

Life Lesson 32
Leviticus
Text: Leviticus

Introduction

We've finished up two of the 66 books of the Bible in our study so far. What are they? The first book of the Bible is Genesis. In Genesis we learned of the early days and the early people of the earth. The next book is Exodus. In Exodus we learned about how God's people, the Israelites, escaped from Egypt. We learned about the law God gave them and about the tabernacle He told them to build.

Now we are looking at the third book of the Bible, Leviticus. Leviticus gets its name from the Levites. They were descendants of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob. The Levites were chosen by God to work in the tabernacle. They were the tribe of priests.

Leviticus isn't an easy book to read, but it's a very interesting one to study.

The Story

In Leviticus, God tells the Levites how to do the work of the tabernacle. He tells about the offerings and even the kind of clothes they were to wear while sacrificing the offerings for the people. Leviticus also tells some more laws and rules for God's people to follow so that they will lead happy and healthy lives, pleasing to God.

The main message in Leviticus is that God is a holy God. He hates sin! He wants His people to be a holy people, separate and different from people in the world who don't believe in Him.

First we can see God's holiness in the sacrifices. Some of the offerings were to be animals. They were to be killed and their blood shed on the altar. Some of these were to be burned. God wants us to see from these offerings that sin must be punished.

"For the wages of sin is death," God tells us in Romans 6:23. The blood of the animals couldn't wash away the sins of God's people. They couldn't die in anyone's place. But they did represent the death of One who could pay for sins -- the Lord Jesus. When the people offered their lambs and cows and birds, they were saying in their hearts that they believed God would send a Messiah, One to pay for their sins with His own blood. Maybe they didn't understand everything about God's promise, or what the sacrifices represented, but they understood that they were a sinful people and they looked for the One God promised to send to save them from their sins.

In Leviticus God also gave the rules for the priests. They were to be mediators, or "go-betweens" between the people and God. Now we don't need to offer sacrifices because Jesus has already come and paid for our sins. We don't need priests anymore either, because Jesus is our priest. He's our "go-between." He intercedes for us before God.

Next, God gave more rules, or laws, to the people. They weren't to be dirty in either body or soul. They were to be clean through and through. These laws told them how to live clean lives.

We who are Christians should be clean. We should have clean lives, not dirty with sins. We should have clean mouths, not saying bad words like lost people do. We shouldn't dirty up our mouths by calling people bad names or saying things that would hurt them.

Even our thoughts should be clean. How can you clean up your thoughts? Not by brain-washing! You can clean your thoughts by a “washing of the water of the word.” In other words, reading your Bible will help you keep your thoughts clean. You should think of good, clean things -- things about Jesus. That will keep your thoughts right.

If you keep your thoughts clean and right, it will be easy to keep your life clean and right. If your thoughts please God, your life naturally will.

What will happen if you put lots of bad things into your mind? What do you think about if you’ve seen a bad movie? Bad things. If we watch bad shows and read bad books, and are around people who say bad things, what will we think? Bad thoughts.

There is one story in Leviticus that tells us how important it is to do things right and to obey God exactly.

God told Moses and Aaron just how to do the sacrifice. They did as God commanded. The animal was on the altar when suddenly fire fell down out of Heaven and burned up the offering. That was God’s way of showing He accepted their sacrifice.

The priests were to keep that fire going all the time. Even when they took the tabernacle down to move it, the priests were to carry coals of the fire in a special pan.

One day when the duties of the tabernacle were still very new, two of the priests, Nadab and Abihu, went in to offer an incense offering. God hadn’t told them yet how to light the fire. Perhaps He wanted them to light it from the one He had already lit. Nadab and Abihu decided on their own that any old fire should be fine, so they brought strange fire into the tabernacle.

God wasn't at all pleased! He never is pleased when people decide that their own way is best. We ought to follow God's direction, not expect Him to be happy with whatever we decide.

When Nadab and Abihu offered the strange fire, God sent fire from Heaven and burned them up! He wanted everyone to see that we must do things His way, not our own.

The Life Lesson

There are many, many lessons in Leviticus. The most important one told throughout the whole book is this: God is a holy god. He wants His people to be a clean and holy people. That message was for the Israelites -- and for you, too!

Review Questions

What is the third book of the Bible?

Leviticus

For what tribe is the book named?

The Levites

What do the sacrifices represent?

They stand for Jesus' death on the cross.

What was the job of the priests?

They were to be go-betweens, between the people and God.

What did Nadab and Abihu do wrong?

They brought strange fire into the tabernacle.

What happened to them?

They were burned up by fire from Heaven.