

SESSION 4 ("LEVITICUS")

- I. PRAYER/REVIEW
- II. PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE: BROAD CONTEXT

A. Movements and Biblical Books

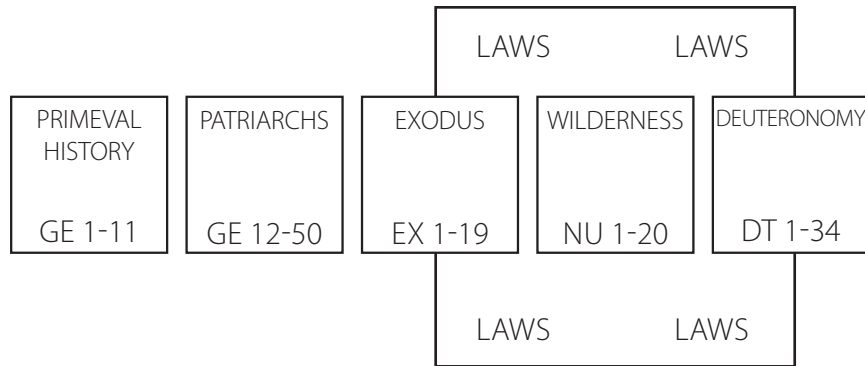
1. "Prologue".....Genesis 1-11
2. "Patriarchs"Genesis 12-50; Job
3. "Redemption".....Exodus, **LEVITICUS**
 "Wanderings" Numbers, Deuteronomy

B. Pentateuch: Broad Overview

1. Charted

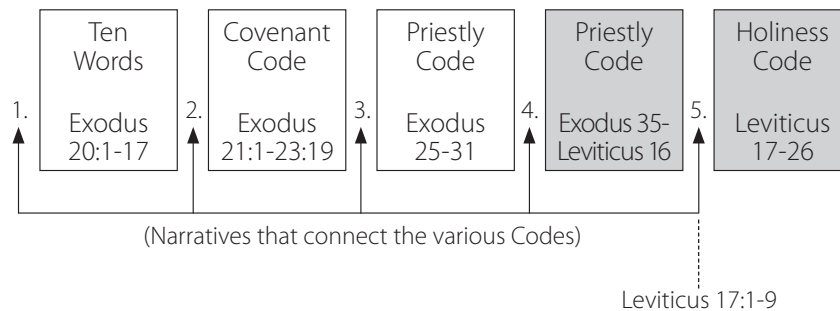
PENTATEUCH				
Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Selection	Redemption	Sanctification	Direction	Instruction
Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant	Holiness Code	Journey Rebellion	Covenant Reinstruction

2. Pentateuch: Chronological Flow
(Sailhamer, Pentateuch, 83)



- a. Leviticus is not a part of the narrative portion of the Pentateuch (Books of Moses).
- b. Leviticus continues the Book of Exodus with an emphasis on the priestly duties and the worship regulations at the Tabernacle.
- c. Chronologically, Exodus ends with the completion of the Tabernacle on the first month of the second year (Exod 40:17). The Book of Numbers begins on the second month of the second year (Num 1:1); thus Leviticus contains those instructions given in the one month (between Exodus and Numbers).

3. Law Code Arrangements (in Pentateuch)



N.B.

Note the placement of Leviticus within the Law Codes. The “Priestly Code” begins in Exodus 25 and continues through the “Day of Atonement” regulations of Leviticus 16. As noted in the diagram, Leviticus 17:1-9 serves as a kind of narrative bridge to the “Holiness Code.” The purpose seems to be “to demonstrate the motive behind the strict rules regulating worship which are found throughout the following sections of the Pentateuch. (Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 342). “Of particular importance is the strict prohibition against sacrifices to the “goat idols” (Lev. 17:5-7). In light of the previous “golden calf” incident, this prohibition (against “goat idols”) precedes the “Holiness Code” regulations of Lev. 17:10-26:46.

