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Article 3: Leviticus at a Glance

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LEVITICUS AT A GLANCE

This book lists the necessary rules and regulations which would permit the sinful Israelites to fellowship with their holy God. It also describes details regarding the duties of the priests, the five Levitical offerings and the seven annual feasts.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

HERE IT IS . . . HEAVEN'S HANDBOOK ON HOLINESS

Leviticus is a divine manual, or heavenly handbook on the subject of holiness. Note the appearance of the following words:

- Holy, and its root meaning, used over 100 times
- Sacrifice, 42 times
- Priest, 189 times
- Blood, used 86 times

This holiness is both vertical and horizontal. Thus:

- The vertical message of chapters 1-10 is *I am Holy*.
- The horizontal message of chapters 11-27 is *Be Ye Holy*.

Jesus may well have had the book of Leviticus in mind when he informed the Samaritan woman: "*God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (Jn. 4:24). No other book in the Bible affirms divine inspiration so frequently as Leviticus. Some 50 times it records God speaking directly to Moses or Aaron.

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Moses**. He was the younger brother of Aaron and Miriam (Ex. 6:20; Num. 26:59) who led his people Israel out of Egyptian bondage (Ex. 5-14) and gave them the law of God at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 20).
2. What? The books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
3. When and Where? 1405 B.C., from the eastern bank of the River Jordan in Moab.
4. Why?
 - a. Genesis. To record the origin of the world and the nation Israel.
 - b. Exodus. The supernatural deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage.
 - c. **Leviticus**. The purpose and functions of the Tabernacle.
 - d. Numbers. The failure of Israel to enter Canaan.
 - e. Deuteronomy. The review of the Law for that generation about to enter Canaan.
5. To whom? Israel in particular, all believers in general.

KEY EVENTS

1. The first of five Levitical offerings
2. The consecration of the priests
3. The deaths of Nadab and Abihu
4. Rules governing the cleansing of a leper
5. The Day of Atonement and the scapegoat
6. The seven annual feasts
7. Rules for the Sabbath
8. The rewards for obedience, the punishment for disobedience

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Moses:** Israel's great lawgiver
2. **Aaron:** Moses' older brother and Israel's first high priest
3. **Nadab and Abihu:** Aaron's two wicked sons, killed by God
4. **Eleazar and Ithamar:** Aaron's two godly sons

KEY PLACES

1. **Base at Mt. Sinai:** Israel would spend 11 months and 5 days in this location

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. In no other biblical book, with the possible exception of Revelation, is the number seven more prominent than in Leviticus.
 - a. Israel was to rest on the seventh day (23:1-3)
 - b. The entire land was to remain idle during the seventh year (25:4)
 - c. The year of Jubilee was to be celebrated after seven sevens of years (25:8)
 - d. A number of Israel's feasts occurred during the seventh month
 - Trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month (23:4)
 - Atonement, on the tenth day (23:27)
 - Tabernacles, on the 15th day (23:34)
 - e. Some of these feasts were to be celebrated for seven days (23:6, 41)
 - f. Seven Sabbaths were to be counted between the feast of First-fruits and Pentecost (23:15)
 - g. Blood was sprinkled seven times in the Tabernacle (4:6, 17)
 - h. Unclean persons were isolated for seven days (12:2; 13:4)
 - i. Israel's sin would result in a seven-fold punishment (26:18)
2. Leviticus provides answers regarding two all important questions:
 - *Question:* How could Israel draw nigh to God?
 - *Answer:* By offering the five sacrifices (1-7)
 - *Question:* How could Israel live for God?
 - *Answer:* By observing the nine festivals (23)
3. These feasts, mentioned in chapters 23 and 25, were two-fold in nature. The first three celebrated God's work in creation, while the final six spoke of his work in

redemption. The last six in fact (Lev. 23) offer the most panoramic preview of New Testament prophecy found in the Old Testament. They speak of Calvary, the resurrection, Pentecost, the Second Coming, the great tribulation, and the glorious millennium.

4. The phrase *the Lord said* appears more than 50 times in Leviticus—more than in any other Bible book.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Leviticus can be contrasted with Exodus. In Exodus we read how God got His people out of Egypt. In Leviticus we see the attempt of God to get Egypt out of His people! Leviticus stands in relationship to Exodus as the Epistles stand in relationship to the Gospels. In Exodus and the Gospels is seen the manifestation of the Passover Lamb! In Exodus we read of God's approach to us, but in Leviticus of our approach to God!

In Exodus Christ is the Savior, but in Leviticus He is the sanctifier. In the former book he spoke from Sinai, but here from the sanctuary. Leviticus gives us the second of two great symbols for sin in the Old Testament. It is leprosy (13-14). The other is leaven, as described in Exodus 12:15-20. The triumph and tragedy of the book are closely related. The former was the divine consecration of Israel's first high priest (8-9), while the latter was the divine destruction of his two boys for blasphemy (10).

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Burnt Offering (1:3-17; 6:8-13) signifies Jesus' complete dedication to the Father (Mt. 26:39-44; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 10:4-7).
2. The Grain Offering (2:1-16; 6:14-18; 7:12, 13) signifies Jesus' perfect humanity (Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 3:5).
3. The Peace Offering (3:1-17; 7:11-21, 28-34) signifies the peace Jesus gives to the believer (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20).
4. The Sin Offering (4:1-5:13; 6:24-30) signifies Jesus was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).
5. The Trespass Offering (5:14-6:7; 7:1-7) signifies Jesus also became our trespass offering (Col. 2:13).
6. The Anointed High Priest (8:7-12). See Heb. 1:9.
7. The Two Goats on the Day of Atonement (16:5, 7-10).
 - The live goat (see Heb. 9:26; Rom. 8:33, 34; Rev. 1:18).
 - The scapegoat (see Heb. 9:14, 26; Rom. 3:24-26).
8. The Feast of Passover (23:5). See 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Peter 1:19).
9. The Feast of Firstfruits (23:10). See 1 Cor. 15:23.