

WOOLHAMPTON PARISH

‘THE GOD WHO SPEAKS’ – YEAR OF THE BIBLE

BRIEF GUIDE TO BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

LEVITICUS

The Book of Leviticus codifies **Israel’s liturgical response to God** and is vital in showing how Israel understood and responded to the holiness of God.

It is called “Leviticus” because the tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe, the custodians of the ritual of sacrifice, and the annual feasts that provided the rhythms of Israel’s life. Israel’s view of life and of its relationship to God circled around the ritual of **sacrifice**.



The first part of the book prescribes the preparation and investiture of the priests who perform much of the ritual sacrifice.

The second part classifies the familiar elements of life into clean and unclean. Many of these rules are based on obvious principles of hygiene, others on ancient superstitions whose meaning is obscure to us.

The third part is the **Holiness Code**, a set of rules by which Israel expresses its awareness that the processes of life and death are awesome, especially linked to the divine holiness.

Although the rituals prescribed in this book are ancient and often mysterious, the book itself and its instructions probably reached its final form at the end of the Babylonian Exile, perhaps as late as the fifth century BC. Its ascription to Moses and its position among the first books of the Bible shows its importance for Israel’s life and attitudes.

(from The Bible – A Reader’s Guide, by Henry Wansborough)

Now read Leviticus chapter 25

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