

The Gospel
According to Leviticus:
“You Shall Be Clean”
(Chapters 11-16)

Week III

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

Tragedy Strikes

When God is approached correctly, He consumes the offering (9:24), but when God is approached incorrectly, He consumes the offerer (10:2). God invites us into His presence but will not tolerate sin.

*"Then Moses said to Aaron, '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.' " And Aaron held his peace" (Leviticus 10:3).*

Now, the people's representatives have been executed (10:1-3), and Aaron is terrified (10:16-30).

Cleanness and Uncleanness

The key to this section is found in the story of Nadab and Abihu (10:1-2 and 16:1). In fact, the teaching of chapters 10–16 all takes place on the same day! The laws of cleanness and uncleanness reminded Israel of their need for forgiveness by showing that a holy God must have holy people. Unclean people and things cannot be in the presence of God.

*"And the LORD spoke to Aaron saying... You are to distinguish between the **holy** and the **common**, and between the **unclean** and the **clean**, and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses" (10:8-11).*

The Problem of Sin

Key Word: “Discern” – to separate or make a distinction between (10:10; 11:47; 14:57). In these chapters, God is teaching holy priests *and* holy people (Exodus 19:6) what sin looks like through everyday pictures. Grappling with these laws all throughout life would yield an ever-present reminder of sin before a holy God.

Dietary Restrictions: A Picture of a Holy People (Chapter 11)

In the Old Testament, believers separated certain elements from their diet because a holy God had separated them from the nations to worship Him alone (20:24-26). The distinctions pictured the danger of being outside God’s people and the privilege of being God’s people (vv. 44-46, see also Mark 7:19; Acts 11:12).

Childbirth Laws: A Picture of Vulnerability (Chapter 12)

Because of the fall, even the good gift of childbirth had been affected (Genesis 3:16). Now the mother was made vulnerable by the loss of blood. What was supposed to be a wonderful occasion is now tainted by uncleanness. But God has an answer, the atonement (vv. 7-8, see also Luke 2:22-24).

Leviticus 11–15: Common Proposals

- Aesthetic
- Allegorical
- Anomalistic
- Ethical
- Hygienic
- Theological

Leprosy Laws: A Picture of Spiritual Disease (Chapters 13–14)

Skin disease excluded people from God's presence. Mold and mildew must be destroyed. Old Testament believers saw their sin much more clearly through these laws (Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 6:5; Ezekiel 36:33). God's merciful solution provided atonement (14:20, see also Matthew 8:1-4).

Discharge Laws: A Picture of Impurity (15)

These laws are symbolic of God's standard for moral purity in His presence (v. 31). God's merciful solution provided atonement (vv. 15, 30, see also Mark 5:24-34).

"God teaches people to feel about sin as they are accustomed to feel about an ignominious and uncomfortable exclusion from [worship]" (Geerhardus Vos).

The Day of Atonement: The Solution for Uncleanness (Chapter 16)

This chapter is the pinnacle of the book of Leviticus and presents the only entrance into the Holy of Holies. This day was the most important day on the Jewish calendar (v. 31), for, on this day, all of the uncleanness of the people of Israel would be forgiven (vv. 21, 30).

Aton—"to cover" with blood, appeasing God's wrath and reconciling God and man (*at-one-ment*)

Three Atonements

- The priest (v. 6)
- The people (v. 17)
- The tabernacle (v. 16)

Two Goats

- Goat for a sin offering (v. 9)
 - Propitiation – Appeasing God's Wrath
- Goat "to go away" (v. 10)
 - Expiation – Complete Removal of Sin

The Temporary Result

"For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins" (16:30).

"According to this arrangement (the Day of Atonement), gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:9-10).

Christ's Atonement (Hebrews 9–10)

Like Israel, we are all unclean because of sin in our heart (Isaiah 64:6; Mark 7:18-23). But Christ has made a way for our hearts to be completely forgiven! He entered once for all into the presence of God (9:24), bearing all of our sins covered by His blood (9:12). His blood purifies our very

hearts, making us clean before the Father (9:14). Christ then sat down, for His work was completed (10:11-14). No other sacrifice is necessary (10:15-18).

Right Thinking About Forgiveness

- My sin excludes me from God's presence.
- My real problem is my heart.
- Only Christ can cleanse my heart.
- Christ has entered heaven on my behalf, presented His blood shed for me, and has sat down (Hebrews 9–10; 1 John 2:1-2). I am seated with Him in God's presence (Ephesians 2:5-6). We are both accepted by the Father.
- Christ's resurrection ensures that I am no longer under God's wrath (Romans 8).
- My sin is gone (Psalm 103:12, Micah 7:19; 1 John 1:9).
- Nothing can ever separate me from the love of God.

Study Questions for Leviticus 17–27

1. Why do you think it was so important for Israel to offer sacrifices at the place God had chosen (17:8-9)? What do you think He was trying to communicate to them?
2. Notice the repetition of the phrase “I am the LORD” particularly in chapters 18 and 19. How does that truth affect our decisions today?
3. In 19:36, God reminds Israel of their own salvation from Egypt. How did that truth impact their way of living?
4. Based on chapter 23, how much of Israel’s year was affected by their relationship with God? What percentage of our lives are about worship?
5. Would you describe God’s actions in chapter 26 as merciful? Why or why not?
6. Who was eligible to make a vow to the Lord based on chapter 27?

Before the Throne of God Above

by Charitie Bancroft

Before the throne of God above I have a strong, a perfect plea;
A great High Priest, whose name is Love, who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heaven he stands no tongue can bid my thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see him there who made an end to all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free;
For God the Just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me.

Behold him there! The risen Lamb, my perfect, spotless righteousness;
The great unchangeable "I AM," the King of glory and of grace!
One with himself, I cannot die, my soul is purchased by his blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Savior and my God.

