

# *The Book Of:* **Leviticus**

*Hebrew Name*  
*way-yiqra*  
*"and He called"*

## **Structure and Outline**

### **Becoming Holy**

<i>Sacrifices and Offerings</i>	<i>Chapters 1—9</i>
<i>Establishment of the Priesthood</i>	<i>Chapters 8—10</i>
<i>Laws of Purity (Clean/ Unclean)</i>	<i>Chapters 11—15</i>
<i>Day of Atonement</i>	<i>Chapter 16</i>

### **Maintaining Holiness**

<i>Laws of Separation/ Holiness</i>	<i>Chapters 17—22</i>
<i>Laws on Religious Festivals</i>	<i>Chapters 23—25</i>
<i>Blessings and Curses</i>	<i>Chapter 26</i>
<i>Laws Concerning Vows</i>	<i>Chapter 27</i>

## **I. What is Leviticus?**

Much like the books *Genesis* and *Exodus*, the Hebrew title for *Leviticus* is "And He Called," which is taken from the first phrase of the book. The English title comes from the Greek word meaning "things concerning Levites." This is somewhat misleading, however, since the book is about much more than just the priestly duties of the Levites.

## **II. Who Wrote Leviticus?**

Traditional scholarship holds Moses as the author of the first five books of Scripture (known as the Pentateuch), and there are no compelling reasons to believe otherwise. In *Leviticus*, the Lord speaks to Moses over 30 times. There are also occasions when Moses is told to relate God's words to the people (1:1-2; 4:1; 6:8-9). The book's date of origin could be attributed to either the 15<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C., depending on the date of the exodus from Egypt (see notes on *Exodus*). The content was originally delivered after construction of the tabernacle and before the beginning of the second month of the second year in the wilderness (*Leviticus* 1:1; *Numbers* 1:1).

# **Leviticus** (continued)

## **III. Why Was Leviticus Written?**

*Leviticus* details the expansion of God's covenant with Israel soon after the tabernacle was completed. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and He spoke to Moses of the requirements for covenant life. *Leviticus* provides instruction regarding the Levitical priesthood (the ordination of Aaron and his sons), sacrifices, offerings, feasts and holy days, including the Day of Atonement, and the Year of Jubilee. It also contains laws regarding ceremonial cleanness morality, and justice. While some of these issues might seem foreign to modern Christians, the main theme is the timeless truth that God is holy, and God requires His people to be holy (see 1 Peter 1:14-16).

## **IV. Types of Sacrifices in Leviticus**

<b>Whole Burnt Offering</b>	animal is slain; the remains are burned. used to atone for unwitting sin
<b>Sin Offering</b>	fat portion burned, remainder is eaten used when restitution is not necessary
<b>Guilt Offering</b>	same as the "sin offering" above
<b>Cereal Offering</b>	part is burned; part is eaten done to retain the goodwill of God
<b>Peace Offering</b>	fat portion burned; remainder eaten by Priest and Worshiper. Three types of peace offering: Vow, Freewill, and Thanksgiving.

## **V. Notes on the Sacrificial System**

### **Sacrifices Were Only for "Incidental Sin."**

*Leviticus* never provides a sacrifice for intentional sin.

### **They Did Not Automatically Earn Forgiveness or Salvation.**

God forgives sin based on His covenant relationship.

Israel's salvation is in covenant relationship, not sacrifice.

Only God's mercy and love can forgive sin (*Hebrews* 10:1-4).

### **The Sacrificial System Foreshadowed Christ's One Sacrifice.**

# *Leviticus* (continued)

## VI. The Seven Annual Feasts of Leviticus

### **The Passover**                      **1st Month, 14th Day**

*This feast was instituted by God to commemorate the salvation of the Hebrews from Egypt. Before the Israelites were granted freedom, God sent one final plague: death to the firstborn. The Lord's Angel of Death would "pass over" the home of any family who had faithfully painted their doorposts with lamb's blood (see Exodus 12).*

### **The Unleavened Bread**            **1st Month, 15th—21st Days**

*This feast is closely associated with The Passover. God commanded the Israelites to eat bread without leaven for seven days during the time of the Passover (Exodus 12). Leaven is often figuratively used in Scripture as a symbol of wickedness. As Passover symbolizes the salvation of God's people, this feast symbolizes the purification of God's people.*

### **The Firstfruits**                      **1st Month, 16th Day**

*This feast symbolized man's thankfulness to God for His faithfulness in providing a harvest. The Israelites were to take a sheaf of barley from the first fruits to the priest to be waved in the presence of the Lord. This was done on the day following the Sabbath and therefore points to the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week.*

### **Pentecost**                              **50 Days Following "Firstfruits"**

*This feast marked the completion of the grain harvest season which began with the Firstfruits. The term Pentecost is translated "fiftieth day." Since Firstfruits points ahead to the resurrection of Christ (Easter), then Pentecost naturally points toward the fiftieth day following Christ's resurrection when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church (Acts 2).*

# *Leviticus* (continued)

### **Trumpets**                              **7th Month, 1st Day**

*This festival instituted as a day of rest for Israel. The trumpets were blown to represent God's call to the people to prepare for the festivals which were to follow closely.*

### **Day of Atonement**                      **7th Month, 10th Day**

*This festival is perhaps Israel's most holy. It was a time of remembrance by God's people over their sins, personally and collectively. This was the only day the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. One key occurrence on this day was that the high priest would take two goats on which he would confess the sins of the people. One goat, the "Azazel" (scapegoat), would be sent away to the wilderness. The other goat, "Goel" (redeemer), would be slaughtered with its blood covering the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. This looks forward to the day when God's people will have remorse and repent from crucifying Christ*

### **Tabernacles (Booths)**                      **7th Month, 15th—21st Days**

*This feast was a celebration of God's goodness through the year. The people of Israel lived in booths (tents) for seven days to remind themselves how God's people lived in booths in the wilderness after escaping Egypt. It symbolizes a future time of peace and prosperity for God's people.*

## **Key Themes & Theology in Leviticus**

- **The Holiness of God**
- **The Holiness of God's People (Israel)**
- **The Severity of Sin and Its Consequences**
  - Leviticus 1—9*                      *Sin Requires Sacrifice*
  - Leviticus 17:11*                      *The Value of Blood*
  - Leviticus 16:1-34*                      *Day of Atonement*
- **The Necessity of God's Grace**