

BIB103 OT1: Creation and Covenants

Unit 4a How to Be Holy

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Leviticus. How to be holy is really what Leviticus is all about. In fact, you could sum up the Book of Leviticus with God's repeated command, "Be holy as I am holy." Leviticus is a book of laws, but it's also a book of worship. Worship is not just a service or the way we sing songs or listen to messages on a Sunday morning. It's the act of giving reverence and adoration to something. For those of us who are believers, that is giving that to God and God alone. It can and should be done in a 24/7 basis. This book is filled with details on how the people of God should live, how they should eat, how they should sacrifice, how they should celebrate, and so much more.

Leviticus is the third book in the Pentateuch, which is the five books of the Bible, first five books of Moses, as we say, first five books of the Bible, and picks up where Exodus leaves off. The children of Israel had just erected a tabernacle at Mount Sinai and now the Lord is relaying specific laws through Moses to his people on what they should do and how they should be living their lives. There's very little narrative in the Book of Leviticus, but there's a few important things that take place, such as Aaron's ordination and the deaths of Aaron's sons. The story of Israel's journey to the Promised Land picks back up in the Book of Numbers, which we'll be covering at a later time.

So who wrote this book? The content of Leviticus relates directly to Exodus, providing evidence that the same hand that penned the one book penned the other book. The arguments that support Moses' writing of Exodus also uphold Moses' authorship of Leviticus. Additionally, we find more than 50 occasions where the text says something like this: "The Lord spoke to Moses." A few examples of that would be Leviticus 1:1, Leviticus 4:1, Leviticus 5:14, and Leviticus 6:1. The New Testament also refers to Moses as the author of passages from Leviticus in Matthew 18:4, Luke 2:22, and Hebrews 8:5.

Now, interestingly, I want to take some time to look at the word Leviticus. It comes from the tribe of Levi whose members were set aside by the Lord to be his priests and worship leaders. As a title, the word is translated from the Septuagint, meaning pertaining to the Levites. And although the tribe, as such as it emphasized really throughout the book, the priestly subject matter makes this title very appropriate for this book. Its content was originally meant to instruct the new nation on how Israel should be leading or participating in proper worship as well as right living, so that they might truly reflect the character of their divine king Yahweh, or God, as we would know him as.

So Leviticus is really composed of two different genres. There's a narrative history as well as the law. The setting of Leviticus seems to mainly appear to take place around the Mount Sinai region. And the key personalities of Leviticus include Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And there's even a

themed verse in Leviticus, even though it's not really a narrative. As I mentioned earlier about being holy, you'll see that in Leviticus 20 and 26 in particular where the Bible says this: "Thus, you are to be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy, and I've set you apart from the peoples to be mine." We see how God took and again is reemphasizing his people Israel being his select and chosen ones that he had a great plan that he wanted to work through.

We also see some very key words here. They're listed a number of times. And let's talk a little bit about those. The word offering is by far the most frequently mentioned word. It's mentioned 293 times in this book. Priest is right behind it by a little bit at 196 times, I guess 100 times behind it. Holy is listed 96 times, which I would have assumed was higher than that. So that's interesting when you look at how many times priest and how many times offering is referenced in relationship to holy. Blood is listed 88 times. And then the two other most often mentioned words are atonement at 51 times and sacrifice at 46 times.

Now, this book was written to draw the Israelites to an understanding of the infinite holiness of God and that he desires them to act in a holy manner toward himself. In doing this, God gives them many instructions to carry out. It describes Moses giving procedural instructions for the Israelites, especially to the Levitical priests, about how they're to carry out offerings, how they're to carry out ceremonies and even celebrations. The word holy is mentioned more times in Leviticus than at any other book of the Bible. That's interesting.

So there seems to be two sections mainly to this book. The first is speaking about the basis of the fellowship of sacrifice. It goes from chapter 1 through chapter 17, and it really has a God word focus to it. It was encouraging the nation of Israel on how they could have closer access to God and deals with the worship that they had in the tabernacle. So let's break that down a little bit more. We're looking at chapter 1 through chapter 17. So let's kind of bring it in a little bit.

