



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

**Old Testament Survey**  
**Lesson 11 – From the Glory of Mount Sinai to the Judgment at Kadesh-Barnea**  
**(Leviticus; Numbers 1-14)**

**LEVITICUS**

After God moved into the tabernacle which He designed for Himself, He gave His people all kinds of regulations concerning their worship. Many of these laws are in the book of Leviticus, which comes from the word Levite. The Levites were the sons of Levi. God accepted them as the substitutes of the firstborn in Israel. They were responsible for the care of the tabernacle and the worship in it and sacrifices that took place there under the direction of the priests.

The first section of Leviticus (chapters 1-16) tells Israel how they are to approach God: with sacrifices for sin. Today also we can approach God only through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, **JESUS CHRIST**.

The second section (chapters 17-27) tells how they are to serve God in holiness of living. Today also we are to lead holy lives as God's purchased people. We belong to God, for we have been bought with a price, the blood of the Lamb of God, **JESUS CHRIST**.

The best commentary on the meaning of the Levitical sacrifices is found in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews. Hebrews explains that these Old Testament ceremonial laws are "**obsolete**" for us New Testament Christians (Hebrews 8:13). Colossians 2:16-17 explains that these ceremonial laws all pointed to Christ, our sacrifice: "**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**"

Therefore, Luther's Large Catechism declares: "*According to its outward meaning, this commandment [the Third Commandment] does not concern us Christians. It is an entirely external matter, like the other regulations of the Old Testament associated with particular customs, persons, times, and places, from all of which we are now set free through Christ*" (Book of Concord, Kolb-Wengert Edition, p. 397).

Skim the chapters of Leviticus using the notes below and read chapters 12 and 16 in detail. If you have any questions, please ask them.

Leviticus 1-7 – The Various Kinds of Sacrifices

- The Burnt Offering: bloody, twice daily, all but the blood is burnt – chapter 1 and 6:8-11.  
 For us today: **"I beseech you...that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service"** (Romans 12:1).
- The Grain Offering: unbloody, partly burnt, partly eaten by the priests – chapter 2 and 6:14-18.
- The Peace Offering: bloody, free will offering given in thanksgiving, partly burnt, partly eaten by priests and those making the offering – chapter 3 and 7:11-21, 28-36.
- The Sin Offering: bloody, restored relationship with God broken because of sin, offered for individual sins and for the sins of the people, as on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) – chapter 4 and 6:24-30.
- The Trespass Offering: bloody, for restoring the relationship with God broken through some sin – chapters 5, 6:1-7, and 7:1-10.

Chapters 1-5 describe the offerings to the people of Israel who will offer them. In general, chapters 6 and 7 give detailed instructions for the priests to follow when they make the offerings. Chapter 7:22-27, however, warns the people not to eat the fat of animals that are offered to God or any blood.

Leviticus 8-10 – The Priests (Aaron's family) Are Sanctified and Offer Up the First Sacrifices

Note: Aaron's two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, were killed because they disobeyed God.

**"So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died"** (10:\_\_\_)

Leviticus 11-15 – The Worshipers Must Approach God in Holiness

The worshipers must eat only clean food (chapter 11) – The Law served as a hedge.

The women who have borne children must be purified (chapter 12) – Like Jesus' mother Mary, for example (Luke 2:22-24).

Those who are lepers are unclean (chapters 13-14) – They had to cry: **"Unclean! Unclean!"** and live alone outside the camp (13:45-46).

Men and women must be sexually clean before they approach God (chapter 15).

Leviticus 16 – The Great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) – A Picture of Christ's Atonement

The five sacrificial victims that were to be offered to God (vv. 1-11):

1. A young bull for a sin offering for the high priest
2. A ram for a burnt offering for the high priest
3. A male goat for a sin offering for the people (for the LORD), to be killed
4. A male goat for a sin offering for the people (for Azazel), the scapegoat
5. A ram for a burnt offering for the people

God's instructions for the various offerings such as fasting, once a year only, entrance into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, the sprinkling of the blood (vv. 12-34).

Note: Hebrews chapter 9 compares this ceremony with Christ's one-time sacrifice.

Leviticus 17-25 – God's Regulations for Holiness of Living

Personal holiness: **"You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy"** (19:\_\_\_ 20:\_\_\_)

Holiness regarding blood – No eating of blood (17:10-14, 19:26).

Holiness in the family – No nudity or fornication (chapter 18, 20:10-21).

Holiness with the neighbors (19:9-18).

Holiness of the priests (chapters 21 and 22).

The holy feasts:

Sabbath (23:3).

