



HOLY GROUND

LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

CONTENTS

02	Letter	
04	Background to Leviticus	
05	The Sacrifices	
07	The Tabernacle	
08	26th of April	Leviticus 1-7
12	3rd of May	Leviticus 8-10
16	17th of May	Leviticus 11
20	24th of May	Leviticus 12-15
24	31st of May	Leviticus 16-17
28	7th of June	Leviticus 18-20
32	14th of June	Leviticus 21-25
36	21st of June	Leviticus 26
40	28th of June	Leviticus 27

LETTER

Dear Church,

It is a great kindness from our holy and gracious God that we are given another season to gather as his people, to sit under his word, and to be shaped by his Spirit. What a privilege it is to grow together, not only in knowledge, but in reverence, obedience, faith, and love for the God who has called us to himself.

This term, we turn to the book of Leviticus. At first glance it may feel unfamiliar or strange, filled with laws, sacrifices, and rituals from a different time and culture. Yet, as with all Scripture, God intends it to be a lamp for our feet. As we look carefully at Leviticus, we see that it reveals some deeply important truths: the overwhelmingly awesome holiness of God and the way he makes it possible for his people to dwell with him.

In these chapters, God teaches Israel how to live as a people set apart for him. Through the sacrificial system, the priesthood, and the call to holiness in every aspect of life, we'll see both the seriousness of sin and the gracious provision God makes for atonement and restoration. These instructions remind us that drawing near to God is not something we achieve on our own, but something he lovingly provides a way for.

Our hope for this series is that we would come to see more clearly the beauty of God's holiness and the depth of his grace. As we read Leviticus in light of the gospel of Jesus, we are pointed forward to his perfect sacrifice that fulfills all others, and to the calling we now share as God's holy people. We pray that this would lead us to reverence, gratitude, and a wholehearted desire to honour him in all we do.

Grace and peace,

Your brother in Christ,

Michael Parker

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY
2

Men's Breakfast

Men gathering to hear from God's word and eat together



MAY
10

Mother's Day Service

Bring your mum to join us in celebration of mothers and mother like figures



MAY
26

Quarterly Church Meeting

Making decision together in the life of our church



MAY
30

Wollongong Women's Conference

Join women across the Illawarra to see salvation unfold in God's story



JUNE
3-17

Onboard

A place to help those who are new get oriented to WBC



JUN
13

Gong Men's Day

Men across the Illawarra gathering to hear God's word



JUN
20

Women's breakfast

Women meeting together over breakfast



BACKGROUND TO LEVITICUS

The book of Leviticus carries on right from where Exodus left off, with Israel camped at Mount Sinai and the tabernacle newly constructed as the place where God dwells with his people. The only question: *How?* For people of sinful or impure status to come in contact with holiness results in death and destruction, so *how* could a holy God dwell with an unholy people? Leviticus answers this question by showing God graciously moving toward his people. It specifies the detailed requirements to be in the presence of his perfect holiness, which is expressed in the repeated call: "Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

The first major section (chapters 1-7) outlines the system of sacrifices, showing how atonement, thanksgiving, and fellowship with God are maintained. Chapters 8-10 establish the priesthood, and chapters 11-15 describe laws of ritual purity, illustrating how everyday life is shaped by holiness. The pivotal moment comes in chapter 16 with the Day of Atonement, which addresses the problem of sin at a national level, followed by chapter 17 which highlights the significance of blood for that atonement. The remaining chapters (18-27), apply God's standards of holiness to every aspect of life.

Leviticus teaches that holiness is not limited to religious rituals but extends to all areas of life, including relationships, justice, and worship. For us today, it points forward to the need for permanent atonement and reconciliation with God found in the perfect once for all sacrifice of Jesus. Its emphasis on holiness challenges us to live distinct, obedient lives, not to earn God's favour, but out of awe and thankfulness for his deliverance. Although on the surface it can seem strange in our context, its core message remains deeply relevant for us. Living in the presence of our holy God is no small thing, but by his grace and wisdom, he miraculously makes it happen.

