

Where are we?

- Act 1 – Creation and Human Calling
- Act 2 – Rebellion & the Fall Out

Act 3

- Movement 1 – The Formation of Israel
- Movement 2 – The Rescue and Wilderness Wanderings
- Movement 3 – Sinai Covenant and Portable Eden

- God gave Moses the covenant code on top of the mountain. (slide 1)
- Instructed him to build the Tabernacle – *miškān* (slide 2)
- So that he could live among them and they could meet with him.

So, they build the Tabernacle – *miškān*

- Tents surround it. (slide 3 + surrounding tents)
- God's glory ^[kābôd] moves from the mountain to the tent. (slide 4)
- Slide 5-10

Which takes us to the next movement in Act 3 ...

The Sanctification of Israel ...

- The “making holy of” Israel.
- Which is what the Book of Leviticus is all about.

Leviticus 1:1 opens by reminding us of this fundamental problem.

- It says **YHWH** called to Moses **FROM** the tent. ^[o-hel mo-ed]
- That is where the book gets its Hebrew name ...
- **Vayikra** [va-jie-ka-ra] – “and he called.”

We get the English name from the Greek **Levitikon**

- “Things pertaining to the Levites”

The question is..

- “How can Israel in their sin and selfishness be Reconciled to this holy God?”
- Already bowed down the cow?
- Slide 10

That's what this book (**Leviticus**) is all about

- God graciously providing a way for people to live in his presence.

Not many of us are naturally drawn to the book of Leviticus.

- I have most probably only read it three times in my whole Christian life.
- Until a couple of months ago when I started to try and make more sense of it.

Two things that were helpful to me, that might be helpful to you.

1. Know why it is important?
2. Aim to understand the Big Picture.
3. Aim to understand the Structure of the Book.

We are going to take a look at the first two this week.

- And then the 3rd one next week.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW?

1. It teaches the people of God how-to live-in relationship with God.

- Without it, the rest of the Hebrew Bible won't exist.
- Because the "people of God" won't be able to live in relationship with God.

Is there anything more important to know in life than that?

- As the "people of God" back then and today ...
- We want to know how-to live-in relationship with God?
- And the answer to them was: Leviticus.

2. Laws are a window or reflection of the values of the law giver.

Leviticus is filled with laws.

- And by reading and having some understanding of the laws.
- We can gain greater insight as to the things that God values.

Example:

Leviticus 19:9–10⁹ "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

¹⁰ Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. [Why?] Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. [And why should you do that?] I am YHWH your God.

[21x's]

What is it that you learn about the heart of God?

- What is it that he values?

Helping the less fortunate ...

- Is more important than maximising your own wealth.

And also, what he values is who he is.

- He is inherently holy.

The topics that Leviticus deals with are all ...

3. Central to the life and work of Jesus.

- Somehow all of this (Tabernacle complex) is connected to this (Life + work)

4. Leviticus is the focal point of the Torah

- Torah is the foundation of the Hebrew Bible.
- As see soon in the literary structure of the book.
- As well as throughout the Old & New Covenant.
- The authors or compilers were literary geniuses.
- A, B, C, B, A
- C – Focal Point

5. The New Covenant writers thought that it was important.

- NT writers often quote the OT books.

If you were to write the NT, how often would you have quotes Leviticus?

- Would it be at the top as most quoted or closer to the bottom.

In the NT Lev. Is the sixth most quoted book.

- Behind Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah.

1. Psalms (68 times)
2. Isaiah (55)
3. Deuteronomy (44)
4. Genesis (35)
5. Exodus (31)
6. Leviticus (13)

So, what might help to increase the desire levels.

Know why it is important.

1. Teaches people how-to live-in relationship with God.
2. Laws are a window or reflection of the values of the law giver

3. It is central to the life and work of Jesus.
4. Leviticus is the focal point of the Torah
5. The New Covenant writers thought that it was important

Aim to understand the Big Picture

- What is the Big Picture?

What is the book trying to achieve?

Primarily three things

1. For Moses to enter the tent.
2. For God to live in their presence
 - Without his *kābôd* consuming them.
3. And for them to enter his presence.
 - Be able to move into the courtyard.

In order for you to grasp the book and its purpose ...

- You need to have some understanding of the idea that ...
- **GOD IS 'HOLY'** [qo-desh]

They Hebrew words help to break habitual patterns of thinking.

- Holier than thou ...
- He is so holy.
- Mostly it is has a negative religiosity to it.

God's holiness [qo-desh] – very different picture in the bible.

God's holiness ...

- Is fundamental to understanding this book.
- And the role that it plays in the whole biblical narrative.

Psalm 99:5 ⁵ Exalt [lift up] **YHWH** our God and worship [bow down] at his footstool; [drawing - ark] Why? he is holy. [qo-desh]

Psalm 99:9⁹ Exalt [lift up] YHWH our God and worship [bow down] at his holy mountain, [drawing - Jersusalem] Why? for YHWH our God is holy. [qo-desh]

God needs to be uplifted and we need to bow down.

- Why? Because he is 'Holy' [qo-desh]

When we come to church, when we pray.

- We need to exalt [lift up] YHWH and we need to bow down.
- ...

But, what does it mean for him to be Holy?

The basic idea conveyed by the holiness of God is twofold.

1. HIS DISTINCTNESS

- He is Separate, He is Unique.
- He is The Creator, Author of Life.
- He is Not bound by our Space-time Continuum.
- Above and Beyond our Universe.

Exodus 15:11¹¹ Who among the gods is like you, YHWH? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory ...

Isaiah 55:9⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Romans 11:34–36³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

2. MORAL PERFECTION.

His absolute freedom from blemish of any kind.

Psalm 18:30 "As for God, His way is blameless [Tāmîm] ..."

- Tāmîm
- Complete, unscathed, intact ...
- Without fault, free from blemish ...
- Impeccable, honest, devout

If God is Holy, then the space around God is also holy

- Distinct and morally perfect.

(Draw the space around God. Concentric circles moving out)

Little bit like sun or a fire.

- God's space is full of his
- Goodness, his Life, Purity, Justice, Creative power, & Glory ...

If Israel who is unjust, impure and sinful (Outside Gods space)

- Wants to live in Gods holy presence ...
- They too need to become Holy (Draw an arrow pointing from Israel into Gods Space)
- They need to become Distinct and Blameless [Tāmîm]

- Which would mean that their Sin has to be Dealt with.
- Thus, the book of Leviticus. (word Leviticus points to the arrow)