

## INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS

### Theme

The book of Leviticus claims to be a record of messages spoken to Moses by Jehovah out of The Tabernacle at Mount Sinai. The book begins in Leviticus 1:1 with the words, “And Jehovah began to call to Moses and to speak to him out of The Tabernacle of Meeting, saying, . . . .” These words are repeated in abbreviated form thirty-seven more times in the book (Lev. 4:1; 5:14; 6:1,8,19,24; 7:22,28; 8:1; 10:3,8,12; 11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1,33; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1,16; 22:1,17,26; 23:1,9,23,26,33; 24:1,13; 25:1; 27:1). Obviously the book presents itself as a group of messages spoken to Moses. The validity of this claim will be discussed later, but the only fair way to state the theme of the book is to describe the writing as it actually exists. Many interpreters of Leviticus have stated that only a few portions of the book are narrative (Lev. 10:1,20; 24:20-12,23). This statement is certainly erroneous from the point of view of the materials themselves. They all claim to be narrative, that is, narrations of what actually was said when Jehovah spoke to Moses from The Tabernacle. The theme of the book, therefore, is “Messages Spoken by Jehovah to Moses at Mount Sinai.”

The theme must be further circumscribed, however, because Leviticus does not claim to be a record of all the revelations given to Moses at Mount Sinai. It claims to be a record of revelations given to Moses within a specific and brief period of time. The dating of the messages is not given in Leviticus, but it is given in Exodus and Numbers, materials that are intimately related to Leviticus. Students of all theological views and all interpretive schools recognize that close relationship, regardless of their views about the origin of these books. The first verse of Leviticus is obviously connected with Exodus by the opening word, “And.” Thus, the book indicates that the first message in Leviticus was given to Moses immediately after the last event recorded in Exodus. The last chapter of Exodus tells of the erection of The Tabernacle under Moses’ direction. That event occurred on the first day of the first month of the second year after the Exodus (Ex. 40:2,17; compare Ex. 12:2). The first message in Leviticus then was given immediately after Jehovah occupied His new Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35). Most likely it was spoken on the same day that The Tabernacle was erected and dedicated.

The book of Numbers begins with a message that was spoken to Moses on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Exodus (Num 1:1). That book also begins with the word “And.” It means that the first message in Numbers was received right after the last message in Leviticus. The required conclusion is that the messages recorded in Leviticus were all given to Moses between the first day of the first month and the first day of the second month after the Exodus, that is, within the span of one month.

The Hebrews began their months with the appearance of the new moon. Though a lunar month is actually 28½ days long, the Israelites allowed 30 days for each month on their calendars. They had twelve months in their calendar year. Since the sun, not the moon, determines the seasons, after some years their calendar would get out of line with the seasons. When that occurred, they inserted an extra month to make them coincide. Some will recognize that the Jews used that calendar arrangement in later years but question whether it was in use as far back as the times of Moses. Please check carefully the dates given in Genesis 7:11-8:14, and you will find strong evidence that the same calendar arrangement was used as far back as the days of Noah. Thus, that calendar arrangement preceded Moses by about a thousand years. The Jews continue to use it in their liturgical calendar today. This arrangement of the Jewish calendar means that the messages of Leviticus were spoken to Moses within a thirty-day period.

It is interesting to notice that messages ten through thirteen were all spoken on the same day (see Introduction to Messages 11, 12, 13, and to comments on Lev. 10:12 in MESSAGE 13). Also, the five brief messages in Leviticus 23 were likely also all given on the same day. The circumstances of Message 36 would seem to indicate that it was an extra message added to meet a crisis. Therefore, it likely was given on the same day as the message preceding it, making a total of eight messages delivered on the same day as other messages.

The passages cited in the first paragraph above indicate that the book contains thirty-eight messages that God gave to Moses. If eight of those messages were delivered on the same day as other messages, then God spoke to Moses on thirty different days. Messages delivered on thirty different days all within a thirty day period seems to indicate that ordinarily Jehovah gave to Moses a new message each day during the first month after the dedication of The Tabernacle. Therefore, the theme of the book should be stated as “Messages Spoken by Jehovah to Moses at Mount Sinai During the First Month of the Second Year After the Exodus.”

It is helpful to define the theme of the book also in terms of the subjects discussed in the messages. Only a study of the whole book can adequately show what these subjects were. This writing will seek to show that the messages dealt with three main topics: the religious system of Israel (Lev. 1:1-17:16; 21:1-24:9), the legal system of Israel (Lev. 18:1-20:27; 24:10-23), and the economic system of Israel (Lev. 25-27). The reader will test the validity of this position as he studies the comments throughout the writing.

It has often been stated that Leviticus is a manual of Israelite rituals. However, this fails to be an adequate description of its contents on two counts. First, the religious rituals of Israel are not fully described in Leviticus. Very important and basic information concerning them is also given in Exodus and Numbers. Second, Leviticus deals with more than religious ritual. It also deals with secular laws and economic laws. Therefore, a full statement of the theme of Leviticus should be “Messages Spoken by Jehovah to Moses at Mount Sinai During the First Month of the Second Year After the Exodus Concerning the Religious, Legal, and Economic Systems of Israel.” The theme might be somewhat more briefly stated as “Messages from Jehovah Concerning Life and Worship in the Nation of Israel.”

### Title

The title of a book seeks to indicate the theme and scope of the book succinctly. No brief title could achieve that purpose adequately for the book of Leviticus. The titles that have been used for the book through the years have all fallen short in some respect.

Leviticus is not called by a title distinctive for itself in either the Old or New Testaments. When Leviticus is referred to in other books of the Bible, general titles are used that refer to the whole of the first five books of the Bible. An example is Nehemiah 8:14, which uses the title “The Law.” “The Law” was the name used by Israelites for the first five books of the Bible, often now called the Pentateuch. It is not a distinctive title for the one book of Leviticus. A second example is Matthew 8:4, which uses the term “Moses.” This adequately describes the person to whom the messages in Leviticus were spoken, but it also is a name that applies to the whole Pentateuch. This title also is pertinent but not specific for the book of Leviticus.

Ancient and modern Hebrew Bibles refer to each of the first five books of the Bible by the first words found in the book. Thus, for Leviticus they use the title אֵלֶּיךָ יִקְרָא, which means, “And He Called.” This title recognizes that God spoke the messages contained in the book. It puts emphasis on the fact that these materials originated as spoken messages. It is not specific as to where, to whom, or on what subjects these revelations were given, but it certainly focuses on what the book claims to be.

In the Talmud, the book is referred to by the title “The Law of the Priests.” This title seeks to present the content of the book. It does so only to a small degree. Important sections of the book deal with the legal and economic systems of Israel, over which the priests did not preside. Some portions of the book did give specific instructions to the priests. However, even the portions that deal with Israel’s religious ceremonies were directed more often to the people than to the priests (Lev. 1:2; 4:2; 5:15; 6:2; 7:23,29; 8:3; 11:2; 12:2; 13:2; 14:2,35; 15:2; 17:2; 18:2; 19:2; 20:2; 22:18; 23:2,10,24,34; 24:2,15; 25:2; 27:2).

The title for the book that is used by the Greek Septuagint was the Greek form of “Leviticus.” The Latin Vulgate used the Latin form of the same title. When the Scriptures were translated into English, the same title was Anglicized and used as the title for the book in English versions. This title points to the fact that the book is related to the Levites or to the Levitical priests. If the title is understood to refer to the Levitical priests, it contains the same weaknesses as “The Law of the Priests.” If it is understood to refer to the whole tribe of Levi, the title is even more misleading. The book contains almost nothing about the whole tribe of Levi. The title “Leviticus” can be said to be appropriate only if it is understood to mean that the revelations in the book were to be taught to the people by the Levites. However, that statement is not found anywhere in the book itself.

In addition to “Leviticus,” the King James, American Standard, Revised Standard, and Holman Christian Standard versions use the title “The Third Book of Moses.” This title certainly describes what the book claims about the person to whom the book was first revealed. However, it says nothing the content of the book.

