

Loving Leviticus Take Home Sheet

Sermon Series | Jan - Feb 2023

C | B175

The Message of Leviticus

“Holiness to the Lord” is how one scholar summarized the message of Leviticus. It’s hard to improve on that. Leviticus declares the Lord to be holy, commands his people to live before him in a holy way, makes gracious provisions for their unholiness, and legislates what holiness looks like.

**“You shall be holy, for I the Lord
your God am holy.”**
— Leviticus 19:2 —

Literary Structure of Leviticus

Seeing how a book is structured helps us follow the author’s flow of thought. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses structured Leviticus with alternating sections of legal material and narrative. Not only that, but the material in the first three sections roughly mirrors the material in the last three sections. Such careful structuring makes it easy to remember the contents of the book, and draws our attention to the centerpiece of the book: The Day of Atonement.

- A** Law - Sacrifices (1-7)
- B** Narrative - Priesthood (8-10)
- C** Law - Purity (11-15)
- D** Narrative - Atonement (16)
- C'** Law - Holiness (17:1–24:9)
- B'** Narrative - Blasphemy (24:10-23)
- A'** Law - Stewardship (25-27)

Some Things to Keep in Mind When Reading Leviticus

1. Leviticus is valuable to us as followers of Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15-17). It is Christian Scripture, as is the rest of the Old Testament. We no longer obey the laws of Leviticus as if the old covenant were still in effect (Heb. 8:13). However, we still profit from Leviticus (a) in understanding Israel, the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the early church; (b) as a foreshadowing of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; and (c) for understanding more about God, our sin, and general truths for living in holiness.
2. The Lord our God is holy, yet he has made provision to dwell among his people. Israel’s impurity and unholiness were removed through priestly sacrifices and atonement; God’s fellowship was enjoyed through sabbaths and the feasts. We understand all these provisions to have been a shadow of something greater—but the substance belongs to Christ (Col. 2:16-17).

3. The Day of Atonement is in the middle of Leviticus *on purpose* (Lev. 16). Atonement is both the bullseye of the book and the bullseye of our life with God. No one is saved by keeping the law; salvation comes only through God’s gracious work of atonement, received by faith.
4. The pursuit of holiness—i.e., Christian lawkeeping, obedience, sanctification—springs forth from atonement. Having been washed clean in Christ, we are called to pursue a holy life. So pursue it (1 Tim. 6:11); work it out (Phil. 2:12-13); train yourself (1 Tim. 4:7); strive for it (Heb. 12:14).
5. At every point while reading Leviticus, ask yourself, “How does this apply in light of Christ?” I.e., has it been fulfilled and set aside? Does the New Testament modify it in some way? Is it fully relevant even as a Christian? Allow Leviticus, understood in light of Christ, to shape your holiness as a Christian.
6. Let Leviticus fill you with wonder and worship. Marvel over God’s holiness, over his willingness to dwell among his people, over his provisions for their sin, over his wisdom in ordering their lives together, and over his lordship in all things.

Some New Testament Usages of Leviticus

- Loving your neighbor as yourself applies to Christians (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Gal. 5:14; Jam. 2:8).
- Jesus is the prophet like Moses, and how you listen to him means life or death (Lev. 23:29; Acts 3:23).
- Disobedience to the law brought a curse, and Jesus redeemed us from the curse (Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12).
- The church has replaced the tabernacle (temple) of the old covenant (Lev. 26:11-12; 2 Cor. 6:16).
- As were the Jews, so are Christians called to be holy as God is holy (Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:16).
- Labor laws are relevant to supporting elders who preach and teach (Lev. 19:13; 1 Tim. 5:18).

Your Own Personal Takeaways from Leviticus

“Leviticus leads me to worship God for _____.”

“Leviticus causes me to reflect on my sin by teaching me about _____.”

“Leviticus deepens my appreciation for the gospel by showing me _____.”

“Leviticus challenges me to pursue holiness in the following ways: _____.”

A MORNING PRAYER FROM LEVITICUS

Good morning, Father. I praise you as the Holy One. Thank you for giving your only Son to be my great high priest and sacrifice. Thank you for purifying me from all my sins through the blood of Jesus. Thank you for dwelling with me by the Spirit. As this day begins, please empower me, my family, and my church to honor your name as holy in everything we do. May our lives be an attractive reflection of your holy love, that our neighbors might join us in worshipping you. In Jesus name, Amen.