

The Book of Leviticus

Modern indifference towards Leviticus stands in marked contrast to earlier Jewish attitudes, when it was valued so highly that it was made the first book of the law to which they introduced their children at school. It was the place they started when instilling the values and rules for daily living. Leviticus is good news. It is full of the Gospel because it is a book that is full of Christ. It is closely related to the book of Exodus, in fact Leviticus begins where Exodus ends - God dwelling among His redeemed people. It was thus in the context of redeeming grace that God delivered these priestly laws to teach his people how to maintain that intimacy and communion in the presence of God. Graham Scroggie has written, "The message of Exodus was about God's approach to his people and their being brought near to Him, whereas Leviticus was about the peoples approach to God and their being kept near to him".

TITLE

The English title "Leviticus" is borrowed from the Latin Vulgate, which in turn had adapted it from the "Septuagint", the early greek version of the O.T. Leviticus = "That which pertains to the Levites". The book contains rules for the priests as well as for others.

The Jews called it "Wayyiqra" based on the first word of the book "And He called". Leviticus contains more of the actual words of God than any other book of the Bible.

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KEYNOTE

Holiness (46 times) "You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy" Lev 19v2 (11v44,45 20v7,26) Holiness in Leviticus is firstly a statement about God, "I the lord your God am holy". Secondly, a command from God to his people, "You shall be holy". And finally, a promise from God to his people, "I am the LORD who sanctifies you". (20v8)

The summons of Leviticus leaps across the yawning cultural divide to call us once again to holy living and to pursue holiness in every dimension of our lives. Like Israel, we too have been set free by Christ, but not so that we might continue to live in sin; rather we have been set free to be holy. 1 Peter 1v15-16.

LEVITICUS AND THE CHRISTIAN

The principles underlying the O.T are valid and authoritative for the Christian, but the particular applications found in the O.T may not be. The moral principles are the same but the application may well be different.