Each of the titles used through the years has some value, but none of them is adequate to describe the real nature of the book. Since no brief title can adequately express the full theme, any one of them can serve satisfactorily as long as the student understands that the title describes the book in only a limited and general way. The name “Leviticus” is used in this writing because of its familiarity.

### **Date and Authorship**

Two basic views are held today concerning the date and authorship of the book of Leviticus. One is that the book was written by Moses or under his direction. The other view is that Leviticus is a part of a manual on Israelite worship, the forms and ceremonies of which developed gradually over the years. This view holds that Israelite worship reached its final form during or after the Babylonian Exile and that its practices were recorded in at least two different documents. It further holds that the separate documents were brought together into one book in post-exilic times by a rather clumsy editor, who also added notes and comments of his own. This view is generally referred to as the Documentary Hypothesis. This writing will refer to that theory as the development view.

The development view of the origin of Leviticus is part of a larger development theory concerning the first five books of the Bible, often called the Pentateuch (which means “Five Books”). Sometimes the theory is enlarged to include the book of Joshua, so that its advocates speak of the “Hexateuch (which means “Six Books),” instead of the “Pentateuch.” Advocates of the development view usually hold that two main documents were woven together to form the basic structure of Leviticus. They identify those documents as “P,” for “Priestly Code,” and “H,” for “Holiness Code.” “P” is said to form the core of chapters 1-16 and 27. “H” is said to form the core of chapters 17-26, with excerpts from “P” interspersed throughout. The many statements within the book that Jehovah spoke these words to Moses are taken to be a formula added by the final editor or editors to show that the rituals in the book were in harmony with the original teachings given by Moses. They also hold that this “formula” was added to persuade people to accept the writing and its rituals.

Following is a brief summary of arguments used on both sides of this issue:

**Arguments for the development theory.** *(1) Comparison with other Semitic religions.* This argument holds that the Leviticus ceremonies were so similar to worship ceremonies of other Semitic peoples that one had to grow out of the other. Semitic peoples descended from Shem, one of Noah’s sons (Gen. 19:21-31; 11:20-26). The religions of all Semitic peoples did contain many characteristics and practices in common. Some striking resemblances have been found between the ceremonies of Leviticus and those of other Semitic religions, such as, an emphasis on a sacred place of worship or temple, offerings burned or roasted on an altar, religious festivals, tithes, forbidden foods, and circumcision. Based on these similarities, advocates of the development view argue that the religion of Israel must have come out of a background of ideas common to all

Semites and, therefore, must have developed slowly over many years. According to this reasoning, they could not have been the work of one man like Moses or the product of a brief period of time like the stay of Israel at Sinai.

While these similarities do exist, many striking and profound differences also exist between the religion of Israel and those of other Semites. The religion of Israel was in many ways completely distinct and unique, indicating that the Israelites were influenced by a source that was unknown to the others. Some of the distinct and extremely important differences are:

<u>View of</u>	<u>Held by Israel</u>	<u>Held by Other Semites</u>
God	Monotheism	Polytheism
Origin of man	Created by God	Procreated by the gods
Power in religion	Divine presence	Magic
Experience of God	Personal	Ritualistic
Daily obligations	Moral	Legalistic

The basic concepts of the two religious systems were so distinctly different that they show that the similarities were only matters of outward form and not inner content. The differences were so great that only one adequate explanation can be given for them. That explanation is that God injected Himself into the history of Israel and revealed infinitely higher ideas to them than could have been humanly discerned. For a group of priests to have developed those ideas simply by their own insights would have been an unbelievable miracle indeed, whether they did it in the time of Moses or in the time of the eighth century prophets or in the time of the exile. Such ideas have never been the result of human thinking in any day, including modern times. The book of Leviticus emphasizes almost to the point of boredom that the ideas in the book came directly from God. Acceptance of that claim is the only satisfactory explanation for the infinite superiority of Israel's religious ideas. On the other hand, the similarities can be easily explained by acknowledging that Jehovah chose to use forms already familiar to the Israelites in making His revelations. When He used familiar forms, the Israelites were able to relate to them and accept them more easily. However, Jehovah infused those forms with infinitely higher truths than other Semites ever imagined. If Jehovah did reveal these ideas, He could just as easily have done it in the time of Moses as in the time of the eighth century prophets or in the time of the exile. A comparison of Leviticus with other Semitic religions does not support the development theory. Instead it emphasizes its impossibility.

**(2) *Supposed references to historical events that occurred after the time of Moses.*** Advocates of the development view claim to find references in Leviticus and other books of the Law to events that took place long after Israel's stay at Sinai. Examples are the exile of the Israelites from their land into Babylon (Lev. 18:28; 26:43-44), Levitical cities (Lev. 25:32-34), and distinctions between home-born Israelites and "sojourners," that is, people of other nationalities who had accepted Jehovah and had become naturalized citizens (Lev. 16:29; 28:26; 19:34).

Concerning the references to the exile, a reading of the passages cited shows clearly that they warn of exile as a future possibility. They do not speak of exile as a past reality. It would not even have taken a divine revelation to know that such could have been a possibility. No reason exists whatsoever to suppose that the Babylonian Exile had to have occurred before those passages could have been written.

Concerning the Levitical cities, the reference cited describes those cities as plans to be carried out in the future. Men certainly are capable of making such plans, even without divine assistance. To suppose that the cities had to have been in existence before this passage could have been written is to suppose that the Israelites were less than human in intelligence, even without considering God's revealing power.

Concerning the references to the home-born and to “sojourners,” it is totally unwarranted to suppose that the Israelites in the wilderness could not have assumed that non-Israelites would live among them when they settled in their land and could not have made plans for how to treat them. Making such preparations would have been especially appropriate in light of statements in both Exodus and Leviticus that non-Israelites accompanied them when they left Egypt and were with them in the wilderness (Ex. 12:38; Lev. 24:10,16).

Those who use these references as evidence in favor of the development theory hold that the “sojourners” were Canaanites whom the Israelites failed to drive out of the Land. They claim the Israelites could have had no knowledge ahead of time that such an event would happen. However, the cited passages show that the “sojourners” were naturalized citizens of Israel and proselytes to the Israelite religion, not foreign aliens (see comments on Leviticus 16:29 in MESSAGE 20; on Leviticus 17:8 in MESSAGE 21; on Leviticus 19:10 in MESSAGE 23; and on Leviticus 24:10-23 in MESSAGE 36). Therefore, these passages could not possibly refer to Canaanites who had not been driven out of the Land. Leviticus contains five references to people of other nationalities living among the Israelites as naturalized citizens (Lev. 22:25; 25:35,40,45,47). These references always are presented as instructions on what their rights should be and how to treat them. In no case is the reference to circumstances that could not have been foreseen and expected ahead of time while the Israelites were still in the wilderness.

**(3) *Supposed contradictions in the text.*** Development theory advocates claim that Leviticus 23:34 contradicts Exodus 34:22. The Exodus passage states that the Feast of Ingathering was to come at “the end of the year.” On the other hand, the Leviticus passage states that it was to be held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The critics claim that the feast could not have been in the seventh month and at the end of the year at the same time. They conclude that the two passages must have come from different documents that originated in widely separated times.

Some defenders of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and of Leviticus have sought to resolve this difficulty by pointing out that the Israelites followed two calendar systems at one and the same time—a religious calendar similar to modern liturgical calendars, and a secular calendar used in conduct business. The religious calendar began in the seventh month of the secular calendar. It is absolutely true that two calendar systems did exist side by side in Israel (see comments on Lev. 23:5 in MESSAGE 30 and on Lev. 23:23-25 in MESSAGE 32). However, this interpretation does not really explain the expression “the end of the year,” since the fifteenth day of the seventh month would hardly be called “the end of the year” on either calendar. A more satisfactory explanation is that the expression “the end of the year” did not refer to either calendar. Instead it referred to the end of the agricultural year. In the same way, people today speak of the end of their fiscal year, which may not be related at all to the beginning or end of the calendar year. This solution to the supposed problem is supported by the fact that Leviticus 23:39 states that the fifteenth day of the seventh month came “when you have gathered in the produce of the land.” These facts do not reveal a contradiction in the text but a lack of understanding of the dynamics of Israelite life on the part of the critics.