III. BOOK OF LEVITICUS

A. Charted

“LEVITICUS”	
ACCESS TO GOD (By Sacrifice)	ACCESS TO GOD (By Separation)
Laws	Regulations
1. The Offerings (1-7) 2. The Priesthood (8-10) 3. The People (11-15) 4. The Day of Atonement(16)	1. About the People (17-20) 2. About the Priests (21-22) 3. About the Feasts (23-24) 4. About Canaan (25-27)
“Priestly Code” (Ex. 25 – Lev. 16)	“Holiness Code” (Lev. 17-26)

B. Distinctives

1. Leviticus is focused on the holiness of God (“Be holy because I am holy” – 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:26). It clarifies how the redeemed nation was to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” – Ex. 19:6; Lev. 26:5).
2. Leviticus is focused on the appropriate worship of a redeemed people. The book is not a way of salvation but a way of fellowship (worshipful communion).
3. Leviticus is focused on sacrifice, the shedding of blood. The sacrificial system foreshadowed the death of Christ on the Cross (cf. Heb 9:11-12 ff).

Leviticus 17:11

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

4. The Book of Leviticus primarily consists of God's direct communication to Moses (for the people). The phrase “the Lord said to Moses” (or “to Moses and Aaron”) occurs at least 33 times in Leviticus. The book ends with this summary statement.

Leviticus 27:34

These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

5. The Book of Leviticus contains the major teaching on the five offerings, the seven feasts, the Day of Atonement. Additionally, the Book of Leviticus contains the second part of Jesus' reply to the question of the greatest commandment (“love your neighbor as yourself” – 19:18).
6. The Book of Leviticus contains key, repeated phrases (“the Lord said to Moses”) and words: “holy” (about 90

times), "atonement" (about 50 times), "sacrifice" ("offering" and the like) about 300 times.

IV. LEVITICUS: BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT (Part One)

The Book of Leviticus can be seen in a two-fold structure:

- (1) Access to God (By Sacrifice) (Chapters 1-17) and
- (2) Access to God (By Separation) (Chapters 18-26).

This first section of Leviticus describes various offerings and regulations for both priests and people. The instructions are not comprehensive nor exhaustive but adequate as a guideline. In a sense this section parallels what can be observed in NT epistles – a doctrinal section followed by a practical one. Here, Leviticus 1-16 corresponds to the doctrinal, while Leviticus 17-27 to the practical.

A. Laws: the Offerings (1-7)

The five primary offerings described in this section were sacrifices brought by individual people (not priests – Lev. 1:3-6:7) and the roles by the priests in making (conducting of) the sacrifice (Lev 6:8-7:38).

The five offerings are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| a. Burnt offering (Lev. 1:3-17) | Voluntary |
| b. Grain offering (Lev. 2:1-16) | Voluntary |
| c. Fellowship (Peace) offering (Lev. 3:1-17) | Voluntary |
| d. Sin offering (Lev. 4:1-5:13) | Mandatory |
| e. Guilt offering (Lev. 5:14-6:7) | Mandatory |

Following the details incumbent upon the one bringing the offering, there followed priestly instructions on making the sacrifices (6:8-7:38). For example, in the priestly instructions for the first offering listed (the Burnt offering), the text reads:

Leviticus 6:8-13

The LORD said to Moses: ⁹“Give Aaron and his sons this command: ‘These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. ¹⁰The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. ¹¹Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. ¹²The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. ¹³The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

Each of these offerings involved:

- a. The offerer (the one bringing)
- b. The offering (what was brought)
- c. The mediator (the priest between God and the offerer)

Also, each of the five offerings was separate and different from the others. What to bring and why (purpose) differed from offering to offering.

The “soothing” sacrifices were the first three: Burnt, Grain, and Peace. These dealt with voluntary sacrifices related to communion (fellowship) with God. For example, at the conclusion of the instructions for the Burnt offering (1:3-17), the text notes:

Leviticus 1:17b

...and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

The “non-soothing” sacrifices are the last two: Sin and Guilt. These were mandatory offerings and were purposed for the covering (expiation) of sin. They were intended to restore a broken fellowship with God (i.e. a ruptured relationship).

