

Leviticus

Pastoral Note to Reader:

Can you remember when you got your very first job? No doubt there was some degree of uncertainty on what to do, and how to do it. Now imagine that job was working in a biohazard lab. Suddenly the importance of getting the steps to follow correct become VERY important. Leviticus is the instruction manual for the Israelite community on how to live with the Holy God in their midst. In the Syriac language they refer to it as “The Book of the Priests.” It covers very specific information from offering sacrifices at the temple, to cleaning your house.

Important Facts

Author: Moses

Location: At Mount Sinai or in the Desert just after Sinai



Date: ca. 1440–1450 BC²

Primary message and purpose

¹ Faithlife, LLC. “Logos Bible Study Atlas.” Logos Bible Study, Computer software. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, LLC, November 28, 2025.

² Barry, John D., David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder, eds. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.

It is no exaggeration to claim that the Book of Leviticus has had more impact on Judaism than any other book of the Old Testament.³ It is intensely practical and deals with the rhythms of everyday life. Although Leviticus is often ignored by the Modern Church as irrelevant to our modern life, the truths found in these texts, and what they foreshadow, must be grasped if the New Testament teaching is to be understood.⁴ Jesus referred to this when he said, “For if you had believed Moses, you would believe me, for Moses wrote about me.”⁵ By learning about the rhythms of Jewish life, from daily sacrifices to how to deal with skin conditions, we see what was important to the Lord and a foreshadowing of Jesus and what he would do when he came.

Important doctrine or themes

Within Leviticus we can find information split into some clear categories.

The Sacrificial System (Offerings and Sacrifices). The initial section deals quickly with the fact that the people are a sinful people trying to serve a Holy God. Leviticus 1–7 discusses the main components of the Israelite sacrificial system. In 1:1–6:7 the prescriptions for the sacrificial system are described from the perspective of the individual presenting the offering, while in 6:8–7:38 the laws are detailed from the standpoint of the priests who were the primary handlers of the offerings⁶

The Institution of the Priesthood. The inauguration and consecration of the priests is the fulfillment of the instructions given in Exodus 29.⁷ The entire sacrificial system prefigures the

³ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 22.

⁴ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 22.

⁵ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [The Lexham English Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Jn 5:46.

⁶ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 80.

⁷ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 138–140.

person and work of Jesus Christ, who would not only tabernacle among men (John 1:14) but who would become the Great High Priest of the Israelite priesthood⁸

The Laws of Purity. At the end of the inauguration Aaron was commanded to lead the Israelites in distinguishing between the holy and profane and between the clean and the unclean (10:10). In Leviticus 11–15 the Lord instructs Moses and Aaron more specifically about what is considered to be clean and unclean.⁹ The concern for cleanness for the Israelite was an essential part of his response to the holiness of God. Cleanness is thus related to holiness, but the two were not equivalent. “The clean is not necessarily holy, but the holy is always clean.”¹⁰

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This section occupied the central portion of the book of Leviticus, and also the central portion of the Torah. It is a passage that clearly help us to understand the foreshadowing of the work of Christ. “Admission to the holy of Holies was barred to all except the high priest, and then he could enter it only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to create a perfect and remarkable coalescence of the most sacred individual, the most sacred of space, the most sacred day of the year, and the most sacred rite.”¹¹

The Laws of Holiness. Next, the text turns its focus onto the everyday affairs and ethics of the Israelite people. As will be illustrated throughout this section, holiness addresses every aspect of life¹² In the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament, a love for holiness and a desire to obey God are evidences of spiritual life. There is a lifestyle of living set apart for God that is set for here. Holiness is especially to be demonstrated in relationship to one’s fellow man.¹³ Although not the focus of the book, sexual prohibitions are detailed here which continue to have implications to our modern world.

⁸ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 140.

⁹ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 167.

¹⁰ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 168.

¹¹ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 212.

¹² Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 231.

¹³ Mark F. Rooker, [Leviticus](#), vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 231.

Vows and Tithes. The last section of Leviticus deal with Vows and Tithes. During times where we are either excited or in distress, we tend to overdo it. Vows are not required in the law, but if a vow it made it should be kept. When tithing, God knows our heart is to again, to go to extremes (overabundance - exodus 36:5), (not giving - Malachi 3:8), by setting guidelines for tithing, it reminds his people that he is the One who provide for all our needs (and our abundance) and gives us a way to thank him for that gift.

Memory verses:

Leviticus 6:13 “A perpetual fire must be kept burning on the altar; it must not be quenched.”¹⁴

Leviticus 7:29-30 “The one who presents his fellowship offerings’ sacrifice for Yahweh shall bring his offering to Yahweh from his fellowship offerings’ sacrifice. ³⁰ His *own* hands must bring Yahweh’s offerings made by fire.”¹⁵

Leviticus 10:3 “Among those who are close to me I will show myself holy”¹⁶

Criticisms:

It is easy to see how our modern culture tends to look down on the practices of the early Israelites as being irrelevant to our lives. But the early Israelites didn’t do these things based on a faulty knowledge of science, human anatomy, or modern societal norms. They did this because God Himself was telling them how to live and walk before him, set apart. But God also tells us “I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6). If we set our decisions on societal morality and how we should live based on human science or knowledge, it will change. But if we allow God to direct our way of thinking we have a firm foundation that will endure forever.

¹⁴ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [The Lexham English Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Le 6:13.

¹⁵ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [The Lexham English Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Le 7:29–30.

¹⁶ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [The Lexham English Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Le 10:3.