

# LEVITICUS - A STUDY GUIDE

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## THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

### What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
  - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of Leviticus? Is **anything** about God clearly revealed in this book or in the ceremonial law?
2. Abraham married his sister, Isaac married the daughter of his first cousin, and Jacob married two of his cousins who were also sisters, Amram (Moses' father) married his aunt (Numbers 26:59), Reuben committed adultery with one of his father's wives, but yet Leviticus 18:6,8,9,11,18; & 20:11,17 forbids such marriages. How can God bless those who break His rules?
3. What do you think of all the ceremonies and sacrifices? What was actually accomplished by all that blood? (Hebrews 9:16-10:4) What did the ceremonial system do for the Jews? In Christ's day how were they observing these ceremonies? (Compare John 2:13-22) What meaning were they getting out of them? Is there any explanation in Leviticus as to the meaning of each of the symbols and sacrifices? For example, can you find a verse that says that the lamb represents or is a type of the Christ to come? Can we tell from the Biblical record what it was that they began to read into these services? (See Malachi 2:4-9) In the time of Christ, why were they offering sacrifices? If they understood the meaning of the ceremonial system, why didn't they recognize Christ? What does or should it mean to us? Or should we interpret Colossians 2:14 to mean that it was nailed to the cross and we shouldn't waste time studying it any more? Is there anything in the Bible that is without meaning for us at the present time? When we say that "All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable" (2 Timothy 3:16), do we really mean **all**, even Leviticus?
4. Were all these sacrifices necessary because, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin?" (Hebrews 9:22) Does this suggest that before the coming of Christ all these sacrifices were necessary since His blood had not yet been shed?
5. Why does God give us so much detail about the tabernacle, the offerings, even the clothing of the priests, and not give us any explanation about what it all means? How did God intend for those people to get the meaning of it all? (For proof that a mere mechanical offering of sacrifices is not what God wants, look at Psalms 51:10-19; Isaiah 1:11-18, Jeremiah 7:21-26; 3:14-16; 31:31-34, Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:1-8, Hosea 6:4-6, and Hebrews 10:1-4.) Is there any evidence that God made provision for the people to be instructed? All these sacrifices—even the death of Christ—are useless without the meaning. The death of Christ doesn't just provide the "right" blood—it must be understood. If the death of Christ does not change us from rebels to understanding and trusting friends willing to listen and let God heal us, then His death has no real impact on us. Believing that there is some "magical" power in the blood is sometimes called "hematolatriy".
6. What would you do if we suddenly discovered that we had misinterpreted some part of scripture, and God expected us to continue sacrificing animals? Could you take a lamb and confess your sins over it and then kill it? In this context, what do you think is the meaning of the statement that "Christ is the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world?" (Revelation 13:8; Compare Revelation 5:6,12) Did the people perceive the love of God in all of this?
7. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that butchers are brutalized by their constant killing. Don't you think that God knew that this would happen to the Israelites? How did God expect them to maintain their reverence for life? Does this partially explain their apparent casual attitude even toward human life?
8. Today we have a ceremony that points back to what all these ceremonies pointed forward to (Luke 22:7-18), but we only drink unfermented grape juice and eat small unleavened wafers. Why didn't

God come quietly down on Mt. Sinai, give the Sermon on the Mount, and introduce something like our communion service back then?

9. Were these laws, which we often call “the law of Moses” (Daniel 9:11; Malachi 4:4; Matthew 19:7, 22:24; Mark 7:10; John 1:17), actually thought up by Moses, or were they given by God? (Leviticus 26:46; 27:34) Doesn't 1 Corinthians 10:4 suggest that Christ was actually the One who gave these regulations? Why then did He say what He said about these ceremonies when He was here in person? (Compare Matthew 5-7)
10. Today Christians look forward to, even long for, the coming of “the kingdom of God” where God will be the true ruler. How would you feel living under the rules given by God himself in Exodus through Deuteronomy where murderers (Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17,21), thieves (Exodus 21:16), adulterers (Leviticus 18-20), people who use bad language (Leviticus 24:16), people who disrespect their parents (Exodus 21:15,17; Leviticus 20:9), Sabbath-breakers (Exodus 31:14,15; 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36), idolaters (Leviticus 19:2-5; Deuteronomy 17:2-6), false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:5), mediums (Leviticus 20:27) even people who can't control their animals (Exodus 21:29), or are immoral (Exodus 22:16; Leviticus 20:15) or homosexual (Leviticus 20:13) or rebellious (Joshua 1:18) are killed on the spot? Is this the way God wants to rule His people? How did they feel about being ruled like this? (Joshua 1:18)
11. Is there any value for us in looking back to see how God chose to reveal Himself to a bunch of escaped ex-slaves at the foot of Mt. Sinai? Is it important for us to understand the difference between the sin offering, the guilt offering, the cleansing offering? Do we need to know about the blood, the fat, the kidneys, and the thigh, etc.?
12. What is the meaning and purpose of “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?” (Exodus 21:24,25; Leviticus 24:20, Compare Deuteronomy 19:21; see Matthew 5:38-42) Do you think this was ever God's ideal?
13. Why did God feel it was necessary to send fire down out of heaven to burn up Nadab and Abihu? (Leviticus 10:1-11) What was so bad about what they did? Is this what God would really like to do when we are irreverent? Is this His ideal?
14. Why did God give them such a list of clean and unclean animals (Leviticus 11) if He knew that meat of any kind wasn't good for them? Why didn't He simply say that the best food is the fruits, nuts, and grains that He gave Adam and Eve, (Genesis 1:29) but if they needed more than this they could eat the vegetables that were given later? (Genesis 3:18) What is the purpose of all the rules about “uncleanness?” (Leviticus 5:2,3; 7:19-21; 10:10; 11; 13:1-15:33) Why does having a baby girl make you more unclean (or at least for a longer time) than having a baby boy? What was God trying to tell them through the elaborate ceremonies for cleansing?
15. In what way were the sins transferred to the lamb, to the priest, to the tabernacle, and finally to the scapegoat? Is it even possible to transfer sins or guilt? What is the true nature of sin?
16. Be sure to read Leviticus 19! But even in this chapter why does God keep telling them, “do it because I say so!” Is this the best reason that God could find?
17. What is implied by the expression, “an aroma pleasing to the Lord?” (Leviticus 1:9,13,17; 2:2,9,12, etc.) Why are leaven and yeast never to be offered on the altar? (Leviticus 2:12) Why did the Lord tell the children of Israel not to eat any fat or any blood? Would that be a good health rule even today? (Leviticus 3:17; compare Genesis 9:4)
18. How can a person be held guilty for doing something that he didn't realize was wrong? (Leviticus 4:14,23,28; 5:1,3,4,17) Is this fair? Why was God so particular about all these Levitical rules?

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