Stanley Ellisen (Knowing God’s Word, 31) categorizes the five offerings with their NT parallels to Christ in the following chart:

Five Offerings: Leviticus 1-7		
Offering	Significance	Foreshadowing
The Worship Offerings (Lev. 1-3)		
Burnt	Dedication of one’s life to God	Christ’s complete dedication of Himself to God (Heb. 10:5-7)
Grain	Consecration of one’s produce to God	Christ’s body presented to God as a perfect life (Heb.10:5)
Fellowship (Peace)	Expression of gratitude or completed vow to God	Christ’s offering provides for peace with God (Eph. 2:14)
The Restoration Offerings (Lev. 4-7)		
Sin	Restoration of fellowship (communion) by the blood of a substitute	Christ’s offering provides for continual renewal by confession (Heb. 9:12, 26; 1 Jn. 1:9)
Guilt (Trespass)	Restoration for damage of sins both to God and to man	Christ’s offering reconciles man to God in light of the damage of sin (2 Cor. 5:19)

B. The Priesthood (Chapters 8-10)

Previously in Exodus 29 instructions were given for the consecration of the priests before the execution of their duties. Here in Leviticus 8 those instructions were carried out; in Leviticus 9 these consecrated priests begin their ministries. This is what the writer to the Hebrews was alluding to in Hebrews 10:11: "Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices . . ."

1. The consecration of the priests (8:1-36)

With great care and attention to detail, the previous instructions of Exodus 29 are carried out. The chapter begins, "The Lord said to Moses . . ." (1). Near the end, the text reads, "Moses said to Aaron and his sons . . ." (31).

These consecration rites included:

- (vv. 5-6) washing of Aaron and his priestly sons (spiritual cleansing)
- (vv. 7-9) placing of priestly vestments upon Aaron (symbolic of role)
- (vv. 10-13) anointing of Tabernacle and Aaron (and priests) (symbolic of the Holy Spirit)
- (vv. 14-30) ordination offerings
- (vv. 31-36) further instructions to Aaron (and sons)

Leviticus 8:36

So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.

2. The installation of the priests (9:1-24)

Following the seven days of the consecration ceremony (9:1), Aaron and his sons (priests) were to offer sacrifices for themselves and the people.

Leviticus 9:7

Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

Aaron and the priests were officially installed into priestly responsibilities. Aaron now has assumed the high priest position; he represented the people before the holy God. "Atonement was made to God, dedication was given, and thankfulness were expressed . . . God thus instituted the schoolmaster (i.e. revealed truths) that would teach Israel how to know the Lord and would ultimately point to the Messiah, who would in Himself fulfill all these things." (Louis Goldberg, Leviticus, 56).

Leviticus 9:23-24

Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

3. The sin of Nadab and Abihu (10:1-20)

In the previous two chapters concerning the consecration and the installment of the priests, the obedience of Moses and Aaron was remarkable.

- "Moses did as the Lord commanded him" (8:4; also 8:9)
- "as the Lord commanded Moses" (8:13; also 8:17, 21, 29)
- "so Aaron and his sons did everything the Lord commanded through Moses" (8:36; also 9:5, 7, 10, 21)

What followed this obedience was a display of God's pleasure through fire consuming the required burnt offering (10:24). As a result, the people "shouted for joy and fell facedown" (v. 24).

Leviticus 10:1-3

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. ²So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored." Aaron remained silent.

- a. From meticulous obedience to careless regard to God's command, God once again brings "fire," yet this time in judgment.
- b. The specific offense is not detailed, but it may have been related to drunkenness.

