

CHAPTER 3

Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

In this chapter we want to study the last three books of Moses, beginning with Leviticus.

Leviticus — How to Worship a Holy God

Leviticus is a *book of worship*. It tells the children of Israel how to **get right with God** and how to **stay right with God**. How can sinful people worship a holy God? This question is answered in the book of Leviticus.

Why is the Book Called Leviticus?

When you think of the name Leviticus, think of the first four letters: _____
This book has much to say about the sons of Levi. Levi was one of the twelve sons of Jacob (see Exodus 1:1-2). The sons (descendants) of Levi are called "Levites" (Luke 10:32). Was Moses a descendant of Levi (Exodus 2:1-3,10)? _____

Aaron, the brother of Moses, was also a descendant of Levi. God took Aaron and did something special to him. God made him His priest (Exodus 28:1). Also, all of the sons of Aaron (all of the male descendants) became priests. No one could be a priest except those men who were from the family of Aaron.

THE SONS OF LEVI are the Levites.
THE SONS OF AARON are the Priests.

The book of Leviticus has much to say about the "sons of Aaron" (the priests). Can you find verses that mention the "sons of Aaron" in Leviticus chapter 1? _____
The book of Leviticus is God's *instruction book for the priests*. When it came to worship, the Levites and the Priests were the leaders of the people, and in this book God tells them the things they need to know.

The Key Word

The key word in Leviticus is the word "HOLY," which is found over 80 times in this book. For example, how many times do you find the word HOLY in Leviticus chapter 21? _____

We also find the words "SIN" and "UNCLEANNESS" many, many times in this book of Leviticus. Man is sinful and unclean. God is holy and pure and sinless. How can sinful man come to a holy God? How can an unclean, filthy man worship a God who is spotless and pure and clean?

MAN

Unholy
Impure
Sinful
Unclean
Filthy

B
A
R
R
I
E
R

GOD

Holy
Pure
Sinless
Clean
Spotless

Isaiah 59:2 — Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.

The Way To God

There is only one way that sinful man can come to a holy God. He must come to God by way of **sacrifice!** The book of Leviticus has much to say about **animal sacrifices**. All of these sacrifices were pictures of what Christ would someday do on the cross for all men. We can read about these sacrifices in the first few chapters of Leviticus. These animal sacrifices carried an important message:

1) *Blood must be shed.*

Jesus Christ shed His blood for us (Hebrews 9:22).

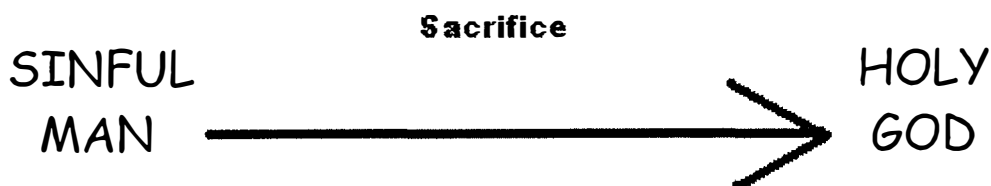
2) An innocent *substitute* must die. Instead of the sinner dying, an innocent animal must be killed.

Jesus Christ died as our Substitute (1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 5:8).

3) The *death penalty* for sin must be paid.

Jesus Christ died for us (Romans 5:6,8).

Sacrifice makes it possible for a sinful man *to come* to a holy God. **Sacrifice** makes it possible for a sinful man *to worship* a holy God:



Have you come to God through the sacrifice of an Innocent Substitute (1 Peter 3:18)? _____

Key Verse in Leviticus

The key verse is found in Leviticus 19:2: "Ye shall be _____; for I the _____ your _____ am _____." See also Leviticus 11:44,45; 20:7, 26. Can you find a verse in 1 Peter chapter 1 which says the same thing? Verse _____

GOD IS HOLY. He is completely set apart from all that is sinful or unclean. He is holy and pure and sinless.

GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO BE HOLY. God wants His people to be set apart from that which is sinful or unclean. In Leviticus God wanted His people to be **different** from those who were not His people. Did God want them to be different from the Egyptians (Leviticus 18:3)? _____ Did God want them to be different from the people who lived in the promised land (the land of Canaan--see Leviticus 18:3)? _____

What about you? If you are a Christian, does God want you to be **different** from those who are not Christians? _____ (See Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:17.) Why? In what ways?

As we read the book of Leviticus and learn about all the sacrifices, we can remember that **Jesus is our sacrifice** (1 John 2:2). He died so that we might have eternal life.

As we read the book of Leviticus and learn about the priests (sons of Aaron), we can remember that **Jesus is our Great High Priest** (Hebrews 8:1). We can come to a holy God through Him!