Passover and Unleavened Bread (23:4-7).

Fest of First Fruits (barley harvest) (23:9-14).

The Feast of Weeks, Pentecost – **"fifty days"** – (grain harvest) (23:15-21).

Feast of Trumpets (23:22-25).

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) (23:26-32).

Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-43) – **"when you have gathered in the fruit of the land"** (23:\_\_\_)

The holy oil for the lamps (24:1-4).

The holy bread (24:5-9).

The holiness of the name of God (24:10-16) – the one who **“blasphemed the name of the LORD”** was killed.

Year of Jubilee – **“that fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you”** (25:\_\_\_)

#### Leviticus 26 – The Blessings of Obedience and the Curses of Disobedience

If they transgressed God’s covenant of Law, they could appeal to God’s covenant of grace (vv. 40-45).

#### Leviticus 27 – Regulations Concerning Voluntary Vows

### **NUMBERS**

The book of Numbers contains the account of the journey of God’s people from Mt. Sinai to the borders of the Promised Land. When the twelve spies returned from the land, the people did not trust in God to give it to them, so this journey ended up taking 38 years instead of just one year.

The book is called Numbers because it begins with a census of the people.

Read Numbers 6-14 along with the notes below. If you have any questions, ask them.

#### Numbers 1-4 – The Counting of the Tribes and the Appointment of the Levites

The total count of fighting men was 603,550. The total number in Israel (including women and children) must have been 2 or 3 million.

God specified the order the Israelites were to camp around the tent of meeting and the order in which they were to break camp (chapter 2).

God assigned duties to the three branches of the Levites: Gershon, Kohath, Merari (chapter 4).

#### Numbers 5-10 – The Last Preparations before Leaving Mount Sinai

The sixth chapter includes the Law of the Nazarite and the Aaronic blessing:

**The LORD bless you and keep you;**

**The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;**

**The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace** (6: \_\_\_\_\_)

Moses **“heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat”** (7:\_\_\_)

The Israelites celebrate the second Passover and God gives the signals for marching (chapters 9 and 10).

Moses invites Hobab, son of his father-in-law Jethro (Reuel), to join the Israelites on their journey – **“Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things”** (10:\_\_\_)

#### Numbers 11 – God Judges His Complaining People at Kibrothhattaavah

Because of the complaining, God sends fire into the camp (vv. 1-3).

The mixed multitude and the Israelites complain about the manna (vv. 4-9).

Moses receives 70 helpers in answer to his prayer (vv. 10-30).

God sends quails, but also a plague with the quails, and many die (vv. 31-35).

#### Numbers 12 – God Judges the Envy of Miriam and Aaron at Hazereth

God defends His servant Moses from the envy of Aaron and Miriam (vv. 1-9)

**“I speak with him [Moses] face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings”** (v. \_\_\_)

God strikes Miriam with leprosy for seven days (vv. 10-16).

### Numbers 13 – The Journey and Report of the Twelve Spies

Moses sends twelve spies to the Promised Land (vv. 1-24).

The spies report a good land, but ten of them speak of giants and walled cities (vv. 25-33).

But Caleb says: **“Let us go up at once and take possession”** (v. \_\_\_\_ Joshua agrees.

### Numbers 14 – God Judges His Unbelieving People with the Wilderness Wandering of 40 Years

Israel rebels against Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and the LORD (vv. 1-10).

The people said: “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”

Joshua and Caleb said: “The LORD is with us. Do not fear them.”

When the people wanted to stone them, **“the glory of the LORD appeared”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Moses prays that God will not destroy His people (vv. 11-19).

**“Pardon the iniquity of this people...according to the greatness of Your mercy”** (v. \_\_\_\_

God declares that no adults shall see the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb (vv. 20-39).

**“Your little ones...I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised... You shall bear your guilt...forty years.”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Now some Israelites want to take the land at once, but they are defeated (vv. 40-45).

### Questions

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1. In what way do the sacrifices commanded in Leviticus point to Jesus Christ?
2. What do we learn from the account of Nadab and Abihu?
3. What procedure was followed with respect to the scapegoat?
4. How is the scapegoat a picture of Jesus Christ?
5. Why do we today not observe all the festivals mentioned in Leviticus?
6. How does the Aaronic blessing hint that God is a Trinity?
7. For what purpose did God choose 70 helpers for Moses?
8. What was the sin of Aaron and Miriam? How did God handle their sin?
9. What was the report of the majority of the twelve spies? Why was it sinful?
10. How did the minority show the proper spirit?
11. What was God’s judgment on the people because of their unbelief?