

LEVITICUS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Leviticus chapter 16 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In this chapter the Lord will once again explain to them who can approach Him and when they can approach Him. So with that said, let's dig into Leviticus chapter 16, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

LEVITICUS 16

VERSES 1-2

1. Here we see a comparison between the wrong way to come before the Lord, as illustrated by Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter 10 as the Lord struck them dead for their sin, and the right way as God explains here. Only the high priest, Aaron could enter into the presence of God and not anytime he wanted. Only one day a year, on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. He also could not approach God anyway he wanted but had to follow what the Lord instructed him to do and the future high priests to do. In a sense it was by God's invitation and His appointed time. Thus, this chapter will now set forth the right way to approach God!

2. Folks, the same is true today. We can only approach God by His established ways and we are so blessed because we can all have access to God the Father through Jesus Christ and that door is always opened. Paul put it like this in Romans 5:1-2, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”** That is what the Lord has done for us and thus, we can enter into the holy of holies, the presence of God, through the veil, through Jesus Christ!

VERSES 3-5

1. Aaron was not to come before God wearing his beautiful high priestly garments, but he was to put on **“the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers,”** but why? I believe he was to be humble as he approached the Lord. But before he put on these clothes, he needed to be bathed, washed. He also was to bring a bull for himself and two goats and a ram for the trespass offering for the children of Israel. Interestingly enough, since there is no temple in Jerusalem today, thus no sacrifices, when the Jews celebrate Yom Kippur it is a day of fasting, soul searching and righting wrongs. It is a day of reflection they call it. But there is no sacrifice for sin, no shedding of blood and you will not find this idea of righting wrongs to atone for your sins anywhere in the Bible for without the shedding of blood, there is *NO* remission of sins!

2. Aaron, by his actions, is a type of Christ. Jesus laid down some of His Godly attributes and clothed Himself with humanity. Paul makes that point in Philippians 2:5-8 as he wrote, **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”** Not only that, but Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for our sins!

VERSES 6-10

1. Aaron was to sacrifice a bull for his sins and his families. And then he was to take two goats, one would be sacrificed the other was the scapegoat as the sins of the nation were placed on this goat and then he would be released into the wilderness never to be seen again!

VERSES 11-14

1. Before Aaron could enter the holy of holies with the blood of the sin offering, he brought in a censor filled with incense, possibly to cover the glory of God before Aaron could enter in. Even with the sacrifices, His sins were only covered and thus, he could not gaze upon God. Then he was to take the blood and sprinkle it seven times on the mercy seat, which was the cover for the Ark of the Covenant where the Law was kept. And so as God dwelt above the mercy seat, between the cherubim he looked down upon the blood stained mercy seat that covered the Law, which was broken, and atonement was made!

2. The Hebrew word for “**atonement**” means to cover, it could never take away your sins. Some may argue to the contrary, but listen carefully to what Paul tells us in Hebrews 9:11-14, “**But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**”

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for “atonement” is KAPHAR and it speaks of a covering. You see, the sacrificing of bulls and goats could never take away a persons sins; it only covered them for a time, until they sinned again. Now as we come to the New Testament, the Greek word for “atonement” is KATALLAGE (kat-al-lag-ay’) and it speaks of “making one” or better put, reconciliation. Think of it like this, at-one-ment! You see, what the Old Testament sacrificial system couldn’t do, Christ has come and has done for us, paying in full the penalty for our sins and thus, our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! We should rejoice over that!

VERSES 15-19

1. Now Aaron was to intercede for the people by placing the blood of the goat on the mercy seat, and then in the holy place and the brazen altar to cleanse it.

VERSES 20-22

1. After all that was done, then the sin of the people would be transferred to the scapegoat or the second goat and lead into the wilderness never to be seen again. And the picture here is that sin could be put away but it could never be eliminated for each year this Day of Atonement took place!

2. Now, what if they did see this goat again, because that was possible? Jewish tradition tells us that they would tie a scarlet cloth on the head of this goat and if it turned white as he was lead into the wilderness, then their sins were forgiven. If it didn't, then their sins were not forgiven and they would mourn for that year. Later on tradition tells us that this goat was lead to the top of a mountain called Azazel, which was the name for this goat, and cast off this mountain. If the red thread turned white, then their sin was forgiven and once again, if it didn't, then their sin was not forgiven and they would mourn for that year.

