

The Book of Leviticus

Theme: God reveals to His people how they can rightly come into contact with Him.

Context: God is perfect, and mankind is not. Yet even so, God now dwells with His people (Exodus 40:34-38, Leviticus 1:1). How can this work? The book of Leviticus reveals to God's people the plan for God and humanity to dwell together. Through rigorous ceremonial and sacrificial laws, God reveals to His people the need for a substitutional sacrifice on their behalf. Without this sacrifice and atonement (payment), it is impossible to come into God's presence. Surrounding this basic premise of the necessity of sacrifice, Leviticus reveals Jesus Christ time and time again. From the high priest's garments to the laws governing no mixing of fabrics in shirt-making to purity rituals, Leviticus reveals Jesus Christ and our need for a savior. In all of these shadows, Jesus is not only revealed but is also seen as the fulfiller of all that is stipulated. This shouldn't surprise us as we read Leviticus in context. After all, Leviticus is a continuation of Exodus, and in the book of Exodus, it was God who acted in deliverance and preservation of His chosen people.

Connection: As was mentioned in the *Context* section, Leviticus is a continuation of Exodus. There is direct connection between the construction of the Tabernacle at the end of the book of Exodus and the laws given in Leviticus directing the functions of that same Tabernacle. To go along with this general connection, Leviticus is heavily drawn on by the rest of Scripture regarding the motif of holiness (clean and unclean), sacrificial imagery, and the function of a mediator between God and man (the high priest). To think of just a few examples of this from the New Testament, John the Baptist cries out, "Behold, the Lamb of God" in John 1:29. Not only is Jesus seen as the Lamb, he is also seen as the fulfillment of the high priestly office and sacrificial system (Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 6:19-10:18; 13:10-16). Barring direct fulfillment, Jesus quotes directly from Leviticus the second greatest commandment (Matt. 22:39, cf. Leviticus 19:18). Similarly, Paul cites Leviticus 18:5 most notably in Galatians 3:12, where he is revealing Christ's fulfilling work on our behalf. Peter, too, sees significance in the words of Leviticus, calling people to holiness with a direct quote from this book (1 Peter 1:16, cf. Leviticus 11:44, 19:2, 20:7, 26, 21:8), and that's only naming a few obvious ones. One of the reasons Leviticus is so connected to the rest of Scripture is that it gives the people of God a very tangible representation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Solid Rock Verses:

Leviticus 9:22-24—*Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them... and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.*

Leviticus 11:44 (see also 19:2, 20:7, 26, 21:8)—*be holy, for I am holy.*

Leviticus 16—*for on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins.*

Leviticus 17:11—*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.*

Leviticus 18:5—*You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*

Leviticus 19:18—*you shall love your neighbor as yourself...*

Leviticus 26—*But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers...*

Offerings: **Sin** and/or **Guilt** (chs. 4-5) → **Burnt** (ch. 1) → **Grain** (ch. 2) → **Peace** (ch. 3)