

## THE BIG READ (27)

### Jesus in Leviticus

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The Old Testament that Jesus read contained the same 39 books as our English Bibles but was arranged in a different order.

It had three sections – the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)

The Law (of Moses) contains the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

3. The third book in the Law part of the Old Testament is Leviticus.

*“Leviticus is a graveyard where the bodies of those who try to read the Bible from start to finish lay.”*

*“If you read people passages from the divine books that are good and clear, they will hear them with great joy... But provide someone a reading from Leviticus and at once the listener will gag and push it away as if it were some bizarre food.” (Origen)*

Leviticus is about God wanting to be in a relationship with people and inviting them to come to Him.

The Hebrew name for Leviticus is “And He Called”.

“[And] The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them.” (Leviticus 1:1-2)

“And” shows the book is a continuation of a previous story.

#### B. Getting Started with Leviticus

1. At the end of Exodus, God comes and makes His home and lives amongst the people of Israel.

“Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” (Exodus 40:34-35)

But there was a problem.

2. The people of Israel were sinful and for a holy God to draw near to sinful people was dangerous for them.

How could a holy God live and carry on living amongst a sinful people?



2. In Leviticus 1-7 we see that God's holiness requires that the people bring the right sacrifices in the right way.

The burnt offering was the way for the people to be accepted by God as the sacrifice dies in their place taking God's anger at their sin.

"If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him." (Leviticus 1:3-4)

The grain offering was the way for the people to say "Thank You" to God for His forgiveness as the offering symbolised a life that was pleasing to God and a commitment to live lives that are pure.

"When someone brings a grain offering to the LORD, his offering is to be of fine flour. He is to pour oil on it, put incense on it and take it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the fine flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD." (Leviticus 2:1-2)

The fellowship offering was the way for the people to celebrate what God had done for them by eating a meal with Him.

"If someone's offering is a fellowship offering, and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before the LORD an animal without defect." (Leviticus 3:1-2)

The sin offering was the way for the pollution sin brought to the people's lives to be cleaned up.

"The LORD said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands – "If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed." (Leviticus 4:1-3)

The guilt offering was the way for the debt the people owed to God to be paid.

"And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty." (Leviticus 6:6-7)

3. In Leviticus 8-16 we see that God's holiness requires priests to be mediators.

The priests needed to be from the right family – a Levite from the family of Aaron.

"The LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron and his sons." (Leviticus 8:1-2)

The priests needed to be cleaned, clothed and commissioned in order to serve God.

"Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water." (Leviticus 8:6)

"He put the tunic of Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also tied the ephod to him by its skilfully woven waistband; so it was fastened on him. He placed the breastplate on him and put the Urim and Thummin in the breastpiece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred diadem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses." (Leviticus 8:7-9)

"He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him." (Leviticus 8:12)

The priests offered the sacrifices to God on behalf of the people.

"Aaron then brought the offering that was for the people." (Leviticus 9:15)

The priests were to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the clean and unclean and teach the people God's law.

"You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses." (Leviticus 10:10-11)

The priests were to protect the purity of the camp.

"The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp." (Leviticus 13:45-46)

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, one of the priest, the High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place with two goats – one would be slaughtered and the other sent away – making atonement for the Tabernacle and the people, so God could live with them for another year.

4. In Leviticus 17-27 we see that God's holiness requires that the people live holy lives.

"The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'" (Leviticus 19:1-2)

To do that they need to listen to God's Word.

"The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God.'" (Leviticus 18:1-2)

To do that they need to live God's way.

"You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD." (Leviticus 18:3-5)

Being holy means loving God and loving our neighbour in all of life.

## **D. Jesus in Leviticus**

1. Jesus is sacrifice we need.

"He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." (Hebrews 7:27)

He is our burnt offering – He is the substitute who dies in our place to take the punishment we deserve for our sins, satisfying God's anger at us, so that we can be accepted.

He is our grain offering – He lived a life that is pleasing and pure in God's sight so that when we give our feeble thanks to God by our lives lived for Him, He sees them as pleasing and pure.

He is our fellowship offering – He makes it possible for us to be part of God's family and enjoy the intimacy and security that comes from being in a relationship with him.

He is our sin offering – He has washed away the pollution sin brings to our lives, making us clean.

He is our guilt offering – He has paid the debt that we owe to God because of our sin.

2. Jesus is the priest we need.

"Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens." (Hebrews 7:23-26)

He offers the perfect sacrifice, once for all time, on our behalf.

"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God." (Hebrews 10:11-12)

### 3. Jesus is the holiness we need.

He listened to God's Word.

He lived God's way.

He loved God and loved His neighbour in all of life.

"First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." (Hebrews 10:8-9)

He makes us holy by giving us His holiness.

"We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."  
(Hebrews 10:10)