THE SACRIFICES

Key to understanding Leviticus is having a grasp of the sacrificial system laid out in the first seven chapters, since they come up regularly through the book. While the following descriptions are very brief, they may be helpful as a reference as you read the more detailed text in Leviticus.

The Burnt (or Ascension) Offering - Leviticus 1 and 6:8-13

A voluntary offering of worship, this involved the complete burning of the animal on the altar, with only the hide going to the officiating priest and nothing to the worshipper. It represented total surrender and devotion to the LORD and was offered for atonement, allowing the worshipper to be accepted before him.

The Grain Offering - Leviticus 2 and 6:14-23

A voluntary offering of tribute, this consisted of fine flour, oil, and incense, given as a tribute to the LORD. A handful was burned on the altar for him, the baked goods from it went to the officiating priest, and some raw flour went to the rest of the priests. It expressed gratitude and recognition of the LORD as the provider of daily needs. Unlike other offerings, it did not involve blood and was often presented alongside other offerings.

The Fellowship Offering - Leviticus 3 and 7:11-36

This was a voluntary sacrifice expressing thanksgiving, vows, or fellowship with the LORD. Part of the animal was burned to him, while the rest was eaten in a communal meal (the only sacrifice resulting with food for the worshipper), expressing shared presence with the LORD. It represented peace, shared joy, and restored relationship with the LORD.

The Sin (or Purification) Offering - Leviticus 4:1-5:13 and 6:24-30

This was a required sacrifice made for unintentional sins that brought impurity upon individuals or the community. Its purpose was to cleanse and restore holiness, especially in relation to the sanctuary. Different procedures were prescribed depending on the significance of the person offering it.

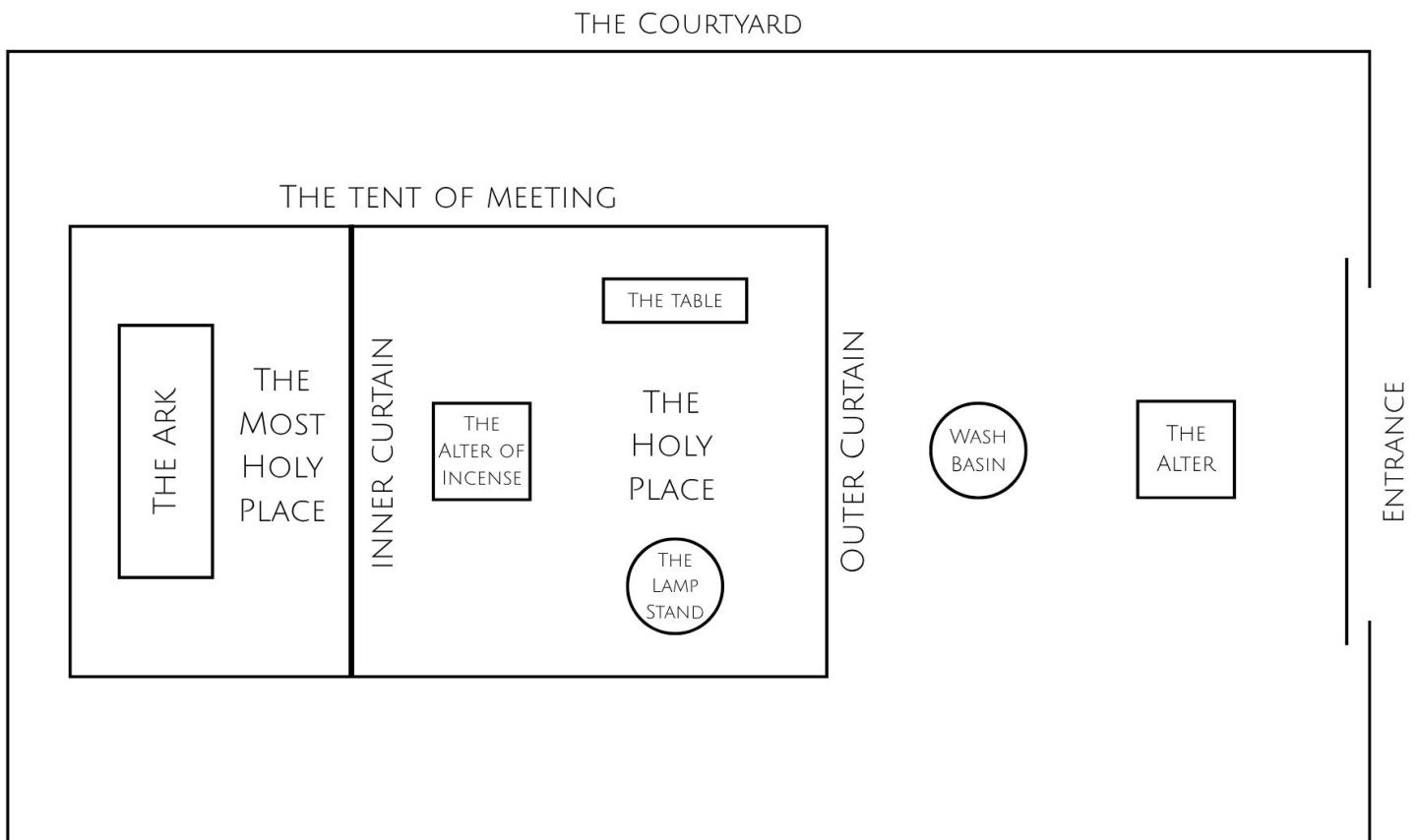
The Guilt Offering - Leviticus 5:14-6:7 and 7:1-6

