

Christ in Prophecy
Jesus in the Old Testament 9: Dwelling with God (Leviticus)
Key Verse: Leviticus 19:2

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Opening

Tim Moore: Welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I'm Tim Moore, the Senior Evangelist of Lamb & Lion Ministries.

Nathan Jones: And I'm Nathan Jones, the Internet Evangelist here at Lamb & Lion.

Tim Moore: Thus far in our "Jesus in the Old Testament" series, we've been in Genesis and Exodus. Those books are marked by sweeping narrative and colorful characters. They offer many stories that can be broken out to teach our children, from Adam and Eve to Noah and the Flood, to Joseph and his coat of many colors, to Moses leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea.

Nathan Jones: But when people get to the book of Leviticus they usually bog down. Without a compelling narrative, this important book of Jewish Law can seem dry and irrelevant to Christians today. Fortunately, Tim has actually made it very clear that he finds Leviticus to be both exciting and insightful to God's Messianic promises. So, today we're going to do something a bit different. We're going to put Tim on what Dr. Reagan used to call the "hot seat" and I'm going to interview him about what is one of his favorite books.

Tim Moore: Well, actually with that introduction, how could we possibly go wrong? Yes, Nathan I do confess that Leviticus is very exciting and interesting to me. But really I find that whenever I study the Bible I have a whole lot of favorites because whenever the Holy Spirit reveals truths to me out of any particular book, it becomes one of my new favorite books.

Part 1

Nathan Jones: Before we dive into the book itself, let's establish the timeline for this third book of the Torah. Moses of course is credited with authoring the first five books of the Bible, recording God's own revelation about Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and we've covered the ancestry of the Children of Israel.

Tim Moore: Yes, and that's right. Because this book deals with the establishment of the Tabernacle and the sundry laws that God handed down to govern the Hebrew nation as they wandered through the wilderness, we would put this book at about 3,500 years ago, we'll call it 1447 BC. And the importance of the 613 laws it outlines cannot be overstated. Strictly observant Jews attempt to keep all of those laws to this day, with additional provisos and interpretations handed down by rabbis and scholars over the years to adapt this to the modern era.

Nathan Jones: Well, speaking of laws and lawgivers, I'd like to get down to the bottom of why you are so excited about Leviticus. We know you spent 13 years in the Kentucky state

legislature, you helped write laws and draft policies, and you helped guide the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Since you liked being a lawgiver is that why you like the book of Leviticus?

Tim Moore: Well, you know that actually might have something to do with it because I was drawn to be able to understand laws. I got very good at reading laws, which were always drafted by someone else, and catching any of the little things that they'd try to sneak in.

But I don't think that is why I am drawn to Leviticus. I can understand though how Moses, and the Lord Himself had to deal with people because I learned in my 13 years, that A you can't please all the people all the time, you can't please some of the people any of the time. And so, there was always grumbling, regardless of the policy we were trying to enact. If we had voted to make a special day to recognize motherhood, there would have been people who were upset about that. So, we always had to deal with folks who would be discontented and grumbling. And certainly Moses, as the intercessor, as the leader there of Israel he had to deal with the Children of Israel grumbling. And again, I'm not complaining about that history. But I just recognize that even when God Himself is the Lawgiver, as we've titled this particular episode, still we grumble and complain.

Nathan Jones: Absolutely. It is like herding cats.

Tim Moore: Good analogy.

Nathan Jones: I don't know how you lawmakers do that. Well, the laws applied and spelled out in Leviticus they clearly differ from how the laws are put out today. Can you tell us what are the vast differences in the processes between how the Jewish people in the desert got their laws, which they then used throughout their history, to how we in the West make our laws?

Tim Moore: Well, that is a good question. Obviously in terms of Scripture Moses recorded most of these laws, but they were dictated by God Himself, so He was the lawgiver. We all have the image in our mind of the finger of God writing the Ten Commandments on the stones there on Mount Sinai from the movie that Hollywood produced. But truly God did write those Ten Commandments, and He dictated the other laws.

So, how can you possibly argue with the ultimate sovereign Lawgiver? Today, God does not speak audibly to us as we pass laws and policies. Ideally our laws should follow some sense of not only natural law, but what is best to provide for human flourishing. Now, it is a very imperfect process that we have today. And again, some people like to get their argument put forward, whether as an advantage for their own business interest, or their own self-interest. But God made sure that He balanced His laws with what was right and just for all the people. Again, our laws should be a reflection of that aspiration, but they are imperfect in every way, shape and form today.