Interestingly enough, about 40 years before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, around the time of Christ's death, we are told that the red string never turned white again! But why did it not turn white again? When the beaten, bloodied body of Jesus rose from the dead He was clothed in white garments, showing us that our sins have been cleansed as white as snow, we are forgiven in Christ, that atonement has been completed at the cross by the shed blood of Jesus!

VERSES 23-28

1. Not only did the person who released the scapegoat have to wash but so did the high priest and now he put on his beautiful high priestly garments. In a sense, you might say that when the atonement was completed, he was seated in glory – sound familiar? It should, for it pictures for us what Christ has done as He now has been raised in glory!

VERSES 29-31

1. This was a solemn day of fasting and rest, not like the other feasts of Israel. Why no work? I believe it points to Jesus and the finished work on the cross of Calvary as He paid in full for our sins. We can't work our way into heaven. We can't attain atonement by our own efforts. Paul put it like this in Ephesians 2:8-9, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**"

VERSES 32-34

1. Prior to the work of Christ, only the high priest could come into the presence of God and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. But now, through the blood of Christ we all have access to God the Father. Paul, in Hebrews 9:24-28 tells us, "**For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another — He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**" Thus, this Day of Atonement has been fulfilled in Christ as He completed the work and has sat down at the right hand of the Father!

LEVITICUS 17**VERSES 1-4**

1. To understand this you have to understand what was going on in the pagan world around them. Sacrifices could be made anywhere and anytime and God is telling His people that for them, they need to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle, they are not to be like the pagans around them who worship false gods anyway they want. If you did not obey, you would be cut off from the people!

VERSES 5-9

1. Those 430 years in Egypt affected the children of Israel in that they began to worship their gods. But once again God is warning them to not worship demons or you will be cut off from your people. They were to worship the Lord alone and God desires the same for us today!

VERSES 10-12

1. God wanted His people to be separate, they were not to drink blood like the pagans, who believed the life of that animal or person was in that blood and as they drank it down they received that life energy! Yes, the life is in the blood, in a physical sense and man did not know this apart from God until 1628 when Dr. Harvey identified the importance of blood. And spiritually speaking it is the blood that is shed that gives to us spiritual life, the shed blood of Jesus! It was shed to give atonement to us and thus, God's command is simple. Don't drink the blood but apply it to your life by faith! Thus, the Jews would drain all the blood they could from the animals before they would cook and eat them.

2. In John 6:53-56 we are told, **“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.’”** Now you can understand why so many of these Jews left Jesus, they were told by God not to drink blood and yet Jesus is telling them to drink His blood! Folks, they missed the point! In John 6:63 Jesus said, **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”** In other words it is not drinking blood or eating flesh but allowing God's Spirit through His Word to sustain us. Remember, Jesus said that the flesh profits ***NOTHING!***

VERSES 13-16

1. If you are out hunting and kill an animal, you could drain its blood and then cover the blood up, but if it could be brought in and bled properly, that is what was to be done.
2. Keep in mind you could not go to the store to buy meat. Thus, if you came by some road kill you might say, you could cook it up and eat it but you would be ceremonially unclean. You needed to bath and you would be unclean until evening, the start of the new day for the Jew.

LEVITICUS 18VERSES 1-5

1. Before the Lord tells the children of Israel what He desires them to do, He establishes His relationship with them by telling them who He is, **“I am the LORD”** or **“I am YAHWEH.”** Then He tells them who they are to Him, **“your God.”** Thus, the Lord is saying to them, “You belong to Me and therefore, don’t do as the world is doing!”
2. Tragically today, many Christians say kind of what sometimes we as parents have said to our children, “Do as I say and not as I do!” Which is obviously wrong, we should live the way we want our children to live. As Christians, it may go something like this, “Don’t look at me, look at Jesus!” Folks, they are to see Jesus in us as we shine in this dark world. And yes we are not perfect, but let us not use that as an excuse for our wrong behavior!

