

The Gospel
According to Leviticus:
Approaching a Holy God
(Chapters 1-10)

Week II

Bible Reading Plan

January 6	Leviticus 1
January 7	Leviticus 2
January 8	Leviticus 3
January 9	Leviticus 4–5
January 10	Leviticus 6–7
January 11	Leviticus 8–9
January 12	Leviticus 10
January 13	Leviticus 11
January 14	Leviticus 12
January 15	Leviticus 13
January 16	Leviticus 14
January 17	Leviticus 15
January 18	Leviticus 16
January 19	Leviticus 17
January 20	Leviticus 18
January 21	Leviticus 19–20
January 22	Leviticus 21–22
January 23	Leviticus 23
January 24	Leviticus 24
January 25	Leviticus 25
January 26	Leviticus 26
January 27	Leviticus 27

Getting Our Bearings

Not many weeks before Leviticus takes place, Israel was introduced to the one true God, "I AM" (Exodus 4). Soon after that, God delivered them from Egypt and entered into a covenant with them (Exodus 5–14, 19–24). Israel heard God's majestic voice and promised to obey Him (Exodus 19–20). However, they quickly sinned directly against Him, opposing His presence among them (Exodus 32–34). **And still, this Holy God wanted them to draw near!**

God's Purpose

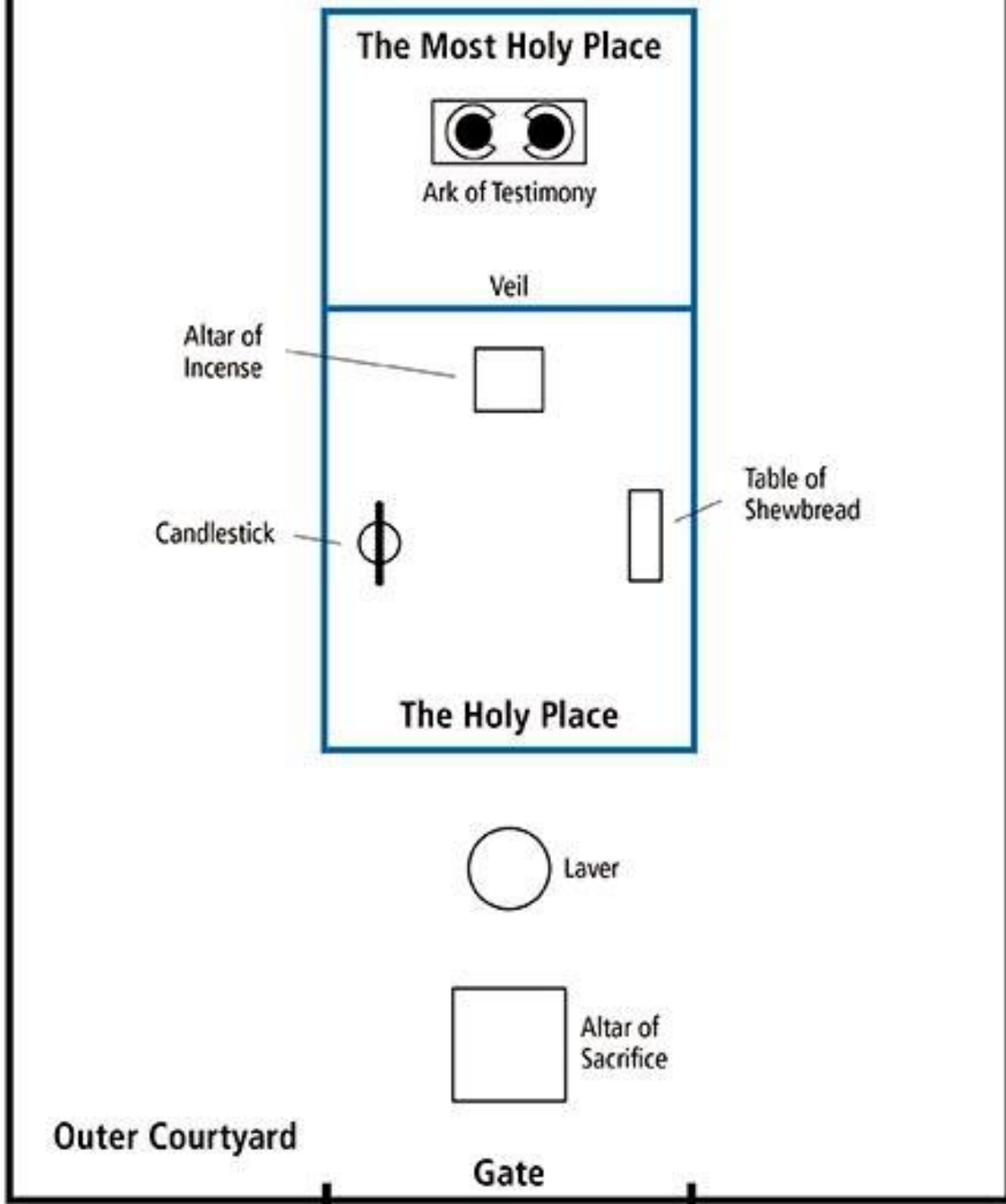
God's purpose for Israel was that they might draw near to see the glory of the LORD.