Nathan Jones: And you would think that our laws today should be based on the Judeo-Christian values that were settled in the Ten Commandments, and the other ceremonial laws that were made. Well, okay, if you are not enamored then with the Levitical laws themselves, or the priestly roles of the Levites, then, alright, Tim, I've got to know why are you excited about Leviticus? Because that is not on the top of most people's list.

Tim Moore: Well, again, I think it's because it's God Word, first of all.

Nathan Jones: Absolutely.

Tim Moore: So, we obviously honor what God has to say. Just to contrast again on the process I'll reflect on what one particular congressman said, this being Jerry Nadler from New York, a very liberal democrat. He said, "What any religious tradition describes as God's will is of no concern to this congress." And ironically, Jerry Nadler is not only a Jew, he is the only member of Congress that actually attended Yeshiva School as a child. Which means he was raised to understand the Torah, the Talmud, the Halakha, which is the Jewish Law itself. And yet, he discounts any relevance of God today.

But what I think excites me is that God did set down a series of guidelines to provide for human flourishing. And He also had a provision that would allow His people to be set apart from all the other nations, and to actually be able to be in a close relationship with Him. His promise at the end of Exodus was that He would dwell with His chosen people. And so, the tabernacle itself was established so that God's Shekinah Glory could come down, dwelling right in the midst of the people. And these laws were designed so that the people could maintain a set apartness; a holiness so that they could be in close proximity with God. We know that they did not succeed in that aspiration, time and time again they failed. But it demonstrates that God Himself came down. He aspired to dwell with His people, just like today we know Jesus came down offering the opportunity for relationship with Him through His blood, and through our salvation.

Nathan Jones: Well, how could anybody follow 613 laws perfectly? What is interesting is that the laws didn't deal just with moral issues, but it also dealt with a slave people living in a desert. You know don't eat crawfish, or don't mix your fabrics, stuff like that, things that today we look at as crazy, but it helped basically a nation that was in its infancy survive in the desert. So, there were guidelines for human flourishing, but the Law also set the Jewish people apart. From all the pagan nations of the world they could look at the Jewish people and say, hey, they are vastly different. No matter what gods ruled the pagan nations, the Jewish people lived, or were supposed to live I'd say, set apart and holy. And that right? Was for the purpose of the world to look at the Jewish people and say, "I want to get to know their God."

Tim Moore: Exactly, right. And quite frankly, when it was done properly, when the Jewish people were fulfilling God's commandments and living obediently to Him, which their forefathers had promised to do. They entered into a covenant relationship with Him, then God's blessings indeed flowed into the Jewish nation, and they were to be a conduit of that blessing to the other nations. Again, this did not happen for a very long period of time without somebody messing it up. But ideally that was what was to be a model for all the nations.

And we know in Scripture there are several instances where individuals recognized not only the blessing of the Jewish people, but also the source of their blessing, the Lord God Almighty. So, when the Children of Israel came into Canaan, the Promised Land, we know that Rahab put her faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and she was preserved even though the rest of her city was conquered. We know that Ruth, who was a Gentile woman, also put her faith in the God of Israel. She told Naomi, "Where you go, I will go, and you're God will be my God." Because these women in particular recognized that the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is God, and He was the source of blessing. And to those ladies' credit, both Rahab and Ruth, they were included in the very genealogy of Christ. So, they are part of the lineage of the Messiah. What a wonderful blessing that is.

Nathan Jones: Oh, my goodness, yeah. I mean ethnically you were a Jewish person, but you could also become a Jew by putting yourself under the Law, and for the men to get the cut there.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Nathan Jones: But either way it was a blessing to have God living among you. But what it must have been to have a Holy God living with an unholy people. And I assume that caused problems in the Bible, right?

Tim Moore: Yeah, you know you'd think that sounds like a great idea. Let's just have God live right in our midst. But the Jewish people found out through experience that was actually a very perilous relationship. Some folks have called it, trying to have the holy and the profane in close proximity. Because all of us, even if we attempt to live righteously, our righteous deeds are as filthy rags, relative to the holiness, the perfection, the righteousness of God. So, we are profane just by our very nature. And God He is holy. And so, living in close proximity, you'd almost would liken it to oil and water, again it's what God provided for the Jewish people, but there were dramatic instances where the people fell short and there were tremendous consequences.

