

Title: **LEVITICUS: God Demands and Gives Holiness**

Text: Leviticus 20:26

Subject: *Salvation by God's Sacrifice*

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Tape # X-44a

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Introduction:

The Book of Exodus concludes with the setting up of the tabernacle for the worship of God. This was the place where God met with his chosen people, the place of divine worship, the place from whence the Lord God gave out his word to his people. This tabernacle, being a picture of our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, was made exactly according to the pattern God gave to Moses. The Book of Leviticus gives us the prescribed ordinances and ceremonies of divine worship.

This Book was written by Moses 2500 years after the creation, about 1500 before the coming of Christ. The various sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies made here described were typical of Christ, and shadows of those good things to come by him for the everlasting salvation of our souls.

THREE HISTORICAL EVENTS

There are only three historical events mentioned in the whole Book of Leviticus. But those three historical events are very instructive.

1. The first historical event recorded in this Book is **THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS AS THE PRIESTS** of Israel (ch. 8-9). There is a twofold type here.

- *First*, the Aaronic priesthood represents the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Specifically, Aaron, as the High Priest of Israel, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest before God.—Divinely Chosen—Divinely Equipped—Divinely Anointed—Divinely Approved.—Only Aaron could make atonement in the holy of holies, because he represented he who alone could and would put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

(Hebrews 7:23-28) "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

- *Second*, Aaron's sons represent the Church and Kingdom of God, as that "*holy priesthood*" of believers who serve God in the holy place day and night. Everything about these priests typifies and represents believing sinners in this world.

(Leviticus 8:2) "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;"

- These men were specifically chosen by God—Divine Election.

- They were God’s priests because they were Aaron’s sons.
- They wore the garments of the priesthood—The Garments of Salvation—Imputed Righteousness.
- They were accepted as priests because of a slain sacrifice.
- They were anointed with holy anointing oil and washed with pure water—The Holy Spirit—The New Birth.
- They were men who deliberately and voluntarily consecrated themselves to God.
- They lived continually upon the sacrifice of God’s altar—Christ.
- They served the people of God.
- They served God continually.

(1 Peter 2:5-9) "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

2. The second historic event recorded in Leviticus is THE DEATH OF NADAB AND ABIHU by the hand of God, for offering "*strange fire before the LORD*" (ch. 10).—Let all who would worship God understand the powerful lesson set before us in chapter 10. If we would worship God and find acceptance with him, we must come to him with that which

he has provided, Christ alone, and no mixture of anything with Christ.

(Leviticus 10:1-3) "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."

3. The third historic thing recorded in the Book of Leviticus is **THE STONING SHELOMITH'S SON FOR BLASPHEMY** (24:10-16).—Those who blaspheme the name of God, curse him, denying him as God alone shall be destroyed by him. Though this unnamed wretch had a Hebrew mother, his father was an Egyptian; and he preferred both the gods and the people of Egypt to the God of Glory and his people.

All the rest of the Book is taken up with the ceremonial laws God gave to Israel by Moses, concerning their sacrifices and offerings, meats and drinks, and different washings, by which God set Israel people apart for himself, and distinguished them from other people and nations. All these things were shadows of those good things to come, which are ours in Christ. This Book is called Leviticus because it is primarily about the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:11).

Leviticus 20:26

You will find the central, dominant message of the Book of Leviticus 20:26.

(Leviticus 20:26) "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have severed you from *other* people, that ye should be mine."

Proposition: The message of this Book is this—God demands holiness and God gives what he demands in Christ.

All the types and ceremonies, laws and sacrifices, priests and holy things spoken of in these twenty-seven chapters show us that our only way of access to God is Christ. But, blessed be his holy name, we do have access to God by Christ, because we have that holiness which God demands in him, by his obedience and blood.

(Hebrews 10:14-22) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. *15 Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, *16 This is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; *17* And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. *18* Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. *19* Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, *20* By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; *21* And *having* an high priest over the house of God; *22* Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

HOLINESS

Look back at Leviticus 20:26 again.

(Leviticus 20:26) "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have severed you from *other* people, that ye should be mine."

This is both the command of God and the promise of God to his people.

(Leviticus 19:1-2) "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy."

(Hebrews 12:14) "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The Lord God is here declaring to his chosen, covenant people that they shall be a holy people—not partially holy—not mostly holy—but entirely holy. This is not a recommendation, but a declaration. It is a declaration of grace made to a specific people.

The word "*holy*" has two distinct meanings. Both definitions of the word must be understood and applied here.

- To be holy is to be separate, distinct, peculiar, separated and severed from all others.
- To be holy is to be pure or purified.

