

OLD TESTAMENT LAW: GOD'S REQUIREMENT FOR HOLINESS

Continuing the narrative from Genesis and Exodus, Leviticus provides governing laws for the newly established nation of Israel. Leviticus focuses on the descendants of the tribe of Levi, who God appointed as the priests over Israel. This book contains laws that God gave Moses to share with the Israelites as instructions for faithful living, including how to worship and obey God. Holiness is a big theme in this book; God in His holiness is set apart, and He called His people to set themselves apart by obeying God's laws.

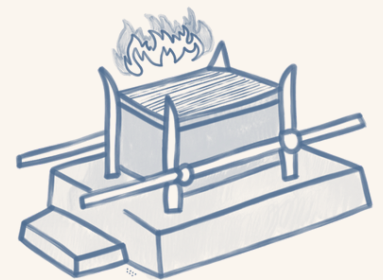
In the garden of Eden, God explained that sin leads to death (Genesis 2:17). Because of the sin and rebellion among the nation of Israel, death was required for reconciliation. When Adam and Eve first sinned, God covered their nakedness with the skin of an animal (Genesis 3:21). In Leviticus, God allowed for sin to be covered (atoned for) by the killing of an animal. God knew that this was not a permanent solution, which is why we no longer do this today. Instead of continually killing animals for temporary sacrifices, God provided the ultimate, permanent sacrifice through the death of Jesus.

MAIN IDEAS: THE ISRAELITE LAWS + THE LEVITE PRIESTS

- **God provided a way for the Israelites to atone for their sins with sacrifices.** (Leviticus 1:4)
- **God established a priesthood to mediate on behalf of the Israelites.** (Leviticus 9:22-24)
- **Although God requires holiness, He still draws near to His people.** (Leviticus 11:44)
- **God outlined ethical and moral principles, describing holiness and justice.** (Leviticus 19:15).

EXAMPLE OF GOD'S CHARACTER: GOD DRAWS NEAR

God's love for His people far outweighs His contempt for sin. Although God requires sacrifice for sin, He established an intricate system for the Israelites to make offerings. God also gave Moses instructions to build the tabernacle, a personal place for God to dwell among the Israelites despite their sin. The tabernacle would serve as the place for offerings, as well as a place to worship and praise God. Instead of sending the Israelites further away to pay for their sins, He called them closer to His presence.



When God appointed the high priests, He gave them the special role of serving as mediators between God and the people of Israel. The high priests served as physical reminders that God desires to draw near and reconnect with the people who have been separated from Him by sin.

JESUS IN EXODUS: THE ROYAL PRIEST + PERFECT SACRIFICE

God gave the Israelites instructions for holiness, but they all eventually fell short. Even the high priests could not perfectly keep the law. Jesus was the only human to ever live without sin and in perfect obedience to God's commands. He was the ultimate high priest for whom the Israelites had been hoping and waiting. Jesus challenged the role of the royal priest by becoming the sacrifice. By serving as the spotless, perfect sacrifice, Jesus permanently fulfilled God's desire for atonement. Jesus' death ended the need for animal sacrifices and offered freedom to all believers. In this way, Jesus suppressed God's wrath and served as the ultimate mediator between God and humanity.