

Leviticus

Who, When, Where

Written by Moses. Moses was a Hebrew, born in Egypt towards the end of the 215 years that his people lived there. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter as a baby and raised as part of the royal family. He left (ran away) from Egypt when he was 40 and lived in Midian to the east where he married and worked as a shepherd for his father in law. When he was about 80 Yahweh called him to return to Egypt and lead his people back to their promised land. He did, but it was a journey that took another 40 years. Moses himself never entered it, but he died at 120, just before they finally entered the land under the leadership of his disciple, Joshua. Moses wrote Leviticus about 1445BC, just after the Exodus. After coming down from spending time with Yahweh on Mt Sinai. Somewhere around Mt Sinai.

Summary

Our culture shapes us way more than we are aware. That alone makes it a wonderful blessing to spend time living in a culture which is vastly different from the one you grew up in. As you think about the differences you will realise some of the impacts your own culture has had on shaping who you are. The Jews had been living in Egypt for a couple of hundred years. What it meant to be “Jewish” wasn’t really defined yet, and they would have been greatly influenced by the Egyptian culture they had grown up in.

As well as defining the religious ordinances of offerings and sacrifices, in Leviticus we see Yahweh spelling out in great detail what it means to be Jewish. What it looks like on a daily basis to live the Jewish life. This is how he wants you to live. Of course it’s important to remember too, that while Christians are NOT under the law, these are still good guidelines for a physically and spiritually healthy life.

Before You Read

What are your rules?
Could you list them?

What rules are black and white for you?
What rules are grey?

This web page has some questions to help you decide: [Is it OK?](#)

Here is a sample to help you see that black and white isn’t always black and white...

Is it OK to kill someone?
Is it OK to kill someone who is trying to kill you?
How would you feel if someone tried to kill you?
How would you feel if someone tried to kill you when you were trying to kill them?
Is it OK to kill yourself?
Is it OK to kill someone who is dying anyway?
Is it OK to have an abortion?
Is it OK to have an abortion because you were raped?
Is it OK to have an abortion because you don’t want a baby?
What if someone had killed you while you were a baby?

Key Verses

Leviticus 11:22

You may eat: any kind of locust, any kind of katydid, any kind of cricket, and any kind of grasshopper.

Great news! You can eat grasshoppers. Johannes the Immerser seemed to like them. And if this rule hadn’t been there he would have been unclean for eating locusts. But apparently he wasn’t. What do you think of God’s list of clean vs unclean foods? How does it compare with yours? What do you think he was thinking? Do you think it was about avoiding disease or illness?

Leviticus 12:8

If she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves, or two young pigeons...

This was the sacrifice for when a woman gave birth. This is how we know Yosef and Maria were poor. They offered two pigeons when Yeshua was born.

Leviticus 16

Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats; one lot for Yahweh, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

Did you know the term “scapegoat” came from the Bible? It was the goat which took the blame for the high priest’s sins so he would be clean to be a priest.

Leviticus 18:22

You shall not lie with a man, as with a woman. That is detestable.

Well, let’s get it out there from the start. This one actually does look black and white. What do you think? What does Yahweh think? How does “not being under Law” change our view of this rule? Does it mean Christian men can sleep with men?

Leviticus 19:18

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahweh.

No vengeance, not even a grudge... How come “righteous” Christians don’t seem so strict about this rule, but they make huge public outcries and hold rallies about the homosexual one? Is that hypocrisy?

Leviticus 27:24

In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land belongs

Every 50 years (after 7 Sabbath years), any land which had been sold was returned (freely) to the family it came from. This was Yahweh’s way of preserving the balance among the 12 tribes of Israel. How much would you pay for your house if you had to give it back in 50 years? How would that change our society?

Leviticus 27:30

All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is Yahweh’s. It is holy to Yahweh.

A tithe is a tenth. This is where most modern churches get their teaching that you should give a tenth of your income. How does not being under the Law affect this one? So what is your rule for giving?

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

What was the wierdest rule in Leviticus? Were there any where you thought, “What the heck?”

Christians aren’t under the Law. We don’t have to obey these rules. Rules tend to make us legalistic and judgemental. And Paul says that they look good, but they have no value in restraining our sinful desires.

But we should still be doing the right thing. So how can we define that? We don’t want to slip back into having a different set of rules. For Christians I think it is a good idea to have some principles we live by rather than rules. Like the one from Matthew about doing to others what we want them to do to us. Things like that. Or that rather than being a particular percentage of your net or gross income, your giving should be generous, and sacrificial, and from your heart.

What are your principles?
How are they working for you?