So from chapter 1 to chapter 7, you'll hear about sacrifice and offerings and how they're laid out for priests and individuals in very minute detail. These passages also describe how to use the altar for the sacrifices and the offerings to God. It's also a similar focus when you think of big themes on these chapters. You'll hear the concepts of substitution and absolution that are mentioned. Maybe not by word, but you'll see the concepts of it on these first seven chapters.

Then we go to chapters 8 through 10. Moses describes the instructions for the Levitical priesthood. Since Israel is to be a kingdom of priests, and that's in Exodus 19:6, he does this from the doorway of his

tent. He does the actual teaching of this. Moses consecrates his brother Aaron and his sons who are the priests. And it focuses again on the bigger themes of consecration and on mediation.

And then we go to chapters 11 through chapter 15. Moses teaches the importance and procedure for things that are unclean. And there is a big list there. It includes things like food and diseases, animals, insects, dead bodies, birth, cleaning, and many others. God's purpose in all of this is to protect his people from illness and diseases that come from these different sources. Again, the bigger theme focus or the overriding you'll see is focused on separation as well as on sanctification.

And then we look at chapters 16 to 27. And this will end the first section of what we would consider the whole of the Book of Leviticus. Moses here in chapters 16 and 17 gets instruction about the Day of Atonement. This was the day out of the year that the high priest cleansed and prepared himself ceremonially to meet with God. This ceremony only took place once a year and the high priest entered the holy of holies and he offered his sacrifice to God for the sins on behalf of the entire nation of Israel. And again, the big picture concepts here are focuses around reconciliation and on propitiation.

So the second section that we're going to look at when it comes to the big chunks of Leviticus is chapter 18 through chapter 27. And we see now a moving from a God word focus more to a man word focus. The activity here is how they can get farther from sin and it deals with the obedient love in the world in which they lived. So chapters 18 through 27 pertained to the laws that then applied generally for living a holy life. There are many laws, including laws of sexual immorality, idolatry, and laws more on the priestly side of things. There's religious festivals and celebrations, how the Sabbath year is supposed to be lived out, and the year of jubilee as well. It's further broken down in chapters 19 and 20 with a focus on holy people, chapters 21 and 22 on the holy priests, chapters 23 and 24 on the holy feasts, and chapters 25 through 27 on the holy land.

So you have to ask yourself with all these details and all these breakdowns of new aspects of the laws that were there, why is Leviticus then so important? See, the Book of Leviticus was the first book studied by a Jewish child, yet it's often among the last books of the Bible that's studied by a Christian, isn't it? Today's readers are often put off by the book's lists of laws regarding diet, sacrifice, and social behavior. But within these highly detailed directives, we discover his holiness and how that links us to separateness and distinction and utter otherness of God. And we learn how sin can devastate humanity's relationship with their Creator. God established the sacrificial system so that his covenant people might enjoy his fellowship through worship. And it also allowed for repentance and renewal.

And you'll see again the strain of the gospel. You'll see how God set up this situation and these circumstances so that we could begin reflecting on the gift that we'd be given now through the atonement through a sacrificial animal and ultimately through his Son dying on the cross for our sins. When an Israelite worshipper laid his hand on the animal victims, he identified himself with the animal as his substitute. This accomplished a symbolic transfer of his sin and a legal transfer of his guilt to this animal victim. God then accepted the slaughter or death of this animal as a ransom payment for sin, which caused it. Many years after Moses wrote Leviticus, Jesus came to offer himself as the ultimate sacrifice, holy and perfect, once for all fulfilling the law and rendering future animal sacrifices unnecessary and void. Hebrews 10:10. It's just one of those passages that reminds us of that.

So the overall message of Leviticus, as we talked about, a theme of holiness, but you see certainly the concept of sanctification. The book communicates that receiving God's forgiveness and acceptance should be followed by holy living and spiritual growth. Now that Israel had been redeemed by God, they were to be purified into a people worthy of that God. "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy." Remember Leviticus 19:2. In Leviticus, we learn that God loves to be approached, but we must do it on his terms. Now, as we pull back and we think of Leviticus in terms of the greater concept of the whole of Scripture, there's a few things I'd like to just share with you about that. See, Leviticus is about holiness, being set apart or separate. But God's holiness and the holiness he expects of his people needs to be noticed as well. So Exodus displays God's holiness on a cosmic scale: sending plagues on Egypt, parting the Red Sea, etc. Leviticus shows us the holiness of God in finer detail. God spells out his expectations for his priests and people so that the congregation can appropriately worship and dwell with him.

