

# Leviticus 1:1-22:33

## Holy to the Lord

### Introduction

The **book of Leviticus** is a **vital** and **important** part of the **Pentateuch** (Torah), and therefore the **whole Bible**. It falls in the **unique place** right **after** the **Tabernacle** is completed at the **end** of **Exodus**, and last section of Exodus reads...

**Exodus 40:34-35** - 34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** NASB

As we pointed out concerning this, *“The question is, how can sinful man dwell with a holy God? How can God justly forgive sin and reconcile with sinners? How can the relationship that Adam had with God in the garden be restored? These are the questions that Exodus sets up for the rest of the Bible to answer.”*

This really **highlights** the **theme** of **Leviticus**, for it **sets forth** the **pattern** of **divine requirements** for the **Holy God** to **dwell** among **sinful people**. And this of course is **huge** in the **storyline** of the **Bible**, for it **sets** the **stage** to resolve what happened in the **Garden of Eden** at the **Fall of man**, where **humanity** was **shut out** from the **presence** of **God**, flaming **Cherubim** to **guard** its way. The establishment of the **Levitical Sacrificial System** sets the stage for **Israel’s worship** of **God**, who has taken up **residence** in the **Tabernacle**, in the **Holy of Holies**, between the **Cherubim** on the **Mercy Seat**. This is unprecedented since the **Fall**, and so therefore, **Leviticus** is the **terms** whereby the **people** of **Israel** are able to **live in** the **presence** of **God**, without having the **holiness** and **wrath** of God breakout against their **sinfulness**. Moreover, these **regulations** for **worship** and **atonement** for **sin**, reveal **monumental information** about **who God is** and **what He is like**. These **God-prescribed** precepts will become the **regulations** for the **Levitical Priesthood** and **Sacrificial System** that will govern **Israel’s worship** of God for the next **1500 years**, until the **Messiah** comes and **fulfills** all these **types** and **shadows**.

**Leviticus** therefore puts on **display** the **holiness**, **grace** and **mercy** of **God** in a vivid way, as **God** graciously **provides** a way for the **people** to **dwell** among His **presence** and to have their **sin atoned for**. Some **scholars** argue that **Leviticus** has a **chiastic structure** which has at its **heart** the **Day of Atonement**, the annual high

Sabbath when the **High Priest** enters the **Holy of Holies** to make **atonement** for the **whole nation**.

**Chapters 1- 7** - Sacrifices

**Chapters 8-10** - Priests

**Chapters 11-15** – Purification -Positional Sanctification

**Chapters 16** – **Day of Atonement**

**Chapters 17-20** - Purification in Community - Practical Sanctification

**Chapters 21-22** - Priests

**Chapters 23-27** - Sacrifices

In fact, some argue that the **entire Pentateuch** has a **chiastic structure** which has at its **center** the **Book of Leviticus**, and the **Day of Atonement** at the **center** of that. If this is true, that puts the **Day of Atonement** at the **theological center** of the **entire Pentateuch** (Torah). In light of this we would consider how the Day of Atonement points to the **greater Day of Atonement** for **all of God's people** for **all ages** at the **Cross of Calvary**, when the Lord Jesus Christ finally **atones** for **sins**, once for **all His people** for **all time** (Hebrews 10:10-14). There the curtain to the Holy of Holies which was **one foot thick**, was **rent from top** to **bottom** upon the **death** of the **Divine Son**, the Lamb of God who was slain for the **sins** of **all** God's people for **all the ages of time**.

