



# LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF A HOLY GOD

ABF Series • Pastor Brian

# LEVITICUS INTRODUCTION

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1. The central message is that God is holy and desires His people to be also, for the purpose of relationship.
2. A key phrase is “the tent of meeting.”
3. Leviticus was a book of blessing to the Israelites, not a book of burden.
4. Leviticus has a center point – the Day of Atonement. This impacts every element of the book.
5. The Old Covenant is not the testament/covenant for believers today.

# A REMINDER ON READING OT LAW.

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The Old Testament law does teach much about the person of God, the values of His desired world, the grace He extends to mankind, and the future He has prepared for those who come to Him on His terms.

# THE TABERNACLE – THE PALACE OF GOD

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1. The Israelites bring their tribute here (Exod. 25:1–9), just as a people would bring tribute to a king's palace.
2. The Israelites come and 'stand before' the Lord, just as one 'stands before' a ruler or person in authority (Lev. 9:5).
3. The tabernacle's furniture and tapestries are incredibly ornate and unlike those of any other tent in Israel (Exod. 25:10 – 26:37; 30:1–10). This is clearly a tent fit for a king.

# THE TABERNACLE – THE PALACE OF GOD

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4. Just as kings had servants in their palaces who wore special uniforms and ministered before him (1 Kgs 10:5), so too the Lord has servants (the priests) in his palace-tent who wear special uniforms (Exod. 28) and minister before him (Exod. 28:43).
5. The tent has a throne room – the Most Holy Place – in which the Ark of the Covenant is the Lord's royal 'footstool' (1 Chr. 28:2), and the carved cherubim on top of it, his royal 'throne' (2 Sam. 6:2).

# GOD IS HOLY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

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## 1. Powerful Creatorship: Majestic Holiness

- God is altogether separate from His creation. His holiness is independent. No one makes Him holy. He is.
- This aspect of His holiness is not transferable.

## 2. Purity: Moral Holiness

- God is altogether separate from any and all aspects of sin. He is pure light, and no darkness dwells within Him.
- This aspect of His holiness is transferable.

# GOD IS HOLY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

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The God of Israel separates himself from all other gods.

1. Power without moral purity becomes tyranny. The God of Israel is no tyrant.
2. Power without relationship becomes distant. The God of Israel is not distant.
3. Purity without care becomes sterile. The God of Israel extends his concern for others.
4. Purity without cleansing becomes impossible. The God of Israel provides a way for holiness.

# GOD'S CALL FOR HOLINESS

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1. God's call for holiness is an invitation for a relationship.
2. God's call for holiness is based upon his redemption of them (Lev. 11:45; 19:36).
3. God's call for holiness required a loyalty to His law (Lev 19)
  - The law provided a modeling of the values of God (vs. 2).
  - The law provided a guide for healthy human society (vs. 9-18).
  - The law provided parameters for purity from the surrounding paganism (vs. 26-28).

# CATEGORIES THAT LIMIT RELATIONSHIP

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## 1. Sin Categories:

- Unintentional Sins – sacrifices are available.
- High-handed Sins – no sacrifices are available.
- Intentional, but not High-handed – some sacrifices are available.

## 2. Ritual States:

- Clean – full participation in community.
- Unclean – no or limited participation in community.
- Holy - leadership in community events.

# LEVITICUS 1 – RITUAL SACRIFICES

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There are three legal “paragraphs” prescribing the correct rituals for burnt offerings of herd animals (i.e., bovines; vv. 3–9) and flock animals (i.e., sheep and goats; vv. 10–13), as well as birds (vv. 14–17). Each of these paragraphs comprises a sub-case, beginning with the word “if” (vv. 3, 10, 14).

# THE ROLE OF RITUALS

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A ritual is a system of activities whose purpose is to communicate an intended goal (physical or symbolic).

1. Prerequisite activities – Actions that are necessary for the task.
2. Hierarchical – Tasks consisting of smaller systems and making up larger systems.
3. Postrequisite activity – Actions that finalize or memorialize the ritual.

# MACRO-RITUAL

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These are voluntary sacrifices, in which:

- the animal must be domestic
  - whether from the herd (bovines, e.g., bulls) or
  - from the flock (sheep or goats).
- The choice of the animal must be male and without blemish.
- The location is specified: “the entrance to the Tent of Meeting,”
- Salt needed to be added per Leviticus 2:13.

# MICRO-RITUAL

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1. Lean one hand on head of the animal slay
2. Slit the throat of the animal
3. Collect blood
4. Present blood to the altar
5. Dash blood against sides of altar
6. Flay (remove the hide of) the animal
7. Dismember/quarter the carcass
8. Stoke the altar fire
9. Arrange wood on the altar
10. Present body pieces, head, and suet (hard fat) to the altar
11. Arrange the body pieces, head, and suet on the altar fire
12. Wash entrails and shins
13. Present entrails and shins to the altar
14. Burn (turn into smoke) the entrails and shins on the fire

# THE RITUAL BRIDGE

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Ritual is a bridging mechanism that spans a gap between persons or things that cannot ordinarily interact with each other. This bridge requires faith in the existence of God and sin and the ability of a particular activity system, correctly performed, to interact with him. Viewed within the context of a system of beliefs, ritual has power to do things that other kinds of activity cannot do.

# GOALS OF THE RITUAL OF BURNT OFFERINGS

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1. Acceptance and enjoyment (vs. 9) - When a burnt offering was done properly in the right place, God did not simply accept the worshiper and the offering—it gave him pleasure. What pleased God was the faith in him (Heb. 11:4–6) that the sacrifices expressed.
2. Expiation (vs. 4) - The burnt offering was a two-way transaction between the offerer and the Lord. The benefit received by the offerer as a result of giving a food gift to the Lord was infinitely greater gift of expiation. Kippur does not mean full atonement. Rather, kipper is removal, that is, expiation, of evil that stands in the way of reconciliation.

# GOALS OF THE RITUAL OF BURNT OFFERINGS

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3. Hand-leaning (vs. 4): Leaning/laying one hand on the head of an animal identified the offerer as its owner, who was transferring the victim to God and who would in turn receive the benefit of that sacrifice. But there was more to hand-leaning than simple identification of ownership. Since the owner was the giving party in a transaction, hand-leaning signified the end of ownership. From this point on, the animal was dedicated to the Lord for his utilization.

# NT SIGNIFICANCE OF BURNT OFFERINGS

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1. Just as animal sacrifices were to be physically unblemished (1:3; 22:17–25), Christ was morally unblemished, “a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:19), in that he did not sin (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). By allowing himself to be a sacrificial victim, he died in place of sinners (Isa. 53:5, 10, 12).
2. Leaning one hand on an animal victim correlates with the role of Christ that Isaiah prophesied: “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases” (Isa. 53:4). Christ atones for us by taking our sin on himself.
3. Just as a burnt offering expiated for an offerer (Lev. 1:4), the New Testament affirms that Christ’s blood sacrifice frees believers from their sins. To express this dynamic process, the New Testament employs the legal metaphors of “ransom” (1 Peter 1:18–19; Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6), “redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7), and release from debt (Matt. 6:12). The ransom or redemption price that Christ paid was himself.