I think of it when I was a young child and I would go outside and I had gotten a gift one time of a magnifying glass. And you go out and you look at bugs and you look at leaves through your regular eye and you're in awe of the creation. But when you can take a magnifying glass and look through a magnifying glass at insects or leaves and you see the intricate details, you see the veins, so to speak, in the leaves that are there, you see the fine details of the legs that are on the insects that you're looking at or other things. And that's kind of what Leviticus is. It's taking a magnifying glass, as you look at the whole Scripture, to some of these finer details in relation to God's holiness instead of that kind of bigger perspective that we can only see through our human eyes. The call to holiness in Leviticus resounds throughout the Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments. Now, parts of the Levitical law are fulfilled with Jesus Christ, such as distinctions between clean and unclean foods, Mark 7:18-19, but the

call to holiness still stands. Peter even cites Leviticus when he encourages us to be holy in all of our behavior (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Now, I want to take some time to really get into kind of the nitty-gritty of Leviticus and look at some of the specifics that are there. And I think it will be fascinating when you see the breadth and the depth of some of the sacrifices and the festivals and celebrations that are covered. Now, it's interesting to know. We've already talked about that sacrificial animal. There were only five sacrificial animals that were able to be used when it came to these sacrifices themselves. Now, remember, these sacrifices had to be animals that were perfect. Now, the concept of perfect being they couldn't have spots and blemishes. They couldn't have broken bones. They couldn't in any way not look normal or actually superb, grade A rating, so to speak, in their presentation. The animals that could be used were a bullock or an ox. We probably know the ox concept better than we do the bullock. The goat. A sheep or a lamb. A turtledove or a pigeon. Interestingly, it's often been asked, "Well, why the different variations of animals?" Now, remember, different people came from different financial backgrounds, so their ability to buy certain sacrificial animals was very limited to some and not limited at all with others. So a poor family even can bring a dove or a turtledove, a cheaper one, whereas a rich family could easily bring, for instance, the biggest animal, an ox there. And of course, the most common was the sheep. That's what we frequently hear referenced in the Scriptures and that's what Jesus Christ himself has referred to.

Now, there were five different offerings and their types that we want to talk about. There were three sweet savor offerings. Now, these all spoke of Christ's perfections and what the cross meant to God. Christ making good our lack of devotedness to the Father's will. So what are those three? The first one is found in Leviticus 1:1-17 as well as Leviticus 6:8-13. And those deal with the whole burnt offering. Now, an act of general worship is what this was. The entire animal was consumed. Mutilation was taking place. Complete destruction. Bones were out of joint. I mean, this animal was crushed, so to speak. Then it's tied down and consumed with fire on the altar. The offer received nothing. The priest received the skin. The cross, through the eyes of God in submission to the Father's will, is that concept of voluntary that we look at as kind of a keyword here. So that's the whole burnt offering.

The second one we see is in Leviticus 2:1-16 and jump again over to Leviticus 6:14-23. And this is a grain offering. Now, it was a fine flour which was the chief ingredient, and it speaks of the evenness and balance of character of Christ. No quality in excess. It was always connected to a blood sacrifice and it equaled Christ's perfect life is not to be isolated or set aside from the sacrificial death. And that's in

Leviticus 9:4 and Leviticus 9:17, and in Leviticus 14:21 and Leviticus 23:18. And it could be no leaven in this offering.

The third offering was the peace offering in Leviticus 3:1-17 and then again in Leviticus 7:11-36. Now, the offer here is shared in a meal or fellowship with God. The key phrase to think of here with the peace offering was sacrifice of thanksgiving. And there's even a New Testament reference to that in Romans 5:1. These three, the whole burnt offering where you get the whole concept, the voluntary of giving it all, the meal offering which was combined with the whole offering but was a grain offering, and then the peace offering which didn't necessarily incorporate the other two, but again, it was more one of a fellowship offering that was there.

