

Message #1

Various Texts

There is very clear evidence that the essence of this very book is missing in the Church. For example, **today many churches are known for their big crowds, expensive buildings, power points, big budgets and political clout; but very few churches and very few believers are known for their holiness. The book of the Bible that is so needed today is Leviticus.**

QUESTION #1 – Why study the book of Leviticus?

(Reason #1) - Because it is a book that is in the Bible.

I love the words of Cyril Barber in his introduction to Samuel Kellog's commentary on Leviticus: "The whole Bible is important and each part of the Divine Library deserves careful exposition." Most N.T. believers apparently forget about what the Apostle Paul specifically said: "whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction" (Rom. 15:4). God did not put Leviticus into print because He needed it, but because we need it. Leviticus is a book of the Bible that belongs to a number of Old Testament books called the Homologoumena—these are books of the Bible which were never questioned or disputed as belonging in the Bible.

(Reason #2) - Because Leviticus is a book that is needed to properly understand the New Testament.

The book of Leviticus is referred to over 100 times in the New Testament and this immediately tells us this book is critical to the N.T. Grace Age. There are over 40 references in the N.T. to ordinances found in Leviticus.

(Reason #3) - Because Leviticus is a book that gives us great insight into the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Think of this; we base our entire eternal destiny upon Jesus Christ. Should we not try to understand His sacrifice as thoroughly as possible? Gary Demarest writes: "Whatever else our study of Leviticus will accomplish, it will give us a profound theology of the cross" (p. 41).

(Reason #4) - Because Leviticus is a book that gives us great insight into the type of holiness that God wants in the lives of His priests.

The key challenge of Leviticus—"Be holy for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45) is specifically aimed at New Testament believers—(I Pet. 1:15-16). Five times in this book God says that His people are to be holy as He is holy (11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). **Somehow, God's people have been duped into thinking that the primary goal of God, for the believer, is happiness. It is not! The primary goal is holiness.** For example, the word "sacrifice" occurs over 40 times. The word "priest" occurs over 180 times. The words "holiness" "holy" or "sanctify" occur 152 times in the book of Leviticus. The word "unclean" occurs 132 times and the word "clean" occurs 74 times. The word "blood" occurs nearly 90 times in the book and the word "atonement" occurs 45 times.

It has been observed that Leviticus offers two key themes: **(Theme #1)** - The only way to God is by a holy sacrifice; **(Theme #2)** - The only way to walk with God is by holy sanctification.

(Reason #5) - Because Leviticus is a book that forces us to look straight at God's Old Testament Law and make a proper N.T. application of that Law.

When we tackle a book like Leviticus, we must remember a principle from Hebrews 7:12—when there is a change in the priesthood, there are also changes in the Law. We know that some of the O.T. laws are still applicable for the N.T. age. For example, you shall not commit adultery, murder, steal or covet are N.T. mandates (Rom. 13:9). We also know that some are not applicable for the N.T. age. For example, the idea of clean and unclean animals in eating are no longer laws we need to worry about (Acts 10:14-15).

(Reason #6) - Because Leviticus is a book that forces us to face our sin personally.

The minute ritual and detail that is described in the Levitical code is designed to give us a very deep and real consciousness of our own sin.

QUESTION #2 – Who wrote Leviticus?

The book does not specifically say who wrote it; however, we may dogmatically declare that **Leviticus is a book written by Moses**.

(Reason #1) - The contents of Leviticus were revealed to Moses and came through Moses.
1:1; 4:1; 6:1; 7:37-38; 26:46; 27:34

(Reason #2) - Leviticus is a sequel to Exodus which specifically states that it was written by Moses. Ex. 17:14; 24:4, 7; 34:27-28

(Reason #3) - Joshua recognizes the existence of “the Book of the Law of Moses.” Josh. 22:5

(Reason #4) - Judges refers to a text from Leviticus (Judges 2:15/Lev. 22:17) and states that God gave His commandments through Moses (Judges 3:4).

(Reason #5) - Ezra connects certain things from Leviticus to Moses. Ezra 6:18

(Reason #6) - Jesus Christ says the “law of cleansing or leprosy” found in Leviticus 14:2-32 was written by Moses. Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14

(Reason #7) - Paul quotes Leviticus (Rom. 10:5/Lev. 18:5) and says it was written by Moses. (Rom. 10:5)

QUESTION #3 – When was Leviticus written?

