

AUGUST 26th

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God." **LEVITICUS 25:38**

A.J. Jacobs wrote a book entitled, "The Year of Living Biblically." Even as Jacobs is not an evangelical Christian, for an entire year he obeyed as literally as possible the laws of the Old Testament. While I haven't read the entire book, it does contain some interesting situations. One humorous example involves a trick that his wife played on him. According to Old Testament Law, blood from a woman's menstrual cycle causes objects to be unclean, including the furniture that they sit on. You can imagine what happened as his wife had her menstrual cycle..."You can't sit there, or there, or there...". These laws can seem strange to us, since we live after Christ fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law. Therefore, we can eat pork and shellfish. Is this Old Testament book called Leviticus still significant for us in a New Testament world? Well, let's dive in to see the 40,000-foot view of what God shows us.

There's one key idea that is emphasized throughout the entire book of Leviticus. In fact, this word is used a total of 92 times in 78 verses...holy. God gives the law and continues to emphasize that He is holy. Furthermore, God's chosen people are to be holy because God is holy. This is the whole reason for the sacrificial system. Blood is to be shed to pay for sin. It's important to note that there's nothing inherently special about blood. There are no magic powers that are given by blood. Instead, blood points to something...death. The writer of Hebrews emphasizes that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Sin before a holy God requires death. God cannot simply wipe away sin without demanding death. You can't have forgiveness granted without a substitute dying. Death signifies justice. Forgiveness signifies love. You can't have just one, since God is not made up of parts. God is not 50% love and then 50% just. He is 100% just and 100% love. Not a single attribute is compromised to make room for the other. Leviticus emphasizes these strange cleanliness laws to remind God's people that they are unclean before a holy God.

Another phrase that is emphasized in Leviticus is "I am the LORD your God." You'll see this phrase used 21 times in the book. God reminds the people that He is the LORD. The same God who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush is the God who offers Himself as their God. God continues to show that He is holy, and shows that He is also near. God is their God; they are His people. He has rescued them and brought them to freedom. Even as God is holy and is separate from His people God also calls them to be holy. We will see in Leviticus 26 that even as God knows that His people will sin against Him, He also promises that repentance brings reconciliation. Here this from Leviticus 26: "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land." Even as the blessings that are experienced by God's covenant with Abraham are conditional, God's promises to Abraham are unconditional. He will always save His people.

Men, God's call to His people hasn't changed. He calls you to be holy because you are His son. He holds His promises to you, and they never fail. How will you respond to your Lord today?

Spend some time thinking about God's holiness and His call for you to be holy. In what ways have you fallen short this week in living a life that is marked by your King? Confess this to God and ask Him for more grace to give you courage to live with an undivided heart today.

Further Reading: Leviticus 26:1-46

