

September 10 2023
The Presence of God Introduction to Leviticus Part 1

Leviticus 11:44-45

44 For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy**, for **I am holy**. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. **45** For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore **be holy**, for **I am holy**.”

Leviticus 20:26

You shall be holy to me, for **I the Lord am holy** and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

Every year a lot of Christians make a decision to read the entire Bible, but then something happens when they get to the book of Leviticus. Some people say it is the **most boring part of the book** and they quit, while others say that it's so **confusing part**, “I don't understand all these **rituals** and **offering** and they stop reading the Bible.”

Well, I am here to tell you how **intriguing** and **exciting** the book of Leviticus is. Once you understand it, you'll get a great **picture of what the New Testament** means. Because much of it is connected to the New Testament like the book of Hebrews, when it says that **Jesus is the “High Priest”** what does that mean?

Or when Jesus says in **Matthew 5:17-18**.

Matthew 5:17-18

17 “Do not think that I have come to **abolish the Law** or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them **but to fulfill them**. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until **all is accomplished**.”

Well, what is Jesus talking about? What **law** is Jesus fulfilling?
The Answer: **The Book of Leviticus** That's why it's very important for us to know and understand Leviticus.

So, what I would like to do for you for the next few Sundays, is just give an **overview of the book of Leviticus**. And then after that go through groups of chapters to give you **key highlights**.

So let's begin!

I have in front of me the first five books of the Bible: (Genesis, Exodus, **Leviticus**, Numbers and Deuteronomy) It's also called the Torah or Pentateuch.

Before we get to Leviticus, we have to see the ending of Exodus and at the very Beginning of Numbers to see what needs to happen in the middle.

Exodus 40:34-35

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **35** And **Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting** because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

[Illustration with a tent]

Here you have Moses, who encountered God personally. Remember the **burning bush** where God spoke to Moses through it. And then later on Moses directly received the **Ten Commandments** from God but yet **he was not able to enter the tent where God dwells**.

So let's pass through Leviticus and read the very first verse of Numbers 1:1.

Numbers 1:1

The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, **in the tent of meeting**, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Wait! So how was Moses **able to enter into the tent with God** and to be in the **presence of God where He dwells**.

So what happened in Leviticus? How was Moses able to enter into the presence of God?

All of us want to know how we can get into the presence of God. Because when you get into the presence of God then we have an understanding of what God means when He says, **“Be holy, as I am holy.”** This can only happen when you enter into the presence of God. So in essence, **you will encounter God’s Holiness**.

So, what we’re going to do is **back track a bit into the Book of Exodus** to figure out what separated the people from God, and why God is wanting us to **be Holy as He is Holy**.

Exodus: God speaks to Moses and tells Moses to go to Egypt to free His people from slavery.

- Moses tells Pharaoh (ruler of Egypt), **“Let my people go!”** But then Pharaoh rejects it and then God sends ten plagues come upon them. So **Pharaoh ends up letting Hebrew slaves go**.
- So all the people of Israel go on this long journey.
- Now on this journey, God himself is directing the people. You have the **cloud by day** and **fire by night**. So if the cloud and the fire moves then the people move. God himself is directing the people.
- We have a scene in which **God and humans co-exist** and **living in harmony because the people are willing to follow God**. **That’s where peace comes**.

- So one of the main reason you and I can co-exist with God is if **we obey God's direction**. That's why God gave to the Israelites the Ten Commandments in **Exodus 20**.

Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17)

1. No other gods before me.
2. Do not make any carved image (do not bow down to any false gods or images)
3. Do not use the Lord's name in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy
5. Honor your Father and Mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Don't lie)
10. You shall not covet (Don't be envious of what others have).

[Do the hand motions of the ten commandments: Parents please teach these to your kids]

Then in **Exodus 25** God tells the people, I want you to build me a sanctuary in which I can dwell in to be with my people.

- The Ark of the Covenant
- The Tabernacle (Tent)

[Show picture of the **ark of the covenant**]

[Show a picture of the **tabernacle**]

Why does God want His people to make a tabernacle and ark of the covenant? God is an almighty God, He **doesn't need a physical place**, so **why does God want them to build it? What is God's desire?** From the very beginning I want you to know God's heart.

Exodus 25:21-22

21 And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. **22** There **I will meet with you**, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, **I will speak with you** about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

My friends, these are the promises of God. God himself will meet with you. God wants to speak to you.

John 10:27

My sheep **hear my voice**, and **I know them**, and they follow me.

You will hear God's voice.

- God desire to be with you.
- God desires to dwell with His people.

This was from the beginning **God's intention**. He wants to be with His people. That's why he gave us the Ten Commandments. A parent that does not give their kids instructions is not a loving God. In America, it is called "**neglect**" and you can get arrested.