3. And we need to remember that God is telling us these things because He loves us and He wants what is best for our lives, He wants to bless us as He wanted to bless the children of Israel!

VERSES 6-9

1. That phrase, “**to uncover his nakedness**” is speaking of sexual relations and God is now saying that incest or sexual relations, marrying your immediate family is prohibited. But why is God now saying that? Because now the gene pool has been so corrupted since the time of Adam, when it was perfect, that a union between family members increases the chances for congenital malformations, prenatal mortality, it just increase the risk for a serious defect!

VERSES 10-18

1. And this goes beyond sexual relations, it speaks of rape and molestation. And here we see God speak of the many relationships that are prohibited:

- Grandparents and grandchildren (by blood or by marriage)
- Uncles, aunts, and nieces, nephews
- Parents and the spouses of their children
- Siblings and the spouses of their other siblings
- The children of a spouse
- The sibling of a spouse

When you read that, if it were obeyed, the Jerry Springer show would be off the air because he would not have any of this behavior on the show, it would not be practiced! But because man thinks he knows better, he is suffering the consequences of his rebellion against God!

VERSE 19

1. Remember back in Leviticus 15:19 we saw that the penalty for breaking this, for having sexual relations with your wife during her menstrual period was not a sin, but it made you ceremonially unclean and you needed to have a ritual washing and be unclean until evening.

VERSE 20

1. Here we see an echo of what God said back in Exodus 20:4, the seventh commandment, “**You shall not commit adultery.**” In our society adultery seems to be the norm and those that come against it are out of touch. People do not realize the devastating affects that this sexual sin brings upon them, their families and their friends. Yes, all sin is against God, but it will affect those around you!

God has clearly established the order of the family and obviously adultery is not part of that order, in fact it brings disorder to the family. Paul, in I Corinthians 11:3 tells us, **“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”** And in Colossians 3:18-21 Paul said, **“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”** That is the order in the family and there is the blessing’s of God as you walk in them and not walk as the world wants you to! You see, man tries to justify this sin but God condemns it. I don’t know if you heard, but now they say that those that commit adultery, it is not their fault; it is in their genes! How sad that we can’t take responsibility for our actions, but blame it on our genetic make-up. If that were true, and it isn’t, then there would be no sin, it is all in the genes and we have no control!

VERSE 21

1. As these adulterous relationships took place, many times children were born out of this relationship. So what do you do with those unwanted children? They would be offered up as a living sacrifice, they would be murdered and burned to this pagan god called Molech and then their ashes would be put in a container and buried in the walls of their homes! Thus, it was a form of infanticide, it would dispose of all those unwanted children and they were making a sacrifice to this pagan god hoping for some kind of blessing out of their sin! Folks, it is hard to imagine anyone doing this but they did! Francis Schaeffer describes this ritual as he wrote:

According to one tradition there was an opening at the back of the brazen idol, and after a fire was made within it, each parent had to come and with his own hands place his firstborn child in the white-hot, outstretched arms of Molech. According to this tradition, the parent was not allowed to show emotion, and drums were beaten so that the baby's cries could not be heard as the baby died in the arms of Molech.

- Francis Schaeffer

2. Did the children of Israel heed this warning by God? No they did not and I will give you just one example as they were in the land of Canaan and what they did. We are told in II Chronicles 28:1-4, **“Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done. For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.”** The king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah burned his children to the god Molech and worshiped false gods and in doing so he was leading the people down that path!

Now, as outraged as you should be by this, we do the same thing every day in this country! We offer our children; our unwanted children to the god of pleasure, the god of convenience as we have aborted over 40 million children, murdered them in the womb, a place that is to be safe for them to grow! My wife was going through the channels and on The View they were talking about the 17-year-old daughter of the Republican Vice Presidential candidate who got pregnant out of wedlock and Whoopi Goldberg was talking about how awful it was that this child was being forced to have this baby by her parents who are pro-life! First of all, if Whoopi is for choice, then isn't it up to this girl to decide what to do? I guess the only choice for those on the abortion side is abortion it would seem. And I do give this family a lot of credit, yes there was sin, but she is not going to destroy life because she made a mistake. My, we have not learned the lessons that Israel went through and do you think God will let us get away with all these murders of His children? I don't think so. Judgment will come! We need to wake up and smell the coffee because God says what He means and means what He says!