Other supposed contradictions in the text have solutions that are equally plain and simple.

**(4) *Supposed dual accounts of the same event.*** This argument does not apply directly to Leviticus, but it is a prominent part of the development view of the Pentateuch as a whole. Therefore, it needs to be mentioned here. Advocates of the development view claim to find several instances where the same incident is recorded twice or even three times in variant forms. They claim that behind the variant forms of the same story is a kernel of truth but that the incident was told and retold over the years so many times that it took on different details in different areas. Supposedly, two of the variations of the story were later recorded in different documents. Then still later, when the final editor or editors put the documents together, he or they included both stories without trying to reconcile them. The most prominent of these “dual accounts” are two supposed versions of the creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-25 and two accounts of Abraham’s attempt to

deceive his neighbors by saying Sarah was his sister instead of his wife (Genesis 11:10-20 and Genesis 20:1-18).

Concerning the two “creation” accounts, a careful reading of the text reveals that Genesis 2 does not claim to be a record of the creation of the earth. Instead, it claims to be a record of the planting of a garden in the earth. The two events are entirely distinct, and it is sad that they have been falsely confused so many times. The critics claim that the two accounts contradict each other, in that Genesis 1 says that people were created after God had made plants and animals, whereas Genesis 2 says God made man before He made plants and animals. They misread the text in three crucial verses: (1) Genesis 2:4, does not say that plants did not exist when God created Adam but that they had not yet begun to sprout out of the ground. God had made the trees and plant life three days earlier, and He had made them with seeds already formed in them (Gen. 1:11-12); but not enough time had elapsed for those seeds to mature, fall to the ground, germinate, and sprout out of the earth. (2) Genesis 2:9 does not say that God made trees and plants after he created the first man but that he caused all kinds of vegetation to grow in the garden. He had already created trees and plants, and he made some of them to grow in the garden he formed for Adam and Eve to live in. (3) Genesis 2:19 does not require that God made animals after he created the first man. It is best translated, “And Jehovah God had proceeded to form out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and He brought [each] to the man to see what he would call it.” God brought to Adam one of each of the animals He had made a few hours earlier, so Adam could become acquainted with the animals and name them. When these verses in Genesis 2 are translated and read properly, it is clear that Genesis 2 is not a variant account of the creation of the world but a more detailed account of the creation of the first man and woman, adding to what was revealed in the chapter 1. Chapter 2 does not conflict with chapter 1 as the critics say. Instead, it clarifies it.

Concerning the two accounts of Abraham’s deception concerning Sarah, the claim that the two accounts are varied versions of the same event is built on the supposition that Abraham would not have made the same mistake twice. They conclude that his mistake of falsifying the facts about his wife just got changed in different ways over the years as it was told and retold. Their supposition that Abraham would not have made the same mistake twice is built on an extremely poor observation of human nature. The truth is that through all the ages people have been accustomed to repeating the same mistakes over and over again. They still do the same today. People are creatures of habit. Once an act is committed, it is easier to do it again. And every time the act is repeated, it comes all that much easier to do still more times. Habits soon become addictions, and they are not only easy to repeat but difficult not to repeat. One of the methods used by detectives in identifying criminals is the recognized habit of criminals to repeat the same crime over and over. If a detective investigates two crimes and learns that they were committed in similar ways, he concludes that the same person likely committed both crimes. He compares the evidence in both locations, and together they make it easier for him to identify the guilty person. When a person lies to us once or twice, afterward we listen to his every word carefully because we suspect he will lie again. Abraham simply was practicing this commonly known characteristic of human nature. His repetition of the same mistake a second time is evidence that both incidents actually occurred, not evidence that neither occurred in the manner recorded.

Even a casual reading of the two accounts of Abraham’s failure shows that the details of the two stories are entirely different. The details are carefully recorded, and they show no evidence of being sloppily or vaguely recounted. The two events occurred at widely different times in Abraham’s life. They occurred in two completely different countries, ruled over by two totally different kings, both of whom are distinctively named. Abraham’s deception was discovered in two entirely different ways, and the way he was treated on each occasion was completely different. Neither story reveals any confusion about the facts of the case. Every evidence indicates that the two incidents were separate events that occurred as recorded, not two vague, inaccurate accounts of the same incident. The claim that the two events are different versions of the same incident is wild supposition that does not stand up to even a brief examination.

Other supposed dual accounts in the books of Moses are equally unsubstantiated and just as easily refuted. Brilliant men have repeated such weak conclusions over and over, not because of strong evidence supporting them but because of the sad inclination of human beings to doubt instead of believing. Eve and Adam started that tendency to doubt. It is still going on.

*(5) Differences in style and vocabulary.* An immense amount of study has been given to variations in style and vocabulary that are found within the Pentateuch and within the book of Leviticus. These variations have been used to support the development theory in two ways. First, differences between Leviticus and other portions of the Pentateuch have been used to support the larger development theory for the whole of the Pentateuch. It is quite obvious to any thoughtful reader that striking differences in style and vocabulary do exist between the narratives of Genesis and Exodus and between the descriptions of ceremonies in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It is equally obvious that both differ greatly in style and vocabulary from the addresses recorded in Deuteronomy. However, it is not necessary at all to conclude that these differences prove that the materials came from different authors or time periods. The differences can be amply explained by differences in the subject matter. It is more than natural for the same author to use different vocabulary words in discussing different subjects. It would be strange if he did not use different words. Simply counting the number of times certain words are used in two different passages is not evidence that the two passages were composed by different writers. It is equally natural for the same writer to use a quite different style when he speaking from when he is writing or to use a different style when he is giving instructions from when he is telling a story. Also the same author will of necessity write quite differently when writing a poem from when he is writing prose. Such differences are not evidence of different authors but demonstrations of human talent and versatility.

It can be easily demonstrated that the same writer today will use quite different styles and vocabulary at different times as he deals with different subjects. In fact, such variations are required of any writer as he deals with different themes in different ways. One has to completely ignore the obvious versatility of human nature to suppose that such variations within the writings of a talented writer are not possible. The fact is that such variations are more normal than unusual. A talented writer with the immensity of background, training, experience, and responsibility of Moses certainly was capable of such variety. That variety should be expected even without considering the immense wisdom and knowledge of God who revealed these truths to Moses.

Second, differences of style and vocabulary within Leviticus have been used to support the development theory of Leviticus itself. Critics have noted that Chapters 17-26 of Leviticus make much more frequent use of words and phrases such as “holy,” “sanctify,” “profane,” and “I am Jehovah” than do chapters 1-16 and chapter 27. This variation has been taken as evidence that the two sections came from different original documents. However, the same critics have also noted that many words and phrases of chapters 17-26 are so identical to those in chapters 1-16,27 that they must have come from the same document. Therefore, they extract those words and phrases from chapters 17-26 and assign them over to chapters 1-16,27. Thus, everything in chapters 17-26 that agrees with the separate source theory is taken as evidence for their theory, while everything that disagrees with that theory is extracted from those chapters and assigned back to the other source. It should not take a great deal of insight to see that it would be possible to “prove” almost any theory with such arbitrary handling of the evidence. Such tortured use of evidence does not prove the theory. It discredits it. And such handling of the evidence is unnecessary when variations in subject matter can adequately explain all the variations in style and vocabulary that exist in the book.

These variations are especially easy to explain when it is recognized that these materials are revelations from Jehovah God. Some have contended that the variations in style and vocabulary prove that these materials could not have been spoken by one and the same God. According to this claim, God must speak in a wooden monotony that is a mark of poor literary ability. What a small concept this view reveals of an omniscient God! Marvelous variety of language is evidence in favor of the fact that these writings came by divine inspiration, not against it.