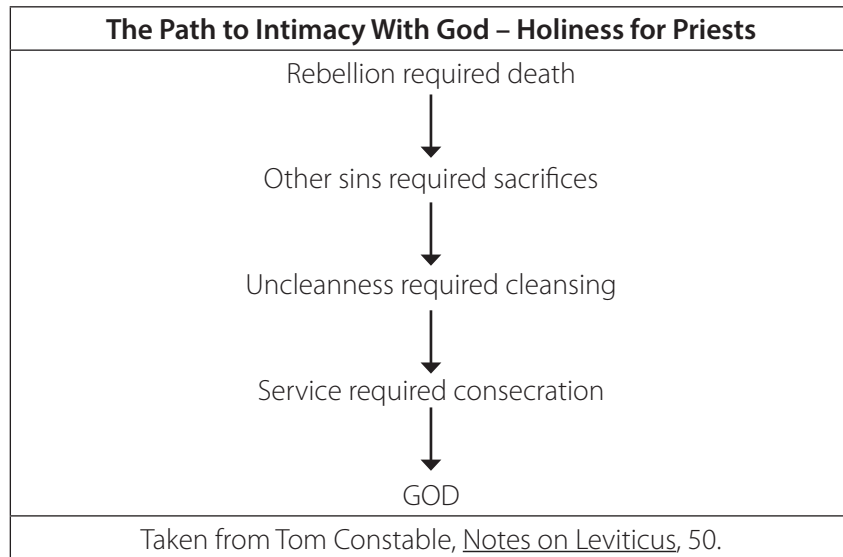
Leviticus 10:8-9 (cf. Noah; Gen 9:20-29)

Then the LORD said to Aaron, ⁹"You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come..."

- c. Perhaps the disobedience was related to how the incense was lighted (not from the altar – see Lev. 16:12); perhaps they rashly took the incense "before the Lord" or into the Holy of Holies (forbidden except to the high priest on the Day of Atonement – 16:1-2).

This incident imprinted upon the Israelites (and, of course, the priests) the necessity of complete

obedience in worship. A redeemed people must approach a holy God according to His prescribed manner. Priests as mediators who stand before the people for God must take special care to respect the holiness of God.



C. The People (Chapters 11-16)

The importance of holiness in worship and daily life was stated in a series of regulations that followed the Nadab and Abihu incident. "Cleanness" before the Lord was necessary. The Lord had already stressed to Aaron, "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean . . ." (10:10).

Constable (*Notes on Leviticus*, 51) notes that following significant failures, the Lord gave more laws to guide the life of the redeemed people. The following chart summarizes this action (adapted from Constable):

FAILURES	LAWS
Complaining from Egypt (Ex. 14-19)	
	Covenant Code (Ex. 20-23) plus Priestly Code (Ex. 25-31)
Golden Calf Incident (Ex. 32)	
	Priestly Code (Ex. 35-Lev.9)
Nadab and Abihu Incident (Lev. 10)	
	Continued Priestly Code (Lev. 11-17)
Goat Idol Incident (Lev. 17)	
	Holiness Code (Lev. 17-25)

These additional laws cluster around specific regulations.
These include the following categories:

1. Clean and unclean food (11:1-47)

Leviticus 11:44-45

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the

ground. ⁴⁵I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

2. Purification after childbirth (12:1-8)
3. Regulations about infectious sin diseases (13:1-46)
4. Regulations about mildew (13:47-59)
5. Cleansing from infectious skin diseases (14:1-32)
6. Cleansing from mildew (14:33-57)
7. Discharges causing uncleanness (15:1-33)

D. The Day of Atonement (Chapter 16)

This chapter may be the heart of Levitical teachings. Goldberg (Leviticus, 82-83) suggests three purposes of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur):

- To remind priests of the necessity to be cleansed as priests and the need to cleanse the Tabernacle;
- To remind the people that their sins as a nation must be covered each year in a renewal ceremony;
- To call individuals, priests, nation to repent and seek the face of God. "The Day of Atonement offering emphasized and made real the forgiveness and restoration of individuals who had offered sacrifices during the past year" (Goldberg, 82-83).