*"All the congregation **drew near** and stood before the LORD. And Moses said, 'This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, **that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.**' Then Moses said to Aaron, '**Draw near to the altar**'" (9:5-7).*

Through God's merciful sacrifices, they successfully did just that.

"And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (9:23-24).

The Tabernacle



Sacrifices (1–7)

The sacrifices of Leviticus were both *relational* (an aid in worship) and *instructive* (a picture of redemption). They acted as a guide for the heart of the worshipper. As a worshipper repeatedly brought offerings to God, he would increasingly feel the holiness of God, his own desperate heart condition, and his need for a better Sacrifice.

Dedication Sacrifices (God is worshipped)

- Burnt Offering (“ascension” or “rising up” to God)
- Grain Offering (“gift” or “tribute” to the king)
- Peace Offering (“fellowship” with God)

Propitiatory Sacrifices (Man is forgiven)

- Sin Offering (“unsin” offering)
- Trespass Offering (“reparation” order to appease wrath)

Sacrificial Themes

- God’s presence is necessary for life.
- Our sin disqualifies us from approaching God.
- We can only approach God through sacrifice.
 - Sacrifice must be *unblemished* (1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3, 23, 28, 32, 5:15, 18; 6:6; 9:2, 3, Ephesians 5:2).
 - Offerings were *costly*, yet *available* to all.

The sacrifices
reveal both the
seriousness of
sin and the
mercy of God.

in

- Sacrifice involved *ownership* through the laying of hands (1:4; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 24, 29, 33).
- Sacrifice requires *blood* (45x, see 17:11). The blood brought the people near (Ephesians 2:13).
- The result is that God is *pleased!* (1:13, 17; 2:2, 9; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15)

Priests (8–9)

They acted as **mediators**. They represented God to the people and the people to God. They also acted as **bodyguards**. They were “protectors” of God’s Holiness.

- Their obedience was crucial: “As the Lord commanded Moses”
- Their occupation was dangerous: “so that you do not die” (8:35)

What did it mean for Israel?

Sacrifices were a guide for the heart (Lev. 26:31):

- Micah 6:6-8
- Hosea 6:6
- Psalm 51:16-19
- Isaiah 53:10
- Isaiah 66:2-3

Every time an Israelite brought an offering to the tabernacle, he was experiencing a shadow of the future curse-reverser (Heb. 10:4; Rom. 3:25).

What does it mean for us?

Christ is our once-for-all sacrifice and Great High Priest! When we approach God, we look back to Christ's sacrifice.

"Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

"He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood" (Hebrews 9:12).

Now our lives are about worship, and it should delight us to approach God (Psalm 84). We should also approach God with boldness and encourage each other to do the same (Heb. 10:19-25).

We can approach God with...

- Atoning Blood (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:12)
- Total Devotion (Romans 12:1-2)
- A Repentant Heart (Psalm 51:16-17)

*Approach, my soul, the mercy seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.*

The Story Resumes (10)

Whereas in 9:24, God's fire consumed the *offering*, in 10:2, His fire consumed the *offerers*, God's priests, Nadab and Abihu.

"This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified'" (10:3)

God's actions terrified Aaron and the people. They knew that something was desperately wrong. God made it clear that He cannot tolerate sin, but He also introduced a plan (10:10-11).

"You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, ¹¹ and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses."

Study Questions for Leviticus 11–18

1. What lesson do you think Israel was supposed to learn from each set of laws? (Hint: look toward the end of each section for a divine explanation)

Clean and Unclean Animals _____

Childbirth _____

Leprosy _____

Bodily Discharges _____

2. Notice the repetition of the words “clean” and “unclean.” How do these concepts help us better understand sin and forgiveness?
3. Leviticus 16 is one of the greatest shadows of the work of Christ. How is this ceremony similar to the work of Christ? How is it different? (See Hebrews 9:23-28)
4. What response should Christ’s once-for-all forgiveness effect in us?
5. In 18:4 God states that the basis for the laws concerning personal holiness: “I am the Lord.” How would that idea motivate Israel to live holy lives? How should it motivate us?

