

SECTION 1 LESSON IDENTIFICATION

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| Week Number | 20 |
| Date | May 17, 2026 |
| Lesson Title | God Is Holy: Drawing Near to God |
| Primary Scripture | Leviticus (overview) — key passages: Leviticus 1:1 to 4, 11:44 to 45, 16:1 to 2, 19:2 |
| Supporting Scripture | Hebrews 9:11 to 14; 1 Peter 1:15 to 16; Romans 3:23 to 25; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Matthew 27:51 |
| Bible Timeline | What came before: In Week 19, God gave Moses exact instructions for building the Tabernacle so that He could dwell among His people. The structure was built and the glory of God filled it (Exodus 40:34). What happens now: God speaks from inside the Tabernacle (Leviticus 1:1). The entire book of Leviticus is God answering one question: how can sinful people come near a holy God? He gives Israel a complete system of worship, sacrifice, and holy living to answer that question. What comes after: The book of Numbers picks up with Israel preparing to leave Sinai and begin the journey to the Promised Land, carrying everything they have learned about who God is and how to live with Him. |

MEMORY VERSE

Leviticus 19:2

Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

SECTION 2 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Leviticus was given entirely at Mount Sinai. Israel was camped at the foot of the mountain and had not yet moved. They had just finished building the Tabernacle at the end of Exodus. God now spoke from inside it (Leviticus 1:1). This detail matters: God moved in first. Then He taught His people how to live with Him.

Israel had spent 400 years in Egypt, a land saturated with pagan religion. Egyptian gods were unpredictable, capricious, and had to be managed through magic, ritual, and appeasement. The Israelites had no fully developed worship system of their own. What God gave them in Leviticus was entirely new and entirely His: a way to approach Him that He designed, not one they invented.

The Hebrew word at the center of Leviticus is qadosh, meaning holy or set apart. Holiness in the ancient Near Eastern context meant otherness. Something holy was in a category by itself, distinct from everything common or ordinary. When Israel heard that God was holy, they understood this to mean He was fundamentally unlike anything else that existed. He was not a bigger, stronger version of a human.

He was a completely different kind of being.

The sacrificial system was not invented by Israel. God gave it. This is critical. In pagan religion, sacrifice was humanity's attempt to manipulate or satisfy a moody deity. In Israel, sacrifice was God's provision, His gracious way of making it possible for sinful people to come near Him without being destroyed. The blood of the animal represented the life given in place of the life that had sinned.

The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) was the most sacred day of the Israelite year. Once a year, only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, the innermost room of the Tabernacle where the Ark of the Covenant sat and where God's presence dwelled. He carried blood as the required offering. This was not a casual visit. It was life and death. The gap between a holy God and sinful people was real, and it required a specific provision to cross.

SECTION 3 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

God speaks from inside the Tabernacle and gives Israel detailed instructions for five types of offerings: burnt offerings, grain offerings, fellowship offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings (Leviticus 1 to 7). Each served a different purpose. Some expressed worship and gratitude. Some addressed sin and guilt. Taken together, they formed a complete picture of what a real relationship with a holy God requires.

Leviticus 11 addresses clean and unclean animals. While some of the distinctions had practical hygiene benefits, their deeper purpose was formation: Israel was to be different from the surrounding nations. What they ate, how they lived, and how they treated one another was to reflect the holiness of the God they served. The underlying principle appears in Leviticus 11:44: I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

Leviticus 16 describes the Day of Atonement. The High Priest performed an elaborate ritual involving two goats. One goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people. The other, the scapegoat, had the sins of Israel symbolically placed on it by the High Priest laying his hands on its head. It was then sent into the wilderness, carrying the sins away. This image is one of the most powerful foreshadowings of Jesus in the entire Old Testament.

Leviticus 19 and the Holiness Code (chapters 17 to 27) bring the book to its practical center. God calls Israel to reflect His character in every area of life: honesty, justice, care for the poor, respect for parents, and protection of the vulnerable. The repeated phrase throughout these chapters is I am the LORD your God, tying every ethical requirement back to God's identity and character.