The Lord God here declares to his Israel, to all who stand before him as his covenant people, "You shall be separate, distinct, peculiar, separated and severed from all others, pure and purified before me."

We know that this is the intent and meaning of this statement by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

(Exodus 19:6) "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

(Leviticus 11:44) "For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

(Leviticus 20:7) "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God."

(1 Thessalonians 4:7) "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

The Lord God almighty, by the work of his sovereign, free, distinguishing grace, takes such things as us, such things as he finds in the dung heap of fallen humanity and makes them holy.

- By the Precious Blood of Christ!
- By Divine Regeneration!
- In Resurrection Glory!

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, *10* Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. *11* And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

(Titus 2:11-14) "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, *12* Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; *13* Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; *14* Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

(1 Peter 2:7-10) "Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, *8* And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. *9* But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: *10* Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

(Ephesians 5:25-26) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; *26* That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

(Jude 1:24-25) "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, *25* To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

Alright, God requires holiness and God gives holiness to his people; but WHAT IS THIS HOLINESS?

Because we are so universally inundated with false, free will, works religion from our youth up we commonly think that holiness has something to do with austere, weird behavior. We tend to think that "holy" people are people who look and act as if they were weaned on a dill pickle and soaked in embalming fluid.

We are all bit like that little city girl you've all heard about who on her first visit to the country saw a mule looking over a fence at her. She had never seen a mule before, and she said, "I don't know what you are, but you must be a Christian—you look just like Grandpa."

Holiness is commonly associated with grimness, strangeness, oddness, something ugly and unappealing. And, frankly, as I have heard it described from the pulpit and read about it in the writings of men, I would have to agree with such thoughts. But that is not holiness. That's just religious self-righteousness and religious delusion.—Asceticism.

- The Corinthian Error
- The Papists' Error
- The Puritan Error
- The Error of All Works Religion

The Word of God speaks of holiness in a different way. The Bible speaks of holiness as a beautiful and delightful thing.

(1 Chronicles 16:29) "Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of **holiness.**"

(2 Chronicles 20:21) "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of **holiness**, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever."

(Psalms 29:2) "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of **holiness**."

(Psalms 60:6) "God hath spoken in his **holiness**; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth."

(Psalms 96:9) "O worship the LORD in the beauty of **holiness**: fear before him, all the earth."

(Isaiah 35:8) "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of **holiness**; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*."

Holiness has something to do with wholeness. Holiness means wholeness, completion, entirety, perfection of being. There are no degrees to it. Either we are whole or we are broken and unwhole, complete or incomplete, perfect or imperfect. As a general rule, when reading the Bible, if you will think wholeness every time you read the word holiness, you will get a better picture of what holiness is.

That is what the Lord is talking about in Leviticus. He says to his covenant people, "you shall be whole, because I am whole." God is complete. He is perfect. There is no blemish in his character. He exists in perfect harmony with himself. He is perfect in beauty. He is perfect wholeness. He looks upon his chosen in great, boundless grace, and says, "You too, shall be whole."

I do not deny, suggest, or imply that holiness does not involve separation, distinctness, and peculiarity. It certainly does. What I am saying is this—Wholeness is that which separates God's elect from a ruined race. Wholeness, the blessed wholeness of grace and righteousness in Christ, is our separateness, distinctness, and peculiarity.

(Titus 2:14) Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Nothing is more desirable, nothing more beautiful, and nothing more rare than wholeness. We long to be a whole people. The whole Book of Leviticus, indeed the whole Word of God tells us how that God demands this wholeness and gives it to poor, helpless, broken, ruined sinners. He declares, "*I am the LORD that healeth thee.*" And he heals us by the sacrifice of his dear Son. It is written, "*with his stripes ye are healed.*" God almighty heals the broken, ruined state and condition of his people by the five things described in this great Book of Leviticus:—(1) Sacrifice—(2) Priesthood—(3) Atonement—(4) Restoration—(5) Liberty.

SACRIFICE (Lev. 1-7)

As I have been trying to show you, The purpose of Leviticus is echoed in verses such as 11:44-45, 19:2, and 20:26: "*Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*" The word "*holy*" appears more often in the Book of Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible. The Book of Leviticus both calls God's people to be holy, and shows us how sinners are made holy by Christ.

In chapters 1-7, God gave Moses specific instructions about the sacrifices and offerings by which his people would be allowed to

approach him. In these five sacrifices, Israel was ceremonially provided with everything needed to make them whole, holy. These sacrifices represent the Lord Jesus Christ, in and by whom the Lord God gives us everything needed to make us whole, complete, holy before him (Col. 2:9-10).

