

SERIES OVERVIEW

The
Holiness
of God

st bart's

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overview

The book of Leviticus flows immediately from the events of the preceding book, Exodus, in which God had rescued his people out of slavery in Egypt. Almost as soon as God's people had entered into a covenant relationship with God at Mt Sinai, they spectacularly rebelled, worshipping a golden calf. Israel's rebellion not only damaged their relationship with God, but also demonstrated the gulf between their sin and his holiness. The Lord longed to dwell amidst his people within the Tabernacle (the "tent of meeting"), but not even Moses could enter: the Lord calling to Moses *from the tent* (i.e., Moses couldn't go in!). That's the dilemma with which Leviticus begins!

How can a holy God dwell with an unholy people?

Leviticus *describes* how God graciously paved a way for his people to dwell in his presence, and points to how that would be ultimately fulfilled in Christ. Holiness is not only God's character, but a call for his people that can only be realised in him.

To the modern ear, many of the laws, rituals, purity demands, and sacrifices described in Leviticus can seem strange and unfamiliar—perhaps even out of place in light of the Gospel. But actually, Leviticus instructs us on the nature of atonement and how God would ultimately restore sinners to holiness through his costly provision for forgiveness. Or as one commentator puts it, the law in Leviticus:

...is like the blueprints of a building: once the building is finished, its blueprints are no longer needed, but they are still useful for understanding the finished product. When we study these "blueprints" of atonement, we explore the riches of what Christ came to fulfill.¹

In this six-part series, we'll explore: how God graciously provided a way for his unholy people to dwell with him; the call on God's people to live holy lives; and how God would ultimately provide a way in order that we might dwell with him forever.

¹ See Michael LeFebvre "Leviticus: A 12-Week Study", p.8.

Outline

Week 1	<i>Approaching a Holy God</i>	Leviticus 1-7 (Focus: 1:1-9)
Week 2	<i>A Holy Priesthood</i>	Leviticus 8-10 (Focus: 9:22-10:3)
Week 3	<i>Set Apart to be Holy</i>	Leviticus 11-15 (Focus 11:41-47)
Week 4	<i>The Day of Atonement</i>	Leviticus 16:1-34
Week 5	<i>A Call to Holy Living</i>	Leviticus 17-20 (Focus 19:1-18)
Week 6	<i>Holy People & Holy Time</i>	Leviticus 23-27 (Focus 23:1-32)

General Resources

- *Read (book)*: “Leviticus: A 12-Week Study” by Michael LeFebvre.
- *Read (book)*: “Rediscovering Holiness” by J I Packer.
- *Read (book)*: “Holiness” by J C Ryle.
- *Read (commentary)*: “Leviticus” by Katy Davis.
- *Watch (website)*: “The Book of Leviticus” by the BibleProject:
<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-leviticus/>

St Bart’s Resources (including for families)

For the series overview, weekly sermons, small group material, and weekly children’s curriculum, visit: stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/leviticus

To access these resources, visit: stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/leviticus

ADAM LOWE

St Bart’s Toowoomba, October 2025



Summaries by Adam Lowe (AL), Amy Norman (AN), Daniel Rouhead (DR)



Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Church Library (stbarts.com.au/library)

how to use this series overview

For each week in the series, a Bible reading, “the big idea”, some reflection questions, and a prayer is provided.

- **PRAY**

Begin with prayer, for example:

Gracious God, please enlighten our minds, enliven our hearts, and shape our wills according to your life-giving Word. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

- **READ from the Bible**

Read the part of the Bible that we are focusing on for that week. Some key verses (from that reading) are also printed — you might even like to memorise these!

- **REFLECT**

Read the ‘big idea’ and use the questions to reflect on the Bible passage. This will help prepare for the sermon and the following week’s small group questions (provided on the St Bart’s website).

- **PRAY**

Each day a prayer is provided that you may like to use. Of course, you need not to be limited to this prayer.