Leviticus 16:1-2

The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. ²The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

1. Sacrifice on behalf of Aaron, the high priest (16:3-14)

Leviticus 16:6-10

"Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. ⁷Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ⁸He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. ⁹Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. ¹⁰But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

2. Sacrifice on behalf of the people (16:15-28)

a. Leviticus 16:15,17

"He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. ¹⁷No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

b. Leviticus 16:20-22

"When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. ²¹He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. ²²The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

3. Establishment of a lasting ordinance (16:29-34)

Leviticus 16:34

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites." And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.

IV. LEVITICUS: BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT (Part Two)

The second half of the Book of Leviticus highlights "Access to God" (By Separation). This section emphasizes regulations for holy living in a wide spectrum of topics. This is often referred to as the "**Holiness Code**."

A. Regulations: About the People (Chapters 17-20)

Once atonement for sin was accomplished (Day of Atonement – Lev 16), it was incumbent upon redeemed Israel to walk in purity and holiness before God. This was accomplished by "life-style" holiness found within the "**Holiness Code**."

1. Holiness in regard to food (17:1-16)

Priests and people were to take extreme care in the offering of animals as sacrifices:

- Sacrificial animals only to be sacrificed at the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle – vv. 3-4)
- Sacrifices to the "goat idols" expressly prohibited (though for some it may have been practiced in the past – v. 7)
- Blood of the sacrifices not to be eaten

Leviticus 17:10-12

"I will set my face against any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who eats blood, and I will cut them off from the people. ¹¹For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar;

*it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.
12Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may any foreigner residing among you eat blood."*

- Ritual cleanness to be practiced with respect to dead animals (15-16)

2. Holiness in regard to sexual relations (18:1-30)

The importance of a strict moral code in the arena of human sexuality was underscored by the strong words preceding the lengthy lists of "do not's."

Leviticus 18:1-5

The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. 4You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

What follows are twenty-one (21) prohibitions against unlawful sexual relations (vv. 6-20). Additionally, child sacrifice (v. 21), homosexuality (v. 22), and bestiality (v. 23) complete the list.

3. Holiness in conduct before God and man (19:1-37)

Leviticus 19:1-2

The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

This section contains twenty-one (21) specific commands. Structurally they are broken up into smaller

units; there is woven into this pattern a seven-fold repetition of "I am the Lord your God." (Also, "I am the Lord" occurs about seven times as well).

Further, a portion of these commandments are reproduced in the NT Book of James. Note the comparison:

Leviticus 19:12-13, 15-18

"Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.¹³" "Do not defraud or rob your neighbor. "Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight . . . ¹⁵" "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.¹⁶" "Do not go about spreading slander among your people. "Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.¹⁷" "Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.¹⁸" "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

From the Book of James

a. James 5:12

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear-not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

b. James 5:4

Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

c. James 2:1-4

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious

*Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.
2Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

d. James 3:9-12

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

e. James 5:19-20

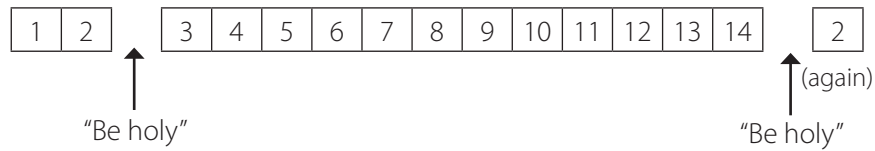
My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

f. James 2:8-9

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

4. Holiness in additional laws (20:1-27)

Sailhamer ([Pentateuch](#), 353) visually demonstrates the structure of these additional 14 prohibitions (the second is repeated at the end).



The content of these prohibitions deal with Molech worship (vv. 1-5), mediums and spiritists (vv. 6-9), cursing parents (v. 9) and sexual crimes (vv. 10-21).

Leviticus 20:22-24

“Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. ²³You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. ²⁴But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations.

B. About the Priests (Chapters 21-22)

Following the careful and detailed instructions on holiness for the people, the next topic deals with the higher standards required of the priests. The NT parallel might be the distinctive, lofty requirements for elders to lead God’s churches (cf. 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1).

