

My Favorite Thing About LEVITICUS

Leviticus 19:2
March 20, 2021

My favorite thing about Leviticus is also a theme = **Holiness**

In Exodus 19:5-6 we read: *"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a HOLY nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."*

The call for Israel to be holy is tied directly to 2 things: God is holy and they are His people = **THEREFORE** they are to be holy too.

It was God who took the initiative; **HE** was the One who went to Moses when it was time to put the rescue mission into action. **HE** was the One who sustained Israel. **HE** was the One who wanted to get as close to them as possible and **HE** was the One who gave Moses the blueprint of the Sanctuary in order to do just that.

- **Exodus 25:8-9** - And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. ⁹ "According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

However, un-holy humans cannot get all that close to a **HOLY** God, so God also took the initiative by providing a way for that to happen ---- the result is Leviticus, which is saturated with the concept of holiness. Therefore, at its core, Leviticus tells us what holiness looks like.

It begins with the sacrificial system. Unholy, sinful humanity, who has no ability to cleanse itself, is cleansed and declared righteous **ONLY** through the death of an innocent creature. This process is described in Leviticus 1-7.

However, this system is not an end in and of itself. It points to a grander and more far-reaching truth – the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus that will bring unholy man back into relationship with holy God.

In Leviticus 8, the whole process of consecration for Aaron and his sons, was to set them apart {make them holy} for service to God.

Forbidding Aaron and his sons to drink intoxicating beverages was tied directly to their ability to discern between the holy and unholy / clean and unclean and to their responsibility to teach the people {10:8-11}

Chapter 11, introduces the 2nd section of Leviticus. What is brought out here is the reality that holiness from God's perspective does not end in the spiritual realm, i.e., the priesthood or things directly related to the Tabernacle – Holiness should be seen in everyday life – beginning with what you put in your body **{The theme is carried on through Ch. 12-15}**:

- **Leviticus 11:45-47** - For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; **thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.** This is the law regarding the animal, and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters, and everything that swarms on the earth, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

In Ch. 18, before God outlined the next set of regulations, He answered the **"why"** question:

- **Leviticus 18:1-4** - Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, **'I am the LORD your God.** ³ **'You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt** where you lived, nor are you to do **what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you;** you shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ **'You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God.**

I am the Lord your God.

I want you to be different from the culture you came from as well as the cultures where you are going.

I am the Lord your God.

The Laws are continued in Ch. 19 - 20 and to make sure there is no doubt as to the foundation of these Laws, God tells Moses: **Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.** {Leviticus 19:2}

- Don't tattoo yourselves.
- Don't force your daughters into prostitution.
- Keep the Sabbath.
- Don't consult with mediums.
- Honor your elders.
- Don't mistreat the stranger living in your land.
- Be honest in your business dealings.
- Do not tolerate idol worship or the consultation of mediums....

Why?

- **Leviticus 20:7 - be holy, for I am the Lord your God.**

Adultery.... Incest.... Homosexuality.... Bestiality.... All on the **NO** list. Why?

- **Leviticus 20:23-26** - You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. ²⁴ But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations..... Thus, **you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy;** and **I have set you apart** from the peoples to be Mine.

The regulations regarding the conduct of the priests also find their source in the holiness of God:

- **Leviticus 22:31-33** - Keep my commands and follow them. I am the LORD. ³² Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy ³³ and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD.

Why? Because the priest's represented God before the people. If their conduct was not holy, they were misrepresenting God and leading the people to believe that if He is not actually holy than they don't need to be holy either.

Finally, God took holiness beyond the spiritual and the everyday and extended it to days and years and to the land they would one day occupy:

- Every 7th day was the Sabbath – it was a holy, set apart day.
- Every 7th year the land would be allowed to rest – it was a holy and set apart year.
- Every 50th year was to be a Jubilee year – a reset year. Land was restored/redeemed, slaves were set free - it was a holy and set apart year.

Why?

- **Leviticus 25:23** - ... **for the land is Mine;** for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me.
- **Leviticus 25:55** - for the **Israelites belong to me** as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

No doubt about it..... Holiness saturates every aspect of Leviticus.

In order to avoid the danger of thinking that the Old Testament doesn't apply to the New Testament Christian, notice:

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** - Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.
- **1 Peter 1:13-16** - Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy.
- **1 Peter 2:9** - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation, a people belonging to God,** that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

We live in a culture of blurred lines. There is no longer a clear definition of what is right and what is wrong. There is no sin there is just "your truth" and "my truth". This has crept into Christianity with alarming ease. But what we need to understand is that for Christians it is about more than right and wrong it's about what God has determined is holy and what He has said is not. **There are no blurred lines with God.** There must be a clear distinction between those who follow God and those who do not.

- **Romans 12:1-2** - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- **2 Corinthians 3:18** - And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Before we go down the very dangerous rabbit hole of thinking that all we need to do to be holy, then, is to create and adhere to a strict list of do's and don'ts, let's get this straight.

We don't keep the 10 Commandments in order to **GET** free. We keep them because we **ARE** free – **This is how FREE PEOPLE LIVE.**

- **Exodus 20:2** - I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

In the same way, the laws of Leviticus don't **MAKE** us holy, they tell us what holiness looks like and how people who have **ALREADY BEEN** set apart {made holy} **LIVE.**

- **Leviticus 20:7-8** - Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, **who makes you holy.**
- **Leviticus 22:9** - The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt. I am the LORD, **who makes them holy.**
- **Leviticus 22:32** - Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, **who makes you holy** and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD.
- **Hebrews 10:10** - And by that will, we **have been made holy** through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Ellen White {RH, May 16, 1907 par.4} - Holiness is constant agreement with God. Shall we not strive to be that which Christ so greatly desires us to be--Christians in deed and in truth, -- that the world may see in our lives a revelation of the saving power of truth? This world is our preparatory school. While here we shall meet with trials and difficulties. Continually the enemy of God will seek to draw us away from our allegiance. But while we cleave to him who gave himself for us, we are safe. The whole world was gathered into the embrace of Christ. He died on the cross to destroy him who had the power of death, and to take away the sin of every believing soul. He calls upon us to offer ourselves on the altar of service, a living, consuming sacrifice. We are to make an unreserved consecration to God of all that we have and are.