

WEEK 7 — LAWS FOR ISRAEL'S HOLINESS

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

The Story: God is holy. Having rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt, and intending to fulfill his promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) by blessing the world through Abraham's descendants, God now establishes laws for Israel to shape and train them to be a holy nation, reflecting God's own character. The most important principle in Leviticus is that Israel must be holy, because Israel's God who rescued them and established his covenant with them is holy. Watch for statements of this principle throughout Leviticus. Centuries later, Peter will quote this principle as he calls Christians to be holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). Notice also how God's commands about purity, sacrifices, and justice point Israel toward holy living.

* Kids' readings may not align with the daily full readings. Parents, see the content ratings on the back page.

FEBRUARY 13 LEVITICUS 13-14

Today's reading is one of those sections of Scripture that is tough for modern readers to work through. It focuses on purity laws having to do with defilements on the surface of skin, cloth, and various objects. Try to imagine how helpful these instructions would be for ancient peoples trying to live healthy lives. More importantly, imagine how adherence to these commands kept their communities clean, pure, and, in a physical sense, holy before God.

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In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 14

Kids' Reading*: Leviticus 16

FEBRUARY 14 LEVITICUS 15-17

Today's reading starts with more cleanliness laws (hang in there through this chapter), then moves on to instructions concerning Israel's most sacred day, the Day of Atonement. On this day each year, God forgave the sins of the entire nation of Israel. This day sets the foundation for our understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for us centuries later, as he offers his body as a sacrifice to God that atones for our sins. Today's reading concludes with a stern warning against improper sacrifices and the eating of blood.

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 16-17

Kids' Reading*: Leviticus 19:1-19 • Leviticus 19:23-28 • Leviticus 19:32-37

FEBRUARY 15 LEVITICUS 18-20

Today's reading includes laws concerning improper sexual relations (chapter 18), laws concerning various matters (especially issues of justice and of faithfulness to God; chapter 19), and penalties for various offenses (chapter 20). Notice how often in these chapters God says, "I am the Lord your God." By this statement God is reminding Israel that (a) he is holy, and so they are to be holy too, and (b) because he rescued them from slavery and promised to protect and bless them, they have an obligation to obey his commands. Be sure to catch the second half of Leviticus 19:18, which Jesus said is the second most important command in the whole law (Mark 12:28-31).

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 19-20

Kids' Reading*: Leviticus 23

FEBRUARY 16 LEVITICUS 21-23

Today's reading contains—you guessed it—more laws. All these laws from a far-away nation over three millennia ago can be tough to read through, but don't give up! As before, watch for what God is trying to teach Israel about holiness. In chapters 21-22, try to imagine being a priest. What about these laws would

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be difficult to follow? What would be easy? In chapter 23, imagine being an Israelite celebrating these festivals God established. What would they mean to you? What might you enjoy about them?

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In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 21:1 to 22:16 • Leviticus 23

Kids' Reading*: Leviticus 25:1-43 • Leviticus 26:1-13

FEBRUARY 17 LEVITICUS 24-25

Today's reading covers a few more laws and the tragic story of the first Israelite we know of to blatantly blaspheme God's name—a capital crime in Israel. Then God gives instructions concerning the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee, both of which were intended to reset the situation of people caught in slavery or generational poverty. How might these laws have made Israel a more stable and prosperous nation?

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 24-25

Kids' Reading*: Numbers 6

FEBRUARY 18 LEVITICUS 26-27

Today's reading brings us to the end of Leviticus. First it presents rewards God will grant for adherence to his covenant in Israel and punishments God will enforce if Israel violates the covenant. This section is very similar to covenants found by archaeologists between ancient civilizations and their kings, detailing obligations of each party to the other. Finally, Leviticus closes with laws concerning the redemption of anything or anyone that has been officially devoted to God.

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Leviticus 26-27

Kids' Reading*: Numbers 9:15 to 10:36

FEBRUARY 19 NUMBERS 7

Today's reading begins in Numbers 7 because chapters 1-6 jump ahead by about a month to provide census information (from which Numbers gets its name). So we'll read Numbers 7:1 to 10:10 first, picking up where Exodus left off, with the dedication of the tabernacle and its furnishings. Numbers 7, one of the most repetitive passages in the Bible, demonstrates the importance of the equality of Israel's twelve tribes: each brought the same offering for, and had the same investment in, the dedication of the sacred tabernacle.

Date: probably spring of 1445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Numbers 7

Kids' Reading*: Numbers 11

Parents' Guide

PG preview for young children

Lev 13:1-46 (T)

Lev 14:5-7 (T), 13-14 (T), 25 (T),
50-52 (T)

Lev 16:1-28 (T)

Lev chapter 17 (T)

Lev 17:7 (S)

Lev 19:26 (T), 28 (T), 29 (S)

Lev 20:6 (S), 9 (T, V), 10 (S, T), 21
(T), 27 (T, V)

Lev 21:13-15 (S), 16-23 (T)

Lev 22:4-8 (S, T), 22-25 (T)

Lev 24:13-23 (T, V)

Lev 26:7-8 (V), 14-39 (T), 25-26
(V), 41 (C)

C = Circumcision
N = Nudity
S = Sexuality
T = Dark/Sensitive Themes
V = Violence

PG-13 preview for under age 13

Lev chapter 15 (S, T)

Lev 19:19-20 (S)

Lev 20:11-20 (S, T)

Lev 21:7-9 (S, V)

Lev 26:22 (T, V), 30-33 (T, V)

R shocking, graphic, or disturbing

Lev 18:6-23 (S), 21 (V)

Lev 20:1-5 (V)

Lev 26:29 (T, V)