This was a required sacrifice when someone committed a violation involving the LORD's holy things or wronged another person. It involved not only a sacrifice but also restitution, often with an added penalty. This offering emphasised making amends and restoring what had been damaged.

As well as providing the means to dealing with the people's sin and impurity, these sacrifices presented opportunities to express thanksgiving to the LORD and also gave provision to the priesthood who ministered to the people. If all the requirements and commands were followed, the picture of Israel in Leviticus is one of a well-functioning, grateful and repentant people living in the LORD's holy presence.

THE TABERNACLE

The sacrifices in Leviticus address the heart attitude and holy status of the people, but they were all performed with reference to the LORD's tabernacle, his dwelling place among his people. Having delivered his people from slavery, the LORD wanted to live with his people and so he gave detailed instructions for an intricate portable tent. The diagram below helps us visualise the interactions between the people, the priests, and the LORD as we read them in Leviticus.



⁸ "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them."

Exodus 25:8

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 1-7

26th OF APRIL

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 1-7

1. As Christians, how do we read and understand the Old Testament?
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word “sacrifice”?

Read the following descriptions of each offering:

Leviticus 1:1-9; 2:1-3; 3:1-5; 4:27-31; 5:14-16.

3. There's a lot more detail in the surrounding verses, but what do you notice about each offering?
4. How does each one contribute to your understanding of how God relates to his people?

Read Leviticus 6:12-13 and 7:11-15

5. What kind of heart attitudes do you think are important behind the actions of the sacrificial system? (See also Psalm 51:17)

6. Would it have been possible to go through the motions of these sacrifices without genuine faith? What about for us today?

Read Hebrews 10:1-10

7. How does Leviticus 1-7 help us to understand this passage?

8. What does this mean for the way we live in God's presence? How is it similar and different to what the LORD lays out in Leviticus 1-7? (See also Romans 12:1).

Pray together and thank God for the once for all sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. Ask for strength to live our lives devoted to him.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 8-10

3rd OF MAY

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 8-10

1. What are some common understandings of what a priest does?

In 8:1-29 Moses takes Aaron and his sons through a ritual process involving their anointing and sacrifices. **Read 8:30-36 together.**

2. What is the purpose of all that the LORD has commanded in this chapter? Why does it need to happen?
3. Do you think God still interacts with his people through a priesthood today? Why, why not? (See 2 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:5-6).

In chapter 9 Aaron and his sons begin to function as the nation's priests before the LORD. **Read 9:5-7 and 9:22-10:3 together.**

4. What do you think is significant in 9:23-24?

5. How does the contrast between the success of the offerings in 9:23-24 and the failure of Aaron's sons in 10:1-3 shape our understanding of God's holiness?

