

Holiness (Leviticus 1-7)

1. Intro

a. Title: "Holiness"

- i. It underpins the entire sacrifice system (Lev. 1:1-9 was the scripture reading)
- ii. "More than any other Old Testament book, at least in terms of prominent vocabulary, Leviticus summons Israel to a holy life... If we concentrate exclusively on the Hebrew root *q-d-s*, we discover... that some form of this root, in adjectival, nominal, or verbal structure, appears 150 times in Leviticus." (Victor Hamilton, *Pentateuch*, 246)
- iii. Moses gave this focused attention to holiness
 1. Because the holy presence of God was among men
 2. This meant a certain privilege and responsibility
 3. Not unlike if you had to host King Charles III at your house for a week
- iv. The LORD gave practices for Israel that would serve as a foreshadow of the New Covenant
- v. Leviticus was a picture book for us to learn how to host the LORD God in our midst, even within, through His Holy Spirit.

b. Overview

- i. Sacrifices (L1-7)
- ii. Purification (L11-15) (next Sunday)
- iii. Priesthood (L8-10, 16) (next Sunday)
- iv. All these were a shadow of the good things to come in the Lord Jesus Christ

c. Context

- i. How Leviticus fits with Exodus
- ii. Exodus ended with the completion of the tabernacle, consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests, and the shekinah glory of God in the tabernacle.

- iii. The last two events are repeated in L8-9.
- iv. This is because L1-7 was not revealed after E40 but while the tabernacle was being prepared and at the Tent of Meeting outside the camp (L1:1; cf. E33:7).
- v. Conjunction in L1:1
 - 1. "Then" (NASB)
 - 2. "And" (KJV, ASB, LXX)
 - 3. "Now" (NKJV, Geneva)
 - 4. No conjunction (ESV, NIV)
 - 5. The NKJV and Geneva Bible gave the best translation given all the factors involved.
- vi. Aaron and his sons were not consecrated twice and God's glory did not fill the tabernacle twice.

2. Sacrifices

- a. L1-7 covers the sacrifice system.
 - i. Five kinds of sacrifices:
 - 1. Burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and guilt offering
 - ii. L1-5 addresses the worshipper's responsibility.
 - 1. "Speak to the sons of Israel..." (1:2; 4:2)
 - iii. L6-7 addresses the priests' responsibility.
 - 1. "Command Aaron and his sons..." (6:9, 25)
- b. God's intent with these sacrifices was to foreshadow the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - i. Heb. 10:1 [1] For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.
 - ii. The OT sacrifices were not an end to themselves.
 - iii. They were meant to be a picture and a symbol for the ultimate once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:10, 12, 14).
 - iv. With this in mind, focus on five features of the sacrifices.

c. Five features of the sacrifices:

i. Occasion

1. Occasioned by the consciousness of separation from God
 - a. Burnt: The need of acceptance by God, atonement, and soothing aroma to the LORD
 - b. Grain: Soothing aroma to the LORD
 - c. Peace: Assurance of peace with God and soothing aroma
 - d. Sin: For a specific violation of a divine prohibition
 - e. Guilt: Similar to sin offering but often with a restitution
2. All the offerings stemmed from the consciousness of sin and the resulting separation from the holy God.
3. Jesus came to address this problem of sin.
 - a. Matt. 1:21 [21] "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
 - b. John 1:29 [29] The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

ii. Cost

1. Animals had to be domesticated and free from defects.
 - a. Domesticated:
 - i. From the herd (cattle) or the flock (sheep or goat) (L1:2)
 - ii. Sacrifices had value to the worshipper.
 - iii. They were costly.
 - b. Without defect (L1:3, 10):
 - i. Not lame, diseased, or disfigured
 - ii. Not what they wanted to get rid of
 - iii. But clean, spotless, and healthy
2. The sacrifices had to be costly and clean.
3. God wasn't just being picky and overbearing.