We can look just at Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, in chapter 10 of Leviticus where they were supposed to bring sacrifice before the Lord, but instead of honoring God, and respecting His holiness, they brought what Scripture describes as strange fire. And the Lord was so offended by their callous treatment of Him, and His holiness that He struck them dead on the spot. As a matter of fact, it says in verse 3, as Moses relayed it to Aaron, the Lord spoke, saying, "By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored." And you think, well, here these two guys, they are sons of Aaron the high priest, and if they can't get it right, how can any of us get it right? I mean the first instance where the Shekinah Glory of God came down, this is immediately preceding the book of Leviticus, but it is tied in where the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

And even Moses, this handpicked human intercessor couldn't enter into the Tent of Meeting because the holiness of God was too, just manifest, and so, even Moses without being holy, he was too profane to enter into that very holy place. And so, you think, if Moses couldn't enter, if Nadab and Abihu fell short, who of us can possibly draw near to the Lord? So, being in close proximity to the Lord is a great blessing, but it is also an awesome responsibility and a challenge.

Nathan Jones: I remember the time, when you are reading about King David moving the Ark of the Covenant, and the cart tipped over and a guy put out his hand to stop the Ark from tipping over, and God just blasted him dead because he did not treat the Ark with the reverence and holiness due. So, it is a wonderful thing to think that one day we are going to be standing face to face with the Lord, but in our fallen sinful bodies that is a terrifying thing. We are looking at Jesus in the Old Testament series, and we are looking for where the Messiah, Jesus, the pre-incarnate Jesus, or a Christophany, or a typology. But I read the book of Leviticus, and I'm like where is Jesus? Now, as we go through the series we want to point out where Jesus is in the Old Testament. So, where, Tim, do you find Jesus in the book of Leviticus?

Tim Moore: Well, I find Him in the very Shekinah Glory. Jesus is the manifest glory of the Father. He is the image, or the manifestation of the invisible God. We learned that in Colossians 1:15. We also know that the whole system of sacrifice, trying to show people that they are not

worthy to come into God's presence was to demonstrate that they need to have a covering of their sins, a sacrifice. And indeed, that it would require blood in order for sins to be forgiven, to have an atonement, or what we call an at-one-ment with God. Atonement is forgiveness of sins but allows us to reenter a communion relationship with God Himself.

We see that there is a priest, outlined, with a specific role, a son of Adam who is to come before the presence of the Lord, to be an intercessor and a mediator for the people. Moses fulfilled that role as the deliverer, we've already spoken about Moses, but who brought the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. But then this role of a priest was stood up to be that intercessor. And even the priest could only go in the Holy of Holies once a year and had to go through a very painstaking regiment of cleansing themselves so that they could enter into the holy presence of God. That role points to our great High Priest, our Intercessor, our Mediator, which is none other than Jesus Christ.

I've spoken of the blood. Once a year, the priest would sprinkle the blood on the Mercy Seat of the Ark, and several drops on the ground itself, again signifying the way the blood would cover over sinfulness, but also signifying that the whole creation eventually would be restored. Well, whose blood does that point to? None other than our great perfect sinless Lamb, Jesus Christ who became the sacrifice.

We could talk about the seven branched lampstand, and the twelve loaves of showbread which were representative of the twelve tribes. But really again, we are demonstrating that Israel, the tribes of Israel were to be a conduit of God's blessing, shining the light of His truth to all the nations of the world. So, over and over again through all these symbols, some of these various practices, which the Jewish people could not ultimately fulfill, they could not remain pure and holy, but it pointed to One who would fulfill all these symbols, all these prophetic references, and would become our great High Priest, and our sacrifice.

Nathan Jones: Wow, that is even neat to think that even the purification rituals that the priest went through with painstaking details through the mikvah and all, all had to do with the purity that pointed to the ultimate Messiah, the ultimate Priest. That is fascinating. Well, there was one of the laws in Leviticus there was a provision that was set out, but to our knowledge, only Jesus ever had to fulfill that provision, right? Can you explain that?

Tim Moore: Okay, you are talking about the provision for leprosy. There was a clear test for leprosy. And let's face it if you are living amongst people in close proximity, in a camp situation you want to make sure that you keep sanitary conditions very tight. As a matter of fact, one of the great threats anytime, even military folks deploy to this day is that there will be sickness or disease. So, believe it or not the most powerful person on any military installation in a deployed location is often the doctor. And they can shut the whole operation down if they find that the sanitation is not up to par. And let's just be very frank, sometimes with a bunch of military folks living in close proximity there are challenges to sanitation.

Nathan Jones: I would imagine.

Tim Moore: But in Leviticus it spelled out a test for leprosy, and then it spelled out in chapter 14, and on into 15 the law regarding how a leper could be declared to be cleansed. To my knowledge there is no record of anybody actually fulfilling that cleansing. Leprosy was not something they knew how to cure, until the Great Physician came and healed lepers.

