

Leviticus

Leviticus focuses on the worship and walk of the nation of God. In Exodus, Israel was redeemed and established as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Leviticus shows how God's people are to fulfill their priestly calling. They have been led out of bondage (Exodus), and into the sanctuary of God (Leviticus). Now they must move from redemption to service and from deliverance to dedication. Leviticus is God's guidebook for His newly redeemed people, showing them how to worship, serve, and obey a holy God. Both access to God (through the sacrifices) and fellowship with God (through obedience) show the awesome holiness of the God of Israel.

INTRODUCTION

For some readers Leviticus appears dull. It has no action or plot except for the death of Nadab and Abihu in chapter 10. It is heavy with rules, regulations, and repetition. Its content seems outmoded and difficult to apply. But, Leviticus is rich in spiritual truth. It develops several doctrinal and practical themes centering on the questions of pardon for guilt and fellowship with God. It reveals how God in His grace accepts the death of a substitute as payment for the penalty of sin. And it has many types and portraits of the coming Messiah. Leviticus is to Exodus what the Epistles are to the Gospels.

The Hebrew title is *Wayyiqra*, "And He called." It has often been referred to as the "Law of the Priests," and the "Law of the Offerings." The Greek title *Leuitikon*, "that which pertains to the Levites." This title is slightly misleading because the book does not deal with the Levites as a whole, but more with the priests, a segment of the Levites.

AUTHOR

The same arguments used to confirm the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and Exodus also apply to Leviticus because the Pentateuch is a literary unit. There is much internal and external evidence which clearly points to Moses as the author.

DATE & SETTING

In contrast to Exodus, no geographical movement takes place in Leviticus. The children of Israel remain camped at the foot of Mount Sinai (see 25:1-2; 26:46; 27:34). The new calendar of Israel begins with the first Passover (Ex. 12:2); and, according to Exodus 40:17, the tabernacle is completed exactly one year later.

Leviticus picks up the story at this point and takes place in the first month of the second year. Numbers 1:1 opens at the beginning of the second month. Moses probably wrote much of Leviticus during that first month and may have put it in its final form shortly before his death in Moab, about 1405 b.c.