Back to Egypt: You have to remember, that the Israelites grew up with other gods and goddesses before leaving Egypt. For over 400 years the Israelites have been living there and for over 3,000 years in Egypt you had over a 1,000 gods.

Egyptian Pantheon (gods and goddess: over 1,000):

- Isis
- Osiris
- Horus
- Amun
- Ra (The Egyptian god of the sun)

And these gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt were an integral part of the people's every day lives. So the Israelites were very much effected by them. That's why God is saying, "**You shall have no other god's before me as the first Ten commandment.**"

So here you have the former Hebrew slaves coming out of Egypt with all these Egyptian culture and identities.

So when the Israelites moved out of Egypt a lot of Egypt moved with them. Just like a lot of Koreans that went to America, you still had a lot of Korean stuff that went with you, like the language, culture and food right. Like in America right now almost **everyone knows what a kimchi is**. A lot of non-Koreans know what **k-pop** or **k-drama** is. So a lot of Korean came out of Korea they took a lot of Korean culture with them.

So when the Israelites came out of Egypt, you still had Egyptian system in them. Good or bad but it followed the Israelites.

This is something very important. **For the majority of the Egyptian gods, you had to go to them for worship**, but here is Yahweh the God of Israel, He is willing to dwell with His people and move with the people and be with His people (Cloud and Fire). That is the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle. God dwells with His people.

And that is why in **Exodus 26**, God commanded His people to build a tabernacle, so God can dwell with His people and for the **people can be in the presence of God**.

So the Goal for the Israelites was to be in the **presence of God**.

Let me ask you a question: "**Do you want to be in the presence of God?**" [Turn to your neighbor, "Do you want to be in the presence of God?"]

But something happened that **separated between man and God**.

Everything was going well. They were following God and obeying God but then sin came into Mt. Sinai.

All the Israelites were gathered together at Mt. Sinai and Moses went up to the top of the Mountain to have a conversation with God, **but he's taking a very long time**. So the people was not sure when Moses was going to come back. In fact, some were even thinking he might not even return. O.K.! So what do we do? **Let's break the first commandment**. Human tendency: when you do not seek after God, you will make another god.

Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses **delayed to come down** from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, **make us gods** who **shall go before us**. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

This is exactly what happens to people who doubt God. You **feel like** God is far away **even though He is right there** in the clouds and in the fire. So when the people "**felt**" like Moses was not going to return or that "**felt**" like God was not going to respond at the time they want, **they went back to Egypt, there old nature**.

Anytime, we "**feel**" like God is far away, even though "**factually**" He is there, we as humans go back to our old nature and say, "**make us gods!**" In other words, they were **impatient with God to respond**. They didn't wait for **God's timing**, they wanted their own time.

So the people created a god, made of gold, and made a "Golden Calf."

Moses got angry (Just imagining: “*Man I spent 40 days up in this mountain and you guys through a party with a golden calf!*” (#2 of the Ten Commandments, you shall not bow down.)

Moses got so upset that he burned the golden calf and ground it into a powder, which he mixed with water and gave the people to drink it.

He rebuked Aaron and called for the people who would choose the Lord to come to him.

Exodus 32:26-29

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the Lord's side? **Come to me.**” And all the sons of **Levi gathered around him.** **27** And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’” **28** And the sons of Levi did **according to the word** of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. **29** And Moses said, “**Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord,** each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”

Three things to understand:

1. Come to Me (Calling in Life: Follow Jesus)
2. Obedience to God's Word
3. “Ordained” is when you actually serve in ministry

Leviticus = Levi

First, this is where you get the the name of the book Leviticus from the tribe of Levi. Remember that Levi is one of the **12 tribes of Israel**, but only the tribe of **Levi stepped up first to be in the side of God**. So

when Moses said, “***you have been ordained for the service of the Lord***” was the beginning for all Levi’s to become priests.

Question: Are you willing to be the first?

This is why all the descendants of Levi were chosen to be the **bridge between man and God**. This is important because this sets the tone for the book of Leviticus. It’s going to talk a lot about becoming priests. Who else is the bridge between man and God? **Jesus!**

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus is the bridge between man and God. (N.T.) And here comes John the Baptist in the N.T, he is a Levi. John the Baptist is preparing the way for the Lord. This is what John said about Jesus.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “***Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***”

One of the main job of the ***Levite priests were to sacrifice the animals for the forgiveness of their sins***. The Levi’s were the bridge way between man and God. Another key responsibility of the Levites was to obey the commands of God

So John the Baptist obeyed God and Baptized Jesus
And ***Jesus became was the sacrificial lamb*** going all the way back to book of Leviticus fulfilling it’s law.

Three things to understand:

1. Come to Me (Calling in Life: Follow Jesus)
2. Obedience to God’s Word

3. “Ordained” is when you actually serve in ministry

Then this sets the background for **God’s Holiness** to come into our lives.