



Bible Readers Club

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Week

5

Leviticus 1-27

Dear Friends, The “desert walk” continues where we left off last week. The Lord is speaking to Moses and saying “Speak to the Israelites and say...” Watch for the phrase “The LORD said to Moses” throughout this book as a marker for each new section of regulations from God to His people.

The word “Leviticus” means “concerning the Levites,” and refers to the priestly clan of Israel who had the special duty of overseeing and providing for the people’s worship of Yahweh God. Many of the laws found throughout this book, then, instruct these priests and the people in how to worship God properly. Guarding the holiness of God and promoting the holiness of His people is of great concern. All of the laws are given in continuity with what was begun in Exodus, and it is important to keep in mind that each of them is ultimately about *right relationships*—with the Living God and with one another. So we find page after page of rules regarding sacrifices, ritual cleanness, Levitical duties, atonement, social obligations, sexual relations, family life, crime and punishment, repeating festivals and special years, but in all of this the goal is *holiness* before God and *love* of neighbors (see 19:2 & 18). As with the long section of instructions in Exodus, part of the glorious message here is that what we do matters to God, even down to the small details! All these laws were never meant to be an end in themselves, but a guide and help for those called to live in the promises of God, in *covenant* with Him.

Fifteen hundred years after God delivered these laws to His people through His special mediator named Moses, a man named Paul became another special messenger for God. This Paul wrote a letter called Galatians in which he said this:

...The law, introduced 430 years later [after God's promise to Abraham], does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (Galatians 3:17-23)

According to our "Bible Readers' – I Read God" Schedule, we'll have to wait until December to read the rest of this letter of Paul (feel free, though, to jump ahead ☐), but may the Spirit of Galatians pervade out reading this week of Leviticus. May the holy requirements of God's Law teach us our need for Jesus Christ. And may we be led to deeper hope, faith and trust in Him.

Pastor Jay