6. In these chapters we're reminded that our God is a consuming fire (see also Exodus 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29). Do you think it's important to include this in our conception of God? Why, why not?

Read Hebrews 9:6-15

7. What are the implications of Jesus being the new high priest for God's people?

8. How have these chapters impacted your understanding of what it means to be in the presence of God?

Pray together and thank God for the perfect high priest, Jesus. Ask that he would help us maintain a conviction of his awesome holiness and what that means for our lives.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 11

17th OF MAY

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 11

1. When you were growing up, did you have any rules you didn't understand or didn't agree with? What did you do?
2. Leviticus 11 details how the Israelites can avoid being ceremonially unclean through what animals they do and don't eat. Scan through the chapter and note any patterns you see.
3. Why do you think God gives these instructions to the Israelites?
4. It can be tempting to ignore this passage of the Bible due to New Testament Scripture like Mark 7:14-15 and Acts 10:9-16. But Christians believe the entire Bible is inspired by God and is given to teach and grow us. As Christians cleansed by Jesus' blood, what do you think God wants us to take from Leviticus 11?

5. The Israelites received their holiness from God through washing and sacrifice. How do we receive our holiness today?

6. While God has declared the animals in this chapter clean, read the passages below and consider the ways God is still concerned with how his people conduct themselves around food.

Matt 6:16-18	
Rom 14:2-4; 14; 20-21	
Col 3:5	
1 Cor 10:18-22	
Heb 13:2	
Jas 2:14-17	

7. In what ways (food related or otherwise) do you feel challenged to pursue the holiness we're called to?

Pray together and thank God for the perfect holiness his gives us through the sacrifice of Jesus. Ask for help to live lives that reflect that holiness in our thoughts, feelings, words and actions.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 12-15

24th OF MAY

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 12-15

1. Have you ever seen someone make a huge mess in a clean space? What happened?

Break into pairs and have each read one of the following passages (Leviticus 12; 13:1-46; 47-59; 14:1-32; 33-56; 15:1-33)

2. Have each pair summarise their passage. These chapters are similar to chapter 11, but have one key difference. What do you think it is?
3. Imagine yourself as an Israelite at this time. What kind of personal and social impact would these instructions have had?
4. God reaffirms the potential consequences from failing to keep this group of requirements in 15:31. What are they? What does this tell us about God and about people?

Despite these clear requirements and their high stakes, Israel did go on to profane the name of the LORD.

5. Have a look at Ezekiel 36:24-29. If the problem is continued impurity. What solution does God promise?

Read Hebrews 10:19-23

6. Jesus makes us ceremonially clean once and for all. What does this shape our understanding of who he is and what he does for us?

7. God promises the new creation will be entirely pure. How does this picture of the future combined with Jesus' work in you now impact your life today?

8. These chapters in Leviticus indicate both the inner and outer transformation that characterise those in relationship with God. What evidence of transformation is there in your life? Is there an element of it you need to change to reflect Jesus' purification of you?

Pray together and thank God for the cleansing we receive in Jesus. Ask for his help in our efforts to see our outward selves reflect our inward reality.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 16-17

31st OF MAY

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 16-17

1. Has anyone ever paid for your entry into a place or an event? How did it make you feel?

Read Leviticus 16:1-9

2. Why do you think 16:1 refers back to the death of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3)?
3. What is the purpose of the garments, the bull and the two goats?

Read Leviticus 16:11-34 and mark where each element of the ritual happens on the diagram of the tabernacle on page 7.

4. What is 'atonement', and how is it achieved through what the LORD prescribes here?

5. What part does the priest play? What part do the people play? What part does the LORD play?

6. In Leviticus 17 the LORD highlights the significance of blood, declaring that it is blood that makes atonement. Why do you think this is?

Read Hebrews 9:24-28

7. How do Leviticus 16 and 17 help us understand what Jesus did on the cross?

8. Leviticus 16 shows God's grace toward sinners as well as his great desire to have his people in his presence. In light of this do you think your life reflects a real understanding of the danger of sin?

