

“What in the Heck of the World”

Sermon Reflection Questions July 12, 2009

Leviticus 20:24-26, Unlocking the Old Testament

Many people make a goal at the beginning of the year to read the Bible in a year. For those who do not finish reading the bible, Leviticus is usually the roadblock for them. Genesis and Exodus are, by and large, great narrative stories about interesting people that journey through life with God. But Leviticus has a whole different tone. It is filled with prescriptions regarding how exactly to make sacrifices and offerings to God, what makes a person clean and unclean, what kinds of animals people can eat, etc. When we read Leviticus it is easy to just say, “Jesus died for my sins so I no longer have to follow the prescriptions in Leviticus”. There is certainly a lot of truth to that statement. However, we can still let the spirit of Leviticus influence our lives and find some amazing benefits.

1. Leviticus is 27 chapters long and it is very complicated. But if you haven’t read it before try to, at least, take half an hour and skim the chapters. In order to give you a framework for Leviticus, chapters 1-7 deal with the way people must approach God because of sin, chapters 8-10 talk about the laws for the priests of the Jewish people, chapters 11-27 focus on how the people should live in everyday life.

2. Most scholars see the central verse of the book to be Leviticus 20:26, “You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine.” Peter quotes this passage in the New Testament in I Peter 1:16. Holy has two major connotations. First, holy means to be set apart, it means to be different than what is around you. Second, being holy means to be whole or complete.

- a. Given these two definitions of holy, how is God holy in both of these ways?
- b. What does it mean that we are to be holy in terms of being set apart?
- c. What does it mean that we are to be holy in terms of being whole or complete?
- d. How did the commands of Leviticus lead the people of Israel to holiness?

“What in the Heck of the World”
Sermon Reflection Questions July 12, 2009
Leviticus 20:24-26, Unlocking the Old Testament

3. Chapters 8-10 of Leviticus tells us how priests are to prepare for their priestly duty, so most people would think that this section of verses would only apply to pastors. However 1 Peter 2:4-9 says that we are all in the priesthood and the great reformer Martin Luther said there is a “priesthood of all believers”.

a. Either from the message or your own thoughts how are we in the priesthood for one another? (See also Hebrews 10:24-25)

b. If we are all in the “priesthood” then what do chapters 8-10 teach about the general intentions of how we are to prepare ourselves for our tasks?

4. In chapters 11-27 there are prescriptions about being ceremonially clean as well as prescriptions regarding other behaviors. In general, which prescriptions apply specifically to us and which ones do not? (See Mark 7:19, Matthew 5:17-20)

5. How do the first few chapters of Leviticus set the stage for Jesus? (See Hebrews 4:14-16) What then should be our attitude in life after we have received Jesus?

6. Even though we don’t practice the specific ceremonial prescriptions of Leviticus (such as, which animals to eat and which not to eat.) we can still practice the intention and spirit of those prescriptions in Leviticus. So how might we live out the intentions of the dietary prescriptions in Leviticus? (see 1 Corinthians 10:31)