That being said, we **should not** only read **Leviticus** for its **very detailed** and informative **regulations** on the **sacrifices**, the **Priesthood**, **clean** and **unclean**, and the **calendar** of **Feast Days**, but also in light of the **greater reality** that it **points to**, the **Person** and **Work of Christ**, and the **great salvation** that has come to us in **fulfilment** of these **God-prescribed types** and **shadows**. The **ESV Study Bible** gives an **insightful summary** of how **Leviticus** relates to **Christ** and the **New Testament**... *"The book of Leviticus is concerned with what it means to be the holy people of a holy God: it provides instruction for conduct, both in private and as members of the body of God's people, and it details the ways in which the sacrifices and priesthood are to be administered as God's gracious provision for his people's failures. Without doubt, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the culmination of salvation history, according to which he fulfilled the goals of the various offerings, the holy objects, the role of the chief priest, and the holy feasts.... Because of this, Christ's atoning work made obsolete the literal observance of not only the animal sacrifices and offerings but also the temple worship as a whole. But as long as believers continue to bear their sinful nature (which they do until they die), the atoning grace of Christ does not make*

*Leviticus irrelevant to NT believers, since principles can still be learned from the underlying laws in this book. In fact, NT writers such as the apostles Paul and Peter employ language taken from Leviticus in their exhortations to believers to follow Christ (e.g., offerings, the tabernacle, priesthood, and feasts). NT authors use the burnt offering ([1 Pet. 1:19](#)), sin offering (e.g., [Rom. 8:3](#); [Heb. 5:3](#); [13:11](#); [1 Pet. 3:18](#); [1 John 2:2](#); [4:10](#)), and guilt offering (possibly [1 Cor. 15:3](#), using [Isa. 53:10](#)) to explain what Jesus accomplished on the cross, and the peace offering to explain the Christian Lord's Supper ([1 Cor. 10:16-18](#)). Thus, the book of Leviticus serves as a constant reminder of the person and work of Jesus Christ and challenges believers to apply his gospel. End quote.* We should also **take note** that there is **lengthy discussion** in the **Book of Hebrews** (chapters **8-10**), relating to texts in Leviticus and **applying them** to what **Christ** has **accomplished** and how this **fulfills** the **Levitical Priesthood** and **Sacrificial System** for all time. One last **important note** is that **all of Leviticus** takes place at the **encampment at Mount Sinai**.

### Today's text – Leviticus 1:1-22:33 Outline

- I. Five Major Offerings ([1:1-6:7](#))
  - A. The burnt offering ([1:1-17](#))
  - B. The grain offering ([2:1-16](#))
  - C. The peace offering ([3:1-17](#))
  - D. The sin offering ([4:1-5:13](#))
  - E. The guilt offering ([5:14-6:7](#))
- II. Handling of the Offerings ([6:8-7:38](#))
- III. The Establishment of the Priesthood ([8:1-10:20](#))
  - A. The ordination of Aaron and his sons ([8:1-36](#))
  - B. The first tabernacle service ([9:1-24](#))
  - C. The Nadab and Abihu incident ([10:1-20](#))
- IV. The Laws on Cleanness and Uncleanness ([11:1-15:33](#))
  - A. Clean and unclean creatures ([11:1-47](#))
  - B. Uncleanness of a childbearing mother ([12:1-8](#))
  - C. Leprous diseases and their purification ([13:1-14:57](#))
  - D. Discharges from male and female reproductive organs ([15:1-33](#))
- V. The Day of Atonement Ritual ([16:1-34](#))
- VI. The Handling and Meaning of Blood ([17:1-16](#))
- VII. The Call to Holiness ([18:1-22:33](#))
  - A. Prohibitions against pagan practices ([18:1-30](#))

- B. Call to holiness ([19:1-37](#))
- C. Punishment for disobedience ([20:1-27](#))
- D. Holiness of the priests ([21:1-24](#))
- E. Holiness of the offerings ([22:1-33](#))

### Five Major Offerings (1:1-7:38)

At the end of Exodus when the Tabernacle was erected, the story ends with the glory of the Lord covering the Tent, but **Moses is not able to enter** because the **presence of God and His glory** had filled the tabernacle.