- a. These were meant to portray the sacrifice of His precious and holy Son incarnate.
- b. The Father would only allow His beloved Son to be depicted as costly and clean.

iii. Atonement

1. "Make atonement" occurs frequently in Leviticus
 - a. Nearly 40 times in chapters 1-16
 - b. A dozen times in chapters 1-7
2. English meaning:
 - a. "Atonement" = "at" + "one" + "ment"
 - b. It means reconciliation and unity with someone with whom you were at odds before
 - c. "Make atonement" means to pay whatever price necessary to reach reconciliation or unity.
3. Hebrew meaning:
 - a. "Make atonement" = *kaphar* (כָּפַר), lit. meaning "to cover"
 - b. Cognate noun *kapporeth* (כַּפֹּרֶת) translated as "mercy seat" or "propitiatory" (NASB)
 - c. Atonement is an act of mercy where sin is covered through propitiation (later)
 - d. The sacrifices made atonement for the sinner so that he would be accepted by God (L1:3-4).

iv. Substitution

1. Laying on hands (L1:4) was a symbolic gesture that made the animal a substitute for the sinner.
2. This gesture signified sin transfer from the sinner to the sacrifice (L16:21).
3. Then the animal was put to death.
 - a. "the fact that the person put his hand on the head of the offering was an admission through action that they believed that they deserved death and that this animal

was dying in substitution for them.” (T. A. Pruett, *Commentary on the Books of Moses*)

4. This process of sacrifice demonstrated that the sinner deserved death, because the price of sin was death.
5. Death was required because “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).
6. Sin is a capital crime.
 - a. There is a death penalty for sinning against God.
 - b. You perceive the gravity of a crime by seeing its recompense.
 - i. Consider drinking and driving.
 - c. There is no true repentance and atonement for sin until there is recognition that the wages of sin is death.
7. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the penalty of death for the sins of His people so that all who repent and trust in Him would be atoned for and be reconciled to God.

v. Aroma

1. The slain animal is butchered and some or all of its parts are burned on the bronze altar.
2. The most important thing about the burning was its effect on the LORD.
3. The smoke of the burning flesh gave a soothing aroma to the LORD.
 - a. L1:9 [9] ... And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.
4. Meaning of Soothe
 - a. The adjective “soothing” is *nihoah* (נִיחֹה) which means “quieting, soothing, tranquilizing.”
 - b. It comes from the verb *nuah* (נָוָה) meaning “to repose, be quiet, or rest.”
 - i. The name Noah comes from this root.
5. Implication of soothe is the wrath of God

- a. Soothing implies is that God is disquieted and agitated.
- b. But the situation is far more serious: God is angry, provoked, furious about our sin.
 - i. Psalm 7:11-13
 - ii. Ex. 34:6-7
- c. NT is no different:
 - i. Rom. 1:18-21
- d. Jesus speaks the same
 - i. Matt. 16:27
 - ii. Matt. 25:41
- e. Jesus is the coming Judge
 - i. Rev. 19:11-12
 - ii. Psalm 96:13
 - iii. Psalm 98:9

6. Propitiation

- a. The Judge who will one day come to judge the world in righteousness, took off the judge's robe and took the sinner's place and took upon Himself his sentence and suffered the wrath of God in his place.
- b. Propitiation is the satisfaction of the wrath of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the place of His people.
- c. His death is called a soothing aroma to God (Eph. 5:2).
- d. We've seen the five features of these sacrifices, and they all point to Christ.
 - i. Occasion: The occasion for His sacrifice was our separation from God because of our sin.
 - ii. Cost: The cost of our reconciliation to God was the precious life of God's beloved Son who was holy and clean in the sight of God.
 - iii. Atonement: Jesus' sacrifice accomplished atonement for sin which brought sinners into a righted relationship with God and united them to God (peace with God).

- iv. Substitution: Jesus' sacrifice accomplished this through substitution. He took the place of His people.
 - v. Aroma: The effect of His sacrifice was a soothing aroma. It propitiated the just wrath of God directed toward sinners.
- e. This is what these sacrifices signified as a shadow of the good things to come in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.