

I. Leviticus

a. Purpose: In this session we shall survey the book of Leviticus

b. Authorship

i. “Unlike Exodus (17: 14; 24: 4; 34: 27), Leviticus makes no allusion to Mosaic authorship.”¹

ii. Reasons why we believe Moses authored it:

1. “The statement “*the LORD said to Moses*” occurs 37 times.”²

2. “Most of the book involves “Yahweh speeches” that Moses delivered to God's servant nation.”³

3. Other Old Testament passages allude to contents from the book of Leviticus and attributing this to Moses in **2 Chronicles 23: 18; 30: 16; 35: 12**.⁴

4. New Testament passages also allude to contents from the book of Leviticus and attribute this to Moses in **Matthew 8: 2-4; Luke 2:22; Romans 10:5**.⁵

c. Purpose

i. The purpose of the book is “*Be Holy for I am Holy*” as stated in **Leviticus 11:44-45 and 19:2** and also from the fact that the Hebrew root word for holy appears 150 times in Leviticus.⁶

ii. According to Old Testament scholar Michel Grisanti: “In the wake of the arrival of God's visible presence at the tabernacle, the defining concern of all of Leviticus is the arrangement of life around His presence. How should people live if the eternal, holy, almighty God lived with them? Leviticus answers various questions in relation to this important reality.”⁷

1. At the end of the book Exodus we see an amazing truth in **Exodus 40:34-38** that God now “tabernacled” with Israel: “*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 36 Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. 38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by*

¹ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 7881-7882.

² Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 7882-7884.

³ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 7882-7884.

⁴ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 7886.

⁵ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 7886.

⁶ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 78-79.

⁷ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 7958-7960.

day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.”

2. Leviticus is actually part of a long segment of the Pentateuch from **Exodus 25-Numbers 10:10** on the ritual and sacrificial system that is tied to the tabernacle.⁸
3. In fact **Leviticus 1:1** begins with “*the tent of meeting*” picking up where Exodus left off with God’s glory in the tabernacle.

d. Structure

i. Big picture outline:

1. Major Sacrifices (**Leviticus 1-7**)
2. Priests: Ordination and Installment (**Leviticus 8-10**)
3. Purification (**Leviticus 11-16**)
4. Holiness Laws (**Leviticus 17-26**)

ii. Derek Tidball’s outline:⁹

1. The Manual of Sacrifice: Enjoying God's Presence (**chaps. 1– 7**)
 - a. The Offerings from the People's Perspective (**1:1– 6:7 [HB, 1: 1– 5: 26]**)
 - b. The Offerings from the Priest's Perspective (**6:8 [HB, 6: 1]– 7:38**)
2. The Manual of Priesthood: Entering God's Service (**chaps. 8– 10**)
 - a. The Ordination of the Priests (**chap. 8**)
 - b. The Beginning of Priestly Ministry (**chap. 9**)
 - c. The Violation of Priestly Ministry (**chap. 10**)
3. The Manual of Purity: Encountering God's Design (**chaps. 11– 15**)
 - a. Holiness and Daily Food: Clean and Unclean Animals (**chap. 11**)
 - b. Holiness and the Physical Life: Childbirth (**chap. 12**)
 - c. Holiness and Disease: Discerning and Cleansing of Disease (**chaps. 13– 14**)
 - d. Holiness and the Body: Cleansing after Discharges (**chap. 15**)
4. The Manual of Atonement: Ensuring God's Forgiveness (**chap. 16**)
5. The Manual of Holiness: Enacting God's Word (**chaps. 17– 26**)
 - a. The Laws (**chaps. 17– 25**)
 - i. The Sanctity of Blood (**chap. 17**)
 - ii. The Sanctity of Intimacy (**chap. 18**)
 - iii. The Sanctity of Interpersonal Relationships (**chap. 19**)
 - iv. Punishment for Holiness Violations (**chap. 20**)
 - v. Worship and Holiness (**chaps. 21– 22**)
 - vi. The Worship Calendar (**chap. 23**)
 - vii. Holiness at the Sanctuary (**chap. 24**)

⁸ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 7910.

⁹ Derek Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press), 5– 6.

- viii. Holiness of the Land: Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee (**chap. 25**)
 - b. The Cursings and Blessings (**chap. 26**)
 - 6. The Manual of Dedication: Enamored by God's Grace (**chap. 27**)
 - e. Themes
 - i. God being Holy means He is special and honorable
 - 1. There are two passages that mentioned the presence of the Lord in **Leviticus 10:2 and 16:1** and both references allude to God's judgment against Aaron's two sons for not obeying God in how to worship God.
 - 2. Thus God should be worshipped the way He wanted to be worship because God is special and to be honored.
 - 3. Part of being God being honorable is that there is a distinction between that which his common/special and ordinary/special in how we honor God. This is the meaning of the term "unclean/clean" and it does not necessarily always mean something physically dirty or sinful in of itself.
 - 4. Thus some things were "consecrated" and were made "were holy because they were consecrated or dedicated to the Lord's use alone."¹⁰
 - 5. Also the concept of ritual purity also shows the importance of how unique and honorable God is in how we must approach Him. Purification ritual shows us that.
 - ii. Following God should make us different in every area of life
 - 1. For instance the way we sacrifice is different than the nonbelievers
 - a. In **Leviticus 17** four different times the Lord told Moses to tell the people to bring their sacrifices to "*doorway of the tent of meeting*" and also mentioned penalty for not doing so (**v.4, 5, 6 and 9**).
 - b. The reason for this is stated: "*They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the [c]goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.*" (**Leviticus 17:7**) → It is so that sacrifices to other gods are forbidden.
 - c. Thus in sacrifices God's people are to be different and not polytheists like the pagans.
 - 2. God's people should also be different in their sexual ethics which is the theme of **Leviticus 18**.
 - 3. God's people should also be different in their relations towards others which is the theme of **Leviticus 19**.
 - 4. Remember the ongoing theme of holiness in the book mentioned earlier which is about how God and His people is to be different.
 - iii. The need for sacrifice to cover/atone for our sins

¹⁰ Michael Grisanti, "Exodus" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 8024-8025.

1. Atonement is a concept that is prominent throughout the book: **Leviticus 1:4, 4:20, 4:26, 4:31, etc.**
2. There are some sins mentioned as needing guilt offering: *“When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, 3 or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; 4 then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was [b]entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, 5 or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it [c]in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering. 6 Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the Lord, a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, 7 and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt.”* (**Leviticus 6:1-7**)
 - a. **What are the sins you see mentioned specifically that need a guilt offering?**
 - b. Why the use of ram as an offering? Perhaps there are echoes of **Genesis 22:13** in which God provides a “ram,” but echoes the idea that this is not a final sacrifice but a stand-in for the lamb that *“God will provide for Himself”* (**Genesis 22:8**)
- iv. Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16**)
 1. On the Day of Atonement there is something that is done for *“all the assembly of Israel.”* (**v.17, cf. v.33**)
 2. What sins are covered? All! See **verses 16, 21, 22, 30, 34.**
- f. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Foundation for other books to understand Old Testament sacrifices: *“Without the book of Leviticus, readers of the OT would be confused by the myriad of details concerning sacrificial ritual encountered in the historical and prophetic books.”*¹¹
 - ii. Foundation for understanding Christ’s work: *“Also they would be unprepared for the significance of the sacrificial death of Christ and the meaning of many passages in the book of Hebrews.”*¹²

¹¹ Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 7838-7839.

¹² Michael Grisanti, “Exodus” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 7840-7841.