**Exodus 40:34-35** - 34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** 35 **And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** NASB

Here **God will prescribe** how **He** is to be **worshipped** and **how sin** can be **atoned** for, so that **His people** can **dwelt** in **His presence**, now that **He** has come to **dwelt among them**. The **Sacrificial System** is what **God has required** for His people to **make atonement** for **sin** and to remain his **Holy People**. There are **5 main offerings** that are explained here in these 7 chapters. **Chapters 1-5** concern what the **worshipper is to do**, and **chapters 6-7** explain how the **priest is to handle the offerings**. Each of the **offerings exists** for a **different purpose**, and God is the one who has **required** and **explained** how He is to be worshipped. Much of the material below on the offerings is provided from the **ESV Study Bible**.

## Levitical Offerings

Type	Purpose	Offering	Blood	Priestly Portions	Lay Portions	Text
<b>Burnt Offering</b>	Atonement, thanksgiving, vows	Cattle, sheep, goats, birds	Poured on altar sides	No	No	Lev 1:1-17
<b>Grain Offering</b>	Pleasing aroma, accompanies other offerings	Flour, oil, salt Frankincense	N/A	Yes	No	Lev 2:1-16
<b>Peace Offering</b>	Fellowship with the Lord communion meal	Cattle, sheep, goats	Poured on altar sides	Yes	Yes	Lev 3:1-17
<b>Sin Offering</b>	Atonement of a committed sin, type of purification	Cattle, sheep, goats, birds	Smearred on altars Sprinkled inside tent	Yes	No	Lev 4:1-5:13
<b>Guilt Offering</b>	Atonement of a committed sin, type of compensation for wrongdoing	Rams	Poured on altar sides	Yes	No	Lev 5:14-6:7

One **important note** is that it is the **worshipper** that does the **killing** and also **flays** and **skins** the **animal**. This shows the **very personal nature** of the **sacrifice** being offered for **one's sins** and the **sins of one's household**. That animal must die

personally for the **worshipper** and **his family**, and its **blood** will be upon their **own hands** when it is offered to the Lord.

### **The burnt offering (1:1–17)**

A Burnt Offering was offered **every morning** and **evening** for **all Israel**. But they could also be offered for repentance and **atonement for sins**, or to express **devotion** to the **Lord** in **thanksgiving** or **making vows**. The burnt offering was **totally consumed** on the **altar** and therefore a **costly expression** of **worship**. The mention of “**a pleasing aroma**” (1:9, 13, 17) implies that the sacrifice results in the **Lord’s favor** toward the **offeror**. This could happen in **sin contexts**, such as Noah’s offering burnt offerings after the flood. This could also happen in praise or **thanksgiving contexts**, such as the psalmist’s presenting **costly** and **pleasing burnt offerings** as **acts of praise** for the **Lord’s deliverance** (Ps. 66:13, 15). One is also reminded by this sacrifice of **Paul’s exhortation** to Christians to present their bodies as **living sacrifices** to the Lord (Rom 12:1). In Leviticus 1, three options are provided regarding the material of the sacrifice—a **bull**, a **sheep** or a **goat**, and a **bird**—but all were to be from the offeror’s **own possessions**.

### **The grain offering (2:1–16)**

The Grain Offering typically consisted of four elements: (1) fine flour; (2) oil; (3) frankincense; and (4) salt (see 2:11–13). They could be brought either uncooked (vv. 1–3) or cooked (vv. 4–10). The priest would not burn the entire offering but only a handful as a “**memorial portion**.” The **grain offering** would ordinarily be offered **with a burnt** or **peace offering** and probably served the same purpose as the **offering it accompanied**, whether for **petition** or for **praise**.

### **The peace offering (3:1–17)**

The Peace Offering achieves and **expresses peace** or **fellowship** between an **offeror** and the **Lord**. The ritual as a whole symbolizes a **communion meal** that is held **between** the **offeror**, the **officiating priest**, and the **Lord**. In OT times such meals were a means of affirming a covenant relationship (Gen. 26:28–30). Generally speaking, then, this offering was a time to **remember** and **reaffirm** the **covenant relationship** between the **Lord** and **Israel**. As with the burnt offering, there are **various** specific **motives** for offering a **peace offering**, ranging from **petition to praise**. In this chapter, though, the entire emphasis is on the procedure for the offering, with a special focus on the **burning** of the **fat**.

