

# Old Testament History

Lesson #7

Leviticus 1:1-Numbers 17:13

## Outline

### I. **A Summary Of Leviticus**

- A. The offering of sacrifices (1:1-7:38).
- B. The institution of the priesthood (8:1-10:20).
- C. Laws regarding uncleanness (11:1-15:33).
- D. Living in holiness (16:1-25:55).
- E. Blessings and curses (26:1-46).
- F. Rules on vows and tithes (27:1-34).

### II. **Studies In Numbers**

- A. Numbering and organization of the tribes (1:1-4:49).
  1. Census of the men of war (1:1-54).
  2. Placement of the tribes in the camp and march (2:1-34).
  3. Numbering and placement of the Levites (3:1-4:49).
- B. Commands for purity among the people (5:1-10:10).
  1. The consecration of the tabernacle (7:1-8:4).
  2. The consecration of the Levites (8:5-26).
  3. The observance of the Passover and instructions on moving the camp (9:1-23).
  4. The departure of the camp (10:1-10).
- C. From Sinai to Kadesh (10:11-20:29).
  1. The fire and the quail (10:29-11:35).
  2. Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses (12:1-16).
  3. The twelve spies' conflicting reports (13:1-33).
  4. The people's rebellion and defeat (14:1-45).
  5. Supplemental laws (15:1-41).
  6. Korah's rebellion (16:1-50).
  7. The budding of Aaron's staff (17:1-13).
- D. Preparations for entering Canaan (26:1-36:13).
  1. Summary of the journey from Egypt to Canaan (33:1-37).
- E. The desert wanderings (Deuteronomy 1:46-2:15).

## Notes

### **Leviticus 1:1-27:34**

- Exodus was intended to recount how God redeemed and set apart a people for His own possession. It fittingly closes with the account of the construction of the tabernacle. Leviticus tells how God consecrates His people. It is the code regulating the spiritual life of Israel.

- The first part of Leviticus (1-16) tells how Israel was to approach God. The second part (17-27) tells how people are to maintain their fellowship with God. In short, the first part shows the justification of God's people and the second part their sanctification. The book is neither simply legal, nor is it merely ceremonial, but it is symbolical and typical. Therefore, it is full of rich teaching.
- Leviticus opens with a description of the various kinds of sacrifices (1-7). It then discusses the priesthood (8-10), worshipers (11-15), family life (12), and the congregation (13-15). The great cleansing of the Day of Atonement brings the first part of the book to a close (16).
- The second part opens with a discussion of personal holiness (17). It then discusses family holiness (18), holiness in social relations (19-20), and holiness in the priesthood (21-22). The text also describes holy seasons (23-24), and the holiness of the land (25). The final chapters detail the blessings and curses of the covenant, and the freewill offerings of the heart (26-27).
- Two instances in Leviticus demonstrate the seriousness to which God expected the Israelites to live according to the covenant. Nadab and Abihu were struck dead when they offered strange fire unto to the Lord (10:1-6), and the blasphemer was stoned (24:10-14).

### ***Numbers 1:1-4:49; 10:1-10***

- Numbers is a chronicle of the main events which occurred during the 38 years of wandering. The book is divided into three parts. The first part (1-10) details the preparations for the march from Sinai. The second (11-21), the history of the wanderings of Israel through the wilderness, and the third (22-36), the various occurrences east of the Jordan.
- Before leaving Sinai, God directed Moses and Aaron to take a census of all who were able to fight in war. This meant every male from 20 years of age (1:3). Israel was then arranged in thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. The census was made on the basis of the poll taken nine months before for the purpose of atonement money (Exodus 30:11-16). This poll had yielded a total of 603,550, which was the same total in 1:46. Before the entering the land, a second census was taken which yielded a total number of 601,730 men, which showed a decrease of 1,820 during the years of wilderness wandering.
- The camp of Israel was arranged as a threefold square. It was a symbolical design, which was further developed in Solomon's temple and finally developed in the "city that lieth foursquare." The innermost square was occupied by "the dwelling," covered by "the tent," and surrounded by its "court." Around this inner square was another square, occupied by the ministers of the tabernacle -- in the east by Moses, Aaron, and his sons; in the south by the Kohathites; in the west by the

Gershonites; and in the north by the Merarites. Finally, there was a third and outermost square, which formed the camp of Israel. The eastern side was occupied by Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The southern side was occupied by Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. The western side was occupied by Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The northern side was occupied by Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Altogether the camp would have occupied about three square miles.

- The signal to move was given by two silver trumpets blown by the sons of Aaron. A prolonged signal indicated the commencement of the march. At the first trumpet the eastern, and at the second the southern part of the camp was to move forward. The tabernacle, the western part, and the northern part of the camp then joined the procession. One short, sharp blast of a trumpet indicated an assembly of the people.

### ***Numbers 7:1-9:23***

- Before Israel left Sinai, three occurrences were recorded: the offering of gifts on the part of the princes of Israel, the setting apart of the Levites to the service for which they had been designated, and a second observance of the Passover.
- The presentation of these gifts took thirteen days. Each offering consisted of a "silver charger," weighing about 4 1/2 pounds, a "silver bowl," weighing about 2 1/4 pounds, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a "golden spoon full of incense" weighing about 1/3 pound. These gifts were accompanied by burnt, sin, and peace offerings, which were probably sacrificed each day, as the vessels were presented in the sanctuary.
- The setting apart of the Israelites was preceded by the lighting of the seven-branched candlestick in the sanctuary. The light of the candlestick was symbolical of the mission of Israel as the people of God, and the Levites were the representatives of Israel, having been substituted instead of their firstborn (Numbers 3:11-13). The people laid their hands upon them, designating them as their representatives.
- The second celebration of the Passover was directed by the Lord Himself, perhaps to remove the possibility of a misunderstanding that the Passover was not to be observed yearly. For those who have defiled themselves, a second Passover was held exactly one month later. Israel had to be compliant in these rites in every detail to obtain the benefits promised to the obedience of faith.

