

SIXTY-SIX BOOKS

LEVITICUS

“Think not for a moment that any part of this precious book is not profitable. Think not that such portions as catalogues and pedigrees, as Leviticus, and the description of Ezekiel’s temple, are useless and without value. Believe me it is childish folly to question the usefulness of any word in the Bible merely because our eyes at present do not see its use.

Come with me and look for a moment at the book of nature, and I will soon show you things of which you do not see the use.

Place yourself in imagination by the side of an Australian gold-digging, and observe the earth that is drawn up from its bottom. It is likely that your unpracticed eye will see nothing in that heap but rubbish, and dirt, and stones. And yet that very heap of earth may prove, on washing, to be full of particles of the purest gold. It is just the same with the Bible. We see but a little of it now. We shall find hereafter that every word of it contained gold.

Place yourself in imagination on the top of some Highland mountain. Look at the minute moss or lichen which clings to the side of that mass of rock. Tell me, if you can, what use and purpose that lichen serves. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the very insects leave it alone. The grouse, and ptarmigan, and red deer draw no sustenance from it. The rock does not require its covering. And yet that minute lichen is as truly a part of God’s creation as the cedars of Lebanon, or the Victoria Regia of the South American rivers. Place it under a microscope, and you will soon see that like all other works of God it is “very good,” and full of beautiful design (Gen. 1:31). Settle it down in your mind, that as it is with the book of nature, so it is with the Book of Revelation, the written Word of God. There is not a chapter or verse from first to last which is not in some way profitable. If you and I do not see its use, it is because we have not eyes to see it yet. But all, we may rest assured, is precious. All is “very good.” Well said Bishop Jewell, “There is no sentence, no clause, no word, no syllable, no letter, but it is written for thy instruction. There is not one jot, but it is signed and sealed with the blood of the Lamb.”¹

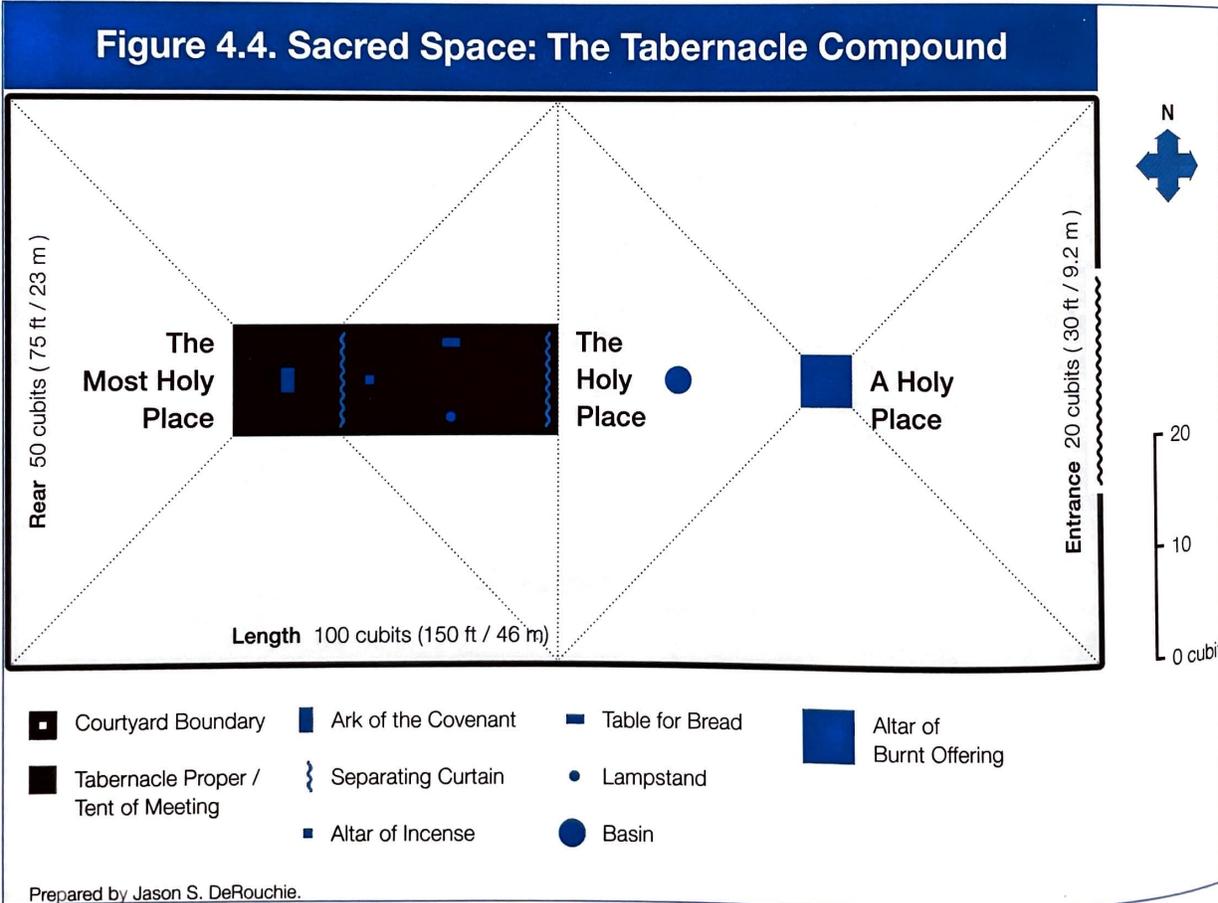
¹ J. C. Ryle, How Readest Thou?