### **The sin offering (4:1–5:13)**

The Sin Offering is for **making amends** for one's **broken relationship** with the **Lord**, caused either by **unintentionally violating** one of the Lord's prohibitive **commandments** (4:1–35) or by **failing to do** something that one was **required** to do (5:1–13). (In other places the focus will be on addressing severe cases of uncleanness; e.g., [12:6](#); [14:19](#); [15:15, 30](#).) The **sin offering** is distinguished from other offerings in that the **ritual** can **vary according** to the **sinner's position** before the Lord (e.g., the type of animal required or what the priest does with the blood). A **core part** of the **ritual** is the **sprinkling of blood** (4:6, 17). Since this is a **purifying act** (cf. [16:19](#)), it implies that the **holy objects** are considered to be **defiled by the sins** of the **people**. Because of this—and the fact that this offering occurs to **address uncleanness** as well—some have preferred to call the offering a **“purification offering”** instead of a **“sin offering.”** In either case, the offering deals with the **sin or impurity** of the **offeror**, culminating in the **Day of Atonement** ritual in [ch. 16](#). In this regard it **foreshadows** the essence of the **Messiah's atoning work** on the **cross**.

### **The guilt offering (5:14–6:7)**

The Guilt Offering is for offenses that are **more serious**, including sins against one's neighbor either by robbery, or extortion. This is shown by the fact that the sacrificial animal is more costly (a male instead of a female) and that the sins are described as a **“breach of faith”** ([5:15](#)). The word translated “guilt offering” (Hb. *'asham*) is used elsewhere with the sense of **“compensation/reparation for guilt”** ([5:6](#)), and the offering as a whole serves to **repair** the **relationship** between **sinner**s and the **Lord**. The offering also **required** the offeror to **correct** the **wrong** committed **against** his **neighbor**.

### **Handling of the Offerings (6:8–7:38)**

This section focuses on issues related to the **proper handling, eating, and disposal** of the **various sacrifices** and **offerings**. The **sacrifices** and **offerings** are either **“holy”** or **“most holy”** and must therefore be **treated** with **due respect**. If this was not done, the offering would not count and the offender would be guilty **7:18**.

- The burnt offering ([6:8–13](#))
- The grain offering ([6:14–23](#))
- The sin offering ([6:24–30](#))
- The guilt offering ([7:1–10](#))
- The peace offering ([7:11–36](#))

One last reminder is that these **rites of worship** have been **commanded** by the **Lord** and **He** is the **one** who has **required** these.

**Leviticus 7:37-38** - 37 This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings, **38 which the Lord commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai.** NASB

### **The Establishment of the Priesthood (8:1-10:20)**

Here in chapters 8-9 the **first services** at the **Tabernacle** are **recorded**, including the **ordination** of **Aaron** and his **sons**. Moses had earlier written concerning the **consecration** of the **priests** in **Exodus 28-29**, and here those **commands** are fulfilled. As God had spoken in...

**Exodus 29:43-46** - 43 And **I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory.** 44 **And I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me.** 45 **And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God.** 46 And they shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, **that I might dwell among them;** I am the Lord their God. NASB

There is series of **blood sacrifices** for the **sins** of the **priests**, to cleanse them, as well as **anointing oil** that is **applied** to them who have been **set apart** as **holy** to the **Lord** for service in the tent of meeting. Careful attention is paid to the exact **sequence** of **rites** as the **Lord commanded**, and **Moses** is **faithful** to make sure they follow the **instructions precisely**. The **whole ceremony** of **consecration** lasts **7 days** and is attended with **beautiful** and **costly garments** and **ritual items** worn by the **priests**. Israel must go to **great lengths** to keep the **tabernacle** and the **system of worship** there **pure, clean, and holy** unto the **Lord**. This highlights the **holiness of God**, and God has required **very specific** and well-ordered **instructions** for **all** that is done there. **God is holy**, and He will be **regarded** as **holy** before His people and **by His priests** lest they die.