VERSE 22

1. Some argue that the word “homosexual” was not around back then and thus homosexuality is not wrong! Folks, how clear does God have to be, it is an abomination before Him! Yes, God loves the sinner but not the sin. In fact God hates sin! And if you are living in that lifestyle and have no problem with it, you are not a Christian! How can I say that? Listen to what God says, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”** I Corinthians 6:9-11. Don’t justify the sin, repent and get right with God or you will not inherit the kingdom of God!

VERSE 23

1. Here God says that bestiality or having sex with animals is wrong! Do we really need to be told that? Obviously we do! In fact, Harris tells us, “In contrast, the gods of Ugarit, by their example, led their devotees in this sin.” Now here’s the thing. If you are going to say that homosexuality is right, on what basis then are you going to say that bestiality is wrong? You see, you really can’t say anything is wrong as long as it is done in love, right? Wrong! God says homosexuality is wrong and He says that bestiality is wrong also! It is the standard that He has set and if we choose to disobey we will be held accountable and suffer the consequences of that lifestyle! And those that do this have!

VERSES 24-30

1. God is saying that sexual sin defiles us and it not only harms us but those around us!

Isn't it interesting that statistics tell us that married couples live longer, get more enjoyment out of sex, have more sex, and are happier than those who are not married!

God blesses as we walk in His ways! Now I am not saying that everyone should be married, but we are talking about relationships and sexual activity, that it is for marriage as the Bible tells us, **“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”** Hebrews 13:4.

2. God was judging the pagan nations for these practices and when they were removed from the land and the children of Israel entered into the land of Canaan, they were not to practice these evil things but follow the ways of God. If they didn't God said that He would judge them for their sin just as He judged the other nations! Sadly, they didn't listen and were judged, they went into captivity for 70 years because of their idolatry!

3. The Canaanites are a graphic illustration of the degradation that idolatry produces.

Look at our society today that calls good evil and evil good and what is produced out of that! You see, a person's morality is the fruit of his theology or his concept of God, his relationship with the true and living God. Apart from that is the works of the flesh and it is ugly! You know, maybe so many Christians are struggling in their walk today because their concept of God is wrong. They are listening to the worldly ideas instead of listening to the Words of God. Paul reminds us in Colossians 2:8-10 of what the world has for us and what the Lord has for us as he wrote, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** May we not forget that!

4. Allen P. Ross, in his book, *Holiness to the LORD*, wrote:

It is amazing to see how modern trends, even in the supposedly Christian world, seem bent on embracing practices that are not too unlike these ancient abominations. This modern sophisticated world has come to accept adultery, incest, homosexuality, and even bestiality, so long as it does not hurt anyone. Pagan goddesses, sensual liturgy, and prohibited practices all keep surfacing within religious settings – and if they find acceptance there, then religion will have little reason to call people to repentance and salvation.

Leviticus 18 is not hard to correlate with any age and certainly not with today. Many Christians are oblivious to the problem and instead desire to be loving and accepting. While these are noble virtues, God also wants obedience to his word, and this requires avoiding wickedness. All the vices listed in this chapter have always been present in the world and are present today as well – even child sacrifice, which occurs in today's world, although not to the extent it did in Canaan. God warns his people again and again to remain pure from the world and to keep the faith holy.

This passage declares that, individually or collectively, all of these practices are violations of God's order and harmful to human relationships. It teaches that

The people of God must remain loyal to their covenant God and not become involved in the abominable practices of the world that God will judge.

- Allen P. Ross, Holiness to the LORD, p. 348

5. As I close this evening I pray that you have heard all that God is saying to you as He said to the children of Israel. And He concludes this section by saying, **“I am the LORD your God.”** Leviticus 18:30. Again, He is *YAHWEH*, Almighty God, and He is our God, we are His people! It is as the Psalmist said, and I will close with this in Psalm 100:1-5, **“Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.”** May we have that kind of relationship with God, filled with joy and reverence for Him! Understanding who He is and who we are! The LORD is good!