### ***Numbers 10:29-11:35***

- On the 20th day of the second month, the signal for departure from Sinai was given. The general destination of Israel was the wilderness of

Paran. On one side, they dealt with the Edomites and on the other side, the Amalekites. The Amorites were also in the area.

- At the request of Moses, Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, accompanied Israel, acting as their guide in the wilderness. Although the Israelites were guided by the pillar and cloud, Hobab would have been useful in informing them about springs and pasturage.
- The difficult conditions in the wilderness had probably depressed the hearts of the ones who were not strong in faith and filled them with a longing for a better place. Before inheriting the promises, Israel had to pass through a trial of faith similar to Abraham's. For them, each failure sounded greater warnings, until at last they were judged and that generation was kept out of Canaan.
- The Israelites displeased God because of their murmuring, and He sent fire to judge them, but they did not change their hearts. This sin was due to lust, and it manifested itself in contempt for God's provision and in a desire for Egypt's provisions. Moses appealed to God and God supported and encouraged His servant. God directed him to appoint 70 elders to help him with the burden of the people.
- In His graciousness, God provided for the needs of the people, but in His justice, He punished their lust. The quail, exhausted from flight, flew a short distance above the ground, where they could easily be killed. When they ate the abundant quantity of quail, God sent a plague which made a great impression upon them (cf. Psalm 78:26-31; 106:15).

### ***Numbers 12:1-14:45***

- Up to this point, the rebellion of the people had been directed at God. Now Moses would experience the full bitterness of their rebellion (cf. Matthew 10:36). Miriam and Aaron murmured against Moses because of his Ethiopian wife, which was most likely a second marriage after Zipporah had died. For the first time we see the pride of Israel and their disdain for other nations. The Lord vindicated Moses as His servant by punishing Miriam with leprosy. Moses interceded and Miriam was spared.
- The Israelites had almost reached the boundary of the land, when an event occurred which not only formed a turning point in Israel's history, but it also formed a pattern of Israel's conduct in the future. As that generation in their unbelief refused to enter Canaan, so did their children reject the fulfillment of the promises in Christ Jesus.
- The proposal to send spies had come from the people (Deuteronomy 1:22). By the permission of the Lord, Moses agreed to the expedition (Numbers 13:1). Twelve were chosen and left about the end of July. After 40 days the spies returned to camp. The report and the evidence presented assured the Israelites of God's original promise (Exodus 3:8).

- However, the spies added the fact that the people who currently inhabited the land were very mighty, and it produced immediate terror in the hearts of the people. Caleb tried to calm them, but to no avail. What followed was an open revolt against Moses and Aaron, direct rebellion against God, and a proposal to elect a new leader and return to Egypt.
- Moses went to God on behalf of the people, and God relented in His desire to destroy them. He punished them by making them wander according to the number of days the spies were in the land. All of that generation, from the age of 20 upwards, would die in the wilderness. The day before, Canaan was within their grasp, and today it was lost!
- The people showed their spiritual ignorance and unfitness for God's promises by their determination to go up and try to take the land. When your obedience is not of faith, it is of self-confidence. Moses tried to talk the people out of their plans, but they refused to listen and suffered defeat.

***Numbers 15:1-41; 33:16-37; Deuteronomy 1:46-2:15; Numbers 16:1-17:13***

- Very few records exist of the years of wilderness wanderings. Kadesh-barnea seems to be their "headquarters" during that time, and the farthest they wandered from Kadesh was Ezion-geber, which was on the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. The 18 "stations" of the wilderness wandering are cataloged in Numbers 33:16-37. There are 40 encampments in all from Egypt to the plains of Moab.
- Deuteronomy 2:7 shows that Israel had not only been well cared for during the wanderings, but had also greatly increased in possessions and wealth.
- The account of the wanderings only really mentions two events -- both of them in rebellion against the Lord. The first is the account of a man who had gathered sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). He was taken outside the camp and stoned.
- The second instance of rebellion was far more serious. Korah, a great-grandson of Levi, and many others revolted against the authority of Moses and Aaron. They charged that Moses and Aaron took too much authority to themselves; they were the priesthood and the government.
- The judgment of this rebellion was so terrible it only has one other parallel in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. The rebellion of Korah is mentioned several times in the Bible, showing its serious nature. Not only was it in direct opposition to the appointment of God, but it also ran counter to the purpose of the Old Testament, and, if successful, would have subverted its typical character by substituting the human for the divine.

- The punishment for this rebellion was something which had never been done before, demonstrating the seriousness of the offense. When the people saw the judgment, it filled them with awe, but not with repentance. The Israelites actually blamed Moses and Aaron, thereby proving the justice of the sentence of wandering in the wilderness.
- In a great show of intercession, Moses and Aaron stopped the plague caused by Korah's rebellion. God showed the legitimacy of His choice of Aaron by causing his rod to bud.