

HEBREWS – LEVITICUS

Leviticus 1:1-17

April 16, 2023

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The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

³“If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. ⁴ He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. ⁵ Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁶ Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, ⁷ and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸ And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; ⁹ but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁰“If his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or goats, he shall bring a male without blemish, ¹¹ and he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. ¹² And he shall cut it into pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood that is on the fire on the altar, ¹³ but the entrails and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁴“If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or pigeons. ¹⁵ And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head and burn it on the

altar. Its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. ¹⁶ He shall remove its crop with its contents and cast it beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes. ¹⁷ He shall tear it open by its wings, but shall not sever it completely. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ¹

“This is the Word of God” – “Thanks be to God.”

It is one thing to preach through the book of Hebrews. The New Testament book provides insight in the sovereign position of Christ as Son of God, God the Son, as High Priest, and as Savior. The imagery is clear. The message is hopeful and yet strong. In fact, many sermons have been preached from the book of Hebrews, especially when it comes to chapter 11.

But today we step back to an Old Testament book. Of all the books in the Old Testament, this one is likely one that you have not heard preached through much...if at all. It is one of the books that faithful Christians get stuck at when seeking to read the entire Bible through. It is, as Albert Mohler has stated, “Most have not heard certainly any sermon series or expository series in this book. Most preachers, at least in Christian history, would’ve been quite scared of this book.”²

What I just read to begin today’s time of study and worship through preaching is something that some parents likely would rather their children not have to hear. This is a more current reality and not true for all. As I read this some of you cringe at the possible conversations over the lunch table (if you still have an appetite) and are thinking that perhaps we should have had a rating on today’s sermon.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Le 1:1–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² Mohler, Albert, Leviticus 1:1-2, <https://albertmohler.com/2021/08/15/leviticus-11-2>

Nonetheless, we step back into the Old Testament into a descriptive narrative here that to those who desire a sanitized Christianity feels almost cultlike.

So, why do this? Why go here?

Because if we ignore Leviticus while studying Hebrews, we will never get the fullness of what God **has** revealed and **is** revealing. Once we make the connections, in the messiness that is the Jewish sacrificial system (created and ordained by God) we will be able to better grasp the horrendousness of our sin that resulted in a horrible, bloody execution as payment that can never fully be understood with passion play reenactments.

This IS the Word of God...and we must not cut and paste the stories that seem palatable, or we will find ourselves guilty of neutering the good news so that it is nothing more than...news.

THE GOD OF LAW

The Old Testament begins with five books historically called “The books of the law” or “the books of Moses.” It is the Torah. These books of law are essential for the people of God. They reveal the sovereignty and holiness of God, the love for his people, the calling of his own, the rescue, the redemption, the guidelines, for living, the boundaries for safety, the protection from enemies, and the expectation of the faithful, and more.

We have Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

This book of Leviticus is in the center of the five. Genesis – the beginning and the perfection of creation. Then the fall. The covenant with Abraham and his seed, all the nations would be blessed by God. Sacrifices are offered. Worship is given. The law is not yet given. There are pieces being put together by God.

Exodus—the story of slavery, punishment, dehumanizing oppression, and rescue. The call of Moses. The redemption of a people. The covenant people. The Red Sea. The wilderness. The idolatry and the giving of the law. The guard rails are now up and the Father draws his people to himself. He provides. He protects. He leads.

Then Leviticus. The center book of the law. What’s the theme of this book?

Leviticus 19:2b

You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.³

Then, there’s Numbers and Deuteronomy. Two books that you cannot grasp without Leviticus.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

We can get lost in the details of how the sacrifices were to be done and what animals were to be used. Don’t misunderstand me, those are vital and essential. They’re important. But before we get to that...look at verses one and two again.

Leviticus 1:1-2

The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

“The Lord called” – not a small statement. During this era of the portable tabernacle—the tent of worship the Israelites were instructed to build and take with them as they journeyed through the wilderness on their way to the promised land, the formality of entering the presence of God is not lost.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Le 19:2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

God is not presenting himself as the buddy of the people, the fun uncle, the good neighbor, or some other such imagery that often gets promoted, or at least imagined by many today.