Week 1

Approaching a Holy God *Leviticus 1-7 (focusing on 1:1-9)*

The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.’” Leviticus 1:1-2

READ LEVITICUS 1:1-9; 5:17-19

REFLECT. It can be very easy to be overwhelmed by the strangeness of Leviticus — particularly when the first chapters seem to be endless instruction, sacrifice, and bloodshed. Even though animal sacrifices were common in the ancient world, we shouldn't think that is the reason they are here in Leviticus. These are instructions *given by the Lord*, so that the people *can relate to the Lord*. The whole context of Leviticus is that the Lord is coming to dwell with his people in a special way in the tabernacle (cf. Exodus 40:34-38). The Holy Lord was coming to dwell with an unholy, rebellious, and sinful people. The sacrificial system *made it possible* for the Lord to dwell with them, and also *exposed the gap* between people and God that *needed* to be addressed by sacrifice. The sacrificial system was of course not the ultimate way God would dwell with his people, but pointed ahead to the ultimate way God would provide for us to approach him. It pointed ahead to the ultimate once-for-all sacrifice yet to come. One who would take on the full consequence for sin, be our perfect mediator, and through whose sacrifice is accepted by God, guaranteeing our forgiveness. AN

- Imagine you lived amongst the Israelites. What would you have learned about God's holiness by constantly seeing the sacrifices performed?

PRAY

Holy Lord, thank you that you have made the way to dwell with us forever. Please help us grow in our gratitude for what it cost for you to overcome our sin. Amen.

Week 2

A Holy Priesthood

Leviticus 8-10 (focusing on 9:22-10:3)

The LORD said to Moses, “Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting.” Leviticus 8:1-3

READ LEVITICUS 8:1-10:3

REFLECT. The role of priests is so central in Leviticus that its very name stems from a group of priests (i.e., from the Levites). Having given *instructions* and *regulations* for various sacrifices in the preceding chapters, chapter eight opens with the ordination of Aaron and his sons. It would have been quite the occasion with intricate rituals specified by the Lord and the *entire assembly gathered at the entrance to the tent of meeting*. The priests’ role was to represent the people before God and—in turn—God to the people. As emphasised in the ordination, priests were called to the highest level of morality and (ritual) holiness to enter into God’s presence on Israel’s behalf. When they violated these instructions—*failing to recognise the intensity of God’s presence and the seriousness of his warnings*—they could be instantly consumed by his holiness (cf. 10:1-3). This is a stark reminder of the paradox of God’s presence: *that so pure is God’s goodness that no person can stand on their own merit but must instead submit to God’s gracious provisions*. Even more: *we need a priest, who is not only perfect and permanent, but also who would become the perfect sacrifice for us so that we might dwell with God and live*. AL

- What are all the various elements of the ordination? What is emphasised?
- What was the priest’s role? *Who is our perfect and permanent high priest?*

PRAY

Gracious Lord, help us to fathom the beauty and weight of your holiness by looking to the one who is our perfect and permanent high priest. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Week 3

Set Apart to be Holy

Leviticus 11-15 (focus on 11:41-47)

Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Leviticus 11:43-44

READ LEVITICUS 11:1-47

REFLECT. God's holiness isn't just relevant for the sacrifices and work carried out by the priests, but as expanded in chapters 11-15, affects the whole of life including what you eat and how your body works. The Lord implores his people to be holy. And these specific sets of distinctions between what is "clean" and what is "unclean" are given to help people navigate living with a Holy God. Everything made by the Lord is good, but the Lord gave priests a *particular* role in distinguishing between the holy and the common, and the unclean and clean (Leviticus 10:10). The Israelites are to take care, for only clean things can approach the holy Lord. It is not that unclean things are sinful (for it would be odd for an eagle to be sinful!), but they can't come into contact with what is holy. God distinguishes between what is clean and what is unclean. For the Israelites, being set apart meant following the food laws. Jesus teaches in Mark 7:14-23 that what makes someone defiled (not clean) is not what they eat, but rather what comes out of their heart. The way we live, set apart through Christ, is no longer tied to the food laws. But the same imperative to *be holy because the Lord is holy* still remains for followers of Jesus today, as we reflect Christ's holiness through our whole lives. AN

- What does it mean to be set apart? What did that look like for the Israelites? What does that look like for you on your frontline?

PRAY

Gracious Father, please help us to reflect your holiness on all our frontlines. Amen.

