

Studying Leviticus

Finding Jesus

Week Four:
Ch 17-22

Chapters 17-18: Laws of Blood and Sexuality

- Set in order to separate the Israelites from certain practices of Canaanites and Egyptians and lead the people in holiness.
- The laws governing the place of sacrifices:
 - Enforce that all sacrifices, regardless of where it was killed, must be brought to the Lord before His altar, including any animals killed in an open field or outside the camp.
 - Leviticus 17:7- Moses specifically mentions the reasoning behind this law,
“So they must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves.”
 - Enforcement of sacrifices was intended to prevent ongoing idolatry.
- Laws against eating blood:
 - Animal blood was not to be used indiscriminately as the other nations did.
 - Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of flesh is in the blood, and I **have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls**, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life”.
 - The Lord himself granted the Israelites the ability to atone by the blood of an animal, saving the offerer from the deserved punishment of death.
 - The Lord set aside that blood for the unique role of atonement.
- Laws against unlawful sexual relations:
 - Emphasis was on avoiding the same conduct of the surrounding nations.
 - The Lord denounces relations like incest, bestiality, homosexuality and adultery.

*“You shall therefore **keep** my statutes and my rules; if a person **does** them, he shall **live** by them: I am the Lord.”*
Leviticus 18:5

- The Hebrew word for “to keep” is “*Shamar*”- to hedge about, to guard, protect
- To keep (or guard) the statutes, did not equate to actually doing them. And it was in the “doing” of them that one could find life by them.
- Living by them implied living in a sense of enjoying life under God’s good provision and fullness of life.

Jesus in Chapters 17-18

Each in respect to sacrifice location, restrictions from eating blood and sexual relations, His desire was for the Israelites to be set apart for Himself, not holding on to the practices of other nations.

- Jesus commands us to drink His blood to find life in John 6:53-57
 - As the Israelites put their trust in the sacrifices provided on the altar, we must put our trust in Him and His sacrifice.

- As the blood of the sacrifice, sanctified or made the altar, where God dwelt holy; we, ourselves, are made holy by His blood and sacrifice
- Marital faithfulness was important to God because it is a picture of God's covenant faithfulness
- He wanted Israel to be faithful in their relationships because God is faithful in His.
- Jesus is our bridegroom, a true and faithful husband, who demonstrated His great love for us by laying down His life.
 - Jesus gave us a new model of distinction of love, John 13:34-35
- Jesus also promises a fullness of life, John 10:10

Chapters 19-20: Laws of Moral Purity

- Moral purity was governed in rules surrounding keeping the sabbath, not having idols, not stealing, not lying, not swearing by name of God, not oppressing neighbors, not cursing the deaf or blind, not slandering others, not hating brother or taking vengeance, not bearing grudges, not interpreting omens/fortunes, having reverence for the sanctuary, loving neighbor as self, honoring parents/ old/ stranger/ sojourner and judging fairly.
- When the Lord reminds them to be holy as he is holy, through following these laws, He is showing us how we are to behave but also what He is like
- These laws are a reflection of who the Lord is and how He treats us; He is trustworthy, true, righteous judge, compassionate
- Most rules, if disobeyed, were punishable by death, with a few resulting in excommunication from the covenant nation. God was serious about His rules and the heavy penalty demonstrated that fact.

Jesus in Chapters 19-20

- Jesus showed us who God is and demonstrated His values through His life and death.
- Just as the laws revealed what God cared for, Jesus lived out by demonstrating them in how He treated others and how we are to treat others
- Christ depicted the holiness of God as the law attempted to do. He was the exact image of the invisible God for us, Col 1:15,19
- As He demonstrates to us the love and holiness of God, we are similarly called to reflect that same love and holiness to the world.

Chapters 21-22: Holiness of the Priests and Offerings

- Priests had strict qualifications for holiness, because they had the important task of representing God to man and man to God.
- Required the highest level of moral integrity and ritual holiness, with more stringent regulations of holiness
- Also strict regulations regarding the acceptable sacrificial offerings, animals with defects were not sufficient for sacrifice.
- Both priests and animals for sacrifice were to exemplify holiness and completeness.

- Priests with defects could not officiate, because the officiating priest represented God and His completeness but they were still permitted to eat of the holy/divine food from the altar, they were still the King's honored servants.

Jesus in Chapters 21-22

- Jesus was our perfect and spotless high priest AND He was our perfect and spotless sacrifice. (Hebrews 9)
- The sanctity of these roles described in these chapters, demonstrated Christ's worthy sacrifice.
- Jesus took our sin and deformities, so that we can be made whole and acceptable through faith in him.
- It is only through Jesus and His sacrifice that we can be able to be presented blameless before the presence of His glory one day. (Jude 1:24-25)
- For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:4-9)
- As Christians, in having a relationship with our Lord and Savior, we can savor not just these first fruits of a relationship on earth, but also find hope and assurance of His promise to make all things new.
- Jesus dealt with sin permanently and He has conquered death for us all who believe. (Revelation 21:2-5)

Homework: Please read Leviticus Ch 17-22 // Optional Devotional, Jesus in all of Leviticus Days 10-12

Week 4 - Discussion Questions

1. In Chapters 17-18, we covered the laws that the Lord instituted governing the place of sacrifices, against eating blood and against unlawful sexual relations. Why were these three practices specifically addressed through the institution of these laws? What did the Lord promise for those who "keep" and "do" these laws?
2. In these laws, God addresses marriage faithfulness, why do you think this is so important to Him? How does Jesus affirm the Lord's great love for us? As Christians, what is our model of distinction from the world?
3. Chapter 19 goes on to cover extensive laws governing moral purity which expand on the original ten commandments. These laws show us how "to be holy as He is holy". How do these laws of moral purity demonstrate God's values and His nature/ character?
4. Just as these laws revealed to us what God cared for, Jesus demonstrated this in how He lived and died for us. What are some ways that Jesus demonstrated these same values? How are we, as followers of Christ, called to respond to Jesus' example of love and holiness?
5. Chapters 21 and 22 describe the strict regulations of holiness for the priests and the offerings. Why were the priests and sacrifices under more stringent regulations of holiness?
6. How do the laws surrounding the holiness of the priests and sacrifices bring us to appreciate Christ's sacrifice? What does His perfect sacrifice mean for us today and in the future? How should this affect how we live?
7. Was there any new insight you got from this week's lesson or last week's reading?