

LEVITICUS AND I JOHN

THE PARALLEL MESSAGE SEEN IN BOTH BOOKS

By Arlen L. Chirwood

That revealed through Moses in the five books which he wrote in the Old Testament parallels that revealed through John in the five books which he wrote in the New Testament. This parallel is seen in Genesis and John, Exodus and Revelation, Leviticus and I John, Numbers and II John, and Deuteronomy and III John.

The Book of Leviticus logically divides itself into *two parts*; and John's first epistle, dividing itself into *two parts* after the same fashion, is structured *EXACTLY* the same way.

Essentially, the first sixteen chapters of Leviticus have to do with *the way sinful man is to approach a sinless God*. And the remainder of the book (chs. 17-27) has to do with *the way man is to then govern his life before a holy God*.

In like manner, the opening part of I John (chs. 1-2a) parallels the first sixteen chapters of Leviticus — having to do with *the way sinful man is to approach a sinless God*. And the remainder of I John (chs. 2b-5) parallels the latter part of Leviticus (chs. 17-27) — having to do with *the way man is to then govern his life before a holy God*.

A Sacrificial System, Offerings, a Holy Walk

The opening fifteen chapters of Leviticus reveal a number of different offerings. Each offering was for *a different type sin*.

Then, concluding this section in Leviticus, the sixteenth chapter deals with sacrificial offerings which *are all-encompassing, having to do with ALL sins committed by both the priests and the people*.

These concluding offerings occurred on “a day of atonement,” later revealed as the sixth of the seven Jewish festivals to be kept annually by the Jewish people (ch. 23).

(These seven festivals, like the regular weekly Sabbath, could be looked upon as *signs* [Ex. 31:17; Ezek. 20:11-13; the festivals themselves were Sabbath days], foreshadowing that which awaited the Jewish people.

The weekly Sabbath in Ex. 31:13-17 refers back to Ex. 20:8-11, which draws from the opening thirty four verses of Genesis. Every time Israel kept the Sabbath, the Jewish people were to understand and keep the thought ever before them that God, *EXACTLY* as He did in the original pattern set forth in Gen. 1:1-2:3, was going to work six days [6,000 years] restoring ruined man and then rest the seventh day [1,000 years, the Messianic Era].

The seven festivals [seven inseparably related Sabbath days in Israel], on the other hand, form *the prophetic calendar of Israel*. They detail, in successive order, that which the nation will experience in the latter days — beginning with the yet future conversion of the nation after Messiah returns, then ending through showing the nation at rest in the seventh millennial day.

And every year, as the Israelites kept each of these festivals, *they were to understand and reflect on that to which they pointed, keeping these thoughts ever before them NOT ONLY throughout the year BUT throughout all time*.

[To place these seven festivals in a proper perspective, refer to the author's pamphlets, “Exodus and Revelation” and “The Seven Jewish Festivals”].)

On the day of Atonement, the high priest in Israel took *a bullock, two goats, and two rams*.

The high priest first sacrificed *the bullock* for himself and the other priests, with the blood sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat seven times.

One goat (chosen by lot) was then sacrificed for the sins of the people, with the blood again sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat seven times.

Then the high priest took and placed his hands upon the head of *the live goat*, confessing the sins of all Israel. *The live goat* was then entrusted to a man who took it to a place in the wilderness, leaving it there, with the goat never to return to the camp of Israel.

The *two rams* were then offered as burnt offerings, one for the priests and the other for the people.

(One thing must be kept in mind concerning all of the offerings, with their sacrifices, seen in the first sixteen chapters of Leviticus. *Everything* connected with these offerings had to do with *a saved people, a people who had already applied the blood of slain paschal lambs*. And, through so doing, they had exercised *faith, believing and doing EXACTLY what God had previously told them to do*.)

Then, following the first sixteen chapters of Leviticus, following these offerings — providing cleansing for the people of God — the remaining eleven chapters of the book (chs. 17-27) relate how a cleansed people were to walk before a holy God.

The Parallel Sacrifice in I John

That seen in the opening chapter of I John, extending into the opening two verses of the second chapter, has to do with a layout of the tabernacle — patterned after an existing tabernacle in heaven — with the blood of Christ on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle. And the offering of Christ in the respect seen in I John, *EXACTLY as in any of the Levitical offerings, had/has to do with the sins of the saved, NOT the unsaved*.

In this respect, Christ's blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly tabernacle — as seen in the blood of a slain bullock and slain goat on the day of Atonement in Leviticus chapter sixteen — has to do with *the sins of the saved, NOT the unsaved*.

(Christ died and shed His blood at Calvary for the unsaved. This has its parallel in activities on the first of the seven Jewish festivals, the Passover. Christ, *EXACTLY* as a paschal lamb slain at the tabernacle or later the temple was crucified at a place *north of the altar*, “before the Lord” [cf. Lev. 1:11; Job 26:7; Ps. 75:6, 7].

BUT, anything beyond the preceding, whether in the Mosaic Economy past or within Christendom today [the high priest in the camp of Israel placing blood on the mercy seat, or Christ, in the antitype, placing His Own blood on the mercy seat], *relates to the saved, NOT to the unsaved*.

The work of the high priest in the camp of Israel had to do with activity of *a people who were already saved*, of a people who had already availed themselves of the blood of paschal lambs, *allowing them to walk in a well-pleasing manner before a holy God*.

