



OUR
HOLY
GOD

L E V I T I C U S



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Book background

Leviticus means, 'relating to the Levites' The Levites were the tribe of God's people he had called to be priests.

Written by Moses, the events took place during a 1 year stay at Mt.Sinai (Exodus 19-Numbers 10) and, Leviticus is the 6th most quoted book in the New Testament (out of 39 the OT books).

Leading up to Leviticus

God promised Abraham and his descendants they would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-5) in the promised land and be a blessing to others. A large part of that

blessing is being in a relationship with God.

This relationship was established in Exodus 19 after they were set free from Egypt. A little later, in Exodus 35-40, God's people built a big tent so that God could live among them, called the tent of meeting. However, at the end of Exodus, Moses can't go into this tent - there's a problem.

How can a people who have rebelled and are selfish at the core, be reconciled and relate to a holy God?

Well, that is what Leviticus is about. How sinful, corrupt people can live in the holy God's presence.

So, the laws reveal what it means for God's covenant people to live in relationship with their king, as he makes his dwelling place on earth.

Interestingly, in Numbers 1:1, (next book in the Bible) Moses actually gets into this tent of meeting! God's law is effective in bringing people to himself and making them holy.

Be Holy!

Leviticus teaches us that God is holy – He alone is perfect, all-powerful all-knowing and completely pure. Because God is this, he requires his people to be holy too.

To be holy, like God, is to be set apart from the ordinary and the sinful.

The good news is that it is God who makes it possible for them through the sacrifices and mediation of the priests.

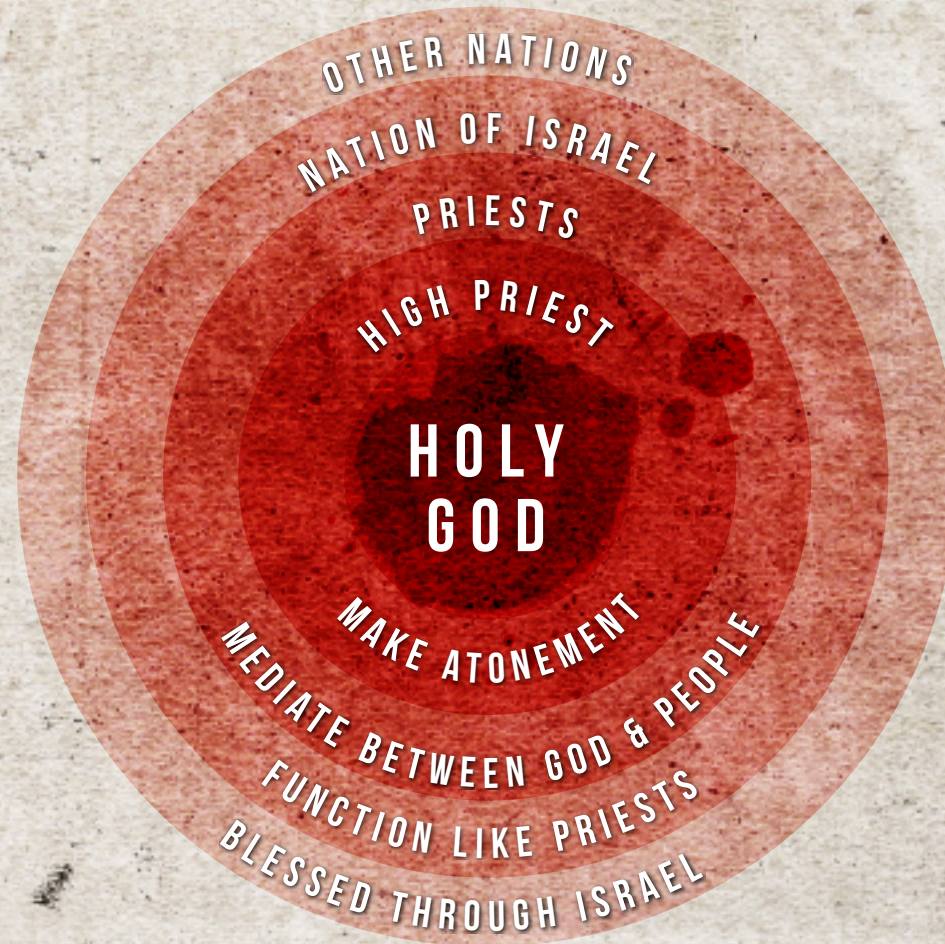
God wants to show grace to his people, to clean them up, to make them holy. And in obeying the laws, they were able to acknowledge their sin, God's justice, holiness, kindness and mercy to them.

