

“Why Leviticus?”

Because God has Spoken

A) When God Speaks...

- a. **Lev. 1:1**
- b. God’s Glory is put on display (**Exo. 40:34-38**)
- c. He reveals Himself & His character (**John 1:1-4**)
- d. He gives instruction to His people

B) We Must Listen & Obey

- a. **Exo. 19:7-9**
- b. **Deut. 13:1-4**

Because God has Spoken We Need to Know His Story

A) What is the over-arching story of the Bible?

- a. A Covenant Story
 - i. God has made a covenant (Spiritual children)
 - **Gal.3:7-9**
 - ii. God instructs His covenant people how to live in that covenant relationship
 - **Gal. 3:19-20**
 - iii. God has made a promise to His covenant people to dwell among them
 1. **John 1:1-3,14**
 2. **Eph. 2:19-22**

b. A Gospel Story

- i. The story of the Bible is the story of the one God
- ii. Redeeming His people through one way, Jesus Christ
- iii. So that the redeemed would worship the one God.

c. A Jesus Story

- i. **Luke 24:27**
- ii. The story of the Bible is, then, about Jesus Christ... every bit of it.

- iii. Every event, begat, sin, blessing, wrath, healing, tragedy, deliverance, birth, death is about Jesus Christ.
- d. God has NEVER changed His story. In a sense, the story of the entire Bible is the story of Leviticus

B) What is the purpose of the Law (as given by God)?

- a. **Galatians 3:22-26**
- b. **Graeme Goldsworthy** (Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture), *“The law functions to enable his new nation of redeemed people to know what kind of existence is consistent with this unique relationship with God. The law not only functions to prescribe human behavior but fulfills the very significant purpose of indicating what kind of God has redeemed them... At the heart of the law is the covenant relationship with God. Relationships between individuals and groups are to reflect the relationship of the individual and the group to God, a relationship that has been established by grace.”*

C) Where does Grace fit in?

- a. **John 1:17**
- b. **Galatians 2:19-21**
- c. The Law has always pointed to Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone

Because Leviticus Helps Us Understand the Grace of God

A) Our natural tendency is Salvation by Works

- a. Taking God’s provision and making it man’s achievement (the Law)
- b. We need to be delivered from legalism - using the law in order to obtain acceptance (difference between acceptance and pleasure)

B) Our Understanding of Grace is generally weak

- a. **Gal. 3:10-14**
- b. Until we understand Grace, we won’t live free as Children of God’s covenant promise, praising God!
- c. **Gal. 4:4-6**

Because God is Relevant

- A) "Why Leviticus? Because God is Relevant!"
 - a. Some feel that Leviticus may be the most irrelevant book in the Bible
 - b. But what do we do today? We (in the church) try to make God relevant to the world by attaching Him to things like... diet, relationships, sex, religion – we try to make God a part of these things and hope that attaching God to these subjects will make Him relevant both to us and to the lost.
 - c. Leviticus is all about these things
- B) In our attempt to make God relevant, we try to associate him with the environment, food, and sex. We tend to think that making God relevant means to make Him matter with the things that matter to us.
- C) Here's the problem: We are not the center of the universe. We need to understand how we matter to God. Our greatest concern should be, is God present. **If He is present, He IS relevant.**
- D) Here's what I mean. We try to make God relevant to us on our terms. Leviticus reminds us that God is not the one adjusting or meeting requirements. Leviticus firmly establishes that God is holy and desires to dwell with His people. In order for Him to dwell with His people, certain requirements must be met by the people for Him to be with them because He is Holy. Anything that God does to either help the people meet those requirements (or meet the requirements for them) is GRACE (undeserved, unmerited favor).
- E) So, the BIGGEST issue for the church today is NOT to make God relevant....it is to know God's Presence!
- F) That's what Leviticus is all about... Better understanding the Presence of God (Who He Is / What He Desires / What He Demands of His people... that He may dwell among them)

A Brief Introduction to Leviticus

- A) The Name "Leviticus"
 - a. Hebrew word meaning "the Lord called"
 - b. Levites were the Law giving rabbis
 - c. This book is as much about the people as it is those who lead them
- B) Context
 - a. Leviticus flows right out of Exodus
 - b. Given less than one month after the establishment of the tabernacle (reminds me of Nehemiah 8-9)
- C) Themes
 - a. God's Holiness
 - b. God's Righteous requirements of His people for the purpose of His dwelling among them
 - c. God's Atoning work to cleanse His people (because they cannot cleanse themselves)
 - d. As a result, our series title is "The Presence" - speaking of God's desire to dwell among His people in order to be worshipped by them. Being Holy, His dwelling must be made holy (us). He gives instructions, but ultimately we know that we are incapable of making ourselves acceptable to God, so we need a mediator (a priest) to make an atoning sacrifice in our place (Lev.16) - fulfilled perfectly in the person of Christ... The Book of Hebrews!
- D) General Outline
 - a. The Five Major Offerings (Lev. 1:1-6:7)
 - b. Instructions for the Offerings (Lev. 6:8-7:38)
 - c. The Priesthood (Lev. 8:1-10:20)
 - d. Laws related to Uncleaness (Lev. 11:1-15:33)
 - e. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16)
 - f. Dealing with Blood (Lev. 17)
 - g. Call to Holiness (Lev. 18:1-25:55)
 - h. Blessings and Curses (Lev. 26)
 - i. Vows and Dedications (Lev. 27)
- E) Our hermeneutic is Christ
 - a. Everyone has an interpretive point when approaching any text

- b. The Gospel-Condition focus of OT interpretation
 - i. God
 - ii. Man
 - iii. Christ
 - iv. Response
 - v. When only one is present in the text, we can get to the others quickly and without violating the context. When the context is Christ (always is) there must be present something of God's work / presence / character, man's sinfulness, and / or God's commandment to men

F) Our command is to be Holy

- a. **Leviticus 11:44-45**
- b. **1 Peter 1:13-16**
- c. Leviticus should promote our gratitude to God for saving us by Grace in Christ satisfying the Law (including its curse) in our place. It should promote our cry for God's help to live holy lives as those who have been purchased with the blood of Christ. GRACE LEADS TO HOLY LIVING!

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

- A) Non-believer, have you tried to be good enough for God? Haven't you banged your head against the wall of your sin time and time again? The story of Leviticus is for because God has provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, to meet all of God's requirements for you, bearing all of God's wrath in your place...if you will only believe in and upon Him, seeking to follow Him from this time on.
- B) Believer, as one who has been ransomed by Christ, you are commanded to live a holy life. Are you pursuing holiness? Sin has robbed your joy because, as a believer, you are designed to be His dwelling place and anything less will not satisfy you. Go back to the cross where every one of God's righteous requirements and every bit of God's just wrath was bore by Christ in your place. Does that not provoke you to obedience and praise?!