

The Way to God: Sacrifices and Priests

Introduction to Leviticus; offerings; establishing a priesthood. Leviticus 1:1–10:20

Overview of Leviticus

- **Titles of “Leviticus”**
 - **Hebrew *Vayikrah*** – “And he called” (first word or phrase of the text, as in the rest of the *Torah*)
 - **Greek *Leuitkos*** from the Septuagint
 - Deceptive - this is for priests, an office among the Levites but not including all Levities
 - Instructions for Levites are in Numbers
 - **Rabbinic - *Torat Kohanim* means “Instructions for Priests”**
- **Documentary hypothesis**
 - **Chs. 1–16 “P” older material originally meant for priests only**
 - Priestly code was likely developed during period of Exile when the priests no longer had the temple to fulfill their duties, so they wrote down what they used to do
 - **Chs. 17–27 “H” likely a later development that takes priestly purity and applies it to all of Israel and promised land**
 - After the exile Ezra taught “the Law” even more than before, applying it more and more to the people
 - This development led to the Pharisees, and especially the Essenes, who lived according to the very strict code of Priests, though they were not
 - **Some “H” passages sprinkled throughout, representing a final H Redactor (editor)**

Structure of Leviticus

- **The Way to God: Sacrifices and Priests (1:1–10:20)**
 - Through the Offerings (1:1–7:38)
 - Through the Priests (8:1–10:20)
- **The Walk with God: Sanctification (11:1–27:34)**
 - Laws Concerning Purity (11:1–15:33)
 - Law of the Day of Atonement (16:1–34)
- **Holiness Code (17:1–27:34)**
 - Laws Concerning Sacrificing (17:1–16)
 - Laws Concerning Standards for the People (18:1–20:27)
 - Laws Concerning Standards for the Priests (21:1–22:16)
 - Laws Concerning Offerings (22:17–33)
 - Laws Concerning Festivals (23:1–44)
 - Laws Concerning the Lamp Oil (24:1–4)
 - Laws Concerning Bread for the Tabernacle (24:5–9)
 - Laws Concerning Blasphemy (24:10–23)
 - Laws Concerning the Sabbatical Year (25:1–7)
 - Laws Concerning the Year of Jubilee (25:8–55)
 - Laws Concerning Obedience (26:1–46)
 - Laws Concerning Vows and Tithes (27:1–34)

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Themes

- Difference between **holy** and **common (profane)**, **clean** and **unclean**
 - *Holy space, holy people (YHWH, priests), holy things, holy time (sabbaths, festivals)*
 - *More next slide*
- **Principles of sin and repentance**
- **Vicarious sacrifice**
- **Atonement**
 - **Kpr meaning either “to cover” and/or “to redeem”**
 - Ritual uncleanliness could be covered by sacrificial blood, defiled people or items could be “bought back” through sacrifice and ritual

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“Holiness”

- In the Mosaic system, **holiness was an issue of ritual purity, which reflected a higher, spiritual purity**
 - **Conversely, sin was a sort of ritual contaminant, like tar, that stuck to and defiled—it needed to be washed away or covered up**
- The Tabernacle was a set of concentric zones, each becoming more holy until one came to the symbolic presence of God
 - **Unholy (i.e., ritually unclean things and people) needed to be kept out of the holy and most holy areas, and these areas and their contents needed to be periodically purified**
 - **Cf. Book of Mormon teachings about “no unclean thing” coming into the presence of God**
- Types of holiness
 - **“Holy” pure items that can be defiled by touching unclean things and people**
 - **“Most holy” items convey holiness**
- **Priestly code extended holiness to sanctuary and priests**
- **Holiness code extends holiness to the promised land and all people**

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Christian Interpretations of Leviticus

See Jackson, “The Law of Moses and the Atonement of Christ,” *SS3*, 153–172

- **“Leviticus is the most Christian book in the Old Testament . . .”**
- Leviticus teaches:
 - **the nature and consequences of sin**
 - **Vicarious atonement**
 - **The necessity and “process” of repentance**
- Christian symbolism
 - Priests = Christ
 - Sacrifices = atonement of Christ
 - *Way to God through a Mediator and ordinances*
- Exposition: lost references to Christ in received text
 - Galatians 3:23–25 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
 - Schoolmaster = *paidagogos* ≠ teacher
 - Read and consider the following Book of Mormon texts on Law of Moses: 2 Nephi 11:4–6, Jacob 4:4–6, Mosiah 13:27–35, and Helaman 8:13–20