Insight:

“The thrust of this section (21:1-22:16) is two-fold: the office of a priest is holy, and the office is above the man. A priest must be holy in body, upright in conduct, and ceremonially clean; for he is the representative of God.” (Constable quoting Harris, Notes on Leviticus, 101)

1. Regulations for priests (21:1-22:16)
(Structure adapted from Sailhamer, 354-58)

List One 14 laws (7x2)	List Two 14 laws (7x2)	List Three 14 laws (7x2)
21:1-15	21:16-24	22:1-15

2. Regulations for offerings (22:17-22)

List One 7 laws "unacceptable offerings"	List Two 7 laws "time intervals"
22:17-25	22:26-30

Leviticus 22:31-33

"Keep my commands and follow them. I am the LORD.³² Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who made you holy³³ and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

C. About the Feasts (Chapters 23-24)

For the redeemed people of God, certain holy days and festive celebrations were required to be kept. Leviticus 23 lists 7 important feasts to be observed throughout the year. Preliminary to that listing is the importance of the Sabbath.

1. Preface / Sabbath (23:1-3)

Leviticus 23:1-2

The LORD said to Moses,² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

Leviticus 23:3

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the LORD.

The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 31:13). It mandated rest (for reflection and worship); it reminded Israel of its deliverance from slavery (Deut. 5:15). In contrast to the annual feasts which follow, it was a weekly observance, perhaps the heart of these special times.

2. Seven feasts (23:4-44)

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL - LEVITICUS 23				
NO.	NAME	REFERENCE	PRIMARY PURPOSE	NT PARALLELS
1	Passover	Lev. 23:5 (Ex. 12:1-14)	Remember deliverance from bondage in Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7) • See 1 Peter 1:18-19
2	Unleavened Bread	Lev. 23:6-8 (Ex. 12:15-20)	Remember the haste in leaving Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purge "leaven" from life • See 1 Peter 4:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:7
3	First Fruits	Lev. 23:9-14	Recognize the gracious provision of harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ's resurrection • See 1 Cor. 15:20
4	Weeks (Pentecost)	Lev. 23:15-21	Joy and gratitude over the blessings of harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of Pentecost / Holy Spirit (Acts 2)
5	Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	Lev. 23:23-25	Assembled Israel appears before the Lord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trumpet sound - return of Christ • See 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16-17
6	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Lev. 23:26-32 (Lev. 16)	Cleanse priest, people, and holy place of sin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual cleansing from sin - Israel (Lev. 16) • Future cleansing - return of Christ (Zech. 12:10; 13:1)
7	Booths (Tabernacles)	Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43 (Ex. 23:16; 34:22)	Remember the journey from Egypt to Canaan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future restoration of Israel (Zech. 14:16)

3. Oil and Bread: Daily (24:1-9)

a. Olive oil

Leviticus 24:1-4

The LORD said to Moses, ²“Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. ³Outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. ⁴The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be tended continually.

b. Bread of the Presence

Leviticus 24:8-9

This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. ⁹It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD.”

4. Blasphemers (24:10-23)

To reinforce the seriousness of the holiness laws, a teaching illustration was provided. In an altercation a person blasphemed the holy name of God.

Leviticus 24:13-16

Then the LORD said to Moses: ¹⁴“Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. ¹⁵Say to the Israelites: ‘Anyone who curses their God will be

held responsible; ¹⁶ anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name they are to be put to death.

D. About Canaan (Chapters 25-27)

1. Future "Sabbath Year"

Leviticus 25:1-7

The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, ² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. ³ For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. ⁴ But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. ⁵ Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. ⁶ Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, ⁷ as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

Insight:

Israel's failure in this regard is recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21: *"He (Nebuchadnezzar) carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. ²¹ The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah."*

2. Future Year of Jubilee (25:8-55)

Every seven-times-seven years (49 years) was to commence a Year of Jubilee in the fiftieth year. This unusual celebration brought total restoration of land, property and debts.

