



The Law (Exodus to Deuteronomy)

Saturday 10th January 2026

Teaching by Laura Gallacher

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It's tricky!

"Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head
or clip off the edges of your beard." (Lev 19:27)

"Put tassels on the four corners of the cloaks you wear..."
(Deut. 22:12)

"When you build a new house, you shall
make a parapet for your roof..." (Deut. 22:8)

"If the offering to the Lord is a burnt offering,
bring a dove or a young pigeon" (Lev 1:14)

Vocation of God's people

Patterns and themes

What is the Pentateuch?

Narrative

Importance in NT

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"I believe it is more important for you and me to read Leviticus than it is for us to read the best Christian book ever published, because Leviticus has a quality and produces an effect that no book in the Christian marketplace can compete with." (Platt, Radical..., p.192)

"No Old Testament book has exerted a greater influence on the formation and development of both Jewish and Christian thought and practice than Deuteronomy." Raymond Brown (Bible Speaks Today, p. 13)

"Deuteronomy is often regarded as the centre of the OT and of OT theology" James Robson (Honey From the Rock p.19)

"I remain convinced that Leviticus is fundamental to our understanding of God and of the Christian faith. Without it so much else in the Bible simply makes no sense. It is, therefore, essential that we encourage people to study it and hear its message. I am also convinced that Leviticus does not deserve its bad reputation and that if Christians would overcome their prejudices against it they would soon find it yielding rich spiritual fruit." Derek Tidball (p.9, BST)

"Leviticus is good news. It is good news for sinners who seek pardon, for priests who need empowering, for women who are vulnerable, for the unclean who covet cleansing, for the poor who yearn for freedom, for the marginalised who seek dignity, for animals that demand protection, for families that require strengthening, for communities that want fortifying, and for creation that stands in need of care. All these issues, and more, are addressed in a positive way in Leviticus." Tidball (p. 17, BST)

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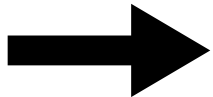
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Three simple initial hermeneutic principles: read forward, read backwards, ask why

Read forwards

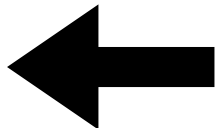


The ways of grace proceed the Law.
The ways of the Law are given to a people who
have experienced first hand the love and grace of
God.
All within communion and relationship.

“You yourselves have seen what I did
to the Egyptians and how I bore you
on eagles wings and brought you to
myself.” (Exodus 19:4)

“The law of God is essentially his instructions on how to live a life pleasing to him, and it has this meaning not only in the Old Testament but throughout the Bible. God’s law is not a ‘ladder of merit’ by which we try to climb, by grim obedience, into his ‘good books’; it is a way of life revealed to those who are already by redemption in his good books. He brings us to himself and then requires us to live so as to please him.” (Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus, The Bible Speaks Today*)

Read backwards



Reading through the lens of Jesus, and the whole of the biblical witness.

Hebrews 9:11-15

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Ask why

Why was this written? Is there a question that the original author was trying to answer for the original hearers?

Vocation of God's people

How can a holy God come close to an unholy people?

Deut 6:20-25, Psalm 119, 2 Kings 22-23, Nehemiah 8

What did Israel think of the law?

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Leviticus

Composition

ANE legal doc

Vision and purpose

In Leviticus, God lives exactly where Exodus 40:34-35 places him-right among his people. (Tidball)

“Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5-6)

“Conceive of an ideal society where, because it is ideal, certain things are done and certain things are avoided.” (Tidball)

Structure

Ch 1-7 sacrifices that address sin
Ch 8-10 priests who will intercede
Ch 11-15 laws of impurity
Ch 16 yearly ceremony
Ch 17-27 other laws to help them live holy

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Holiness

Leviticus: a return to God's purposes in creation		
	Creation	Leviticus
Separating things into their proper place and bringing order to the world	Gen. 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18	Lev. 10:10; 11:46-47; 20:24-26
Blessing humanity: • Fruitfulness • A lush land where physical needs are met • Sabbath rest • Walking with them as their God	• Gen. 1:28 • Gen. 2:8-25 • Gen. 2:3 • Gen. 3:8	• Lev. 26:9 • Lev. 26:4-5, 10 • Lev. 23:3; 25:1-7 • Lev. 26:11-12
A calling: to reflect God's image in the world	Gen. 1:26-28	Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26

INTRODUCTION					
	I Very holy	II Holy	III Clean	IV Unclean	V Very unclean
<i>Spatial</i>	Most Holy Place	Holy Place	Court	Camp	Outside
<i>Personal</i>	High priest	Priests	Levites and clean Israelites	Minor impurities	Major impurities
<i>Ritual</i>	Sacrifices (not eaten)	Sacrifices (priests eat)	Sacrifices (non-priests eat)	Purification (1 day)	Purification (7 days)
<i>Temporal</i>	Day of Atonement	Festivals, Sabbath	Ordinary days		

Table 2. The geography of holiness.

The geography of holiness affects people, ceremonies and even the concept of time. This leads Jenson to produce a revised form of our earlier table (see Table 2).³² The geography of holiness provided Israel with a graphic visual aid for their faith and enabled it to be expressed in concrete terms.