Pray together and thank God for the perfect atonement we receive through the blood of Jesus.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 18-20

7th OF JUNE

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 18-20

1. Have you ever made a conscious decision to be different from the people around you? What happened?

Leviticus 18-20 focuses on holy living before God in every area of life, with emphasis on sexual conduct in chapters 18 and 20. **Read Leviticus 18:1-5, 24-30; 19:1-2, 37; 20:7, 22-26**

2. What does the LORD command the Israelites and why?
3. Why do you think these chapters come at this point in the book?
4. Have a look through the commands in chapter 19. Which seem understandable and which seem strange?

5. Why do you think Leviticus 18 lists all those specific prohibitions instead of simply saying “Only have sexual relations with your husband/wife”?

6. Which laws in these chapters are the same in our society today, and which are different?

Read Romans 8:1-4

7. How do these verses help us understand Leviticus 18-20?

8. Now that we have been given the Holy Spirit, how does the holiness we have and the lives we live compare with Leviticus 18-20?

Pray together and praise God that he has fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law through Jesus’ sacrifice. Ask for his help to honour his will for us.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 21-25

14th OF JUNE

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 21-25

1. What examples have you seen of people who don't take God seriously?

Read Leviticus 21:1-8; 22:1-2, 9, 31-33.

2. Why does the LORD have higher standards for priests?

3. How does this impact the way you think about your own holiness and that of others' in the church?

Read Leviticus 23:1-4 and then briefly scan the rest of the chapter.

4. What do you think is the purpose of proclaiming and observing all these festivals?

5. Have a look at Mark 2:27-28, Colossians 2:13-17 and James 2:13-15. How does Leviticus 23 help us understand these verses?

Read Leviticus 24:10-16; 25:8-12, 25-28, 39-41

6. What do these verses tell us about what God thinks of justice and mercy?

7. How do we see these ideals fulfilled in Jesus? (See Romans 5:6-10).

8. How should these chapters impact the way we think about God's presence in our lives?

Pray together and praise God for his power and authority over all things in creation. Ask that he would help us to see his care and concern for these things, and that we would continually glorify him for it.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 26

21st OF JUNE

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 26

1. How important do you think obedience is in the Christian life?

Read Leviticus 26:1-13

2. Why do you think this section is framed by references to the 10 commandments and the exodus (26:1-2, 13)?
3. What is significant about verse 12?

Read Leviticus 26:14-35

4. What do these verses reveal about the LORD, and what do they hint about the Israelites?
5. Jesus did what the Israelites (and we) couldn't do: obey the LORD perfectly. How should we who have had our sin forgiven think of obedience to God? (See John 14:15-17, 21).

Read Leviticus 26:40-46

6. What covenant is the LORD speaking about? (See Genesis 17:1-8; 26:2-5; 28:10-15).

7. How have we seen the LORD's promises fulfilled so far throughout history? What about in the future? (See Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-3).

8. Passages like Leviticus 26 can sometimes be misused in the proclamation of a prosperity gospel. Why is this kind of teaching a misunderstanding of God's message?

Pray together and thank God for the perfect obedience of Jesus; for its effectiveness in fulfilling the Law, and its beauty as an example to us. By his Spirit, ask him to help us trust and obey his good teaching and instruction.

SERMON NOTES – LEVITICUS 27

28th OF JUNE

How have I been encouraged or challenged by God's word today?

HOME GROUP STUDY – LEVITICUS 27

1. Have you ever been involved with or witnessed a grand gesture of thankfulness? What happened?

Read Leviticus 27:1-25

2. What is the context for the dedications listed in these verses?
3. What does verse 8 reveal about this practice?
4. Do you think it's right for Christians to make vows when asking God for help?

Read Leviticus 27:26-34

5. There's a key difference between the actions described as "dedicate" and "devote". What do you think it is?

6. How is this chapter similar and different to Leviticus 1?

7. At WBC, how do we publicly give thanks to God? How could we do this even better?

8. Reflect back over the series in Leviticus and what it means to be in the presence of our holy God. Share something you've been encouraged by or challenged to change.

Pray together and thank God for all his goodness and grace in creation, salvation and sanctification. Ask that he would continually renew our sense of awe and wonder at his perfect holiness, and his call for us to be in his presence through Jesus.