In spite of the momentous effort and scholarly weight that has been thrown into the effort to support the development theory, the evidence simply is not sufficient to support a theory that so completely contradicts the testimony of the book itself. It fails miserably to explain how such a confused mixture of contradictory statements as they claim are in the book could have survived through thousands of years as part of the most loved and read writing in the history of the world.

**Arguments against the development theory.** (1) *The moral impossibility.* Advocates of the development theory hold, on the one hand, that those who produced these materials gave to the world the infinitely distinct and superior moral and spiritual ideas contained in them. On the other hand, they hold that those who produced these materials sought to achieve acceptance of those superior ideas by claiming they came from Moses, when actually they did not. This claim is equivalent to saying that men who would lie about the most often repeated statement in the book could at the same time give to the world the most exalted ideas ever written about honest and morality. Such moral contradiction in the same individuals cannot be! Immoral men cannot produce exalted moral ideas. Liars could not have given to the world the highest standards of truth and truthfulness that the world has ever known.

Advocates of the development theory have sought to support their position by saying that people of that day did not hold the same concepts that we hold today concerning copyrights and authorship. No one knows whether that claim is true or not, but that claim is not the point. The man or men who produced these materials certainly did know the concepts of honesty and truthfulness. These writings are the primary source for teaching those very concepts to the whole world. Those who gave those concepts to the world would not have blatantly contradicted their own principles by falsifying the origin of the ideas themselves. It is morally impossible for these materials to have been produced in the manner claimed by the advocates of the development theory. Dishonest men do not produce the kind of writing and ideas found in the book of Leviticus.

(2) *The practical impossibility.* According to the development theory, a group of prophets or priests of post-exilic times produced the final form of the Pentateuch, including the book of Leviticus. Then they convinced the people of their time that those materials had been in existence from the time of Moses. In fact, they convinced them so completely that the claim was never doubted in either the Jewish world or the Christian world until the last one hundred fifty years. The very statement of this claim should be enough to discredit it. No group of people since the beginning of the world has been either that convincing or that gullible. The very fact that the authority of Moses was so great that the critics claim the priests had to appeal to it to get their writings and ceremonies accepted is in itself proof that the people would not have accepted their writings without positive proof that the authority of Moses was really behind them. To deceive the Israelites in a matter that was as important to them as their religious ceremonies was beyond the realm of possibility. In addition, how could Moses' authority have been so highly respected if he had not given them the exalted ideas for which they so highly respected him? Moses was highly respected because he was the instrument God used to give Israel these books. If Moses did not give Israel these books, he would not have been the highly respected authority the supposed writers needed to get their ideas accepted.

(3) *The logical impossibility.* The development theory is built on the supposition that it is possible for literary specialists to tell whether the same person wrote two different passages simply by studying the style and vocabulary of the writings. While such critical studies have been called scientific, no attempt has ever been made to demonstrate under control conditions that such accomplishments are even possible. A fair test would be for someone to gather different materials that are written on the same subject but that are not known to the critics and to weave them together for the critics to study. If the critics could accurately separate out the documents that had been woven together, then the validity of their method would have been proved. They could then proceed to try to use that method on the Pentateuch and on Leviticus. However, no such test has ever been attempted. The critics use their method without ever having proved or attempted to prove scientifically that it is a valid method. It is shocking to call such an unproved procedure scientific.



It seems to be a fair conclusion that the critics have not attempted scientific verification of their method because they are unconsciously aware of the logical impossibility of what they are claiming. Human ability is so varied and so versatile that it is not possible to know with assurance what a person has said or will say under varying conditions at different times. When the divine dimension, which is the most basic claim of the Pentateuch and of Leviticus, is brought into the picture, this impossibility is magnified to unlimited proportions. The critics have simply expended a monstrous amount of intellectual effort on a logical impossibility.

**(4) *The consistency impossibility.*** When a student begins to read the claims of those who espouse the development theory, their conclusions seem to be clear and exact. However, just a little more study of the various works on the subject reveals the vast lack of agreement that exists among the critics. In fact, the student becomes bewildered with the multiplicity of the conflicting opinions and theories. He should soon become aware that the evidence is not nearly so exact and that the conclusions are not nearly so secure as many would lead him to believe.

The more thoroughly a person studies the multiple varieties of the development theory, the more he becomes aware that the critics have drastically changed their theories and opinions over the years, and that they are still changing them. After one hundred fifty years of intense and microscopic study, a failure to achieve any measure of consistency should be taken as overwhelming evidence that consistency cannot be achieved and that the basic theory is insupportable. The critics began with a concern over certain seeming inconsistencies in the text of the Pentateuch and of Leviticus. Their work has produced a vastly greater number of inconsistencies in their own theories. The smaller number of difficulties in the Biblical documents when compared with the problems in the critics' theories argues strongly in favor of the reliability of the Biblical documents.. The failure of the critics to attain consistency among themselves argues strongly against their conclusions.

**(5) *The disappearance impossibility.*** Advocates of the development theory call their method "higher criticism." They claim it is a higher method of studying the Bible because they do it without any supporting evidence. Actually what they attempt is similar to trying to prove a murder in court with no body, no weapon, no material evidence, no witnesses, and no motive. After one hundred fifty years of intense study and after archaeologists have unearthed millions of ancient artifacts and documents, not one shred of evidence has ever been found that the hypothetical separate documents that supposedly were woven together to form the Biblical texts ever existed. Furthermore, not one single mention or even hint has been discovered in ancient writings that anyone ever saw or even heard of one of those separate documents. Is it really credible that sacred documents that were developed over generations and practiced by thousands could have so thoroughly disappeared that not a single thread of one of them has survived? Would those who developed the supposedly original documents have surrendered every copy so willingly and abandoned them so thoroughly that not one page has ever been found and not one word of objection or approval of using their documents in the manner the critics claim has ever been unearthed? The development theory requires the complete disappearance of every shred of evidence that the sacred and honored separate documents they espouse ever existed. Such a feat would not happen by accident and could not have been accomplished by intent. Their method is not a higher kind of study. It is just higher gullibility. It is an impossibility.

**Arguments for Mosaic authorship.** The development theory of the origin of the Pentateuch originated because people did not want to believe Moses could have written those books. Nevertheless, strong reasons exist for believing he did indeed write them. No arguments can provide absolute proof that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch, but they provide convincing evidence for those whose minds are not already dead-set against the idea.

**(1) *The recognized antiquity of the basic ideas of the Pentateuch and of Leviticus.*** The critics who deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and the book of Leviticus recognize that the basic forms and ideas contained in the books go back to the times of Moses and earlier. Those forms and ideas include the sanctuary,

sacrifices, festivals, tithes, and clean and unclean animals and objects. Critics used to claim that these practices did not come into being until much later times. They now claim that, whereas Leviticus did not exist in its present form until the exile or afterward, Leviticus does contain some traditions that do go back to Moses or before. If the traditions go back to Moses, why not the writing of them? If some of the forms and ceremonies in the Book of Leviticus go back to Moses, why not all of them?

(2) *The admitted antiquity of writing and of the Hebrew language.* Critics used to deny that writing even existed in the time of Moses. In the light of voluminous archaeological evidence, all scholars now recognize that writing and written Hebrew were highly developed arts in the time of Moses. If language was that advanced in Moses' time, why should we deny that he could have written the books that traditionally been attributed to him? The critics lost their primary argument when archaeology produced evidence of how ancient the art of writing is, but they still refused to give up their theory. By doing so, they have revealed that their theory is more important to them than evidence.