Nathan Jones: Because they used to exile them out of the camp, right? And just let them die out there.

Tim Moore: Yes, they would take them out of the camp because it was just too risky that the other folks in the camp would be infected, and they couldn't accept that for the sake of society. And so, sadly these individuals were, they were outcasts, they had to go around yelling out, "Unclean. Unclean." And in that sense that is a picture of all of us, without the blood of Christ we are all unclean, and we are not worthy of even being in communion or in fellowship with others. But Christ cleansed lepers. And He sent them to the priest, "Go and show yourself healed. Show yourself cleansed." And so, they probably had to dig out their references to Leviticus, "Well, we've never seen this, but you are actually cleansed. How did that happen?" And then of course they got offended that Christ had healed on the Sabbath. So, they went down a rabbit trail that had no merit given the great miracle He had performed.

Nathan Jones: Well, you talked about the Shekinah Glory once the Tabernacle was set up. I always believed that the Shekinah Glory of God may be a pre-incarnate Christ, it might be the Holy Spirit Himself, entered into that Tabernacle, and that kind of sets up something surprising that happened. It didn't bode well for the Israelites, right, when the Shekinah Glory did show up?

Tim Moore: No, it didn't. As I mentioned a moment ago this is at the very end of Exodus, because when the Shekinah Glory arrived you'd think there'd be much rejoicing, you'd think Moses would go in, He's already encountered God almighty. But he wasn't allowed to enter. That Shekinah Glory was so holy, the presence was so palpable that even Moses could not enter. And you'd think if Moses can't enter, who possibly can? I mean can you think of another example of someone who couldn't even go into the presences of God?

Nathan Jones: Well, I think of one of the kings in David's line tried to go into the Temple and give offerings and the Lord afflicted him with leprosy, and that was pretty much the end of his kingship. So, no king was allowed into it, only the priests. And it interesting that we know the Messiah would be both offices, He would be priest and king.

Tim Moore: He would be priest and king. You know you talk about David, and that is a great example for the one who was made into a leper. David recognized the special blessing of dwelling in the presence of the Lord. Many of us have Psalm 23 as one of our favorite psalms, and David says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." And yet, this question resonates throughout Leviticus, if Moses can't enter the presence, if Nadab and Abihu fail in their following of the regiment, the ordinance of God to be able to go in, then who can go in?

And David, King David the psalmists asked this question two different places, in Psalm 15:1 he said, "Oh, Lord who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hills?" Meaning Mount Zion. In chapter 24:3 he says, "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?" And he sets an incredible high bar even in his answers because David wrote, "He who walks with integrity and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart." And, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart."

And yet, even David, this man after God's own heart, he failed time and time again. Which is why he had to pray, "Don't cast me out of your presence, and just let me stand at the door," because he wanted to be with the Lord. But it is such a high bar to think that we can aspire to maintain that level of purity, and cleanliness to even be in God's presence. And others ask the

same question. Isaiah asked in chapter 33, verse 14, "Who among us can live with the consuming fire?" I mean the very holiness of God, who among us can live with continual burning? And he asserted also, "He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity." And that sounds so easy, "Oh, I can do that." But not for long. We all fail and fall short.

Nathan Jones: Well, the Apostle Paul said that the purpose of the Law was to point out what sin is, because without it how do you know? You work basically on your conscious, which was the pre-Mosaic Law. Well, now we are in the Church Age, we have Jesus Christ crucified. But there are Christians at there who are saying that, "That we need to go back and live under the Law and grace at the same time." Do you think that any of the Mosaic Law, all 613, which of them apply to Gentiles today?

Tim Moore: That is a good question. And to a degree we have to let our conscious be our guide. I think that the moral law clearly applies because we are to be a people set apart. The laws that provide for human flourishing as I said are still applicable. But we know that some of the laws regarding food. So, you mentioned certain kinds of foods that they couldn't eat.

Nathan Jones: Shellfish.

Tim Moore: Shellfish, and fish without skin. That means no catfish for those of us who love catfish. But the Lord revealed to Peter that everything once again is given to eat. You remember Peter had a vision, and the Lord was letting down a sheet with all sorts of unclean animals. And Peter said, "I can't eat those." And the Lord said, "Take and eat." And so, I think some of the Law the Lord has given us latitude to enjoy all of His bounty. But the moral laws, and the laws that, again, govern how we interact with one another and how we approach God, we just have to follow our consciences once they have been restored by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and then we give grace to one another.

