

Introduction to Leviticus

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

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- I. This book of the law is about sacrifice and offerings, worship, communion with God, and moral and physical purity.
 - A. This book was not the beginning of these things, but the putting down in a written record of them for all ages.
 - 1. It is a step in the progressive revelation of God and his redemption of his lost creation.
 - B. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden men have always tried to do something about their sin.
 - 1. Adam and Eve first tried to cover their sin and hide from God.
 - 2. But that proved to be futile and did not solve their problem – God came seeking them and they could not hide.
 - 3. They made aprons, but God made a sacrifice.
 - 4. He covered their nakedness with what had covered another living creature.
 - 5. In order to cover their nakedness and shame that other creature had to die.
 - C. Cain and Abel made sacrifices and offerings to God, but they were very different from one another.
 - 1. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, something he had worked for – something he was proud of and on which he placed great value.
 - 2. His thinking was to impress God with his sacrifice – he was blessing God with an expensive and beautiful gift that he had designed in his own heart and wrought with his own hands.
 - 3. It did nothing for Cain except increase his pride – which made his sacrifice unacceptable to God.
 - 4. Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof (for he was a keeper of sheep, which they did not eat).
 - 5. Abel was affected differently by his sacrifice than Cain was with his.
 - 6. Abel's sacrifice affected his heart and humbled him before God, which was pleasing to God and made his sacrifice acceptable.
 - 7. Abel's sacrifice was about Abel's sin while Cain's sacrifice was about Cain's pride and self-righteousness.
 - D. We find Abraham making sacrifices the same way as Abel about 2000 years later.
 - E. And we find all through history, in every culture on earth, some type of sacrifice and offering to gods.
 - 1. Most all of it is after the manner of Cain.
 - 2. The focus is on the value of the sacrifice or offering.
 - 3. The thinking behind the sacrifice is to impress, appease, or please an angry God.
 - 4. The value of the sacrifice is increased or diminished according to the gravity of the sin they are seeking to expunge from their record.
 - 5. It is always viewed as a way to get things from God or the gods, or to stop some calamity or hardship that they are experiencing.

- II. This book, along with Deuteronomy and parts of Exodus, laid down the order and guidelines for sacrifices and offerings acceptable to God and distinct from all the other inventions of men.
 - A. The sacrifice was always the same.
 - 1. It did not increase or decrease in value according to the transgression.
 - 2. There was a way made for the poorest and for the richest – according to every man’s ability.
 - B. The order in which the sacrifice was made was always the same.
 - 1. It did not evolve with the culture as the culture changed.
 - 2. It did not change from generation to generation.
 - C. “I am the Lord...” – 45 times in the book of Leviticus.
 - 1. I am not “a” god – I am THE LORD GOD.
 - 2. It emphasized that the sacrifices and offerings were different than the religions of the rest of the world practiced.
 - 3. It emphasized the authority by which the sacrifices and offerings, the worship of God, the communion with God, and the instructions in purity were given.
 - 4. This little phrase gives the assurance repeatedly that all this is not just a bunch of vain religious practices invented by men.