(3) *The admitted Mosaic authorship of portions of the Pentateuch.* The critics now recognize that certain portions of the Pentateuch, such as Exodus 17:14; 24:4-8; 34:27 firmly state that Moses received those portions from God, that God commanded him to write them down, and that he obeyed that command. They also recognize that some form of a written Testimony (Ex. 16:34; 25:21; 27:21; 30:6,36; 40:20; Lev. 16:13) or Book (Ex. 17:14; 24:7) existed in Moses' day that claimed to be a record of what God had revealed. To that admission should be added the information that Exodus and Leviticus both reveal that that Testimony was so important that the ark (Ex. 25:16,22; 26:33,34; 30:6,26; 31:7; 39:25; 40:3,5; 40:21), The Tabernacle (Ex. 38:21), and the veil (Lev. 24:3) were all named after it, because the Testimony was kept in them. Even the two tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments were called "the two tablets of the Testimony" because they were a part of the Testimony that contained the record of what God had revealed. Critics may question what was actually written in the Testimony that was kept in the ark, but it is difficult for them to deny that whatever it contained in the time of the Exodus was written by Moses or under his direction. If Moses wrote portions of the five books that have traditionally been attributed to him, he could just as easily have written all of them. Once a person recognizes that Moses wrote portions of these books, he has little reason left to deny that Moses wrote the whole of the books.

(4) *The definite ascription of these books to Moses by other Bible writings.* Other Old Testament writings definitely state that Moses wrote passages in the book of Leviticus. Examples are:

Leviticus 1:1-17; 8:8-13	2 Chronicles 23:18
Leviticus 26:33	Nehemiah 1:8
Leviticus 23:34,36,40,42	Nehemiah 8:14,18
Leviticus 23:3,7,8,21,25,28-32,35-36,39; 25:2-7	Nehemiah 10:29-31
Leviticus 26:14-39	Daniel 9:11-13

See also Joshua 1:7; 8:35; 23:6; Judges 3:4; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 18:6,12; 21:8; 23:25; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 2 Chronicles 33:8; Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 1:7; 8:14; 10:29; Psalm 103:7; Malachi 4:4.

New Testament books also ascribe portions of the book of Leviticus to Moses, such as:

Leviticus 12:8	Luke 2:22,24
Leviticus 20:10	John 8:5
Leviticus 4:2,22,27; 5:15,18	Acts 13:39

See also John 1:17; Acts 6:11-14; 15:5,21; 21:21; 28:23; 2 Corinthians 3:15; Hebrews 7:14; 9:9. If Moses wrote these varied portions of the book of Leviticus, one is hard pressed to prove that he did not write all of it. The

development theory simply contradicts the statements of divine Scripture. Since Scripture ascribes the book of Leviticus to Moses, the question of its authorship never should have been debated in the first place.

**(5) *The clear recognition by Jesus Himself that Moses wrote the book of Leviticus.*** According to Matthew 8:4, Jesus said to a man whom he cured of leprosy, “Go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded as a witness to them.” This statement of Jesus is also recorded in Mark 1:44 and Luke 5:14. The critics say that those statements only mean that Moses gave that one commandment and that many other commandments were added to the book later. If we consent to that argument, Jesus would have had to quote every single word in Leviticus and the Bible writers would have had to record every quotation He made before we could believe that Moses wrote the whole book. But, fortunately Jesus did give Moses credit for the whole of the first five books of the Bible. John 7:19 records that He said to the Jewish authorities, “Did not Moses give you the Law? And yet none of you keeps the Law.” The Jews of Jesus’ day clearly understood that “the Law” meant the book we call the Pentateuch, that is, the first five books of the Bible. Hebrews through the ages have arranged the books of the Hebrew Bible into three sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Christians have arranged those same books into five Sections: Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets. In both arrangements, the first five books are called the Law. Jesus was referring to those five books when He said, “Did not Moses give you the Law?” Since Jesus is Lord of the world and Truth in human flesh, His authority should settle the question of the authorship of the books of the Law. No more questions should be asked. According to Jesus’ authority, we can properly call the books of the Law “The Five Books of Moses.”

**(6) *The almost universal acceptance of Mosaic authorship by Jews and Christians until the rise of the critical school in the last one hundred fifty years.*** It is recognized by all scholars that Bible students universally acknowledged that Moses wrote the books of the Law up until relatively recent years. It is incredible that a fact so firmly accepted after careful scrutiny by so many Bible students over so many years should suddenly be found to be bogus at such a late date. But the critics think no one before them ever had an analytical mind. Actually some of the greatest thinkers of every age devoted themselves to detailed and scrupulous study of the Bible, and none of them found reason to doubt Moses’ authorship until some modern “scholars” discovered it more than three thousand years after it claims to have been written and more than 1,500 years after the critics claim it was compiled. The conclusions of believers through the years are not to be so easily discredited.

**(7) *The strong evidence that the book is divinely inspired.*** Leviticus claims to be a record of revelations given to Moses by Jehovah God. It is either what it claims to be, or it is a shabby hoax. A hoax could scarcely have given light and life to so many people through so many ages as this book and the other books of the Law have given. If it is a divinely inspired book, as it claims to be, we are obligated to accept what it says. If we accept what it says, we surely must accept what it says about who wrote it as well as the message it contains.

**(8) *The plausible explanations that exist for the few seeming inconsistencies and contradictions in the book.*** Critics have sought to show that Leviticus and the other books of the Pentateuch contain contradictory statements that could not have all been written by the same person. Actually not as many seeming contradictions exist in these materials as many suppose. Of the seeming inconsistencies that do exist, adequate explanations have long been given many times over many years. The supposed inconsistencies and contradictions are examined in their contexts in comments throughout this writing. Please give serious consideration to the comments and test their validity as you follow them throughout this writing.

**(9) *The amazing fruits that this book has produced.*** The book of Leviticus, along with the other books of the Bible, has produced fruits of righteousness and holiness in the lives of multitudes of people over the last three thousand plus years. Those fruits are spiritual wonders that were produced in the lives of men and women who believed and followed its teachings. Those men and women have stood out as spiritually distinct and morally superior above all others. Such results could not have come from a book that was produced by carelessly patching together the disjointed thoughts of writers who never knew each other. They had to come

from a book that is what it claims to be, a divine revelation. The superior results this book has produced in people's lives provide strong support for the truthfulness in what it says about where it came from.

All these factors combine to provide ample evidence to warrant the conclusion that the most supportable view of the date and authorship of Leviticus is that the messages it contains were given to Moses by God and that they were written down in virtually their present form by Moses or by men who worked under his direction.

The greatest reason this position has not been more widely accepted in recent times is not the strength of the evidence, but the spirit of the times. The past one hundred fifty years have been the most completely materialistic period that has existed in the history of the world. In former ages, people may not have accepted the true God; but they did not question the existence of gods and spirits. People's ideas greatly changed in modern times. Multitudes came to believe that nothing exists outside of objects that can be seen and touched. Everything has to be explained in terms of observable phenomena. Every object and every experience has to be the result of processes that can be seen, touched, or demonstrated. The development theory appeals to that materialistic spirit of the times in which we live. It makes the materials to be the result of an explainable process instead of an unexplainable revelation from an unseen Power. It turns the books into being the product of a slowly developing process in the people's thinking rather than the result of God's direct intervention. Thus, it fits the secular spirit of the last century and a half. This statement does not mean that all those who accept the development theory reject belief in God or in the spirit world. It does mean that even those who believe in God and still accept the development theory are strongly influenced by the spirit of the times. The development theory coincides with the materialism of recent years, but it does not coincide at all with the claims or the fruits of the book itself.

However, a new spirit is slowly entering the world in the present day. Men are tiring of the sterile emptiness of a totally materialistic approach to life. A new day is dawning in which men and women are more willing to listen to the multiplied evidences that a spirit world does exist and that the spirit realm is an important dimension of a satisfying life. At the same time that the weaknesses of the development theory are beginning to be more clearly seen, men and women are willing to listen to the evidence that argues in favor of a spirit world. Unfortunately, as men and women seek for the spiritual dimension of life, many are seeking it in the deceptive devices of paganism, man-made religions, spiritism, mediums, magic, horoscopes, and witchcraft. Those concepts have enticed people throughout the ages because sinful human nature is so easily deceived. Since human nature is still fallen, those deceiving concepts have not lost their appeal. Hopefully, however, many will find their way through these deceptions to the true spirituality that God began to reveal to the world through Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Maybe the day is approaching when men and women no longer will automatically be labeled unscholarly because they accept the weight of evidence in favor of the divine origin and the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible, including the book of Leviticus. Perhaps this writing will help you to accept the reality of God's revelations to Moses and of their relevance for people of today.