Leviticus and Mission

Probably not the first thought when you think of Leviticus! Try and think of Leviticus like an on-going, missional heart, for God's people. And it's all to do

M I S S I O N O F L E V I T I C U S

- BRING PEOPLE **TO** THE HOLY GOD
- LIVE **WITH** THE HOLY GOD



KEY VERSES LEADING UP:

- GENESIS 12:1-2
- EXODUS 19:4-5
- EXODUS 35-40

with priests. See, not only do they teach the law and handle sacrifices (Leviticus 1-7), but, they are to function as a priestly nation too (Exodus 19:1-5). That doesn't mean they are all priests, but what it does mean is that the nation of God's people are to mediate God to the other nations (Deuteronomy 4:5-8). The people of God are priests in the midst of the other nations. This is to fulfil the promise to Abraham of being a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:1-2). Because, you see, to bless, is to be a priest. Which means, the priesthood is missional!

This means that at a big picture level, their obedience to the law is about their mission, not their salvation. God has saved them, and now, they live missionally, holy lives, as a nation, to bring the blessing of Abraham to the rest of mankind.

But... it's law?

Laws take up lots of room in the Bible and they seem very, 'boring' and 'irrelevant'. Yet, they form the foundation for us understanding why we need

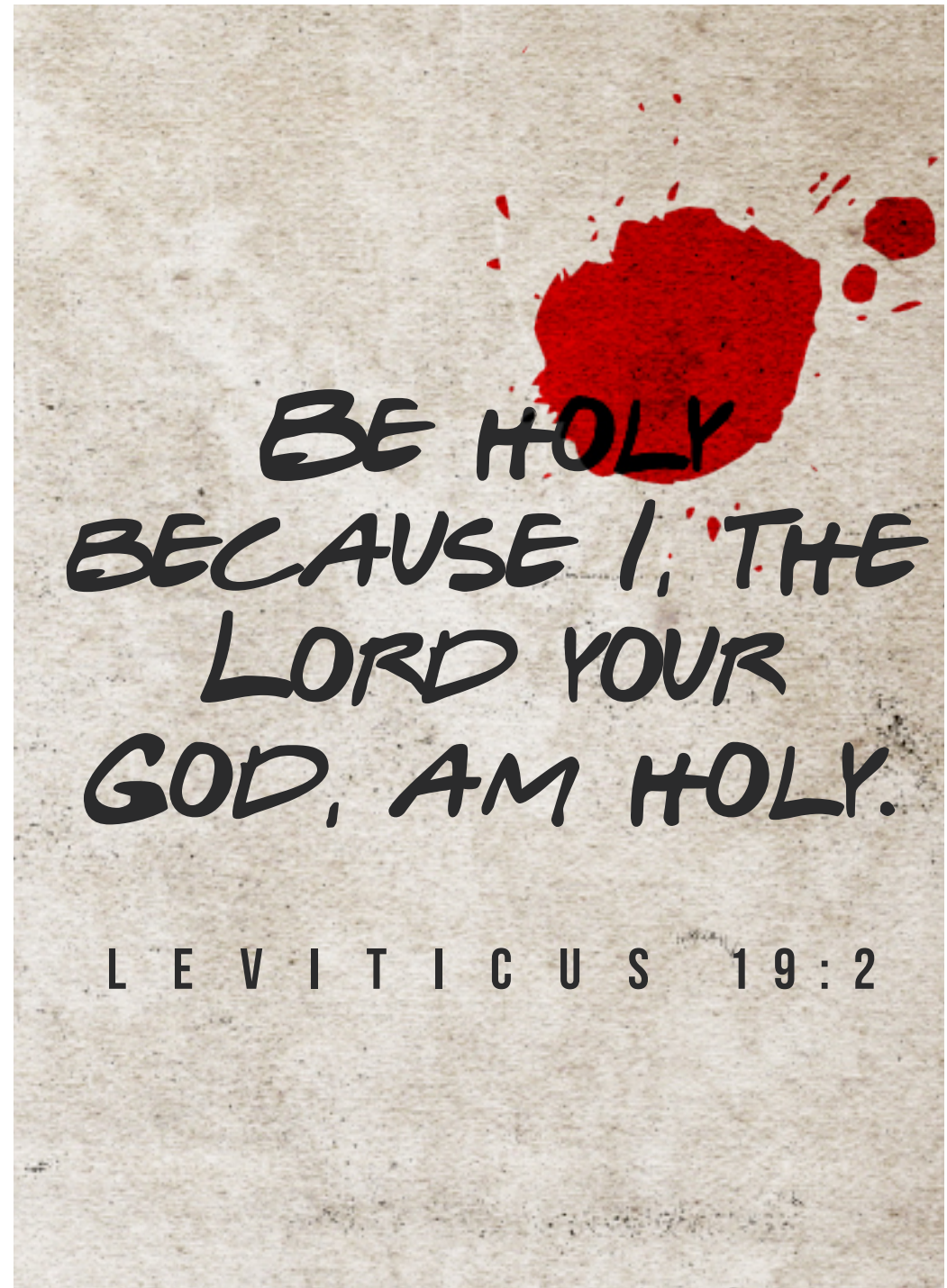
sacrifices for sin, how horrible sin is to God and how God graciously makes a way for people to know him. The law shows us the heart of the law giver, God himself, and how he wants to forgive us, and to let life flourish under his loving rule and care.