Week 4

The Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:1-34

“This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.” And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.” Leviticus 16:34

READ LEVITICUS 16:1-34

REFLECT. The Day of Atonement reveals both the holiness of God and the depth of human sin. Once a year, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. Every detail (the washing, the blood, the scapegoat sent into the wilderness) reminded Israel that sin separates humanity from a holy God and that atonement requires sacrifice. This chapter teaches that we cannot approach God casually or on our own terms. His holiness demands purity, yet his mercy provides a way of cleansing. The Day of Atonement pointed forward to Jesus Christ, our ultimate High Priest, as he shed his own blood once and for all for our sin. Through Jesus, we receive forgiveness and are made right with God. As we reflect on the holiness of God, we are reminded that his justice and mercy meet perfectly at the cross. Our response is humility, gratitude, and renewed devotion. Holiness is not distant, it is now our calling, made possible through Christ who atones for our sin and makes us holy. DR

- How does the Day of Atonement reveal God’s holiness *and* his mercy?
- How does Jesus fulfil what the Day of Atonement pointed to?

PRAY

Holy God, Thank You for providing a way for forgiveness — for cleansing what we cannot clean ourselves. Help us to live with reverence, gratitude, and purity of heart, remembering the cost of our forgiveness and the greatness of your grace. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Week 5

A Call to Holy Living *Leviticus 17-20 (focusing on 19:1-18)*

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.’” Leviticus 19:1-2

READ LEVITICUS 19

REFLECT. One of the persistent themes in Leviticus is not only the holiness of God but also the call of God’s people to holy living. God’s people are set apart by God and therefore ought to reflect the character and purposes of God. As the Lord says, “be holy because I, the Lord your God, am Holy” (19:1-2). The call to holiness is not just for the priests; the central call to holy living in daily life is for every person, shaping their worship, character, and relationships with others (noting the emphasis by the Lord on provisions to protect the most vulnerable). When we read the extensive list in chapter 19, some of these laws will sound familiar (i.e., the ten commandments), many will be recognisable (still bearing influence in the world today), and a few might seem strange. However, it’s important to note that these practical commands are not only intended as a reflection of God’s holiness (and as a way of honouring our relationship with him), but also to mark them out distinctively from the nations around them. While Jesus fulfilled the Law, Christians are also called to holy living (in the power of the Holy Spirit) for the same reasons. Christ dying for our sin doesn’t release us from the call to live holy lives (for the Lord is holy) but gives us even more cause to seek out his ways with the confidence that we are saved. AL

- How should Christians discern the shape of holy living? *Who helps us?*

PRAY

Lord, please forgive our sins and failures and help us to live holy lives in accordance with you. May we respond wholeheartedly to the Good News that Jesus is Lord—the one who fulfils the Law, sets us apart, and sanctifies us by his Spirit. Amen

Week 6

Holy People & Holy Time

Leviticus 23-27 (focusing on 23:1-32)

The LORD said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of sabbath rest...” Leviticus 23:23-24a

READ LEVITICUS 23:1-3

REFLECT. These chapters are filled with rhythms relating to times of resting (i.e., Sabbaths) and feasting that the Israelites are to observe as God’s people. This ordering of time would not only have clearly made them distinctive (as many rhythms of rest and gatherings as God’s people make us distinctive today), but also systematically through time (in the ordering of days, weeks, months, years, and *longer periods*) called them back into worship of God and the dedication of their lives to him. Whilst Christians are not bound to the keeping of time in the same ways, it is clear that God is concerned with the use of our time *for him*. We are to use our time — *including rhythms of rest* — as an expression of our dependence on God, in recognition of our human finitude, and to delight that we find our ultimate rest in Jesus (the Lord of the Sabbath!). That’s a key reason for weekly gathered worship to punctuate our every week. In the closing chapters of Leviticus, we are reminded afresh not only of the Lord’s holiness and his call to us to live holy lives, but just how desperately that we need him. *There is nothing that we can do to account for our sin, but praise God that he sent his Son to make us holy through him.* AL

- How does the ordering of your time help you to worship God?
- How does Jesus bridge the gap between our unholiness and God’s holiness? In what way do we find our ultimate rest in and through Jesus?

PRAY

Gracious Father, please help us to order the rhythms of our time—the days, weeks, months, and years—in accordance with your good purposes. Thank you for the ultimate rest we find in your Son. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.