**Chapter 9** records the **first tabernacle service**. **Moses** and **Aaron** and his sons offer the **proper sacrifices** and **sprinkle the blood** in the necessary **places** and the service is a **success**. The **Lord** is obviously **pleased**. Here the problem at the end of Exodus where **Moses could not enter** the Tabernacle has been resolved.

**Leviticus 9:22-24** - 22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. **23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.** 24 Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. NASB

Chapter 10 records a **serious matter of rebellion** by Aaron's sons **Nadab** and **Abihu** and **judgment** from God.

**Leviticus 10:1-3** - 1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and **after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.** **2 And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.** 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the Lord spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" NASB

Scholars argue about exactly what they did wrong. Suffice to say it was **"strange fire before the Lord"** which the Lord **"had not commanded them."** Now Aaron and his remaining sons **Eleazer** and **Ithamar** continue the services as Moses commands, and the **directives to follow all the instructions precisely** are highlighted as **extremely important**. God here speaks directly to Aaron...

**Leviticus 10:8-11** - 8 The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, 9 "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you may not die — it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations — **10 and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, 11 and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses.**" NASB

Here God explains **3 major roles** for the **priesthood**: **(1) to distinguish** between the **holy** and the **profane**, **(2) to separate the** clean from the **unclean**, and **(3) to teach the people** the laws of God. In the coming sections the text will expand on these ideas.

### **The Laws on Cleanness and Uncleanness (11:1-15:33)**



This **section of Leviticus** concerns itself with **ritual states** and **ritual purity**. These are important for God's people to remain **holy** to the **Lord**. Much of the material below has been provided by the **ESV Study Bible**.

The **Laws on Cleanness and Uncleanness** are a guide for the **Priesthood** to fulfill their duty **"to distinguish between the unclean and the clean."** Chapters 11-15 apply these **principles** to a variety of areas of Israelite **life and culture**. Chapter 11 deals with the **matter of foods** that are **clean** and **may be eaten**, and foods that are **unclean** and may **not be eaten**. Chapter 12 treats the issue of **cleanliness** and **purification** after **childbirth**. Chapters 13 & 14 provide regulations concerning **cleanliness** in matters of **fungi, skin diseases (like Leprosy), and infections**. Chapter 15 considers **human bodily discharges** that may **cause a person** to be **unclean**. These five chapters constitute a **codified directory** for Israel, and in **particular** for **the priests**, that defines what is clean and unclean in God's sight.

The ritual states of **unclean, clean, holy**. Leviticus also often uses the language of **"unclean," "clean,"** and **"holy"** differently than today. With **"unclean"** and **"clean,"** for example, most modern readers are tempted to think of that which is **"nonhygienic"** or **"hygienic."** In Leviticus, however, these words **do not** refer to **hygiene** at all. Rather, they refer to **"ritual states."** The word **"holy"** is also used in **many contexts** to describe a **ritual state**. Understanding the concept of **ritual states** is very **important to understanding Leviticus** as a whole. Leviticus sets forth **3 ritual states**: the **unclean**, the **clean**, and the **holy**. On the one hand, these categories guide the community with reference to the **types of actions** a person **may** (or may not) **engage in**, or the places that a **person may** (or may not) **go**. Those who are unclean, e.g., may not partake of a peace offering ([7:20](#)), while those who are clean may ([7:19](#)). In most cases people are **"clean"** until they have been **defiled** by a **matter** that makes them **"unclean,"** such as touching a **dead body**, or a person with an **infectious disease**, or having or touching a human **bodily discharge**. In most cases people **can be cleansed** from the **defilement** by following a **ritual cleansing practice** as described in these chapters. The word **"holy"** is usually used to describe **people, places** and **things** that are **set apart** and **consecrated** unto the **Lord** and **free from defilement**. The **Hebrew** words for holy used in this section **qadosh** {kaw-doshe'} and **qodesh**, {ko'-desh} are used to describe things **sacred (ceremonially or morally)**; including **God**, an angel, a holy (One), a **saint**, or a sanctuary, also a **sacred place or thing**; or a **consecrated**

(thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), sanctity or holiness, like a day, portion, or an item, like the **Holy Crown** worn by the **High Priest**. You might recall the **Tabernacle** has a **Holy Place**, but also the **Most Holy Place** (the Holy of Holies), where only the **High Priest** could enter **one time a year** on the **Day of Atonement**. These words and concepts of course display the **ritual state** of God Himself, who is the **epitome of Holiness**, being **separate from sin** and **Most Holy** in **His character** and **attributes**. Therefore, **God** calls **His people** to be “**holy**” and to **bear His image** and **likeness**, because He has **set them apart** for Himself to be His **holy people**. Therefore, **chapters 11-15** apply these **principles** to most areas of Israelite **life** and **culture**. By constantly calling the **Israelites** to **ritual purity** in **all aspects** of life, the **Lord** was **reminding** them of **their need** for also **seeking** after **moral purity** in **all aspects** of life, a **calling** and **obligation** that **remains** even in the **Christian Church** today.

**Leviticus 20:22-26** - 22 'You are therefore to **keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them**, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. 23 'Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I shall drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. 24 'Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." **I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples.** 25 'You are therefore to **make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean**, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. **26 'Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.** NASB

### **The Day of Atonement Ritual (16:1-34)**

Surely the most important of the **holy days** for **Israelite life** is the **Day of Atonement**. This **High Sabbath** (it is a sabbath no matter what day of the week it falls on), is an **annual rite** that is for the **cleansing** of the **Tabernacle** and all the **holy things**, and especially of the **priests** and **all the people** of the Israelite community. It is the **annual cleansing day**, a **solemn day** of **fasting** and **purification** for the **entire community**. The **nature** of the **ritual** shows that **purification** for **sins** and **uncleanness** must be done for the **entire community** and the **Tabernacle**, all the way into the **innermost part** of the **sanctuary**. The ritual includes not only an **offering** and **cleansing** for the **High Priest**, but also for the

**holy things** themselves. Once the **High Priest** has **atoned** for his **own sins**, he then makes atonement for the **holy things** including the **Tabernacle**, and then the **people**. The aspects of this ritual are **highly symbolic** and deal with the nature of **ritual purification** so that **God** may **live among** the **people**, but also display the **amazing grace** of **God** in our **cleansing from sin**, and the **utterly final** and **sufficient manner** in which **God forgives us**, which is **ultimately accomplished** by **Christ**. It includes offerings from **two goats**, both symbolizing in a **very profound way** the **cleansing** from the **defilement of sin** that must take place.

**Leviticus 16:1-10** - 1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the Lord and died. 2 And the Lord said to Moses, **"Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at 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 over the mercy seat.** 3 Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash, and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. **5 And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. 7 "And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell, and make it a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.** NASB

As the **goat** for the **sin offering** is to be made for the people, the **second goat**, the **scapegoat**, also serves a **profound purpose** reflecting **God's complete** and **absolute forgiveness** of the sins of His people.

**Leviticus 16:20-22** - 20 "When he finishes atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. **21 Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it**

**away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. 22 And the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.** NASB

See pictured here the idea that **once a sin offering** has been **made** for the **sins** of **God's people**, the **sins themselves** shall be **banished** from the **presence of God** and the **people**, out into the **wilderness**. This is **symbolic** of the fact that once we have **received forgiveness** from **God** and **His righteous requirements** have been met for our **atonement**, the **Lord** will **remember our sins no more**. This kind of language describes our **forgiveness** in the **prophets**, which carries the idea of what the **scapegoat** has done by **bearing our iniquities** out into the **wilderness**.