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“How to live as the holy priestly kingdom of the holy and heavenly King” (Sklar, p. 30)

Kadosh (adj) kodesh (n) 1. Holy, commanding respect, awesome, treated with respect 2. Removed from profane usage, singled out, consecrated for

Kadash (v) state or transition into/move towards a particular state of holiness or to dedicate use before God

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Clean

Unclean

“More about a status indicating that a person or object is dedicated to the service of God” (Sklar, p. 27)

Lev. 10:10 “you must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean”

Lev. 8:10-11 “Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them.”

Ch 11 Unclean animals

Ch 14 Disease, cleansing houses

Ch 15 Bodily discharges, cleansing

Blood

Ch 12 regulations following childbirth,

Ch 15 laws around menstruation,

Ch 17 eating only well- done meat

Ch 16: 15 “then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins”.

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How has it helped to view Leviticus in terms of vocation?

In light of the OT Law regulations especially around clean/unclean, blood/life....what difference does Jesus make? Which Bible references help here?

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Deuteronomy

Composition

Vision and purpose

ch 4:9-10 and **ch 5:3** “Not with our fathers did Yahweh make this covenant, but with us, we, these, here, today, all of us, alive”.

Deuteronomy 30

ch 31:9-13 “Then Moses write this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi.....”write it down for those that follow afterwards

Structure

- Prologue (ch 1:1-5)
- Moses first speech (ch 1:6-4:40)
- Second Speech (ch 5:1-ch 26)
(commandment of ‘love’ and other ways to live)
- Others (Leviticus Priests and elders) join Moses in speaking (ch 27:1-12)
- Third Speech of Moses (ch 27:12-28)
(blessings and curses)
- Final speech (ch 29:2-30 covenant in plains of Moab)
- Narrative context chapter (ch 31)
- Moses song (ch 32:1-43)
- Moses’ final blessing (ch 33)
- Moses’ death (ch 34)

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Vocation of God's people

Ch 5 and 6

“Obedience, therefore, like faith, is the means of appropriating God’s grace and blessing, not the means of deserving it.”
(Christopher J. H Wright, *Deuteronomy* pp. 280-281)

“How and why would God rescue the Israelites from the burdensome and death-dealing slavery of Egypt (Exodus 20:2) only to impose on them an even heavier burden of the Law, which they were unable to keep and which would sentence them to an even more horrible fate- damnation under His own wrath?” (Daniel Block, *Grace of Torah* p. 7)

“Moses knows that his fellow-travellers will soon be on Canaanite soil, immediately confronted with religious teaching about Baal, an agricultural deity who gives rewards to those who will do what he requires.” (Raymond Brown, p. 23, BST)

“..calling Israel to an act of corporate, imaginative remembrance as the insights of the past are brought to bear on the decisions of the present and future.” (J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*, p. 77)

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Our vocation as the people of God today

Galatians 3:21 “Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!”

Romans 3:31 “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary we uphold the law”

Romans 7:12 “the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

Q: Civic (just for Israel), Ceremonial (abolished in Jesus), Moral (continue to have authority)

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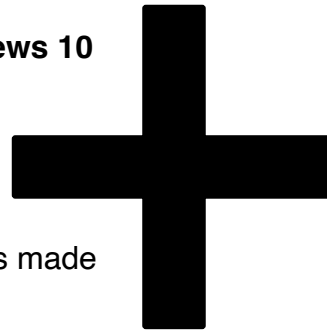


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The work of Christ and the Spirit

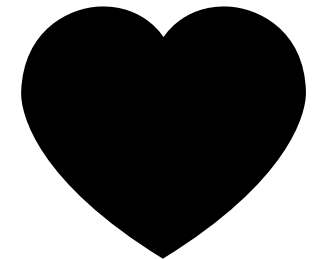
*Christ fulfils the law (He is our righteousness)
and the Spirit empowers us (to live as the people of God)*

Hebrews 10



Acts 10:15 Peter and Cornelius “what God has made clean, do not call common”

Matthew 5: 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.”



“You’ve heard it said don’t even....” (**Matt. Ch 5**)

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The vocation of the people of God: holiness

Leviticus 11:44-45,
19:2, 20:7

Be SET APART

1 Peter 1: 13-16, 1 Peter
2:9-12

Lev. ch 19:9-10

Animal welfare:

Deut. 25:4
Deut. 22:6-7
Lev. 25:7

Command to assist the stranger,
orphan, the widow eg Deut. 14:29,
Deut. 24:19-21, Lev. 25:6

Get STUCK IN

Deut. 21:10-14; 23:16

“A holy society should be marked by justice and compassion (especially towards the poor and vulnerable). “The emulation of God’s holiness demands following the ethics associated with his nature.” (J. Milgrom)

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Hebrews 12:14

Galatians 5

Be SET APART

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

Matthew 5:16

Get STUCK IN

Galatians 2:12

1 Peter 2:12

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The vocation of the people of God: be more like Jesus

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18 //Exodus)

2 Thess. 2:13

Romans 8:5-11

**The Spirit enables us to become more like
Christ**

Eph. 2:22

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Honey From the Rock
James Robson

Reading

Ten Words to Live By, Jen
Wilkin

Holier than Thou, Jackie Hill Perry

*Old Testament Ethics for the People of
God* Christopher JH Wright

*Leviticus (Tyndale Old Testament
Commentaries)* Jay Sklar