And it is *EXACTLY the same today*. Christ's work

as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat, has to do with *Christians ALONE*. *EXACTLY as seen in the sacrificial system in the camp of Israel in Lev. 1-16, Christ's present work in the sanctuary has to do with the cleansing of a people who are already saved, allowing them to walk in a well-pleasing manner before a holy God.*)

Note how this is all laid out in the opening verses of I John.

After two introductory verses, “fellowship” (the translation of *koinonia* from the Greek text, which means “like-minded”) is brought into the picture. John made it known that he was writing this epistle to provide the necessary information which would allow his readers *to have fellowship with him, though NOT with him personally per se*.

John stated that *his fellowship was “with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”* (v. 3). John knew enough about what God had said concerning matters that he could be *like-minded with God and with His Son* about these things (i.e., have fellowship with the Father and with His Son). And John was making God’s Word known to his readers so that they could *do EXACTLY the SAME thing he was doing (be like-minded, have fellowship, with the Father and with His Son)*.

(In the preceding respect, *note the importance of knowing the Word of God.*

It would be IMPOSSIBLE for anyone to be like-minded with God and with His Son IF they did NOT know the mind of God, found in His Word ALONE.)

This is the way I John begins, so that the people’s “joy may be full” (v. 4).

Then John immediately deals with Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, in order that a cleansed people could have fellowship with a holy God (1:5-2:2). The picture, drawn from the tabernacle, has to do with *Light*, which can be found only in the Holy Place, foreshadowed by the seven-leafed golden candlestick.

And for a Christian to have access to the Holy Place, where the Light exists, he has to do that seen through stopping at the brazen laver in the courtyard and washing his hands and feet (1:5-7; cf. John 13:5-11).

(Note that the Christian *has ALREADY moved beyond* that seen through a sacrifice occurring at the brazen altar at the entrance into the courtyard. That is, he has already applied the blood of the Paschal Lamb, Who died and shed His blood.

NOW, he finds himself at the brazen laver, which he CANNOT bypass if he would move on into the Holy Place, walk in the Light, and have fellowship with the One in the Holy of Holies through the rent veil. He *MUST* do that seen through stopping at the laver and washing his hands and feet.

Note Christ’s exact words to Peter concerning this matter in John 13:8b:

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” [contextually, an inheritance in the kingdom was in view; and the cleansing being offered *was absolutely necessary* if the disciples were to have a part with Him in the kingdom].)

And through that symbolized by washings at the laver, the person is carrying out that seen in I John 1:8-10 — *confession of his sins (i.e., saying the same thing God says about sin [“confess” is a translation of *homologeō* in the Greek text, “to say the same thing”] — with Christ then cleansing the person on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat (2:1, 2 [Gk., *hilasmos*, a form of the word for “mercy seat,” here translated “propitiation,” referencing Christ’s work after this fashion]).*

That’s the manner in which the Spirit moved John to open his first epistle, *EXACTLY* as He had moved Moses to open his third book some 1,500 years earlier. And both books then continue after the same fashion from that point — the walk of a cleansed people before a holy God, having fellowship with the Father and with His Son.

A Holy Walk in I John

A holy walk in I John is seen the same place it was previously seen in Leviticus — following the sacrificial offerings and work of the high priest in Leviticus and following the sacrificial offering and work of the High Priest in I John.

A form of the expression, “born of God,” is used ten times in I John (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1 [three times], 4, 18 [twice]). And the expression CANNOT possibly have anything to do with the unsaved in any

*one of its ten usages in the epistle (ref. the author’s book, *Brought Forth from Above*).*

The expression has to do with that experienced by saved individuals, those having fellowship with the Father and with His Son *through a knowledge of the Word and through availing themselves of the present high priestly work of the Son in the sanctuary.*

Attempting to relate these expressions in I John to the unsaved is *NOT ONLY contextually wrong BUT destructive relative to the overall message of the book.*

A person being brought forth from above CANNOT sin, for sin CANNOT originate from above (3:6, 9; 5:18). But the same person in a body of flesh CANNOT continuously remain in the position of being brought forth from above. That’s the reason for I John 1:5-2:2 in the same book, referencing Christ’s present work in the heavenly sanctuary.

(Don’t be misled by attempts to translate the Gk. word *poieō* [“commit”] in I John 3:9 as “practice” [based on the misuse of a Gk. verb tense]. *That’s NOT what’s in view at all.* Aside from that, Christians, because of the old sin nature [I John 1:8], CAN and DO practice sin.

Translating and understanding *poieō* as “practice” in I John 3:9 results, as well, from misunderstanding “born of God” in the same verse, attempting to make this expression relate to an unsaved person being saved.

Then, seeking to harmonize this verse with I John 1:8, 9, the mistake is *NOT ONLY* compounded *BUT* that actually being dealt with in the verse — and, in reality, the book as a whole — *is done away with.*)

The Christian is to abide in Christ, “that, when he shall appear we may have confidence [i.e., possess boldness concerning that which is in view, the things connected with His appearance], and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (I John 2:28).

God, Israel, and the theocracy were in view in Leviticus. Christ, Christians, and the theocracy are in view in I John.

One book presents *the SAME message* as the other book, with two peoples of God in view — *Israel* in Leviticus and *the Church* in I John. *And everything moves toward that coming seventh day, the Messianic Era.*

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