I would say this too. You know you think, well what does Leviticus teach us? I think it teaches us the only way to approach God is by the way that He is revealed. In the Old Testament it was through the Laws, the ordinances. We know the way He is revealed is Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Leviticus also tells us that sacrifice, and an ordained priest are necessary to draw near to God. Well, we know again, that sacrifice was Christ, and He is our perfect High Priest. And finally, the first step of atonement is a reconciliation between God and man. Not, by any act of righteousness on my part, but by accepting His free gift of salvation. And ultimately, Nathan, this promise of God wanting to dwell with us will be fulfilled, because Zechariah says in chapter 2:10-11, "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the Lord. "Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you." Wow! Who is talking? If the Lord of Host has sent Me, then it is none other than Jesus Christ talking as the One who will dwell with us. And, so, we proclaim His soon return, and we look forward to that glorious day.

Part 2: How Then Shall We Live? Freed By Grace

Nathan Jones: Whenever the holiday season rolls around, without fail, we here at Lamb & Lion Ministries are inundated by people proclaiming that Christians should abstain from celebrating Christmas and Easter, attend church service on Saturdays instead of Sundays, and

must celebrate the Jewish feasts. They adamantly insist that Christians should be obeying all of the precepts of the Mosaic Law. These people are often followers of what's called the Hebrew Roots Movement.

Now, let me be clear, there's a vast difference between the Messianic Jewish Movement and the Hebrew Roots Movement. The first rejoices in being a Jew and living under the grace of the risen Messiah. The latter focuses on the Mosaic Law and seeks to yoke the believer back under it. The latter is both heretical and a danger.

Why? Because trying to uphold the Hebrew Law rejects Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross. It negates our God-given grace and espouses a works-based salvation. While a quest for godliness is to be commended, choosing to embrace slavery under the Mosaic Law is truly sad. The Apostle Paul labeled those who insist on obedience to the Law as Judaizers, and he had some very strong words for them.

Likewise, the Apostle Peter asked this telling question of the Jerusalem Council, "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

The book of Hebrews confirms this grace, that Jesus' death on the cross provided the only work necessary for salvation. And, if anyone adds works to their salvation, they are putting themselves under the "yoke of slavery" by not trusting God to wholly save them.

Once we've placed our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, Romans tells us, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

Romans also reminds us what the Law was for, "Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

Paul affirms, "That a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ."

And Ephesians states point-blank, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Biblically taught then, believers in Christ are free of the old Mosaic Law and now live by the Greatest Commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

And because of this principle of grace then, it becomes not just one day, or feast that we should set apart for the Lord, but every minute of every day. So, in many ways, under this New Covenant, we've become even more responsible, for the act of worship has been expanded beyond just a few set days. Bear in mind we're never free to sin, but we are free to worship God in a relationship deeper than do's and don'ts. That's a relationship that those burdened under the Old Covenant could have only dreamed of having.

Do you see then how grace frees us from the Mosaic Law, yet enables us to fulfill God's moral law through Jesus Christ? That's what grace is all about, and we can praise the Lord for it this holiday season!

Part 3: Closing

Tim Moore: Nathan, I appreciate you speaking truth regarding the very human desire to put back on the yoke of the Law.

Nathan Jones: Well, thanks Tim. Just like the Children of Israel wanted to return to Egyptian bondage, our natural inclination is to abide in our sin. Others zealously pursue a false assurance of holiness. But the Law merely shows us our need for a Savior.

Tim Moore: Exactly. We cannot achieve righteousness any more as believers than we could as pagans. Even our supposed righteous deeds, or what the King James Version calls our “righteousnesses”—are as filthy rags compared to His great holiness.

Nathan Jones: Well, ironically, our Key Verse today points to God’s call upon the Hebrew nation to “be holy.” He said, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”

Tim Moore: Yes, but that is not a contradiction. We endeavor to obey, but we are ultimately set apart by God and for God, because He too is set apart from all other so-called gods. Only as we confess our sins and trust in Christ—believing in Him for our salvation, our justification, and our sanctification—can we be freed from the burden of the Law.

Nathan Jones: And for those of you who would like to keep or share a particular episode of Christ in Prophecy, just call the number on the screen, and for a donation of \$10 or more we’ll be glad to send you a DVD copy of whichever episode you’d like.

Next week, we’ll turn our attention to the book of Numbers with another special guest. Until then, this is Nathan Jones.

Tim Moore: And Tim Moore saying, Look up, be watchful, for the God who desires to dwell with us; Immanuel—God with us—is drawing near. Godspeed!

End of Program