### **Method of Revelation**

Once a book is accepted as a revelation from God, the question of how God revealed that book becomes important. The writer of Leviticus thought the method God used was important and communicated it repeatedly. According to the book itself, the method God used was to speak audibly to Moses. Leviticus says Moses heard the messages spoken to him out of The Tabernacle. Sadly, what the book says about the means God used to reveal Leviticus has been strenuously ignored in recent years. It seems people just do not want to believe that God could or would actually talk audibly to Moses or to anyone. Yet that method is exactly what is described in the book of Leviticus. If the statements that are found throughout the book about how the messages were given are taken at face value, all the messages of the book with the exception of MESSAGE 13 (Leviticus 10:19-20) were revealed by means that were perceived with the physical senses. As unacceptable as that fact is to people today, it is the clear statement of the book itself. It is strange that a materialistic age would reject material means

of revelation. However, it is not the material means they reject but the spiritual message that was revealed by those material means. Therefore, it is important to establish that the books of Exodus and Leviticus combine to clearly state that God revealed Leviticus to Moses by audible and visible means.

The whole atmosphere of the revelations that God gave at Sinai was one in which truth was revealed through physical means, including a burning bush, plagues, fierce winds, an opening and closing sea, water from a rock, manna every morning, a fiery cloud, fire on the mountain, smoke, earthquake, trumpet sounds, AND thundering voices. In such an atmosphere, the statements that God spoke to Moses in audible words can scarcely be taken in any other way than as literal statements of fact. Passages that especially emphasize the physical manner in which the revelations were given to Moses are Exodus 19:1-20:21; 24:1-18; 25:22; 29:42; 31:18; 32:16; 33:7-11; 34:1-9; Leviticus 9:22-24; 10:1-12; 16:1-2; Numbers 7:89; 12:1-15. The statements in those passages that God spoke to Moses out of The Tabernacle must be taken as audible words, or the whole of the Sinai experience must be relegated to imagination.

Several of the passages cited deserve special attention. Exodus 25:22 says that, when Jehovah was giving Moses instructions about how The Tabernacle was to be built, He told Him that when The Tabernacle had been completed He would speak to Him there. The verse can be accurately translated as, "And I will meet you there, and I will speak to you from above the covering [of the ark] from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the Testimony all that which I command you concerning the children of Israel." Exodus 29:42 adds that while Jehovah would be speaking from out of The Tabernacle, Moses was to stand outside of the entrance to The Tabernacle. By these words, Jehovah told Moses that one of the uses of The Tabernacle would be to provide a place from which He could speak to him. Furthermore, God said that from that place He would speak everything He had to say to the Israelites. Numbers 7:88, relates that Jehovah actually did what He said He would do. He used The Tabernacle as a place to meet Moses and reveal to him the way of life and worship He wanted Israel to follow in the years and centuries ahead. That verse says, "And Moses, in coming to The Tabernacle of Meeting to speak with Him, would hear the voice speaking to him from above the covering [of the ark] that was over the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; and He would speak to him." The state of the verbs in this verse is imperfect, which indicates repeated, customary action. The verse means that Jehovah not only spoke to Moses out of The Tabernacle once but that He used that method as His regular, customary way of speaking to Moses. If we accept The Tabernacle as a real, literal structure, we should accept statements about how God used it as real and literal also.

Numbers 12:1-15 is an even more amazing passage. It states that Miriam and Aaron denied that Moses received a more direct word from God than they received. Jehovah took personal offense to their claim. He descended in the form of the Glory Cloud and stood at the entrance to The Tabernacle. Then He called Miriam and Aaron to come stand before Him. When they came, He said,

"Hear now My words:  
When a prophet arises among you, I Jehovah,  
Reveal Myself to him in a vision,  
I speak to him in a dream.  
[It is] not so [with] My servant Moses.  
In all My house, He is distinct.  
I speak with him mouth to mouth, and [by] an appearance,  
And not in riddles.  
And he looks at Jehovah's likeness.  
So why are you not afraid  
To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

The words of this passage are in the style of Hebrew poetry, but their meaning is clear. Jehovah's prophets receive visual messages in dreams and waking visions that reveal truth in a way that has to be interpreted and applied. With Moses, God's speaking was in a different category. Jehovah spoke to him with clear, specific, and direct words. In the light of that fact, Jehovah was amazed that Aaron and Miriam would challenge Moses' authority. Jehovah struck Miriam with leprosy, because she was the leader in this rebellion against His inspired Word. He took away the leprosy only after Moses intervened for her in prayer.

Jehovah made it clear that the messages He gave to Moses were not to be compared with the symbols and visions He gives to ordinary prophets. However, in a real sense they must still be considered to have been visions. Human eyes cannot actually see God, and human ears cannot actually hear God speak. God is not physical so that He can be seen with physical eyes or heard with physical ears. However, God can give a vision of Himself that is perceived by human eyes and ears. Whether the vision is given while the person is awake or asleep makes no difference. The principle is the same. God makes the person see and hear something that represents Him. A vision is a revelation of an unseen God through a method that eyes can see. God revealed Himself to Moses in that manner. God also gave visions to other prophets, but He clearly made a distinction between those vision and the visions He gave to Moses. His messages to Moses were clear, specific, and direct in a way that was more exact than the means He used in speaking to other prophets. The messages God gave to Moses had an exactness, an accuracy, and an authority that the messages of ordinary prophets did not have.

God was describing to Miriam and Aaron the difference between inspired preaching and the inspired Word, the Bible. True preaching today is essentially equivalent to Old Testament prophecy. As has been said many times, Old Testament prophets were not primarily foretellers of the future, though they did preach about future events that God had revealed. Primarily they were forth-tellers of God truth. They sometimes told about events to come in the future, but the purpose always was to apply those future events to their present circumstances and needs. They used future events to teach people how to prepare for the future by living in the present. Gospel preachers do the same today. But neither ordinary Old Testament prophets nor present-day preachers speak with the accuracy or the authority of those whom God inspired to write the Bible. God spoke in a face-to-face manner to Moses, and He revealed His truth in an equally clear and precise manner to other Bible writers. Their writings have a special level of inspiration, and they contain a special level of accuracy and authority. The means God used to reveal truth to Moses was what is called today the plenary verbal method of revelation. It means every word of the message is inspired by God and protected from inaccuracy of any kind. The words are God's just as much as the thoughts. The result is an infallible, inerrant, perfect, true, and sufficient message. It is different from and above all other speaking, preaching, or writing of any kind. It is God's true and pure truth. God used that method in revealing His truths to Moses, and He also used that method to reveal all the rest of the Bible. The way God spoke to give us the Bible was distinct and above the way He spoke to other people in ancient times, and it was distinct and above the way He speaks to other people today. People in every age need to be afraid of speaking against what God has revealed in His Book or making their words equivalent to it, as Miriam and Moses did at Sinai.

In spite of the clarity of the words of the text, the sin of Aaron and Miriam has been rampant among Bible scholars in the last one hundred and fifty years. Today many recognized Bible interpreters and many professed Bible preachers make the same sad mistake that Miriam and Aaron made. They claim their thoughts and words are equivalent to or even superior to the revelations God gave to Moses and to other Bible writers. They question, delete, emendate, revise, extract, add to, and even deny clear statements of the Bible. They put their insights above Bible truth and rewrite the Bible to suit themselves. Or they speak the words of the Bible but give those words a different meaning of their own. Surely in the end they will receive the same disapproval and judgment that Miriam and Aaron received.

