

1. **The Center of the Pentateuch.** The first 5 books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch, from “penta” meaning five, and “teuchos” meaning scroll.

Many Bible scholars have noted that these 5 books appear to be a literary “chiasm” (arranged in mirror image order) with the structure: A B C B’ A’, making Leviticus the **central** book of the Pentateuch.

Video: The Bible is Art: <https://youtu.be/EA136X181CI?t=201>

A	Genesis	Prologue	Ends with Jacob blessing the 12 tribes outside the promised land in Egypt before dying. (Gen 49:28)
B	Exodus	Foreign Country Wilderness Mt Sinai	Exodus from Egypt Israel’s desert journeys Building the tabernacle
C	Leviticus	God speaks to Israel from within the tabernacle at Mt Sinai	37 divine speeches from the tabernacle (the most “red-letter” Bible book)
B’	Numbers	Mt Sinai Wilderness Foreign Country (Moab)	Tearing down the tabernacle Israel’s desert journeys Entrance to Moab
A’	Deuteronomy	Epilogue	Ends with Moses blessing the 12 tribes outside the promised land in Moab before dying. (Deut 33:1)

2. **Historical Context of Leviticus.** The Israelites camped at Mt. Sinai for about **one year**. They built the tabernacle there.

The period from the building of the tabernacle to the departure from Sinai was about **48 days** (Ex 40:17; Num 10:11-12). It was during this time that the divine speeches and events in the book of Leviticus took place.

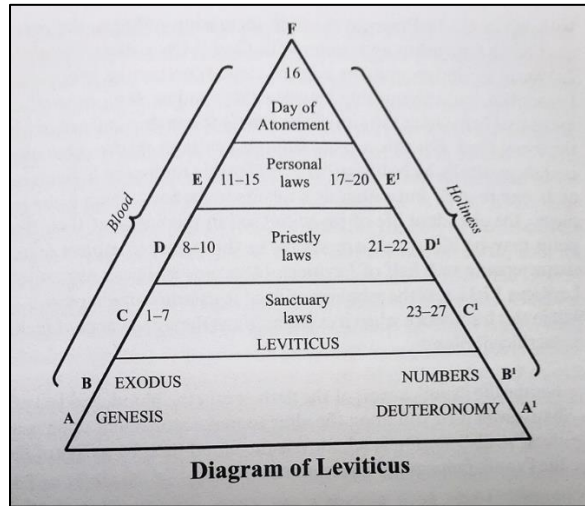
3. **The Pentateuch’s Most Holy Book.** Leviticus is the **third** book of the Pentateuch. Three is the number of cubic measure (length x width x height). When all three dimensions are the same, we have a **cube**, a symbol of the most holy part of the sanctuary (**Holy of Holies**) where the fire-cloud **presence** of God dwelt, the throne room of God, the place where heaven and earth meet.

Tabernacle - Most Holy place: 10 x 10 x 10 cubits (derived from multiple verses in Ex 26-27, 36)

Temple - Most Holy place: 20 x 20 x 20 cubits (1 Kings 6:20)

The New Jerusalem city that comes down - 12000 x 12000 x 12000 stadia (Rev 21:16)

4. **The Center of Leviticus.** The **Day of Atonement** (Yom Kippur) is the literary center of the book of Leviticus. It is recorded in Lev 16:2-34. This is the 19th divine speech out of 37 divine speeches in Leviticus (18 speeches are on either side of it).



Yom Kippur was the capstone of the sacrificial rituals. It was the holiest day of the year when sacrificial blood was sprinkled upon the Atonement Lid of the Ark and in front of it (Lev 16:14). This was the only day of the year the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies. It was the nearest human approach to God’s presence possible at that time.

It was a somber day for the Israelites to “afflict themselves” and a Sabbath day of “solemn rest”. Read Lev 23:27-32.

Read Hebrews 9:11-12. Do you see the Day of Atonement ritual in these verses?
 Read 1 Cor 11:26. What “ritual” did Christ give us to memorialize the most somber and holy day in history?
 What do you think it means to “proclaim his death until he comes”?

Israel must preserve her purity to remain in close contact and nearness to God who dwelt in her midst. Uncleaness and sins in Leviticus affected BOTH the individual and the tabernacle. How would you relate that to the life of the Christian and the church?

5. Seven-fold Outline of Leviticus

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lev 1-7 Sacrifices 8-10 Institution of priesthood; inauguration of the rituals 11-15 Clean/unclean in daily life 16 Day of Atonement 17-20 Holy/profane in daily life 21-22 Legislation for the priesthood 23-27 Festivals / sacred time | }
}
}
}
}
}
} | Approaching God
ATONEMENT

JUDGMENT / CLEANSING

Communion with God
HOLINESS |
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L. Michael Morales - "From, perhaps, the most basic vantage point, one may consider Leviticus in two halves, with chapter 16 serving as the fulcrum, summing up the sacrificial rituals and functioning as a segue to the call for holiness."

"The first half deals primarily with the approach to God through blood, while the second half is taken up with life in God's Presence through increasing holiness, the overall goal being fellowship and union with God..."

"Though Leviticus is often characterized thematically by holiness, it is preferable to discern holiness not as an end in itself but rather as a means to an end, which is the real theme, the abundant life of joy with God in the house of God."

- Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A biblical theology of the book of Leviticus; 2015

6. **Before the LORD.** The laws on sacrifice say repeatedly (63x) that the ceremonies take place "before the LORD" (Lev 1:3; 1:11; 3:1; 4:6; 4:15; 9:23-24 ... and many more).

Do you live your life with the recognition that everything you do is being done "before the Lord?" (Heb 4:13)