Purpose. In anticipation of God’s abiding presence among his people, Leviticus details the standard of holiness for maintaining close, favorable proximity to Yahweh, the only holy God of Israel.

Outline.²

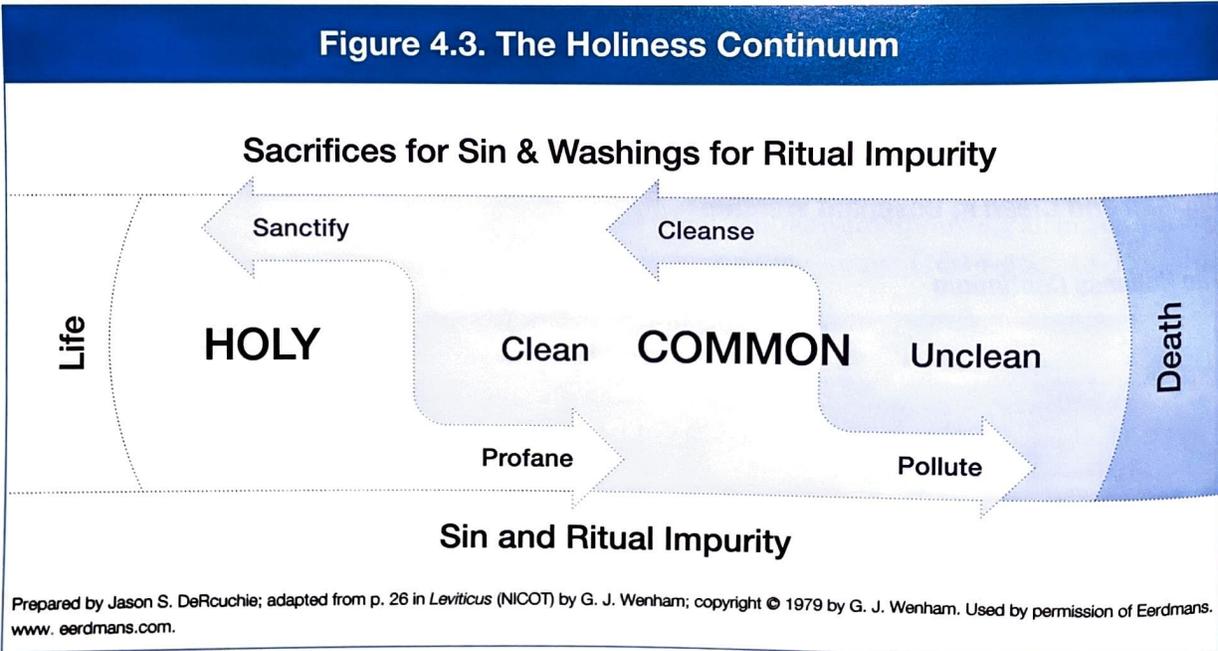
- I. Laws Pertaining to Sacrifice (1:1–7:38)
 - A. Legislation for the Laity (1:1–6:7)
 - 1. Burnt offerings (chap. 1)
 - 2. Grain offerings (chap. 2)
 - 3. Peace offerings (chap. 3)
 - 4. Sin offerings (4:1–5:13)
 - 5. Trespass offerings (5:14–6:7)
 - B. Legislation for the Priesthood (6:8–7:38)
 - 1. Burnt offerings (6:8–13)
 - 2. Grain offerings (6:14–23)
 - 3. Sin offerings (6:24–30)
 - 4. Trespass offerings (7:1–10)
 - 5. Peace offerings (7:11–36)
 - 6. Concluding remarks (7:37, 38)
- II. Beginnings of the Priesthood (8:1–10:20)
 - A. Ordination of Aaron and His Sons (chap. 8)
 - B. First Sacrifices (chap. 9)
 - C. Execution of Nadab and Abihu (chap. 10)
- III. Prescriptions for Uncleaness (11:1–16:34)
 - A. Unclean Animals (chap. 11)
 - B. Uncleaness of Childbirth (chap. 12)
 - C. Unclean Diseases (chap. 13)
 - D. Cleansing of Diseases (chap. 14)
 - E. Unclean Discharges (chap. 15)
- IV. The Day of Atonement (chap. 16)
- V. Guidelines for Practical Holiness (17:1–27:34)
 - A. Sacrifice and Food (chap. 17)
 - B. Proper Sexual Behavior (chap. 18)
 - C. Neighborliness (chap. 19)
 - D. Capital/Grave Crimes (chap. 20)
 - E. Instructions for Priests (chaps. 21, 22)
 - F. Religious Festivals (chap. 23)
 - G. The Tabernacle (24:1–9)
 - H. An Account of Blasphemy (24:10–23)
 - I. Sabbatical and Jubilee Years (chap. 25)
 - J. Exhortation to Obey the Law: Blessings and Curses (chap. 26)
 - K. Redemption of Votive Gifts (chap. 27)

² Amended slightly from MacArthur, John F., Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006).