Let's remember what we learned about the book of Exodus. In Exodus people are brought out of slavery and **brought near to God**. In Leviticus people are **kept near to God**. The way to God is by the Saviour's death. The way to walk with God is to be set apart by the Saviour's life.

NOTE: Did you know that the second greatest commandment is found in the book of Leviticus? See Matthew 22:36-39. What verse in Leviticus chapter 19 contains this second greatest command? _____

Numbers — The Problem of Unbelief

Why is it Called Numbers?

This book is called "**Numbers**" because the children of Israel were "numbered" or counted on two different occasions. We learn about the first numbering in Numbers chapter 1. This was not too long after the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea. The second numbering is found in Numbers chapter 26. This took place about 40 years later, just before the children of Israel entered the promised land.

How many people were there? Only the men who were able to go to war were counted--men 20 years of age and older (Numbers 1:3). What was the total number of these men?

There must have been about the same number of women. If we also count children, there must

have been a total of about two million people (2,000,000)! That's a large group of people!

How many people were counted in Numbers chapter 26 (see Numbers 26:51)?

_____ These are the people who went into the promised land (about two million also).

The book of Numbers may be called "**The Book of Wanderings**"--the road map for the wilderness of this world. The believer should *march through this world* and *march through time* for God's glory, not to go around and around and around getting nowhere. As we learn the lessons from the book of Numbers, we can learn how the believer can glorify God in the wilderness of this world.

How Should We Walk in This World?

How are God's people supposed to walk and live in this world? In 2 Corinthians 5:7 the Bible says, "For we walk by _____ and not by sight." As we walk in this world we should walk **by faith** (by believing God and believing God's promises). God wants us to walk on the path of faith.

This is what the children of Israel did **not** do! They walked on the dangerous path of unbelief. God had given the children of Israel a wonderful promise! What did God promise to give them (Numbers 13:2)? _____ For this reasons we call the land of Canaan **the promised land**. God promised to give this land to the children of Israel. This means that as they would enter the land God would give them complete victory over all their enemies! As we read the book of Numbers we learn that the children of Israel did not believe God's wonderful promise!

Israel's Unbelief

The story of Israel's unbelief is found in Numbers chapters 13 and 14. God sent 12 men to spy out the promised land. These spies went into the land and they saw some huge men of great height. These were giants about the size of Goliath (see Numbers 13:31-33).

Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed that God was bigger than these giants and that God was able to give them the land. The other ten spies **did not believe** that God was greater than the giants.

Now the whole congregation (about two million people) had to make a choice: Should they believe in God like Joshua and Caleb or should they not believe God and get all worried like the other ten spies? What choice did they make? Did they follow Joshua and Caleb's faith or did they follow the unbelief of the ten spies (see Numbers 14:1-10)?

Unbelief Hinders Blessing

The children of Israel were severely punished because of their unbelief. These people would never be allowed to see the _____ which God had promised to give to them (Numbers 14:23). Instead God would make them **wander** in the **wilderness** year after year until they all dropped dead (Numbers 14:29). All those thousands and thousands of men who were numbered in chapter 1 would **die** in the desert wilderness. This would take about 38 years. Only two men

would be allowed to live and enter the promised land. What were the names of these two men (Numbers 14:30)? 1) _____ 2) _____ All of the others would die "in this _____ (Numbers 14:35).

The children of Israel missed out on God's blessing! They missed out on entering a wonderful land flowing with milk and honey! They missed out on seeing God give them a wonderful victory over giants! But Joshua and Caleb were different! They grabbed hold of God's promise and simply believed that God was able to do what He said He would do! They received the blessing!

The Key Verse in Numbers

The key idea in the book of Numbers is that of UNBELIEF. The children of Israel did not believe God and as a result of this the book of Numbers tells about the 38 years of **wilderness wanderings** (the time that elapsed before the last unbelieving man died). See Numbers 14:29-30.

A key verse goes along with this idea of unbelief, and it is found in Numbers 14:11: "And how long will it be before they _____ Me?" God Himself is asking this question! Again and again God's people refused to believe God's promise. We read about these same people in Hebrews 3:19---"So we see that they could not enter in because of _____." The children of Israel could not enter the promised land because they refused to believe God's promise! God had given them a wonderful promise about a wonderful land, but that promise did not do them any good. Why not (see Hebrews 4:1-2) ?

How long will it be before *we* believe God? Are we missing out on what God has for us because of our unbelief? Are we missing out on God's blessings? Are we walking by faith, or do we get all worried about every little problem that comes our way? Is God bigger than the problems we face, or are the problems we face like giants that are bigger than God? Out of all those thousands of people, only two really believed God. We need people like Joshua and Caleb today! What are some of the promises that God has given to us? God has not promised to give us the land of Palestine, but what promises has God given to believers today? Are we going to grab hold of those promises and make them our very own?

