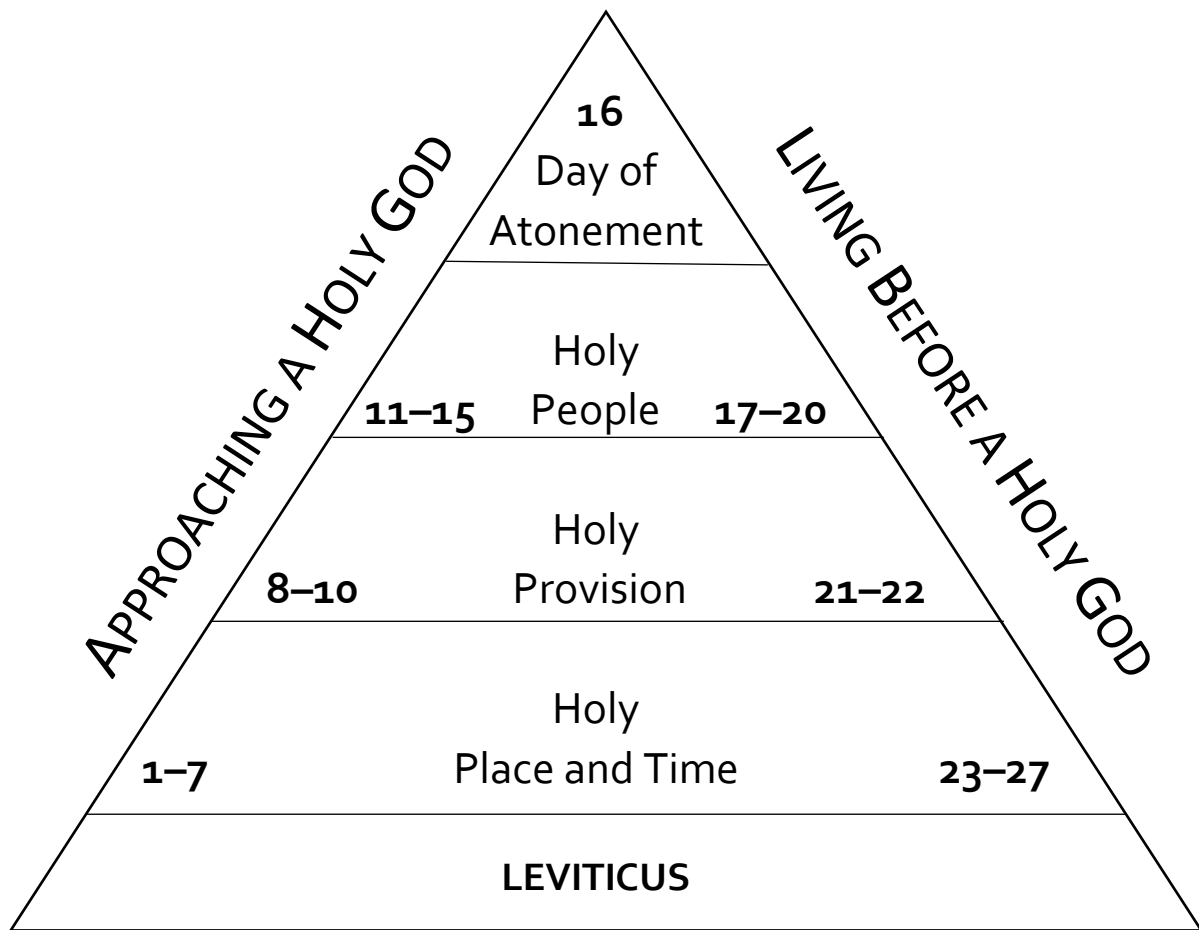


*The Gospel*  
*According to Leviticus:*  
***Profile of a Forgiven People***  
***(Chapters 17–27)***

**Week IV**





The story of the execution of Shelomith's son in Leviticus 24:10-23 clearly presents a problem. Though the nation as a whole has been cleansed, the people still struggle with sinful behavior. How then should a forgiven people live? God's answer is given in chapters 17-27.

## Forgiven People Are Holy People

After the Day of Atonement in chapter 16, our holy God does not simply tell Israel *what they must do* (though He certainly does that). More fundamentally, He tells them *who they are*, for a new identity must

precede new behavior. Because they have been set apart and forgiven by a holy God, they now “share his holiness” (Hebrews 12:10), a doctrinal truth which affects every corner of their lives.

## Key Theme #1

Holiness is not just what you do; it's who you are.



## Holy people reflect God's character (Chapters 17–20)

*"You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples that you should be mine" (20:26).*

### *...In Their Worship (17)*

The sanctuary was the hub for the holy lives of God's people (17:1-9). They were not to subdivide their lives into worship and non-worship activities. Instead, every part of their lives was to be oriented toward their relationship with God. These laws were a safeguard against idolatry (Deuteronomy 12) and, therefore, carried a grave consequence (v. 9).

## Key Theme #2

Our relationship with a Holy God is the source of holiness.

