

## An Introduction to Leviticus

*One of the stubbornly enduring habits of the human race is to insist on domesticating God. We are determined to tame him. We figure out ways to harness God to our projects. We try to reduce God to a size that conveniently fits our plans and ambitions and tastes. But our Scriptures are even more stubborn in telling us that we can't do it. // The Message Introduction to Leviticus*

- 36 divine speeches
- The 3-year lectionary readings only include one reading from Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18.

## Vayiqra

- Exodus begins with God being silent. Leviticus begins with God speaking. *Exodus 1:8-14 and Exodus 2:23-25*
- Exodus begins with the people of Israel not able to worship God properly. *Exodus 5:1-3*
- Exodus creates the people of Israel. Leviticus teaches them how to live as God's people. *Exodus 19:1-6*
- The rest of the Old Testament is the people of Israel living up to Leviticus.

## Kipper

- Atonement or covering (Sephardic Jews call their yarmulkes - kippahs) if I am sacrificing an animal then I will be "covered" by the blood and I will be atoned for and accepted by God because I am covered in the blood of the lamb/animal

## Nislach

- Forgiveness
- *"It seems that this book is thought to have little or no relevance for modern people. At best, it contains outdated ancient Israelite ritual legislation that has been abolished by Christ. At worst, it is considered quite un-Christian in its promotion of ritual legalism, justification by works, the very antithesis of the Gospel. So churches that prize the Good News of free forgiveness through faith in Christ may mistakenly assume that they should no longer use Leviticus to nurture the saints, even though the entire book is concerned with forgiveness and atonement - more overtly than any other book of the Bible." // Kleinig, CPH commentary on Leviticus*

## Tabernacle

- Leviticus begins with instructions for the people themselves to commune with God. It shows that the tent of meeting is for everyone. It does not begin with instructions for the priests and levites. This is opposed to the dominant religious cultures of permanent temples and priests who profited from the temple work.
- John 1:14-18
- Colossians 1:19, 2:9

## Olah

- Whole/burnt offering
- Literally means "to cause to ascend" - the Greek Septuagint translates it as holocaust
- Genesis 8:20-22
- Presented by lay people - man or woman - rich or poor

- The personal burnt offering is so that the person would be accepted and favored by God
- *And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. // Ephesians 5:2*
- *And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. // Revelation 8:3-4*

**It is a voluntary offering/sacrifice**

- *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. // John 10:17-18*