws for Life in the Land (Leviticus 25-27)

Understanding the Structure of Leviticus 25-27

Leviticus 25: Special Years

- Sabbath Year

- Jubilee Year
 - o Basic idea:

 - o Principles:

Leviticus 27 – Special Vows

- What is this about?
- Merciful accommodations but with important limitations

Takeaways:

- Jesus brings rest(oration) *and* calls for risky faith.
- Jesus offers mercy without minimizing the seriousness of obedience.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What are some ways we can apply the basic principles of the Jubilee year to our own lives (as individuals, churches, and communities)? What are some of the differences between our context and ancient Israel's that we need to keep in mind in seeking application?
2. If you are interested, obtain Jay Sklar's commentary on *Leviticus* and read his explanation of slavery in Israel's society and the OT texts. Do you find his explanations persuasive? What should we do with texts like these today?
3. How does what Leviticus 27 says about vows compare to other places the Bible talks about this topic? How do the various texts work together to paint a composite picture?
4. Have you ever made any vows to God? (Maybe in a time of need, or a time of intense devotion.) Did you keep your vow? Do you have any unresolved vows that need attention?
5. What do you need most at this phase of your discipleship: to experience Christ's mercy or to remember the seriousness of obedience? Why?

SESSION 15: Blessings and Curses in Christ (Leviticus 26)

Reading in Context(s)

- Historical –
- Literary –
- Scriptural (canonical/theological) –

Hearing the Content

- Blessings upon disobedience (26:1-13)
 - o _____
 - o _____
 - o _____
- Discipline for disobedience (26:14-45)
 - o Specific “curses” –
 - o General observations –

Seeing Jesus Christ

- Christ became a curse for us...
 - o That we may have life (not death)...
 - o By grace through faith (not works)...
- Without which we forfeit the gifts God has provided.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. When you read a list of blessings and judgments, what is your initial impression? Which do you tend to focus on, and why?
2. What are some ways people could misunderstand God by reading this chapter? What are some ways people could misunderstand God by *not* reading it?
3. How often do you think about the life God wants for and with us? What difference does it make to keep the hope of eternal restoration at the front of our minds?
4. Read the following passages and think about (and discuss) the different ways that relate to what we’ve learned – Christ dying for us *and* calling us to continue in faith: 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2; 4:9-10; Romans 5:6-8; Galatians 3:10-14; Colossians 1:21-23; Matthew 9:10-12; John 10:10; Mark 8:34-38.

SESSION 16: Wrapping Up and Walking On

Where we've been:

- 1-7: Drawing near
 - o 8-10: Dangerous Presence
 - 11-15: Commands and Decrees
 - 16: Day of Atonement
 - 17-23: Commands and Decrees
 - o 24: Dangerous Presence
- 25-27: Looking ahead

Where to go from here:

1. Look to Leviticus for " _____ ."
2. Organize your life/lives around God's holy _____.
3. Remember the role of _____ in regulating worship.
4. Draw near to God through _____ .

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What do you learn about the message of Leviticus by backing up and looking at the whole?
2. What are some other things you have learned in this study that you hope not to forget?
3. Generally speaking, what we always need most is a clear vision of Jesus. What have you learned about Jesus?
4. What is your plan for remembering what you have learned?
5. What practices would be wise for you to put into place in light of what you have learned? (What do you need to start, stop, or continue?)
6. What is your plan for turning good intentions into wise action?

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