Fortunately, in recent years a growing number of Bible interpreters and preachers are returning to fearlessly proclaiming the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. However, even many of them seem to question

or ignore the method God used to give His revelations to Moses. They seem to believe that the revelations to Moses were given through inner discernment under the leadership of the Spirit, rather than through audible words. Some have flatly rejected the idea that God would reveal His truth in that manner, even His truth that is recorded in the Bible. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the arguments that have been used to deny and reject verbal revelation of God's truth.

### **Arguments against audible revelation.**

**(1) *A spiritual God would not use physical means to reveal Himself.*** This argument may seem to be logical, but it puts limits on God that He never put on Himself. It is true that God is spiritual. He is Spirit and is not limited by a body, but the people to whom He speaks are physical. If a Spirit God is willing to speak to physical people at all, no reason exists as to why He would refuse to speak to those people by the physical methods they understand. And, no reason makes any sense as to why He would be one bit less spiritual Himself for doing so. This argument is false logic and contrary to Scripture. The Bible strongly affirms that the Spirit God created all physical things. If He could create physical human beings, why would He refuse to speak to them in the physical communication methods they understand?

**(2) *For God to use physical means in revealing Himself would degrade the person to whom the revelation is given.*** Many Bible teachers have held that, if God spoke audibly to a person, it would degrade the person to whom He spoke. They say that, if God revealed a portion of the Bible in that fashion, it would amount to "mechanical dictation." They reject such a method of revealing God's truth as "wooden" and demeaning. They say this method would reduce the writer to the role of a mechanical scribe.

The word "mechanical" is a trick word in this argument. When God chooses to reveal truth by physical means, it is no more or less worthy than when an author or teacher or businessman dictates a letter to his secretary. What secretary who receives and transcribes dictation with utmost accuracy would consider his or her work to be "mechanical"? A good secretary makes every effort to be absolutely accurate in recording the message just like the employer spoke it. The secretary considers accuracy in transcription to be evidence of skill and efficiency, not evidence of "wooden" or mindless action. When God wants to speak to people with clear, direct human words, His message does not demean the person to whom He speaks. It honors that person in the highest way possible by trusting that person to receive and share that message accurately. He wants that person to receive and report the message exactly as He spoke it. When Moses and other Bible writers received an inspired message from God, it was enough of an honor for them to hear and record that message just as God gave it. They did not need to revise it, alter it, or put it in their own words. Receiving God's message and recording it accurately was honor enough in itself. The highest honor for that person was that he had the privilege of receiving a revelation God wanted to be shared with the whole world.

According to the New Testament, the highest achievement a person can perform is to be an instrument yielded in the God's hands for His use. Therefore, it is not demeaning but exalting to Moses that he was a specially chosen instrument to receive and accurately report God's message. The argument that the dictation method of revealing parts of the Bible is demeaning to the recipient is misguided argument and erroneous reasoning.

**(3) *For God to use audible words in revealing Himself is an inferior method and unworthy of the exalted truths He has revealed.*** This argument is a strange contention. If God is going to communicate with people at all, why should it be an inferior method for Him to communicate with exact and specific language? When people communicate with each other, we do not consider it to be inferior if they speak with clarity and exactness. Why should it be considered inferior when God communicates with people in clear and exact words? For God to speak His message clearly and specifically makes those messages more important, not less important. He did not want the messages to be distorted, so He formed the words Himself. His doing so should make us all the

more receptive to the words and more eager to understand and obey them. So it is encouraging that God gave Moses revelations in such an exact manner. God just did not agree with today's philosophers concerning the value of this method of revealing His truth, and we should be glad.

**(4) For God to use physical means to reveal Himself would make it impossible to explain the variations of style and vocabulary found in various portions of His revelation.** This argument holds that the only way to explain the different styles and vocabulary found in different parts the same Bible book is to believe that they were written by different men in different times in history. This claim is equivalent to saying that an omniscient God is not capable of varying His style and vocabulary to fit the subject He wants to reveal. Surely such a contention is absurd on its face. Audible revelation does not turn the variations in style and vocabulary found in different sections of Leviticus into a puzzle. Instead, it explains those variations. Different approaches are needed to express different ideas and situations. Who else but God could be so completely capable of varying style and vocabulary as needed to make every different subject perfectly clear? Upon a little examination, this argument falls on its face.

**Arguments for audible revelation.** In spite of the critics' claims to the contrary, valid and logical reasons exist as to why God would want to use physical methods to reveal the messages He wanted recorded in the Bible and in the book of Leviticus.

**(1) Audible revelation is logically possible.** The Bible clearly states throughout that God created man—body, soul, and spirit. Jehovah gave us our senses, including the ability to see and hear. He gave those senses to us to enable us to communicate. It is totally logical that the God who gave those senses to people should be able to use those senses to communicate with the people He created. True, God is Spirit and is not limited to a body. However, He did create the physical universe, and He controls all the physical principles and laws that are in that universe. He certainly can use the principles, laws, and abilities He created whenever and however He wishes. Therefore, He can communicate through audible speech any time He chooses.

**(2) Audible revelation is sometimes logically necessary.** Many times, even usually, a believer can discern God's message in the mind and heart through the inner moving of the Holy Spirit. He does not need ears or eyes to receive God's message. The Holy Spirit is enough, especially when he has assistance from divine truth that is recorded in the Bible. Through all ages God has used the method of the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit to communicate with His people. He definitely also used that method to reveal truths that are now recorded in our Bibles. God revealed the historical books of the Bible by giving men spiritual discernment of how God was working in history. God revealed the wisdom books of the Bible by using human reason that built upon spiritual truths that already were known. However, at other times, the truth God wished to reveal was so radical from the human point of view, so foreign to the thoughts of mortals, and so exact in detail that it would have been impossible for a human to perceive it simply by inner discernment, even under the moving of the Holy Spirit. On those occasions, God logically would have wanted to reveal His thoughts to people in a more precise way. The Bible reveals that Jehovah is a communicating God. He wants to talk to the people He created, and HE wants to have fellowship with them. A communicating God will logically use whatever method is necessary to get His thoughts across. When necessary, He certainly will use visible sights and audible sounds to communicate His message. The Bible clearly states that He did do so with Moses.

If we accept the statements of Leviticus that God spoke audibly to Moses every day for a month after The Tabernacle was constructed, it is not an unreasonable question to ask why God does not speak to people that way today. At least He does not do so often or regularly. The answer is that in the earlier days of humanity, people had no written teachings to guide them in their worship and living. God needed to reveal to them teachings that were completely unknown. They had no background to build on to be able to understand what God wanted to say. Therefore, He spoke to them in a way they could understand so they would not be groping in the dark to try to discover what He expected of them. After He revealed His ways to people over many years and after those



truths were written down in the Book, He did not need to repeat what He already had taught. People could refer to the revelations recorded in His Book and find the answers and the guidance they needed. God does not need to speak audibly today, at least not as often as He did in earlier days. His revelations are now physically available to us in the Bible. Today God speaks through His Bible as clearly and as definitely as He spoke through an audible voice in the days of Moses.

**(3) *God's use of audible revelation on some occasions is virtually universally recognized among believers.*** Even those who discredit or disparage God's speaking to people audibly recognize that on some occasions He did do so. Some explicitly clear and well-known examples are: Jehovah's appearance to Abraham to announce the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:1-33), the vision of God in Jacob's ladder dream (Gen. 28:10-17), Jehovah's appearance to Moses out of the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-4:7), Jehovah's announcement of the Ten Commandments to all Israel at Sinai (Ex. 20:1-21), Isaiah's vision of God on His throne (Is. 6:1-12), the voice of God out of heaven at Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22), the voice of God at Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), the voice of God in response to Jesus' prayer during His last days in Jerusalem (John 12:27-30), the appearance of Jesus to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-11; 26:13-18), and the vision that Jesus gave to John at Patmos (Rev. 1:10-20). Other examples could be given, but these instances are so clearly stated that to deny that men saw or heard God on these occasions would utterly destroy the meaning of language. Certainly God did speak audibly to people when He needed to. If He did so on those occasions, a person is hard pressed to find a reason to deny that He did so on other occasions, especially on occasions when the Bible says He did. What He did once or a few times, He could do as often as He wished or as often as He found necessary. If Moses says God spoke to him audibly out of The Tabernacle thirty-eight times over the span of one month, no reason exists to deny that He could have done so.