- a. Land (25:8-22)
- b. Redemption of kinsmen (25:23-34)
Note the Book of Ruth for an illustration of this law.
- c. Poor (25:35-55)

Leviticus 25:39-42

"If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. ⁴⁰They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ⁴¹Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. ⁴²Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves.

3. Covenant blessings and cursings (26:1-46)

For a similar (yet later) discussion, see Deuteronomy 28-30.

- a. Result of obedience (1-13)

Leviticus 26:3-4

"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, ⁴I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit.

Leviticus 26:9-12

"I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my

covenant with you. ¹⁰You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. ¹¹ I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. ¹²I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

b. Results of disobedience (14-39)

Leviticus 26:14-17

"But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, ¹⁵and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, ¹⁶then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. ¹⁷I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.

Leviticus 26:34-35

Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.

c. Results of confession (40-46)

Leviticus 26:40-43

"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors-their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward me, ⁴¹which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies-then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin,

⁴²I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees.

4. Vows and tithes (27:1-34)

The giving of the Law began at Sinai with the Ten Commandments (or Ten Words – Ex 20). The broad law instructions end with a final list of ten laws. These spell out the process of payment of vows and tithes.

The Book of Leviticus concludes:

Leviticus 27:34

These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

V. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: BOOK OF LEVITICUS

The Book of Leviticus highlights certain Biblical themes of great importance to the whole of the Scriptures. Three major themes are discussed (adapted from Constable, Notes on Leviticus, 7-10).

A. Sin

1. Sin is unlikeness to God.
 - a. Man and God are different from one another ethically and morally.
 - b. God is holy; man is sinful (though he can be redeemed and have his sins covered/forgiven).
 - c. Holiness speaks of being pure, unblemished, clean, thus set apart. The opposite of holy is sinful.
2. Sin is wrong that man does to God.
 - a. Man violates the “shalom” (the way things ought

to be) of God; in doing so, man sins (does wrong) against God and His order.

- b. Man must have his "wrongs" taken care of in order to have relationship/fellowship with God.
 - c. Offerings, sacrifices, feasts throughout the year provided for man's approach to and life before God.
3. Sin created distance from God.
 - a. Sin causes a breach (symbolically required veils, curtains, priests to approach God).
 - b. God takes the initiative through the Levitical system to provide a prescribed way or approach to God.

B. Atonement

1. Man's sin must be dealt with.
2. Atonement means to cover, thus to cover man's sin.
3. Atonement satisfies God from year to year (Yom Kippur) until such time as the final, complete sacrifice for sin could be made.
4. Atonement highlighted:
 - a. Substitution: required innocence for guilty
 - b. Imputation: required transfer of guilt to the innocent (hands on sacrifice)
 - c. Death: required a blood sacrifice which imputed the guilt to the innocent demonstrating that "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness [of sin]" (Heb 9:22)

C. Redemption

1. Man's sin places him into slavery to sin.
2. To redeem means to purchase; Israel was redeemed by God out of slavery to the Egyptians. NT believers are redeemed by Christ out of slavery to sin.

3. To be redeemed means to belong to another (cf. I Cor 6:19-20).
4. To be redeemed:
 - a. Rests on righteousness: a right payment to God is made through the sacrificial system; sin is not overlooked nor trivialized.
 - b. Made possible only by blood: not obtained by works of service but by the shedding of blood.
 - c. Should produce holiness: redemption does not excuse us from the obligations of holy living; with the privilege of redemption comes the responsibility of personal (national-Israel) holiness.

ISRAELITE WORSHIP

The redeemed Israelites had an exalted position – “treasured possession,” “kingdom of priests,” and a “holy nation” – and a prescribed worship liturgy. This liturgy included:

1. Sacred Site: the Tabernacle
 2. Sacred Objects: consecrated furniture
 3. Sacred Personnel: priests, High Priest
 4. Sacred Seasons: feasts of Israel
 5. Sacred Institutions: practices and rituals
- (Adapted from B. Waltke, 458-468)

VI. TAKEAWAYS