The one, true God, creator of all that ever was, ever is, and ever will be, the one who is sovereign over all, not constrained by time, natural law, or other such things...**SPEAKS**.

Now, duh, of course God can speak, we say. We, who most likely have never heard God audibly. Yet, we say this. We say it because we have been told it is true, but not just by our grandma, by the Word of God.

Now, I realize that believing the Bible is a faith-step but take it with me here.

God calls Moses – and who is Moses? Moses is God’s chosen redeemer. He is not perfect, but he is a redeemer. He is chosen by God, even though his resume is less than stellar. He tries to back out, but God is persistent and eliminates his excuses for not being faithful. The man of God is called and placed above the people as God’s mediator, but not as a mediator in a dispute or in a courtroom, but as the sovereignly chosen mediator between God and his own people. This is not a role of middle-ground between two equal parties. This is an ambassadorship of sorts. And it is a precursor to the ultimate Redeemer. The one who is perfect. The one who has an exquisite resume. The one who would come and not just be mediator, but intercessor, priest, prophet, king, and Messiah.

But don’t miss what’s happening in these verses here.

The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting,

The Lord speaks. Why? Because he has something to say. God is the only one who has never minced words. He’s never said the wrong thing. He has never had to apologize. He may be misunderstood, but not because he wasn’t speaking clearly.

He speaks.

Why? Because he loves.

He spoke to Moses because he called and loved Moses. He spoke to Moses because he had a word for his children. Moses was positioned in a role he did not run for, was not voted into, and did not study to become. He was the mediator of God to his children, to his people and while Moses was not perfect, the one who spoke to him was, and is.

Through Moses, God revealed his holiness to his people. He revealed his instructions, his expectations, his guidelines, his plans.

The message of God is not a secret. Why? Because God speaks. Still.

THE GOD OF DETAILS

The remainder of chapter one is full of details regarding ritual and instructions on what must be done to please God in worship.

In today's church culture, casualness has led many to ignore ritual. Now, I get it, ritual for ritual's sake is useless for many. Even in Baptist churches, rituals are often developed with no understanding of why things are done and no explanation of what they mean. And...over time, they become just "how we do things" but no one knows why.

What happens when the order of worship, the rituals **with** meaning, the details of orderly worship are abandoned? We end up with Lord's Day gatherings that become more man-based rather than God-centered.

Do you know what a technical rider is? It's a form given by bands to venues related to what they need and require regarding meals, set up, sound systems, hotels, and other such things. Years ago, Van Halen required a bowl of M&M's in their green room, but the rider said that all the brown M&M's must be removed. That's tedious work. Now it could

be just a joke from prima donnas, but it's been said that they used that to test the venue. For if they ignored the M&M requirement, they could not be confident the other, more important things were done.

That's a crude illustration and in no way is Van Halen on the same level as Moses and this instruction to God's people, but as we continue through this book and through the study in the book of Hebrews, hear this – the God of all creation, of everything in the cosmos, the one who spoke it all into existence, who is not bound by laws or science (for he created them) who rescued his people from slavery, gave detailed instructions of how to worship him in the desert and in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, knows...YOU. Because you are a detail. A very important detail to him. Thus, his great love is revealed in his Word, his spoken word given to his children thousands of years ago, recorded for us today. This word is true. It is holy. It continues to speak and while the people of God in Leviticus heard from him through Moses, we know his word through the Son, the ultimate Word.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS IS SPEAKING TODAY

Are you hearing God? What he is saying to the church? To you? For some, he is calling us back to a walk with him that leads to holiness and righteousness. For others, it is a call to know him, to surrender, to come to him, repenting of sin, abandoning self, and experiencing salvation.

The God of Leviticus is the God of Hebrews is the God of right now. And he speaks today. Are you listening? Or...just hearing?