In the same way, blood was the basis for the holy lives of God's people (17:10-19). Their reverence for shed blood was a reminder of what God had done for them in the atonement (v. 11). This set of laws also carried a stiff spiritual punishment (v. 10).

*"I will set my face against that person who eats blood...for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life" (17:10-11).*

### *...In Their Sexuality (18)*

Instead of reflecting the character of a holy God, the sexual perversions in this chapter mirror the practices present in both Egypt and Canaan (v. 3). They therefore carried a severe penalty for Israel (v. 29). Our sexuality is defined by the identity of our holy God, and proper sexuality reflects His good character.

**Key Theme #3**  
**Holiness is defined  
by a Person.**

*"You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan to which I am bringing you... You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God" (18:3-4).*

### *...In Their Relationships (19)*

The various laws in this important chapter focus on relationships.

Holiness is not just about refraining from sin; it is also about positively loving others. God's people reflect His character through proper reverence (vv. 3-8, 29-32), loving relationships (vv. 9-18, 33-36), and holy personal conduct (vv. 19-28). Each of these laws has a direct connection to God himself.

*"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (19:18)*

### *...In Their Extermination of Sin (20)*

Holiness also requires removing everything that opposes the character of God. The penalties in this chapter are spiritual, not merely legal ("cut off" in vv. 2-3), for the transgressions are actually acts of rebellion against God's purpose for Israel (vv. 22-27). New Testament believers can apply this chapter by "cutting off" sinful behaviors through repentance (Matthew 5:30).

*"Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (20:7-8).*

## **Key Theme #4**

**Holiness shows up  
in relationships.**

## **Holy people receive God's provision (Chapters 21–22)**

*"You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy" (21:8).*

### *God's provision of a perfect Priest (21:1–22:16)*

These laws protect the continued fellowship of God and His people. God's priests had stricter relational requirements (21:1-15) and physical requirements (21:16-24). Because their work was of utmost importance, God provided for them spiritually and physically (22:1-16). These laws foreshadow the finished work of the perfect Great High Priest:

*"For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath (God's promise is Psalm 110:4), which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever" (Hebrews 7:28).*

### *God's provision of a perfect Sacrifice (22:17-31)*

In order for the people to experience continued fellowship with God, they needed to have perfect sacrifices, "without blemish." This truth points to Christ, the perfect sacrifice:

*"Knowing that you were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).*

## Holy people remember God's salvation (Chapters 23–27)

### *Remember God's Past Deliverance (23:1–24:9)*

Israel's calendar included regular reminders of the goodness of God. Each holiday reminded them that the God of heaven had entered into a relationship with them. Even the daily routines involving the lampstand and bread pointed them to God's covenant (24:1-9).

<b>Passover</b>	March/April	<i>God's Deliverance</i>
<b>Firstfruits</b>	March/April	<i>God's Provision</i>
<b>Pentecost</b>	May	<i>God's Provision</i>
<b>Trumpets</b>	September/October	<i>God's Presence</i>
<b>Day of Atonement</b>	October	<i>God's Forgiveness</i>
<b>Tabernacles</b>	October	<i>God's Leadership</i>

### *Remember God's Future Rest (25–27)*

Holy people take time throughout their busy schedules to rejoice in God's eternal goodness (chapter 25). When Israel celebrated the Sabbath, they fulfilled God's purpose for mankind on earth, bearing His image

## **Key Theme #5**

### *The Sabbath*

God's plan for His holy people is that we would eternally enjoy His presence.



before the nations and pointing to a future perfect rest through the Messiah.

Unfortunately, Israel did not consistently provide this witness to the nations, resulting in God's discipline. Chapter 26 presents God's blessings for obedience (vv. 1-13), the consequences for disobedience (vv. 14-33), and His mercy for His holy people (vv. 34-46). His message is clear: holy people heed God's discipline. Interestingly, this chapter became the preaching text for many of the Old Testament prophets! Verses 11-13 present the heart of our loving God:

## **Key Theme #6**

### *The Sanctuary*

Our holy lives say something about the presence of God.

*"I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect" (26:11-13).*

In the final chapter, God shows Israel how they can outwardly demonstrate their commitment to holy living—through freewill vows. These vows were available to all people, and, through them, Israel could acknowledge God's ownership of His people. After the offer of mercy in chapter 26, this chapter functions as an "altar call" for a nation of holy people.

## Holiness Today

Because of the work of Christ, believers have been made holy (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9). We have a new identity in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Based on that new identity in Christ, we are called to live holy lives (Romans 12:1-2). God's holy people have the privilege of "sharing his holiness" as we grow in our relationship with Christ (Hebrews 12:10).

## Application Questions

*Read 2 Corinthians 6:16–7:1 and 1 Peter 1:14-16. Then consider the following questions:*

1. On what do you base your daily choices? As a general rule, are they based on your own desires or do you strive to consider the desires of your holy God?
2. Do you treat your pursuit of holiness as more of a relationship or as a set of rules?
3. Which interests you more, what God is up to or what is going on in popular culture?
4. How much time do you spend enjoying God's presence by faith throughout your busy schedule?
5. How often do you consider your forgiveness through Christ's work on the cross? How can you remind yourself more of this foundational truth?