Deuteronomy — God's Commentary on the Law Of Moses

Finally *after 38 years* in the wilderness desert, the last unbelieving person of the older generation died. Of this older generation, only Joshua and Caleb and Moses were still alive. All of the other men living were younger, because they were under 20 years old when the first counting was made. They were the younger generation. Some of them were teens when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea. Others were only children when this happened. Others were not even born yet. As the book of Deuteronomy begins, it is about 40 years after crossing the Red Sea. The new generation has grown up and the older generation has died off.

The Name of the Book

The name **Deuteronomy** means "the second law." This means that God's law was given a second time to the new generation. Moses, who was now a very old man, carefully repeated and explained the law to this new generation. These people would go into the promised land. The older generation was not allowed to go into the promised land.

Even today laws need to be explained and re-taught to the new generation. This is true when it comes to the laws of our own country. The great laws of our country were first set forth over 200 years ago. These great laws are found in a great document known as *The Constitution of the United States*. Those of us living today were not around in the days of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. If we had lived back then with these great men we would probably understand the Constitution very well! The same thing is true with the law that God gave to His people at Mt. Sinai. The new generation had not been present when God gave His law to Moses (or if they were present they were only teens or children who were probably too young to remember). They needed Moses to teach them God's law in a new and fresh way. This is just what Moses did!

Deuteronomy is also the last book of Moses. In this book we find Moses' last words to the children of Israel. The book ends with the death of Moses. So as we read this book, we are reading Moses' last words before his death.

The Greatest Commandment

In Matthew 22:36-38 Jesus told what the first and greatest commandment is. This command is found in the book of Deuteronomy, in chapter 6. What verse? _____

How does man show his love to God? Read the following verses. All of them talk about loving God. What does each verse say after it mentions loving God?

Deuteronomy 5:10 _____
 Deuteronomy 7:9 _____
 Deuteronomy 11:1 _____

Therefore, how does a person show his love to God?

_____ Did Jesus say the same thing in John 14:15,21,23? _____ This is one of the key ideas in the book of Deuteronomy: **OBEDIENCE**. We show our love for God by simply obeying Him and doing what He says.

The book of Deuteronomy is filled with laws: "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." The Ten Commandments are repeated in the book of Deuteronomy. Can you find them in chapter 5? When you think of the book of Deuteronomy you should think of the word **obedience**. To love God is to obey God!

Before we can obey God we must be saved! An unsaved person must realize this: "I have failed to obey God. I have failed to love God with all my heart. I have broken God's laws. I am a guilty lawbreaker!" But there is good news for unsaved and guilty people! Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and lawbreakers (1 Timothy 1:15). What is the very first command that an unsaved person must obey (1 John 3:23, the first part of the verse)?

_____ Have you done this? When the unsaved person obeys this first command, then he is saved! He can then begin to learn to obey God's other commands! Are you learning to obey?

A Blessing and a Curse

The key passage in the book of Deuteronomy is found in Deuteronomy 11:26-28. God's people must choose between a **BLESSING** and a **CURSE** (verse 26). The blessing will be theirs if they do what (verse 27)? _____ The curse will be theirs if they do what (verse 28)? _____

_____ The same thing is true for God's people today: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey!" Doing what God says is the very best medicine for the believer's soul! What do you want from God? His blessing or His curse?

Jesus is the Perfect Example

Jesus perfectly obeyed God! Jesus perfectly obeyed *all* the commands found in the book of Deuteronomy. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy three times ("It is written!" "It is written!" "It is written!"--see Matthew 4:4,7,10). Can you find the verse in Deuteronomy 8 which says that man does not live by bread only? _____ Can you find the verse in Deuteronomy 6 which says that man should not tempt the Lord or put Him to the test? _____ Can you find the verse in Deuteronomy 6 which says that man should worship and fear the Lord and serve only Him? _____

The Message of the First Five Books

Let's briefly review the message of the first five books of the Bible:

1. **GENESIS**—I'm born again! I'm a new creature (new creation) in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)! I have a new heart and a new beginning!
2. **EXODUS**—God has delivered me out of the terrible slavery of sin (John 8:32-36)!
3. **LEVITICUS**—I can worship a holy God because of Christ's sacrifice (1 Peter 3:18).
4. **NUMBERS**—I must believe God's promises. **Faith** is the key (Hebrews chapters 3 and 4).
5. **DEUTERONOMY**—I must obey God's commands. **Obedience** is the key (John 14:15,21,23)!



One Or The Other