There was two other offerings and they were considered non-sweet savor offerings. Now, Christ here is making good on our lack of obedience in bearing the penalty of sin for us. They speak of what the cross means to us. Note that there's nine different occurrences of the words "It shall be forgiven" in this one. You'll see it in Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35, and then all the way into Leviticus 5:10, 13, 16, and Leviticus 5:18. And one other reference would be Leviticus 6:7. There was two, as I mentioned. The first being the sin offerings specifically listed in Leviticus 4:1 through Leviticus 5:13 and Leviticus 6:24-30. Now, these were for sins of ignorance, defiling principles of sin, root principles of sin, sinners by nature. Emphasis here was on blood that was sprinkled on the veil and Christ being the guilt bearer, becoming sin for us. That's sin offering. And again, the concept there was things that people did inadvertently or did out of more foolishness or simplicity. Then there was the second which was the trespass offering, Leviticus 5:14 through Leviticus 6:7, and then Leviticus 7:1-10. And this was a payment for the damage that was caused by sin, the acts and fruits of sin. And it was about atonement and it was about restitution. A fifth part added equaled always a penalty that was connected to sin. Christ bore my debt, my hell. Christ brings much more than that. In Romans 5:14-21, we see that. So those were the five different offerings that we see offered and spelled out for us in the Book of Leviticus.

There also is the laws that we see there as it relates to the priesthood. Remember again the word Levite, Leviticus, talking a lot about their responsibilities as we also talked about the details of the obedience, the offerings, the ceremonies and the celebrations. Now, who were the priests? They were instruments that were used by God and how they should be interactive with the people but also interactive with God. They were oftentimes considered mediators of a sort. In chapters 8 through 10 in particular, you see how they're instruments of approach. There must not only be a sacrifice as in chapters 1 to 7, but a priest needs to mediate. And if you think about that, Christ is both the sacrifice and the priest. We no

longer need two separate. We have one in Christ. Hebrews 10:19-21 tell us about that. Authority was specifically given in this situation to Aaron's sons. Remember how we talked about Moses and him praying over and sanctifying them and putting them in this position? The consecration of that is in Leviticus 8:22-28. You'll see it's listed there. And that's really to fill the hands with the sacrifice, and they would take that and be again that go-between for the Israelite or Hebrew to take the offering and process it the way that God had intended.

So what was the process involved for a Levite or a priest that had to come and deal with these offerings? First of all, they had to have a calling on them. They were called to be a Levite or they were called to be a priest. There had to be a cleansing and there was a process for that. And then there had to be specific clothing that they wore because, again, it was instrumental as well as it painted a picture for them of different aspects of the whole ceremony. The blood of consecration on the ear, you'll see that in Leviticus, it marks the hearing of those commandments. And then on the thumb, it speaks of the duty and service. And then one we don't hear a lot about is actually on the toe, and that speaks of one's walk. So hearing, doing, and walking.

You also see that God says, "Let me have a consecrated priest and then we can have worship." So it's so important that that consecration takes place first before the worship takes place. And I think that's a great challenge for us today as believers. It's Sunday morning where you roll out of bed last minute, you jump up, you go, and you just worship. You sing a few songs. You hear the message and go on your way. How much heart preparation do we put in corporate worship? How much heart preparation do we put in personal worship? When we open up the Scriptures, when we sing to ourselves praises to God, when we do those different elements of worship, do we really consider the heart preparedness? And I think this is a good reminder that that is important to God.

So you did see as a result of talking about these steps taken so that they would be prepared, there was specific laws of purity that were there. And that was really the conditions for their ability to approach. And those are found in chapters 11 through chapter 22. And there ought to be a physical cleansing, which we mentioned, and a ceremonial cleansing. And that was so they could make a difference between the unclean and the clean (Leviticus 11:47) and to separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness (Leviticus 15:31). Now, chapter 11 speaks specifically about the foods. And then chapters 12 through 20, the majority of this section deals with cleanliness. It deals with sanitation. And it deals with customs.