**Psalms 103:12** - 12 **As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed** our transgressions from us. NASB

**Isaiah 38:17** - 17 "Lo, for my own welfare I had great bitterness; It is Thou who hast kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, **For Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.** NASB

**Micah 7:19** - 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, **Thou wilt cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.** NASB

**Isaiah 43:25** - 25 "I, even I, am the one who **wipes out your transgressions** for My own sake; And **I will not remember your sins.** NASB

And of course, the **greater** and **ultimate sin offering** and **scapegoat**, the **Lord Jesus Christ**, has **completely** and **sufficiently cleansed** us for **all time**, having born our iniquities **all alone** outside the camp.

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach** NASB

**God has forgiven all of our sins through faith in Christ** and removed them **as far as the east is from the west**, put them **behind His back**, drowned them in the **deepest part of the sea**, and **will remember them no more**. In fact he has so completely dealt with and **removed our sins** that He can say that we are **holy** and **blameless** and **free from accusation!** The **beauty** and **profound reality** that the **Day of Atonement** ritual is, points forward. All of the **aspects** of this **God prescribed sabbath ritual** point ultimately to **Christ**, who did indeed come and **fulfill them once and for all time**.

**Hebrews 9:6-14** - 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine

worship, **7 but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, 9 which is a symbol for the present time.**

Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, 10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. **11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.** 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** NASB

Praise God for a **final and completely sufficient atonement** that we can both rely upon and **rest in**, so that now Christ Himself has become our Sabbath rest **forever**. He is both the **sin offering** and the **scapegoat**, who has **cleansed us** and **removed our sins** as far as the east is from the west, never to be **remembered again**.

So this **cleansing day**, a **solemn day of fasting and purification** for the **entire community**, is required every year for the Israelite community.

**Leviticus 16:29-34 - 29 "And this shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; 30 for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord. 31 It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.** 32 So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, **33 and make atonement for the holy sanctuary; and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 Now you shall have this as a permanent**

**statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year."** And just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so he did. NASB One last important note concerning the **Day of Atonement** being the **theological center** of the **Pentateuch**. What is remarkable is that ever since the **Fall of Man** in **Genesis 3**, the **problem of humanity** not being allowed near the **presence of God** having been **shut outside** the **Garden of Eden**, has been **resolved here**, at least in a **temporary** and **prophetic sense**. God has returned to **dwell among His people**, even if it is **behind the veil**, in the **Most Holy Place**. In the fulness of time, God will resolve the problem permanently, and will make **humanity themselves** the very dwelling place or **Temple of God**.

### **The Handling and Meaning of Blood (17:1-16)**

Chapter 17 deals with the handling of animals, beginning with a reminder that the **blood of slain animals** should be brought to the **sanctuary**, and **sacrifices** to the Lord are to take place at the **sanctuary**. So serious is this matter of bringing the **blood** to the **sanctuary**, that anyone who does not do it is to be **cut off** from among the people. This imperative **directly addresses** the **idolatry** of the worship of Goat demons, and other **pagan practices** wherein the blood was used or eaten after **offering sacrifices** to them.

**Leviticus 17:5-7 - 5 The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the Lord, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord.** 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the Lord. **7 And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations."** NASB

See here **animal blood** is not to be used by **Israel indiscriminately** as it was used among the **pagans** of the time, and especially **not to be eaten**. The **blood** of a **sacrificial animal** is the **"life"** that **takes the place** of the **offeror's death**. The **life** of the **flesh** is in the **blood**, it is **sacred**, and must be **regarded as so**.

**Leviticus 17:10-11, 14 - 10 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by**

reason of the life that makes atonement.' .... 14 "For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.' NASB

### **The Call to Holiness (18:1-22:33)**

This section of **Leviticus** is a call to **personal holiness** for the **people** and the **Priesthood**. It applies the **principle of holiness** to many aspects of Israelite life.

