

Leviticus

Authorship: Moses

Date: c. 1446 BC – 1406 BC

The historical period during which Moses lived seems to be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy by 1 Kings. We are told that “the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel” was the same as “the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt” (1 Kings 6:1). Since the former was c. 966 BC, the latter—and thus the date of the exodus—was c. 1446 (assuming that the 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 is to be taken literally). The 40-year period of Israel’s wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 to c. 1406, would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Pentateuch.

Background: The events in Leviticus cover about one month in 1446 BC, following the giving of the law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20). In Israel’s earlier history, worship had been a family affair, with the head of each household acting as “priest” for his family. After God gave Israel the law and the Tabernacle, however, He designated Aaron and his descendants to be priests (Exodus 28:1), and the rest of the tribe of Levi to assist them (Numbers 18:1-2). Leviticus consists mainly of instructions concerning duties of priests and Levites (“Minister’s Handbook” for the priesthood).

Purpose: (1) To show the Israelites, freed from Egyptian bondage, how they should live as God’s people. It is the same for all believers: First comes redemption, then sanctification.; (2) To instill an awareness of sin and describe what constitutes holiness in one’s relationship with God. Under the law this was accomplished in large part by concrete, visual illustrations (e.g., blemishes or defects in humans or animals).; (3) To foreshadow the complete and perfect sacrifice of Christ by repeatedly emphasizing the complete and perfect sacrifice of animals.; (4) To add to the revelation of God’s nature in Genesis and Exodus by focusing on His holiness.

Unique Features: The phrase *the LORD said* appears more than 50 times in Leviticus – more than in any other Bible book. No other Bible book speaks so much of holiness. Various forms of holy occur more than 100 times. **Sacrifice** occurs 42 times, **priest** 189 times, and **blood** 86 times.

Outline:

I. The Offerings (1:1-7:38)

- A. General Regulations (1:1-6:7)
- B. Priestly Regulations (6:8-7:38)

II. The Priesthood (8:1-10:20)

- A. Consecration (8:1-36)
- B. Installation (9:1-24)
- C. Consequences of Disobedience (10:1-20)

III. Cleanness and Uncleanness (11:1-16:34)

- A. Regulations (11:1-15:33)
- B. The Day of Atonement (16:1-34)

IV. The Holiness Code (17:1-26:46)

- A. The Sanctity of Blood (17:1-16)
- B. Moral Laws (18:1-20:27)
- C. Priestly Regulations (21:1-22:33)
- D. Worship Calendar (23:1-44)
- E. Oil, Bread, and Blasphemy (24:1-23)
- F. The Sabbath Year and Jubilee (25:1-55)
- G. Rewards and Punishments (26:1-46)
- H. Vows and Tithes (27:1-34)

The Five Types of Sacrifices

(Main Offerings)

1. The Burnt Offering (Lev. 1; 6:8-13);
2. The Grain Offering (Lev. 2; 6:14-23);
3. The Fellowship Offering (Lev. 3; 7:11-36; 22:17-30; 27);
4. The Sin Offering (Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 12:6-8);
5. The Guilt Offering (Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6, 14:12-18).

The Seven Feast

1. The Feast of Passover (Leviticus 23:4-5);
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8);
3. The Feast of First-fruits (Leviticus 23:9-14);
4. The Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-22);
5. The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25);
6. The Feast Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32);
7. The Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-44).

Sources:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-genesis/> (visited on: 09-08-2020).

Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.