**(4) *Audible and visible revelation reached its apex in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.*** Jesus' life and ministry are the ultimate proof and example of God's willingness and ability to communicate with people through physical means. Jesus was God in human flesh, dwelling among people and speaking to people. In so doing, He was and is the supreme revelation of God to fallen humanity. Jesus' words on earth were and are the ultimate revelation of God's grace and salvation. That revelation has never been superseded, and it never will be. In Jesus, God certainly did use physical means of every kind to communicate His message to people. To deny that God can and will speak to people audibly is to deny that Jesus was God. It denies the basic axiom of Christianity.

**(5) *Audible revelation was highly appropriate when God revealed to Israel the basics of their religious and national life.*** At Sinai God taught the basic principles He expected His people to live by as they served Him on and on into the future. He was beginning a grand new plan for salvaging the world from its sin and rebellion. He needed to lay the foundation carefully and clearly. The plan was complicated and detailed. It involved the way of life and the form of worship that He wanted His people to follow from that day until the coming of Christ. Only the coming of Christ to reveal Christianity can rank in crucial importance with the cosmic plan God revealed at Sinai in founding the Israelite nation. The Israelites were simply incapable of understanding the details of His plans through inner discernment alone. If He ever was going to speak His message audibly, Israel's sojourn at Sinai was the appropriate time.

Since God used physical means to reveal His truths at the time of the founding of Christianity, we can certainly expect that He would use physical means to reveal His truths at the time of the founding of Israel. Christians are the people of God in New Testament times, and they were called out by physical revelations in Christ. Israelites were the people of God in Old Testament times, and logic would indicate that they too were called out by physical revelations at Sinai. This statement is not meant to deny that Israel is still God's chosen nation. However, they are not fulfilling their calling today, and God is using Gentiles to carry out the task of continuing His work in the world until Israel returns to Him. The point to note is that, even though Jews are

largely failing to carry out their calling today, God thought that calling was important enough to reveal it to them in clearly spoken audible words.

When these insights are added to the specific Biblical statements that God indeed did use physical means to communicate His message at Sinai, the conclusion is irresistible. The book of Leviticus was given to the world by means of an audible voice that spoke to Moses out of the newly completed Tabernacle. This insight should not be taken lightly. It deserves careful attention. It means that the words Moses heard with His ears are now recorded in the Bible and in the book of Leviticus for us to read for ourselves. We should be as eager to read them today as Moses was eager to hear them long ago. Leviticus is not a book to be ignored.

### Outline

As has already been noted, Moses recorded in the book of Leviticus thirty-eight separate messages that he received from Jehovah. He indicated the beginning of each message with the words “And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, . . .” or their equivalent. The only exceptions are MESSAGE 11 (Lev. 10:1-7) and the MESSAGE 13 (Lev. 10:12-20). In the first message in the book, He was even more specific when He said, “And Jehovah began to call to Moses and to speak to him out of The Tent of the Meeting, saying, . . .” Those introductory statements at the beginning of each message were his obvious way of identifying the subdivisions of his outline of the book. Any outline of the book that is true to the contents of the book itself must recognize those natural subdivisions that were indicated by the writer Moses.

Various messages in the book naturally group themselves together by subject matter. Those groupings must form the basis for the major divisions of any outline faithful to the book itself. The following outline recognizes each message as a separate section, and it indicates the distinctiveness of each message by numbering it on the right margin of the page in the order in which it occurs in the book. It also shows how the messages in the book are grouped together by their topics. It does so by using those topics as major divisions of the outline.

	<u>Message Number</u>
I. MESSAGES ON THE ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS SYSTEM (1:1-17:16)	
A. The fire-offerings (1:1-10:20)	
1. Instructions for all the people (1:1-6:7)	
a. Rededication-offerings, homage-offerings, and slaughter-offerings (1:1-3:17).....	#1
b. Sin-offerings (4:1-5:13).....	#2
c. Offense-offerings (5:14-6:7)	
(1) Offered for offenses against Jehovah (5:14-19).....	#3
(2) Offered for offenses against other people (6:1-7).....	#4
2. Instructions for the priests (6:8-7:21)	
a. The continual offerings (6:8-18).....	#5
b. The homage-offerings of the day of anointing (6:19-23).....	#6.
c. Regular fire-offerings (6:24-7:21).....	#7
3. Additional instructions for all the people (7:22-36)	
a. Eating of fat and blood forbidden (7:22-27).....	#8
b. Wave-offerings and the contribution for the priests (7:28-36).....	#9
Summary note on the messages on the fire-offerings (7:37-38)	
B. Instructions delivered in connection with the hallowing of the priests and the sanctuary (8:1-10:20)	
1. The command to hallow the priests and the sanctuary and the carrying out of that command (8:1-9:24).....	#10
2. The offense of Nadab and Abihu punished with death (10:1-7).....	#11
3.	

4. Drinking of wine and other intoxicating beverages forbidden to priests when on duty (10:8-11).....	#12
5. The deviation of Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar forgiven (10:12-20).....	#13
C. Uncleaness and its cleansing (11:1-15:33)	
1. Uncleaness from unclean creatures and its cleansing (11:1-47).....	#14
2. Uncleaness from childbirth and its cleansing (12:1-8).....	#15
3. Uncleaness from tsaraath on people or in cloth and leather (13:1-59).....	#16
4. Cleansing of a person healed of tsaraath (14:1-32).....	#17
5. Uncleaness from tsaraath in houses (14:33-53).....	#18
Summary note on the messages on uncleaness from tsaraath (14:54-57)	
6. Uncleaness from bodily discharges and its cleansing (15:1-33).....	#19
D. The Day of Coverings (16:1-34).....	#20
E. Forbidden ceremonies (17:1-16).....	#21
II. MESSAGES ON ISRAEL'S LEGAL SYSTEM (18:1-20:27)	
A. Civil laws relating to sex crimes (18:1-30).....	#22
B. Civil laws relating to many subjects (19:1-37).....	#23
C. Civil laws requiring the death penalty (20:1-27).....	#24
	<u>Message Number</u>
III. ADDITIONAL MESSAGES ON ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS SYSTEM (21:1-24:9)	
A. Conduct of a priest and his family with regard to death, grooming, and marriage (21:1-15).....	#25
B. Factors disqualifying a priest, a member of his household, or an animal from participating in fire-offerings (21:16-22:23)	
1. Blemishes disqualifying a priest from participating in fire-offerings (21:16-24).....	#26
2. Uncleaness disqualifying a priest and relationships disqualifying a member of a priest's household from eating meat received from fire-offerings (22:1-16).....	#27
3. Blemishes disqualifying an animal from being used as a fire-offering (22:17-25).....	#28
4. Other factors disqualifying an animal from being used as a fire-offering (22:26-33).....	#29
C. Holy convocations (23:1-44)	
1. For the Sabbath day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:1-8).....	#30
2. For the Waving of an Omer of the Beginning of Harvest and for the Feast of Weeks (23:9-22).....	#31
3. For the Memorial of Noise-Making (23:23-25).....	#32
4. For the Day of Coverings (23:26-32).....	#33
5. For the first day of the Feast of Booths and the day following that feast, plus an explanation of the booths (23:33-44).....	#34
D. The oil and bread for The Tabernacle of Meeting (24:1-9).....	#35
III. ADDITIONAL MESSAGE ON ISRAEL'S LEGAL SYSTEM: The penalties for blasphemy and for certain crimes of violence, and the application of the civil law to sojourners (24:10-23).....	#36
IV. MESSAGES ON THE ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC SYSTEM (25:1-27:34)	
A. Economic obligations of Israelites to each other (25:1-26:46).....	#37
B. Economic obligations of Israelites to Jehovah (27:1-34).....	#38