Now, interestingly, think about some of those. And I want to take a side note for a minute here to talk about leprosy because Leviticus 13 and 14, in the midst of all this, talks about leprosy and also the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. So they're all kind of entangled, so to speak, or woven in here. And God has a purpose in that. Now, what was leprosy? Leprosy was an illustration of sin. We see that mentioned on more than one occasion. Leprosy, like sin, separated us from the pure and the clean. Those that had the disease of leprosy had to announce themselves ahead of time before they got to groups of people. It was a very contagious disease, so there had to be a separation physically between them and the other person. The sinner is unfit for heaven as the leper was unfit for the community in which he lived and was quarantined out, just like we were quarantined from God aside from him saving us, removing our leprosy or our "sin" so that we could have a relationship with him.

So talking about leprosy in particular, it's interesting the details of it. The spot usually started as what it was on the skin, and it would spread and contaminate the whole body. In Bible times, it was incurable by any human wisdom or power. And ultimately, the end was always death for somebody that had leprosy. The Bible speaks not of healing but of cleansing. Psalm 51:7. "Purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean." The interpretation is found in the leper's cleansing ceremony in Leviticus 14. The cleansed leper brought two birds to the priest. One was killed over an open bowl. The second live bird is dipped into the blood and released and passes into the heavens, bearing the marks of the sacrifice, which was a picture of Christ passing into the heavens and bearing the marks of death. Then the hyssop attached to the seeder's stick is dipped into the blood and splattered on the leper (Leviticus 14:1-7). David is saying "I'm a leper." Otherwise, without that, we don't get the complete picture. And he was trying to say "Cleanse me just like the leper was cleansing. I need to be cleansed" is what David was talking about in Psalm 51. In Leviticus 13, 14, and 15, after we talk about the leper, we talk about the great Day of Atonement which specifically focuses a lot of that in chapter 16. Chapters 13 and 14, the leper is outside of camp and he's helpless. Chapter 15 is a graphic picture of the sinner. The flesh can send nothing forth that is good (Ezekiel 36:18 and Romans 7:18).

But then the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. The holy of holies, the high priest functions in this role again alone. There was no help whatsoever that could be given. If he falls or fails, there was no backup. You remove the high priestly garments that he had and then he dresses in a simple, clean linen robe, even more plain than what a priest would wear. The people's goat is what it was referred to, or he was during this time. And an equal carrying away the sin, heard from no more, the scapegoat we might be able to understand a little bit better. The Lord's goat killed. Blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. So the

high priest, one time a year, Day of Atonement, would go out and get this goat, this scapegoat. He would be sacrificed. The sacrificial blood would be brought in and actually put in the holy of holies on the furniture that was there and splattered around that area of the holy of holies. Why? Because he was the scapegoat. It was done for the entire nation of Israel.

An interesting note is that when the high priest would go in there, there was two additional things that were a part of that just simple linen robe or garment that he wore. Number one, in the hem of that garment was tied on little bells or at least metal that would cling against each other, so that you could hear the priest moving. Secondly, he went in with a rope that was tied around his ankle. If the priest went in there and he was not in a position where he had done all that he was told to do, he would be stricken or killed. And the only way that could get him out of there was when they didn't hear him moving anymore, they'd give a tug on the rope. If he moved, then they knew that he was just being perhaps prostrated before the Lord of the holy of holies. But if they'd gotten a response, then literally they would have to drag out the high priest knowing that God had stricken him, killed him because he was not in the place that he should be to represent the entire nation of Israel. It shows you the importance and the severity in which God looked at it and also reminds us again of his holiness and his demands in relationship to that.