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Sacrifices or Offerings

- **Definitions**
 - *Sacrificium*: Latin “to make holy” or “do holy things”
 - A gift or offering to God
 - Popular: “giving up something good for something better”
- **Transformation**
 - Transferring ownership from worshipper to God
 - Changing from common to holy
 - after the sacrifice, the victim is holy and sometimes most holy—can transfer its holiness to the worshipper!
- **Procedures**
 - Presentation (demonstrates ownership)
 - Laying on of hands (transfer of ownership, transfer of guilt)
 - Slaughter of animal victims on north side of the altar (transfer complete, victim becomes holy)
 - life blood poured out, sprinkled (blood, now holy, covers “sin,” cleanses defilement)
 - Burning of all or part (final act of consecration, transference)
 - Sacrificial meal (priest and worshipers share in holiness of victim, communion established with deity)

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The Way through Offerings (1:1–7:38)

- The Burnt Offering (1:1–17)
- Grain Offerings (2:1–16, “meat offerings”)
- Well-Being Offerings (3:1–17, “peace offerings”)
- Purification Offerings (4:1–5:13, “sin offerings”)
- Reparation Offerings (5:14–6:7, “trespass offerings”)
- Supplementary Instructions Concerning Sacrifices (6:8–7:38)

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The Burnt Offering (1:1–17)

- **Completely consumed or “turned into smoke” to give completely to God**
 - Greek *holokaustos* or “wholly burnt”
 - Greatest offering allowed to Israelites or non-Israelites
 - Sometimes required (daily offerings for sanctuary, inauguration of priests, etc.) but also voluntary
- **Qualifications**
 - *Male, without blemish, voluntary*
- **Likely original sacrifices before the Law of Moses**
 - Principle of sacrifice eternal, practices dispensation-specific
 - Adam to Moses – firstlings of flock given to sacrifice

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Grain Offerings (2:1–16)

- “Meat offerings” = **Grain Offerings**
 - “meat” Elizabethan for food
 - Firstlings of the Field
 - Cain because wrong motivation, not illegitimate offering
 - Also likely from Adam to Moses
 - Portion burned, the rest given to priests
- **“Oblation” — something offered to the Lord**
 - Made and burned with oil and frankincense to smell good to the Lord!
 - Sometimes required, sometimes voluntary
- **Salt**
 - *Represents covenants – because its preserves, saves, and flavors*
 - **Mosaic sacrifices do not use wine, yeast, honey, milk**
 - Swell ferment and perish
 - Pagan systems of worship have these – symbols of fertility
- **Can be voluntary or necessary**

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Well-Being Offerings (3:1–17)

- “Peace offerings” = Well-being Offerings
 - **A gift back to God in gratitude for blessings**
 - Can be male or female animal, but without blemish
- Rather than serve as expiation, *these offerings allowed consumption of meat and ritual communion*
- First offering where worshiper consumes part of it
 - Shoulder and breast to priests
 - Remaining meat is boiled and cooked on-site, the worshiper eats it and shares a meal with the Lord
 - Cf. sacrament

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Purification or “Sin” Offerings (4:1–5:13)

- “Sin Offerings” = Purification Offerings
 - Deal with ritual rather than moral sins (i.e., impurities)
 - **Individual and group sins contaminate the sanctuary**
 - Remember, sin = tar!
 - Blood poured out, fat and innards burned but the rest burned *without the camp*
 - Carcass has absorbed the impurity of the sanctuary
 - *The performing priest has “made atonement for them” (see 4:20b) by covering sin*
- **Exegesis: sins = impurity**
 - some sins can be unknowing, effects are still the same
- **Exposition: sin ≈ transgression**
 - “transgressions” refer to any breaking of the law, *sins to knowing violations or purposeful violations of God’s will*

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Offerings with Restitution (5:14–6:7)

- “Trespass offerings” = **Reparation Offerings**
 - An individual’s act hurts the Lord or another person
 - The offering acknowledges the wrong and *makes restitution*
- **Cultic (against sacred objects; 5:14–19)**
 - Defiling a holy object, space, or time “hurts” the Lord
 - Object is sanctified *or replaced*
 - Priest must “make it holy” again
 - Pay not just for the object, pay for the priest’s time as well
- **Personal (against another person; 6:1–7 (2-5 read))**
 - “he shall restore that which he took violently away . . . he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, *and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.*” (6:4–5)
 - **20% fine!**