1. **The burnt offering shows us the way to God** (1:1-17). -- We must come to God by faith in Christ, who was consumed by the fire of God's wrath as our Substitute. But our Lord Jesus Christ is that Burnt Offering who consumed the fire of God's wrath for his people.
2. **The meat offering portrays the character of Christ, the God-man** (2:1-16). – He who is our Substitute is most holy unto the Lord. – It also speaks of our consecration to God by faith in Christ.
3. **The peace offering speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Peace** (3:1-17). – Christ alone can reconcile God and man. Christ alone can speak peace to the guilty conscience. Christ alone is our Peace.
4. **The sin offering, of course, represents Christ our Substitute** (4:1-35). – Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. There is no forgiveness with God except by the merits of a suitable, slain sin offering; and that Sin Offering is Christ.
5. **The trespass offering sets before us a picture of Christ's atonement** (5:1-6:7). – Our Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for the sins of his people by paying our debt to the full satisfaction of divine justice.

I hear the Savior say,

“Thy strength indeed is small.
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in Me thine all in all.”
Jesus paid it all! All the debt I owed!
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow!

PRIESTHOOD (Lev. 8-10)

Here is our unwholeness, our brokenness. Sin has separated us from God. We cannot come to him, approach him, and find acceptance with him. How, then, can we come to God and find acceptance with him? We must have a priest, a mediator, a daysman, an advocate. This God has provided in Christ.

None but God’s Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ can represent us before God, make sacrifice for us in the presence of God, and bring to us the blessing of God.

So great, so meritorious, so effectual, so worthy is our great High Priest that he makes us priests unto God! Yes, it is true...

“Near, so very near to God, nearer I cannot be,
For in the Person of His Son, I am as near as He!”

(1 John 2:1-2) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."

ATONEMENT (Lev. 11-16)

Christ is our great High Priest; but a priest is useless without a sacrifice. Christ is both our Priest and our sin-atonement Sacrifice, the Lamb of God who has taken away our sins!

(Isaiah 53:9-11) "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. *10* Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. *11* He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

RESTORATION (Lev. 17-24)

Leviticus 17-24 shows us typically that which is the result of Christ's sin-atonement sacrifice as our Substitute. Because Christ has made atonement for us and put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, God almighty sends his Spirit in omnipotent saving grace and restores us to himself, reconciles us, and brings us into fellowship with him as the sons of God, causing us to walk with him in the obedience of faith, worshipping him. He says, "*I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people*" (20:24). In other words, he says to you and me, as we come to him through the sacrifice of Christ, "I am yours and you are mine!" Even now, he owns us as his!

(Leviticus 20:26) "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have severed you from *other* people, that ye should be mine."

The only thing left is that for which Paul longed, when he cried, “*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*”

LIBERTY (Lev. 25-27)

Leviticus 25 opens with the blowing of the jubilee trumpet. I can hardly wait. Soon, Christ shall come again. Then liberty, the glorious liberty of the sons of God! Then, blessed be his name, then we shall be made whole!

I read a story today of a true incident which illustrates what I am trying to communicate. He told of a children's service at a rescue mission in a Midwestern city a few years ago. Children were putting on the program, and one little boy was to give a recitation. He was only about five or six years old and he had a deformity; he was a humpback. As he walked across the stage to give his recitation it was evident that he was very shy and afraid, and very much aware of his condition. In fact, it was the first time that he had ever tried anything like this and it was a great struggle for him.

Two older fellows had come into the back of the room intending to ridicule the service. One of them called out to this boy as he walked across the stage, "Hey, bud, where are you going with that pack on your back?" The little boy was completely demoralized, and he just stood there and sobbed.

A man got up out of the audience and came up to the platform. He knelt down by the little boy and put his arm around him. He said to the audience, "It must take a very callous and cruel person to say something like that to a little boy like this. He is suffering from something that is not his fault at all. In spite of this deformity, he was trying for the first time to venture out and say

something in public. This remark has cut him deeply. But I want you to know that I love him just the way he is; this little boy is mine, he belongs to me, and I'm proud of him" And he led the boy off the platform. That is what God is really saying to us. He sees our hurt and our heartache and our longing and our brokenness, and he says, "You're MINE"

But that isn't all. Because of his power and wisdom, God says, with that wonderful hopefulness of a loving father, "You shall be mine---healed, made whole, with all your blemishes and deformities corrected, all your faults straightened out, all your iniquities set aside, all your tangled relationships unsnarled. You shall be whole, for I am whole." That is what this book is about, that is what the Bible is about, and that is what Jesus Christ is about.