- Israel's social and religious life orbited around God's holy place, the Tabernacle/Tent of meeting, where God especially dwelled and manifested his holiness (and then later, the Temple; cf. Ex. 40:36-38; Lev. 16:29-17:9; Num. 2:1-3, 10, 18, 25; 1Kgs. 8:27-53).

³ D. Jeffrey Mooney and Jason DeRouchie, *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013), 112.



- “In Leviticus, the call was for those who were declared holy in status to move away from death toward life, becoming holy in state or condition—“Be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8; cf. 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Peter 1:14-16).” — D. Jeffrey Mooney and Jason DeRouchie⁵

Themes.

1. God speaking (entire book, except portions of chapters 8, 9, and 10; 24:10, 23; 26:46; 27:34)
2. God's attributes
 - a. Presence (1:2, 3, 5, 11; 2:1, 8, 11, 12, 14; 3:1, 3, 7, 12, 14; 4:4, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 24; 5:19; 6:6, 7, 14, 20, 25; 7:11, 14, 29, 30; 8:26, 27, 29; 9:2, 4, 5, 21, 24; 10:1, 2, 15, 17, 19; 12:7; 14:11, 12, 16, 18; 23, 24, 27, 29, 31; 15:14, 15, 30; 16:1, 7, 10, 12, 13, 18, 30; 17:5; 19:21, 22; 22:3, 18; 23:11, 20, 28, 40; 24:3, 4, 6, 8)
 - b. Holiness (10:3; 11:44, 45; 20:3, 26; 21:8; 22:1, 32)
3. Atonement (1:4; 7:7; 8:34; 9:7; 10:17; 12:7, 8; 14:18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34; 17:11; 23:27, 28; 25:9)
4. “I am Yahweh” (11:44, 45; 18:1, 4, 5, 6, 21, 30; 19:3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37; 20:7, 8, 24; 21:12, 15, 23; 22:1, 3, 8, 9, 23, 30, 31, 32, 33; 23:22, 43; 25:17, 38, 55; 26:1, 2, 13, 44, 45)

⁴ D. Jeffrey Mooney and Jason DeRouchie, *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013), 110.

⁵ Ibid.

Christ and Leviticus.

- Readers would do well to take the words of Leviticus at face value and avoid attempts to discover Christ in every minute detail of the biblical text. The meaning of the words of Leviticus in this current church-age are the same as when Moses first penned them. Any detail impossible to understand prior to Christ’s coming must not be read back into the Levitical laws. In other words, God is teaching the New Testament Christian the same lessons that were discoverable by the Old Testament audience(s). This plain reading of the text leads us to appreciate several key factors regarding Christ’s person, offices, and work.

1. God is holy and cannot be approached by unholy sinners; *therefore* Christ, the perfect Son of God must mediate on our behalf.
2. Sinners need a priest to mediate and offer sacrifices on their behalf before God; *therefore*, one ought to look to Christ as a suitable mediator.
3. God accepts sinners on the basis of a perfect sacrifice offered for sins; therefore, Christ offered himself as a suitable substitute for sinners.
4. Animal sacrifices were insufficient and had to be perpetually offered; therefore, Christ offered himself only once to cleanse the conscience of worshippers.

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Old Testament Sacrifices Compared to Christ’s Sacrifice		
Leviticus		Hebrews
1. Old Covenant (temporary)	Heb. 7:22; 8:6, 13; 10:20	1. New Covenant (permanent)
2. Obsolete promises	Heb. 8:6–13	2. Better promises
3. A shadow	Heb. 8:5; 9:23, 24; 10:1	3. The reality
4. Aaronic priesthood (many)	Heb. 6:19–7:25	4. Melchizedekian priesthood (one)
5. Sinful priesthood	Heb. 7:26, 27; 9:7	5. Sinless priest
6. Limited-by-death priesthood	Heb. 7:16, 17, 23, 24	6. Forever priesthood
7. Daily sacrifices	Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25, 26; 10:9, 10, 12	7. Once-for-all sacrifice
8. Animal sacrifices	Heb. 9:11–15, 26; 10:4–10, 19	8. Sacrifice of God’s Son
9. Ongoing sacrifices	Heb. 10:11–14, 18	9. Sacrifices no longer needed
10. One year atonement	Heb. 7:25; 9:12, 15; 10:1–4, 12	10. Eternal propitiation

The MacArthur Study Bible, by John MacArthur (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997) 160. © 1993 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

⁶ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 152.