**Leviticus 19:1-4** - 1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, '**You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.** 3 '**Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God.** 4 '**Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the Lord your God.**' NASB

**Chapter 18** concerns the **sexual behavior** of **God's people** and how they are **set apart** from the **pagan nations**. Very **clear and specific regulations** are given by which to **discern sinful sexual behavior** in a long list of **prohibitions**, the violation of which make one "**defiled**" (v-30) and "**unclean**" (v-24). **Sexual behavior** with any **family members** apart from **one's spouse**, any **non-family members**, any members of the **same sex** (homosexuality), or any **animal** (bestiality) is "**depravity**" (v-17) and a "**perversion**" (v-23). These are **strictly forbidden** for God's **holy people**. Here God explains why the **land of Canaan** has become **defiled** and will soon "**vomit the people out.**"

**Leviticus 18:24-30** - 24 '**Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.** 25 '**For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.** 26 '**But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you** 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); 28 so that the land may not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. 29 '**For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people.** 30 '**Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.'**" NASB

**Chapters 19-20** applies the **principle of holiness** to the manner in which the people treat the **land**, their **neighbors**, their **parents**, and **all other things**.

**Holiness** is to affect **every area** of Israelite life. One becomes **practically holy** by observing all the following **negative** and **positive commandments**. There is a **long list** of **statutes** for **civil behavior** among the **community** which **govern** the way people should treat **one another** with **love**, being **honest**, **generous**, and having a **pure heart**.

**Leviticus 19:9-18** - 9 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; **you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.** 11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 12 'And you shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord. 13 'You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. **The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.** 14 'You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord. 15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. 16 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. 17 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. NASB

Moreover, many **punishments** for **disobedience** are given in **chapter 20**. Many of these are **punishments** for **violations** of the **sexual ethics** of **chapter 18**. Special emphasis is laid on **Molech worship**, (which required child sacrifice), and on **mediums** and **necromancers**. Almost all the **crimes listed** are **punishable** by the **death penalty**, but for a few exceptions, in which the perpetrator is excommunicated. **Holiness** is to be **set apart** to God and **separate** from the **sinfulness** of the unholy **pagan nations** around them.

**Leviticus 20:24** - 24 'Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." **I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples.** NASB



**Chapter 21-22** specifically deal with the **regulations** regarding the **holiness** of the **priests** and the **rituals** they **administrate**. The Lord demands holiness for the priests and the offerings, it is the **ritual state** required for **their office** and the **work** they do. There is a list of **prohibitions** for **priests** that are not required for the people in general, including a **list of strict qualifications** for office (v-10-23). More strict **regulations of holiness** are required of the **priests** because they **work directly** with the **holy objects** of the sanctuary.

**Leviticus 21:6 - 6** 'They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the Lord, the bread of their God; so they shall be holy. NASB

There are also **regulations** regarding the **holiness** of the **offerings**. This chapter aims at guaranteeing the **holiness of offerings**, particularly against those who handle them.

**Leviticus 22:2-3 - 2** "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the Lord. **3** Say to them, 'If any man among all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy gifts which the sons of Israel dedicate to the Lord, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from before Me. I am the Lord. NASB

The **offerings**, just like the **priest**, are to be **without blemish** or **uncleanness**. In order to **properly honor God** with the **offerings**, they must be **costly** and the **worshipper** is not to **give God** their second best.

**Leviticus 22:19-22 - 19** for you to be accepted — **it must be a male without defect from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. 20** 'Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. **21** 'And when a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord to fulfill a special vow, or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, **it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22** 'Those that are blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the Lord. NASB

**God** is to be **regarded** as **holy** among the **people**, because **He** is the **Holy Lord!**

**Leviticus 22:31-33 - 31** So you shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am the Lord. **32** And you shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel: I am the Lord who sanctifies you, **33** who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord." NASB