



# WHOLEHEARTED

LEVITICUS

TERM 4 2022  
BIBLE STUDY BOOK

# BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 4 2022

## - *Wholehearted* -

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St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda

# Wholehearted

## Bible Studies in the Book of Leviticus

In the story of the bible, Leviticus marks an enormous change in the relationship between God and his people. Consider for a moment the ending of the Book of Exodus and the start of the Book of Numbers.

**Exodus 40:**<sup>34</sup> *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.* <sup>35</sup> *Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

**Numbers 1:**<sup>1</sup> *The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt.*

These two events are separated by about a month (cf Exodus 40:17 and Numbers 1:1). Yet within that month an enormous change has occurred. Moses is in the tent! In Exodus, having finished the Tabernacle, Moses stands outside the tent, unable to enter. But as Numbers begins he is inside. He stands in a place filled with the glory of God. At a broader level we could even compare the change that has occurred amongst God's people between these two books. In Exodus God's people are worshipping idols at the foot of Mount Sinai. Numbers begins with Israel being numbered (hence the name) to form a Holy Army.

What has made this possible? The answer is Leviticus.

Leviticus reads like a cold, inhuman technical manual for priests. But don't miss the role it plays within the story-line of the bible. What God does through the symbolic world Leviticus creates is turn an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. God turns the Camp into a new Eden and the tabernacle into a new Garden where God and people meet once again.

Leviticus has what is called a chiasmic structure. You see this structure in many places throughout the bible.

Chapters 1-5: Rituals (Sacrifices)

Chapters 6-10: Priests (Ordination)

Chapters 11-15: Purity (Food, bodies and homes)

Chapters 16-17: Atonement

Chapters 18-20: Purity (Ethics and Morality)

Chapters 21-22: Priests (Qualifications)

Chapters 23-25: Rituals (Festivals)

Chapters 26-27: Warnings about obedience and faithfulness

We will cover the book over the course of six Studies which will allow us to consider the three outer layers of the symbolic world of Leviticus (Rituals, priests, purity) and the heart of the symbolic world, the Day of Atonement. We will then spend some time, in the lead up to Christmas, looking at the festivals and sacred times that Israel celebrated. During the term we will also dedicate a week to thanksgiving in the lead-up to our Thanksgiving Sunday.

# Study 1: Sacrifice

## Leviticus 1-5

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The first layer of this symbolic world are the rituals. Sacrificial rituals are described in chapters 1-5 and the festival rituals in chapters 23-25.

## Talk

- 1) Have you ever read Leviticus? What do you know about it?

## Investigate

- 2) Use the table below to help your group gain an understanding of the sacrificial system. Divide the group into five parts and give each a sacrifice to investigate. Get the group to report back.

- 3) What might compel someone to make each of these offerings? What is the worshipper trying to express as they make such a sacrifice?

- Burnt/Ascension Offering (cf also Psalm 20:1-5 and Psalm 66:13-15):

- Grain Offering (cf also Lev 14:20, 31; 23:12-13):

- Fellowship Offering (cf also 7:15 and 7:31):

- Sin/Purification Offering:

- Guilt/Reparation Offering:

4) These offerings are occasional and therefore the order they are in here is not the order they are performed. However, if you were to do them back to front, from Reparation to Ascension, how would they form your understanding of God and your life with him?

## Apply

5) Leviticus makes clear that sacrificial atonement leads to the sinner being forgiven (4:40, 26; 5:10). However, Hebrews 10:1-10 says that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. How do we understand the sacrificial system in light of Christ?

6) How does the Sacrificial system teach about sin, its impacts and the means by which it is dealt with? Do you tend to overlook these? What practices can we adopt to remember them?

## Prayers

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Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Please pray for Brett as he seeks to encourage, serve and build up the wider staff team. Pray for wisdom that he and the team develop ministry plans that will help St Luke's stay faithful and grow into the future.

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra, Joanna and Samuel Thomas and their mission work with OMF International to an unreached people group in South East Asia.

Bring before God those who are physically or mentally ill, grieving or experiencing financial hardships.

Please pray that the way we welcome people would encourage them to seek Jesus and make St Lukes their home. Pray that we would continue to connect with hospitality and warmth.

