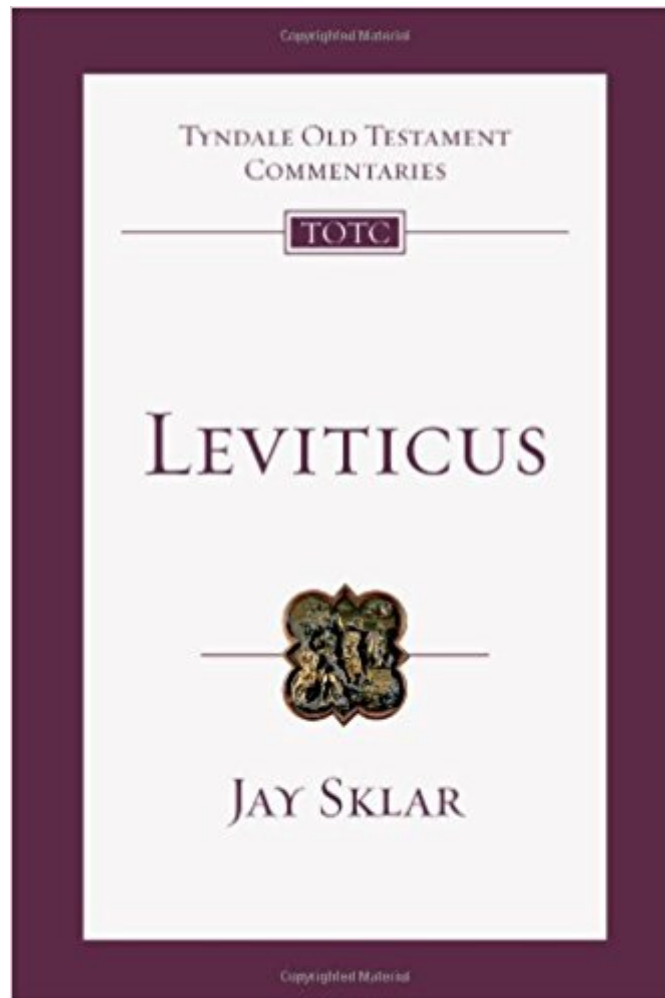




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# Leviticus (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)



## Synopsis

Preaching's Preacher's Guide to the Best Bible Reference for 2014 (Old Testament Commentaries). Levitical rules and regulations can at first appear irrelevant to contemporary Christians--but they provide important Old Testament background for understanding large portions of the New Testament. Leviticus describes a point in human history when God came and dwelt in the midst of the ancient Israelites and taught them what their purpose in life really was. Jay Sklar's commentary makes clear what it is that the Lord said to them and, in so doing, makes clear what he says to us today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If you have always baulked at reading Leviticus, then get this book, and use it as a guide. It will be money and time well-spent." (John de Hoog, Vox Reformata, 2016)"Pastors, seminarians, and Bible teachers will surely benefit from this volume, and its readers will likely quote many of Sklar's moder-day analogies." (Kazuyuki Hayashi, Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament, 5.1 (2016))"Most Christians find Leviticus rather difficult to grasp. Here is a volume aimed at Bible students and pastors that will provide real help at an economical price. Mr. Skylar has spent much of his career on this portion of Scripture and it shows. . . . In the commentary proper every passage is given sufficient, interesting, and helpful discussion. You could not help but gain by this fine volume." (Jimmy Reagan, The Reagan Review, April 25, 2015)"Professor Sklar deserves our

gratitude for the way in which he has set about his task of providing an entry-level work for what many newcomers to the OT view as a daunting part of the Bible." (James F. Coakley, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 2016)"Too often Bible readers overlook the book of Leviticus. By offering a balanced and readable commentary that focuses on the person and purpose of Christ, Sklar reminds us that the rich text of Leviticus loudly proclaims the gospel message." (Jason Brueckner, Bible Study Magazine, November-December 2014)"This is an outstanding commentary that will serve pastors and preachers well for at least another generation. It opens up the world of ancient Israel's laws and ritual in a clear and understandable way, rejoicing in the grace of the law of the Lord that is more to be desired than gold, a law which leads us to the majesty and glory of Jesus." (Paul Barker, Themelios, December 2015)