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The Way through Priests (8:1–10:20)

- The Rites of Ordination (8:1–36)
- Aaron’s Priesthood Inauguration (9:1–24)
- Sacrilege of the Priestly Service: Nadab and Abihu (10:1–20)

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The Rites of Ordination (8:1–36)

- This section follows Exodus 35–40 both chronologically and logically
- High priest wore Golden plate – YHWH or Holiness to the Lord – acting in YHWH’s stead
- 8:33 And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation *in* seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you.
 - Consecrate = ordain
 - Ordain = fill the hand
 - Fill with offerings? Priestly claims on portions of sacrifices?
 - More likely with incense to approach the Lord
 - Perhaps hand filled with blessings
 - Liminal period 8:33

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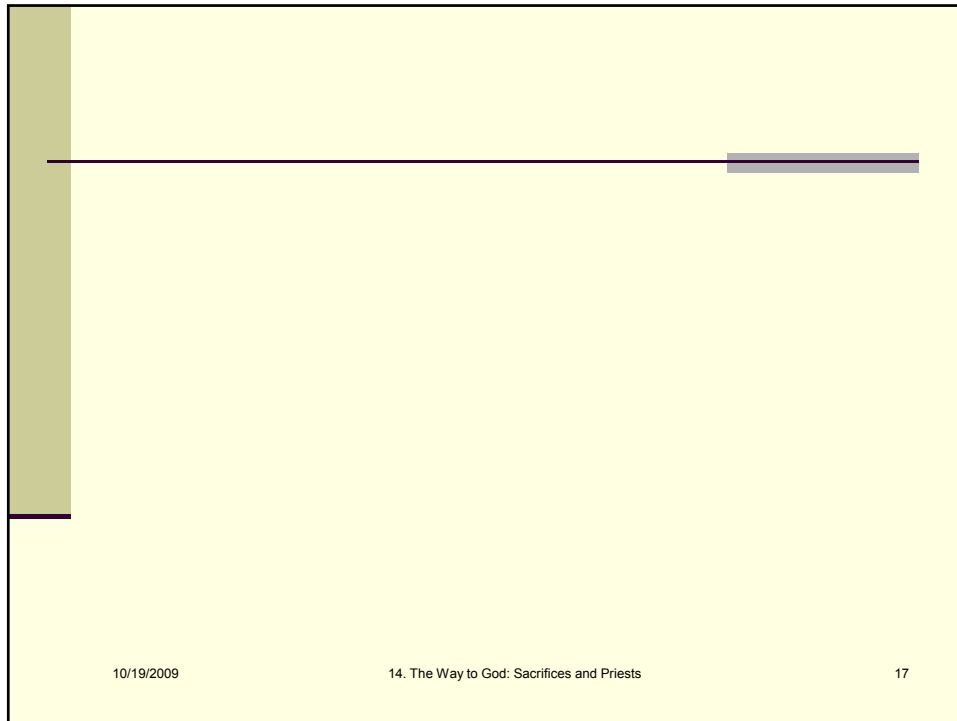
Sacrilege of the Priestly Service: Nadab and Abihu (10:1–20)

- **Aaron’s elder sons offer “strange fire” and are punished (10:1–7)**
 - The preparation of Nadab and Abihu to burn incense may suggest that they were preparing to go through the veil, entering where they were not permitted
 - Today modern temple presidents have the responsibility to ensure that ordinances are done exactly correct and not changed
- ***Responsibility of priests (10:8–11): make the difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean***
- **Aaron and his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, continue to perform vicarious sacrifices and share in offerings (10:12–20)**

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Book of Mormon and LDS atonement

- Atonement = Hebrew Kpr (Yom Kippur)
 - Cover is the main idea, can't wash off cover with blood
 - Redeem – buy back from sin
- KJV Atonement does not appear often
 - Romans 5:11
 - But Greek word is to reconcile – any reference to reconciliation is atonement
 - Atone = katalasso – bring two separated things together
- Reconcile – not the model of covering with blood
 - [atonement – for Jsoeph Smith “atonement” had so many different aspects of what Christ did, perhaps this is why he used it. Note frequency in BoM before 3 Ne]
 - Really strong connections in BoM and OT
 - Language different but still the same ideas
- Jesus had to do something to make us like God
 - Cover everything that can make us not like God
- Theme – separate divine from mortal – weakness as well as sin

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