# Study 2: Priests

## Leviticus 8-10

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The second layer is the order of Priests. The conduct and ordination of priests is described in chapters 6-10 and the qualifications of a priest in chapters 21-22.

### Talk

- 1) Ceremonies bring about a change in status for the main participants. Ceremonies will involve a series of rites which symbolise this change of status. Have you ever been a witness or a participant in a ceremony? What rites and symbols were used and why?

### Read Leviticus 8:1-13

*In these verses we have the beginning of the ordination ritual for the priests. It is quite long and elaborate, involving all the sacrifices we saw in chapters 1-7. It doesn't seem like it is repeated every time a new priest is ordained. Rather, this is a founding ritual for the establishment of the order of priesthood.*

- 2) Chapter 8 describes the ordination ceremony for priests. Consider the way the ordination ceremony plays out. How do the rites relate to the change in status of Aaron and his sons?
- 3) What might Israel learn about God and their vocation as a Kingdom of Priests (Exodus 19:6) through this ordination process?

### Read Leviticus 10:1-11

- 4) Consider 10:8-11. What is at the heart of the job of a priest?

5) How might this help us understand what Nadab and Abihu did wrong (cf also Leviticus 16:1-2)?

## Apply

6) In the book of Acts, when new churches are formed, they are not led by priests but elders. Why do priests drop out of the picture (Hebrews 7:26-8:2)?

7) God gave very clear guidelines for worship in Leviticus. What rules guide our worship gatherings?

8) What can each of us do, as we gather to worship, to better build one another up in Christ? Think it through from pre-service to post-service.

## Prayers

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Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as she ministers and cares for the people who attend the Thursday Communion Service. Pray for her as she continues to pray and care for those who are unable to attend, due to Covid.

We pray for Ministry Trainees Evan Caddy and Matt Peck, working alongside Brett and Sam.

Pray for the Sparks Family and their mission work making disciples in Spain.

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

# Study 3: Purity

## Leviticus 11:1-47

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The third layer of this symbolic world is the purity laws. Chapters 11-15 consider purity laws related to food, the body and the home. Chapters 18-20 consider purity laws related to ethics and morality.

## Talk

1) Why do we feel it's ok to eat fish but not dolphins, cows but not horses, chicken but not cats?

## Read Leviticus 11:1-47

2) If you were an ancient Israelite, which food laws would you be most disappointed to have to obey? What do you think might be the rationale behind these laws?

3) What are the five categories the animals are divided into? Are each category treated as seriously as the others or are some categories more symbolically powerful?

4) When we hear about animals that fill the land, water and sky, what other part of the bible does this categorisation remind you of? What about the description of animals that "crawl on their belly"?

5) Is there any underlying logic you can notice with the clean and unclean animals? Consider how they eat and what they "wear". Might this also echo Eden in some way?



- 6) These food laws did not always exist (Genesis 9:3). A time will come when they are done away with (Acts 10:14). But for this time in Israel's history God establishes a symbolic diet with echoes of Eden and the fall. Why might this be?

## Apply

- 7) Galatians 3:24 says the law was like a guardian or teacher. How does this help us understand Jesus' relationship to The Law (Mark 7:18-23)? What types of purity laws come to an end with the arrival of Jesus? What sort of purity laws are ramped up with the arrival of Jesus (Compare Leviticus 18 and Matthew 5:27-30 for example)?
- 8) What measures do you put in place to make sure sin and temptation doesn't come crawling into your heart and home?

## Prayers

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Pray for Colin as Office and Site Manager. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as he looks after staff and the Church site.

Pray for Theyn our Finance Officer that she would bring Glory to God in her work.

Pray for Lisa as Admin Assistant, as she looks after the administration of the Church.

Pray for Sarah and husband Tim and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Pray for our witness to our local community – especially as more units are developed and more people move into the area. Pray for opportunities to connect with our community.

# Study 4: The Day of Atonement

## Leviticus 16:1-34

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The centre of this symbolic world is The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

### Talk

- 1) Every culture has its “sins” and the system by which it manages “sinners”. We might look at ancient Israel’s “sin management system” as strange, but will other cultures think the same of ours? What are the attitudes or actions that modern secular Australia might consider a “sin” (though they wouldn’t use the word) and how does it attempt to manage sinners?