(Fact #1) - Since Moses is the author, it was obviously written sometime before he died—1400 B.C.

(Fact #2) - Leviticus was obviously written after the Exodus, which most believe occurred somewhere near the year 1440 B.C. (Based on calculations in I Kings 6:1, if Solomon built the Temple in 960 B.C., which most agree is the date, and this date was 480 years after the departure of Egypt, the Exodus took place in 1440 B.C.)

(Fact #3) - Leviticus was written after the Tabernacle had been constructed (Lev. 1:1) 1438 B.C. According to Exodus 40:17, the Tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year after the Exodus. If we assume the Exodus occurred somewhere near 1440 B.C., the date of the writing of Leviticus would be approximately 1438 B.C.

(Fact #4) - Leviticus was written before Israel left Mount Sinai. Lev. 7:37-38; 26:46; 27:34
We may assume that Leviticus was written somewhere around 1438 B.C.

QUESTION #4 – Why was Leviticus written?

We get a big help in answering this question in the first verse and the first word of the book “then.” This immediately connects us to the preceding verses in the book of Exodus. **God’s objective ever since the Exodus was to make Israel a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:6).** Leviticus takes dead aim at priestly holiness!

QUESTION #5 – What is the theme of Leviticus?

The theme of Leviticus is this—**In order for any person to have a relationship with and fellowship with the Holy God of the Bible, he must be holy positionally and practically.**

QUESTION #6 – What does Leviticus mean to Israel and what does it mean to us?

Israel would view it as a book that was designed to furnish them with well-being laws to govern their physical, moral and spiritual lives until the Messiah would come. Israel made at least two mistakes with Leviticus—1) She missed the real meaning of the sacrifices as it related to Jesus Christ; 2) She convinced herself that she had kept all of the laws, when in fact she hadn’t. Truth is Israel still has not made a proper application of Leviticus.

QUESTION #7 – What is the title of the book?

In Hebrew, the name of this book of the Bible is—Wayyiqra, “and he called.” The Hebrews typically named their books of the Bible by the first word of the text, which is “wayyiqra.” The name that we have of the book “Leviticus” actually comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T. done approximately 300 years before Christ). The Greek word is Levitikon—which is an adjective used to describe priestly ceremonies and institutions. The Latin Vulgate (a translation made by Jerome from A.D. 382-405) gave the title Leviticus to the book and it has been used in English Bibles ever since. It has come to mean pertaining to the Levites.

QUESTION #8 – How does the book of Leviticus unfold?

There are many ways the book may be broken down.

Dr. Ryrie breaks the book down into two main outlines:

- I.** The Way to God: Sacrifice. 1:1-10:20
- II.** The Walk with God: Sanctification. 11:1-27:34

Dr. J. Vernon McGee breaks the book down into six main points:

- I.** The Five Offerings and the Law of Them. Chapters 1-7
- II.** The Priests—All Believers are Priests. Chapters 8-10
- III.** Holiness in Daily Life. God concerned with His Children's Conduct. Chapters 11-22
- IV.** The Holy Holidays. Chapter 23
- V.** Laws and Prophecies for the Promised Land. Chapters 24-26
- VI.** Dedication and Devotion—Concerning Vows. Chapter 27

Dr. F. Duane Lindsey gives the following outline:

- I.** The Way of Approach to God by Sacrifice. Chapters 1-16
- II.** The Walk of Holiness before God by Separation. Chapters 17-27

Dr. Samuel Schultz breaks the book down in the following way:

- 1.** Instructions and laws on sacrifice (chaps. 1-7)
- 2.** Institution of the priesthood (chaps. 8-10)
- 3.** Treatment of uncleanness (chaps. 11-15)
- 4.** The Day of Atonement (chapter 16)
- 5.** Instructions for holy living (chaps. 17-27)

Dr. Warren Wiersbe gives the following outline:

- I.** Holy Offerings—1-7
- II.** A Holy Priesthood—8-10, 21-22
- III.** A Holy Nation—11-17
- IV.** A Holy Land—18-20, 23-27

Dr. Mark Rooker does an excellent job giving a content outline:

- I.** Laws Concerning Offerings and Sacrifices. (1:1-7:38)
- II.** The Institution of the Priesthood. (8:1-10:20)
- III.** The Laws of Purity. (11:1-15:3)
- IV.** Day of Atonement. (16:1-34)
- V.** Laws of Holiness. (17:1-26:46)
- VI.** Vows and Tithes. (27:1-34)