SECTION 4 KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

| What This Reveals About God | What This Reveals About People | How This Points to Jesus |
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| God is perfectly holy, entirely without sin, and completely set apart from everything created. His holiness is not a barrier to relationship; it is the foundation of it. He is holy and He is the one who makes a way for His people to come near. (Isaiah 6:3) | People are not naturally holy. We have sinned, and sin creates a real separation from a holy God. We cannot fix this on our own. We need God to provide the way. Leviticus is the earliest picture of that need and that provision together. (Romans 3:23) | Every sacrifice, every priest, and every Day of Atonement pointed forward to Jesus. He is the final sacrifice, the ultimate High Priest, and our permanent scapegoat. His one offering accomplished what centuries of animal sacrifice could only picture. (Hebrews 9:11 to 14) |

SECTION 5 GOSPEL CONNECTION

Leviticus is God's answer to a question that every honest human being eventually asks: how can I come near a God who is perfectly holy when I am not? The sacrificial system showed that sin has a real cost and that something must die for someone to be forgiven. But animal blood was never the final answer. Hebrews 10:4 says plainly that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Every sacrifice was a promissory note pointing to the one payment that would actually settle the debt.

Jesus fulfilled every element of Leviticus. He is the unblemished lamb offered for sin. He is the scapegoat who carried our guilt into the wilderness of death and left it there. He is the High Priest who entered not the earthly Holy of Holies but heaven itself, not with the blood of an animal but with His own blood (Hebrews 9:12). When Jesus died, the Temple curtain that separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the world was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). The barrier was gone. Access was open. The way had been made.

SIMPLE GOSPEL SENTENCE

Jesus is the final sacrifice who made a permanent way for us to come near to God.

SECTION 6 QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

| What a Child Might Ask | How to Answer It Simply |
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| Why did God need animals to be killed? | Sin has a real cost, and the Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. God was teaching His people that sin is serious and someone has to pay for it. The animals were a picture pointing forward to Jesus, who would pay the price once and for all. |
| What does holy mean? | Holy means completely different from everything else — perfect, pure, without any sin at all. God is holy because He has never done anything wrong and never will. When He calls us to be holy, He means: be set apart, be different, be like Me. |
| Why could only one person go into the special room? | God is so perfectly holy that sinful people cannot simply walk into His presence without it being dangerous. He provided the High Priest as the one person who could go in on behalf of everyone else. Jesus replaced all of that by making the way open for everyone. |
| Did God enjoy the animal sacrifices? | No. God told Israel many times that what He really wanted was their heart. The sacrifices were His teaching tool, His way of showing them that sin must be dealt with and that coming to God requires His provision, not our own effort. |
| Do we have to do sacrifices today? | No. Jesus was the final and perfect sacrifice. When He died and rose again, every sacrifice the Bible ever described was completely fulfilled in Him. We do not need to repeat it because His one sacrifice was enough for everyone, forever. |

SECTION 7 TEACHER SUMMARY

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| Big Idea | God is perfectly holy, and He made a way for us to come close to Him. |
| What God Did | God gave Israel a complete system of worship and sacrifice to show that He is holy, sin is serious, and He provides the only way to draw near. |
| How It Points to Jesus | Every sacrifice, every priest, and every Day of Atonement was a preview of Jesus, who became our permanent sacrifice, our High Priest, and our open door to God. |
| Error to Avoid | Do not teach that God was angry and needed to be satisfied by killing animals. Teach that God was gracious and was providing a picture of the rescue that was coming in Jesus. |
| Hope to Emphasize | Because of Jesus, we have complete access to God right now. Not once a year. Not through a priest. Directly, personally, anytime. |

TEACHER BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION SHEET COMPLETE

Wait for approval before creating Step 2: Main Lesson, Activity and Discussion.