### Read Leviticus 16

- 2) Who takes centre stage on the Day of Atonement (v.3)? How does he dress? What does this symbolise?
- 3) Two goats become key in the ceremony. How are they first introduced (v.5)? Where do they come from (v.5)? How are they differentiated (v.8)?
- 4) The word translated ‘atonement’ means ‘covering’. On this day the sins committed and the defilement accumulated is covered over. What parts of the Israelite camp are covered by the sacrifice of the first goat? What might this teach about sin?
- 5) What is the ceremony that surrounds the second goat? What do you think this moment would teach the Israelite community?



# Study 5: Sabbath

## Leviticus 23:1-3

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The first layer of the symbolic world is the rituals. Sacrificial rituals are described in chapters 1-5 and the festival rituals in chapters 23-25. The cornerstone of all the festivals is the Sabbath.

### Talk

- 1) What is the most restful day of your week? What is the most stressful?

### Read Leviticus 23:1-3

- 2) The first appointed festival is the weekly observance of the sabbath. What would an Ancient Israelite do (and not do) on the sabbath?
- 3) Where does such a pattern come from in the bible? Have a look at Genesis 2:2, Genesis 3:17-19, Exodus 16:23-26 and Exodus 20:8-11.
- 4) How does this seventh day weekly rest provide the pattern for other festivals observed by Israel (Leviticus 25:1-7 and 25:8-10).

### Apply

- 5) Must Christians observe the sabbath? Why or why not (Colossians 2:16)?

6) Where do we find the rest sabbath pointed to (Matthew 11:28)? In what ways has Jesus brought you rest?

7) What wisdom might there be in still observing disciplined patterns of rest in our weeks, years and life-time?

## **Prayers**

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Pray for Cam, Katrina, Peyton and Thea Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Children's Thursday arvo programs.

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois, Finn and Cleo Morton. Pray for Sam as our Services Pastor, preparing the elements, which make up our Sunday services. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Youth Ministry and high school Scripture.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

## Study 6: Thanksgiving

The coming week at church is Thanksgiving Sunday. Use this week with your groups to share all that you are thankful for as you reflect on the year. We'll provide some further material for you during the term.

# Study 7: Festivals

## Leviticus 23:1-44

Through the symbolic world Leviticus creates, God turns an idolatrous rabble into a holy army. God turns the Israelite camp into a place he is pleased to dwell. The first layer of the symbolic world is the rituals. Sacrificial rituals are described in chapters 1-5 and the festival rituals in chapters 23-25. Last week we looked at the weekly cornerstone festival, the sabbath. Today we will look at the remaining six annual festivals.

### Talk

- 1) What annual festivals/seasons/days do you celebrate? What tone do each of these have? What is your favourite?

### Read Leviticus 23:4-44

- 2) Spend some time getting a handle on the character and timing of the two festival seasons and the individual festivals within.
- 3) Which festivals do you think would have a sombre tone? Which would be a party? Why would it be important to have both?
- 4) What would Israel learn about God and their history with God from this schedule?

### Apply

- 5) Consider the spring festivals (Passover, Firstfruits, Pentecost). How do they align with events in Jesus' life? How does this help us understand the significance of these events in Jesus' life more fully?

- 6) Consider the autumn festivals (Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles). These don't quite line up with particular events in Jesus' earthly life, but more with his continued heavenly ministry and the future.
- What event is the Festival of Trumpets associated with (Matthew 24:31, 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16)?
  - How is Jesus fulfilling the Day of Atonement (Hebrews 8:1-2)?
  - How might the Festival of Booths connect with the current experience of Christ's church (2 Corinthians 13:11)?
- 7) How can we make the most of the festivals and ceremonies in our year, both religious and secular, to make much of God and celebrate the gospel?

## **Prayers**

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Pray for Jess Moran as she oversees our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for David and Kathryn, Reuben and Felix Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Helen Webster and Phil Moss. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Timothy Clipsham, Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Kath Telfer, Alex Kiefer, Brendan Carpenter and Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer). Pray for our Parish Nominators: Timothy Clipsham, Michael Easton, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes and Alan Gibson. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.