Leviticus setups our entire understanding of Jesus' death on the cross as a sacrifice for sin and that's pretty important!

Interpreting the laws

There is no strict division between moral, civil and ceremonial laws, as some say. They are a unified body, never intended to be broken down in such a way. For God's people, their entire life and culture revolved around these laws.

Moreover, when we talk of Jesus fulfilling the law, he doesn't just fulfil one section of law, but all of them. But, what does it mean they are fulfilled? It doesn't mean they don't apply to us any longer, rather, we view and understand and apply them in light of Jesus and his sacrifice,



death, in his role as a priest, and by his Spirit within us.

What we want to do with Leviticus, is to faithfully see how it fits in the OT context where it belongs, then to see how it is fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus and to see how the story of God - creation, redemption in Jesus, new creation is at work here. You can also look up Luke 24:27 and Luke 24:44 for Jesus' own understanding of the law.

Aussies and the law

Aussies are a ruled based nation; we like rules, laws and justice. We like things to be concrete and firm. But, the bible is a little less tight than we'd like it to be in some parts. For example, in other cultures, offending someone is considered far worse than telling a lie, because relationships are more important than rules. Whereas we don't mind offending to tell the truth!

Moreover, we are very strongly independent and individual in

Australia. Reading it, as we do, we can sometimes miss the collective effect they have on others as well as us. For example, committing adultery isn't a private matter, Offerings are offered for families, not just individuals, sin hurts those around them. And, it shows how we can relate to the least, last, lost and how to care about others in our community, even at our own expense.

We also see that there is a strong sense of hierarchy in the law too. We don't like this in Australia! Only priests can offer a sacrifice. Only the high priest can offer the atoning one. This can be hard to hear, but, if we keep going, we see that in Jesus, our priests and head, all believers are one in Christ and that leaders in the church aren't priests, but sheep, like others,

Think relationally

Relationships matter to God. The law is about us and God and us and others living with God. They are given in the

context of an already relationship with God, and thereby describe how to relate to God and others in this existing relationship.

All this to say, we should think about the laws relationally, not as rules with no social context. As one pastor said about preaching law, "We want to produce good neighbours, not Pharisees." So, we see that the fulfilment of the laws passages are transformed in Jesus to be relationship based.

Therefore, because of Jesus, we now relate to God, in Jesus, as forgiven sinners before a holy God.

Join us as we open up a book dripping with God's holiness and grace. How our king who once dwelt in a tent, delighting in sacrifices, always intended, since Abraham, to bless the nations though this sacrificial system though his own son Jesus Christ - and how the requirements of a holy God are met, fulfilled and completed in Jesus. All so that we can gather around his throne, enter into his

heavenly presence, and delight in our king.

My hope is that our time in Leviticus would help us to have a bigger, holier view of God and both delight and appreciate his grace to us in Jesus even more and that each of us would live as God's holy people.

R E S O U R C E S

Commentaries

Jay Sklar, **Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary**, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 2013.

Kids & Teens

Engage, Issue 6, The Good Book Company

Videos

Why is it in the bible? <https://www.paultripp.com/bible-study/posts/leviticus-summary>

Why even study Leviticus? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrB0n8LSt6I&t=58s>

Book overview: <https://bibleproject.com/learn/leviticus/>

Theme: holiness <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/holiness/>

Theme: Sacrifice <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-and-atonement/>

5 W E E K P L A N

Leviticus: Our Holy God

- Week 1:** The Cost of Our Sin, Leviticus 1
- Week 2:** Our Need For A Mediator, Leviticus 8-10
- Week 3:** The Day Of Atonement, Leviticus 16
- Week 4:** God Is Holy, Leviticus 19
- Week 5:** Motivation To Obey, Leviticus 26-27