As we continue on, we kind of take that aside. Let's kind of go back to what we were talking about with the priests and the festivals and the purity and so on, because in chapters 21 and 22, it talks about the purity of the priests and the offerings. Now, there were laws of seven Levitical feasts and they were occasions now to approach (chapter 23 and chapter 24). These Old Testament feasts are a whole system of tights arranged chronologically to set forth a New Testament history of redemption. The first one that we see is the Passover. And you can see notes about this in Exodus 12. Really quickly, that was the time when the death angel crossed over all of Egypt, the Israelites were captive prisoners at the time, and their only way to escape death of their firstborn child, firstborn animal in their home, was that they took and had a sacrifice, that they took the blood of that sacrifice and put it around the doorposts of their home, and that would have the death angel pass over them, which established this feast. When did Christ die? They said not on a feast day, lest there would be an uprising of the people (Matthew 26:5, Mark 14:2, and 1 Corinthians 5:7). I find that quite interesting that even when Christ was about to die, how their philosophy or purpose was tied back into the Old Testament, which they grabbed on to but completely missed that right in front of them was the ultimate sacrifice for their sin.

We see a second feast that's listed here of the seven Levitical feasts, and that's the one of Unleavened Bread. Now, leaven equaled sin (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). It was inseparable from the Passover (Luke 22:1). They're spoken of together. Seven days equal a whole period of time all the days of our life. That was the concept that was being taught. And what this was, was purging up the old leaven. Sweep your houses, they talked about it. Clean your houses. Get rid of all the old and understand that a redeemed people is to be a holy people. Remember our key verse again. "Be holy" is based on a redemption found in 1 Peter 1:15-19. Now, on their journey to Canaan rest, we hear this: "I have a Christ that satisfies, since I have been redeemed to do his will, my highest prize, since I have been redeemed." As they would go out and have this Feast of Unleavened Bread, it was a time for them to understand that redemption that could only take place as the leaven was taken care of would be their Messiah, or as we know him, Christ who would come.

There's a third Levitical feast that we will talk about called The First Fruits. In Leviticus 23:11, we see that on the morrow, after the Sabbath, that would be, in the Old Testament, Sunday, Passover can be any day of the week, always the 14th of Nisan, but the First Fruits will always be on the first day of the week which is Sunday. 1 Corinthians 15:20-33 tells us about that. Now, the barley harvest was the out of the common field harvest. The first fruits belonged to God. And it was interesting that we want to make a statement here that the remaining crop would be good, that is, that the first, the rest is on the way is the concept. This is the first, but the rest is on the way. How do we know our resurrection is valid? Because of Lazarus' resurrection? No. Christ was good and the rest of the field will be good. The sample was gathered into the treasury of heaven. There was that concept of the sheaf of barley that was loosely tied together. The fitting picture of the resurrection. Jesus, again, the first fruits. He was the one that came. He's the one that gave the sacrifice that made all of us who have accepted his gift of salvation to be a part of that harvest that was taking place. What a beautiful picture that is. It's interesting to note that Christ died at the right moment. He died at the Passover and he also rose at the right moment. He rose at the Feast of First Fruits.

The fourth Levitical feast is the feast of the Pentecost, sometimes called the Feast of Weeks as well. In Acts 2:1, we see the Holy Spirit came at the right moment. This is the historic designation that Luke points out. This is the only reason it happened when it did. In Leviticus 23:15-16, we see seven Sabbaths even into the next day which equals Sunday. Another harvest, the First Fruits also happen on that Sunday, and that was wheat. Now, again, these weren't loosely tied with a string but actually baked into two wave loaves, they called them. And really which is the description of the church: that we're not

loosely strung together but united into one loaf with heaven. Now, we're not going to get into the whole concept in Leviticus, but that's where a lot of times the argument of universal gets local. There is that universal kingdom of God, but God working in that local church of people. In verse 22 [Leviticus 23:22], we see that Acts 2 was the only earnest or first fruits of a vast harvest. That was the beginning of it all as God established his church in the New Testament.

Now, all these four feasts typify events that have all passed: death of Christ and holiness, resurrection of the church. The next one is a long interval of time before it takes place. And the last three feasts, they all depict eschatological time or time in the future, and it happens in rapid fire succession. The first one of that being the Feast of Trumpets, and that was on the seventh month, the first day. Now, we're not equating this, so we understand, to our calendar we currently use. This would have been in relationship to the Hebrew calendar. And there are people who celebrate these, the certain Jewish factors or pure Jews as they would call themselves, those that aren't messianic Jews or haven't come to a relationship with Christ that still practice these today, so that you put them into...you'll see them in our calendar, but they're established at a time period with their calendar that was designed back in their day and age. So when I say seventh month, first day, you can't think of this as July 1st because, again, it's not in our calendar year. The seventh month of the religious year is what it was. But the first month of the civil calendar, which was another calendar they used, and what it does is it introduces a new era or a new dispensation. The trumpets called to God's people, summon them to a holy convocation. For the church, this meant that it was the rapture to our holy convocation (Revelation 4:1, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16). For Israel, it was a call to the great tribulation nine days before her national repentance and atonement to awaken or to prepare (Joel 2:1).