Generally speaking, a commentary aims to give the reader an understanding of what a particular verse or passage is trying to say. With this commentary, I have had three further goals in mind. ã ã First,ã ã I have tried to be aware of issues in the text that will seem strange, or simply wrong, to modern people.ã ã As you are aware, Leviticus has many of these! As much as possible, I try to provide the reader with help in terms of how to address these concerns. Here are just a few of the questions we often have in reading Leviticus (and the pages where the questions are addressed): How do we know which laws apply today? And why do Christians say some laws don't apply (like food laws) and others do (like laws on sexual ethics) (pp. 57-62, 237-238)? Why are so many of the penalties so severe (pp. 62-69)? A woman is ritually impure for twice as long after the birth of a female than after the birth of a male; is this a sign of sexism (pp. 177-179)? Are the laws about ritual impurity and menstruation oppressive to women (p. 203)? Does Leviticus condone slavery (pp. 307-301)? In many cases, if these questions are not addressed when teaching or preaching on these passages, our listeners will be unable to hear the rest of what the passage is trying to say. ã ã Second, where possible,ã ã I have tried to use language throughout the commentary that translates well to the person in the pew.ã ã It is easy to describe things in a technical way, but it is far more helpful to the teacher or preacher to describe things using everyday language and examples where possible. For example, in Lev 8 we read about some Israelites becoming priests. Part of the ceremony involves a changing of garments. Now it's possible simply to say, "The people becoming priests change their garments as a way of indicating that they are entering into a new role in society, something that anthropologists might call a rite of passage." That's all well and good, but it seems to me more helpful to the teacher or preacher if the commentary says, "In most societies, we use special clothing to indicate that we have entered into a special state or have a special role. A

bride's wedding dress sets her apart as the one who is getting married. A soldier's uniform sets him apart as part of the military. That is what is happening in this chapter: the priests change into special priestly clothes as a way of indicating that they now have a special role." That is what this commentary aims to do. ã ã Finally, the brief application section always begins with the question of how this would have applied to an ancient Israelite before discussing how itã ã applies to the follower of Jesus today.ã ã This is crucial. The Lord gave Leviticus to specific people (the Israelites) in a specific time and place (at Mt. Sinai just after their departure from Egypt). To understand the text properly, interpretation has to begin with this original audience. Otherwise, we are not reading the text in its context and this will almost always lead to errors in understanding. (Many of us have had a personal experience of this when people take our own words out of context!) But once we begin with the original context, we not only find it easier to understand what the Lord was saying then, we also find it easier to see how his words apply to us today. To take just one example, the more that I understood what sacrificial atonement meant in the context of ancient Israel, the more beautiful and moving the sacrificial death of Jesus became -- so much so that it is often hard for me to sing songs that mention sacrifice or atonement without tears coming to my eyes. ã ã Many blessings to you in your service of Jesus, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

I haven't been able to read beyond the introduction, but there is so much good information just in the introduction. The author makes the study of a difficult book very clear. I am not a seminarian. Just a lay person who enjoys studying the Old Testament. When I get further into the book I will add and update to my review.

This book has great scholarship as well as great practical value. No pastor in particular should be without it--in fact every person involved in Christian education. It gives great insight into the book of Leviticus from a Christocentric perspective.

Very text-bookish, but also a very good commentary on the heavy-duty book of Leviticus. Sklar's setting the context of when the book was written was especially helpful.

Readable, scholarly, with an attempt at a devotional sense.

Outstanding

Excellent. Makes what seems a dry, detailed book of rules & laws very interesting. It is GOD's boundary of love.

I can only say the book is excellent in covering and explaining Leviticus, a most book for many.

It was said of Willie Mays that his glove was the place where triples went to die. I suppose it could be said that Leviticus is the place where Bible reading plans go to die. Many a person has begun a Bible reading plan at the start of a new year with high hopes and the best of intentions. Things generally begin well. The stories found in Genesis keep things moving along and the mighty acts of God in Exodus usually keep the reader on track. Then something happens. That something is Leviticus. With all of its detail and minutiae regarding ceremonial law, many a reader simply loses interest. What, after all, does all of it have to do with the Gospel? Against the backdrop of this reality comes this commentary on Leviticus by Dr. Jay Sklar from IVP's Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series. Jay is Professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, where I took two semesters of Hebrew from him. As unbelievable as it may seem, each class period could truly be classified as a devotional experience. If a man can turn the study of Hebrew into a devotional experience, he can no doubt show us how the Gospel sings in Leviticus. That, after all, is what it is intended to do. As Jay reminds us, "If what we see in the Old Testament is an acorn, what we see in Jesus is a magnificent oak. This is especially true for the themes of Leviticus." I am very thankful to have this commentary on my bookshelf and I highly recommend that you do the same.

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