So that's the first feast that would have been in the future for the Israelites. The second was the Day of Atonement. We've already heard about that, but let's hear a little bit more about how that was as a feast now. And that would have taken place in the seventh month, the 10th day. Seventh month, first day was the last one. Seventh month, 10th day. And that was Israel's national repentance time. It was the full atonement of all sins and transgressions. On that day alone, the holiest was open for the high priest to enter, which we've talked about. Two goats, remember? We talked about that earlier. Life was given up at the altar. You had a living goat survived to carry away all the sin and uncleanness to some unknown land, never to be seen from anymore. That was that scapegoat where we get the word scapegoat from. All services and tasks of the tabernacle were to be done by the high priest alone on that day. Not assisted, not accompanied. If he faltered or was in sin, salvation was in jeopardy. Remember

again, no backup. That's all they had. The high priest removed all those high priestly garments (we've talked more about that) and looked more like a servant (Daniel 9:24-27). We'll mention a little bit about that feast of the Day of Atonement or surrounding that feast that was there.

Then we see the Feast of Tabernacles. Now, this was the final feast. It was in the seventh month and the 15th day. It was for a memorial and it was also prophetic. It comes after Israel's sins had been removed. Deuteronomy 16:13-15 says that it comes after the harvest at the end of the age, and a vintage or the winepress of the wrath of God. So we see two things: the harvest and the vintage. The end of the age and the winepress of the wrath of God. In Leviticus 23:39, we see that it's the longest feast. The eighth day equals a new beginning. And it speaks of an eternal rest that looks back on their deliverance from Egypt and dwelling in tents or the Lord's Table is also a part of that, which you think about that for just a moment, as a Christian, that's why although death can be difficult because that person is no longer a part of our life, it's also a time of celebration not only of the life that they lived, but a celebration that we will see them again. We are separated for a time but not for eternity.

And there was a full cycle when this was taking place because the Passover and the Tabernacles, there was a tie-in to those: Zechariah 14:16-21 and Revelation 21:3. Now, the law required that all adult males were to travel to the central altar to observe these three feasts (Deuteronomy 16:16, Exodus 23:14-17, and Exodus 34:22-23). Those would be the Passover, also called Unleavened Bread; the Pentecost, which is also called the Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvests, or Feast of First Fruits of the wheat harvest; or the Feast of Tabernacles, which is also called the Feast of the End Gathering.

So the question that I ask as you go through a book like this is how do we apply all this? How does it function and apply to me? And we've given a couple of applications as we've gone through this study, but the theme of holiness extends to the church. And the New Testament, 1 Peter 1:15-16 actually references Leviticus 19:2 when it says this: "Like the holy one who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior. Because it is written, you shall be holy." Why? "For I am holy." Those who are redeemed by the mercies of God offer different sacrifices today. They offer themselves (Romans 12:1). Like Christ or God did with the Israelites, God has redeemed and consecrated Christians. Jesus offered himself as the perfect sacrifice on our behalf, taking the punishment that we deserved so that we might be forgiven. Those who place their trust in Jesus' atoning act become God's children saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“If you’re his child and he wants you to reflect his character, he is sanctifying you much like he did the nation of Israel. Does your life echo his will? In what ways are you growing to be more like Christ?” are questions for us to consider and ponder as we wrap up this topic of the Book of Leviticus and the intricacies and yet the amazing focus that it has, both to be referred to and enjoyed from the historical perspective to understand the Israelites’ culture better and their laws and celebrations and festivals, as well as for us as believers to ask ourselves, “How am I being the holy individual that God has called me to be?”