A photograph of a woman in the foreground, looking down at an open Bible she is holding. She is wearing a dark top with white stripes on the sleeve. In the background, a man is also looking down at a book, and another person is partially visible. The setting appears to be a church or a study hall. The text "SMALL GROUP BIBLE DISCUSSION NOTES" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

SMALL GROUP
BIBLE DISCUSSION NOTES

saltchurch.

SERIES BREAKUP

We have 2 series this term: 2 Corinthians 3-6 & the book of Leviticus. You can see the breakup of the weeks in the table below.

- 2 Corinthians ties into 'Share Hope' – a 4 week period where as a whole church we're seeking to be more intentional in sharing the hope we have in Jesus with friends & family & the people of the Illawarra.

This series will look a little different to what we normally do in Small Groups, so [here's info & advice to guide you](#) plus [prayer points](#).

- The series in Leviticus will work our way through & unpack the book. It's usually a very unfamiliar part of the bible, so [here's a bunch of info](#) to help you make sense of it & get amongst it.

DATE	BIBLE	DATE	BIBLE
22-26 Jul	Share Hope wk 1	2-6 Sep	Lev 18
29 Jul - 2 Aug	Share Hope wk 2	9-13 Sep	Lev 20
5-9 Aug	Share Hope wk 3	16-20 Sep	Choose your own
12-16 Aug	Lev 1	20-22 Sep	Salt Away
19-23 Aug	Lev 8-10	23-27 Sep	Lev 26
26-30 Aug	Lev 16	30 Sep - 11 Oct	Have a Break!

SHARE HOPE: IN SMALL GROUPS

Our Small Groups exist so we can help each other know God better and learn to love each other like God loves us. Normally the centre & bulk of our time is spent working through part of the bible & praying from it.

For part of this term though we're doing something a little different. Our whole church is seeking to Share Hope with our friends and family who don't know Jesus.

Hundreds of thousands of people around us – the people we work with, live near, shop from – **don't know Jesus**. Most of them don't even know a Christian who could tell them about Jesus! In fact if every unbeliever who knew a Christian became a Christian right now, 60% of the Illawarra would still not know Jesus.

So just for this term we're going to use some of our Small Group time to help each other Share Hope.

How it'll work is there'll be these 2 parts each week:

1. **Bible Time:** there's some questions to dig into part of 2 Corinthians 3-6. But treat this a little different to how you'd normally run a Bible Discussion in your Small Group. Rather than spending lots of time in these passages, just dip into them quickly. Spend just enough time there to spur you all on to mission, & to help you grasp how God sees the lost & the reality of heaven & hell. Then move on to...
2. **Mission Time:** as a group share friends you want to take a next step with, stories of attempts to take those next steps, & pray for these friends & each other. Give the bulk of your time in Small Group to these conversations, so we can help each other Share Hope.

No-one expects you or your group to be fantastic at sharing the gospel with your friends (who of us is really!) Just try & take next steps with the people you know, be honest with your group, & pray to the God who saves & who deserves all people everywhere to honour and worship Him.

SHARE HOPE: PRAYER

Paul urges Christians: *'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ' (Col 4:2-3)*

Praying before, during and after sharing the hope we have in Jesus with friends who don't know him **is crucial for countless reasons**; here's just 3:

- It focuses us on the Lord Jesus Christ, who deserves the glory of people turning to him in repentance and faith.
- It underlines that what we do matters. As we share God's life changing message with the lost, God loves to use our words to save them.
- It reminds us it's only God the Holy Spirit who can change people's hearts & bring them from spiritual death to life.

Sometimes we want to pray but we don't know where to start. Or we run out of ideas and find ourselves saying the same type of prayers on repeat.

Here are 12 suggestions of things you could pray for during this 4 week period, as our whole church seeks to Share Hope:

1. Pray that God will keep us mindful of Jesus, so that praise of Christ on His throne will be the big reason we're on mission.
2. Pray that in our Small Groups we'd be honest about anything that holds us back from doing mission & sharing our hope.
3. Pray that God would soften the hearts of the people we want to reach, & give thanks that He's able to soften even the hardest of hearts.
4. Pray that we'd be able to remember and use any knowledge or skills we've learned from training courses, books we've read, sermons we've heard, other training moments & past experiences.
5. Ask God for boldness, because He's able to give that to even the meekest of us.

6. Pray we will recognise the opportunities God gives us & just take them rather than waiting for the 'perfect one'.
7. Ask that God will give you the right words to say at the right time.
8. Ask God to prepare us to make the sacrifices needed to invest in the lives of people we want to reach with His life saving news.
9. Pray that God will strengthen and deepen our relationships with the people we want to reach.
10. Pray that God will use other Christians He's placed in the lives of the people we want to reach.
11. Give thanks that God rules over Satan & ask God to defeat Satan's attempts to keep us silent and our loved ones in darkness.
12. Pray that our hearts will be convicted of Jesus' worthiness to be worshipped. Give thanks that He can & does change the desires of our hearts over time.

SHARE HOPE WK 1 • 22-26 JUL

DIRECTION: This term as a whole church we're looking to share the hope we have with more people in our region. The hope we have, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is precious & beautiful. It is forgiveness & new life. It is knowing & sharing in God's glory. The gospel is God's power to save. God's power is shown as He saves people even through our weaknesses.

PRAY TO START: Heavenly Father, you've given us a message of hope in your Son Jesus Christ. May we boldly share this hope with friends & family.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 6-7

- How do these verses help us be on mission – Why do we do it? How do we do it? Can we have any confidence of success?



This term as a whole church we're seeking to Share the Hope of Jesus with more people in our city.

There's no "1 size fits all" way to do this, but here are a few suggestions to help you think about how you can share the hope of Jesus with those in your life.

Who are the non-Christians in your life?

List in the table below some non-Christian people you are in contact with: daily, weekly or monthly. They could be friends, family, neighbours, colleagues or other community connections.

Daily	Weekly	Monthly (or less)

Who could you introduce them to?

It's possible that you're the only Christian person they know! Who from Salt Church do you think they'd have things in common with? Could you invite a bunch of people over & give your unbelieving friends a chance to meet more Christians? How could you do that?

Conversations

Sam Chan, in his book *Evangelism in a Sceptical World* helpfully outlines 3 layers of conversations we may be having in these relationships. Take a moment to think about which circle some of the contacts you listed in the table might be in.

It's also worth pointing out that while you might be eager to tell them stuff, a crucial part of conversations is LISTENING. This enables you to better understand their way of thinking and ask relevant questions to help them take a step closer to Jesus.



What's the next step?

Choose a couple people & write down a next step you can take to help you Share Hope with them this winter, e.g. introduce them to someone at Salt, ask them a particular question, move to the next level of conversations.

Person	Next Step

Pray together for your contacts & for one another as you seek to Share Hope in the coming weeks and months.

SHARE HOPE WK 2 • 29 JUL-2 AUG

DIRECTION: This week, check in your friends & family to see if people have taken next steps, to pray & to encourage each other as we try to share our hope together. Also look at 2 Corinthians to see our hope: that our life now cannot compare with the goodness of the life to come, & that Jesus is our judge. This is the hope we want more people in our region to know about!

PRAY TO START: Father, you've given your Spirit as the guarantee of our new life in the new creation. May we rely on you as we're on mission to our friends and family, knowing there is eternal life awaiting us & holding out that hope to them. Amen.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:5-10

- Why does the Spirit give Paul confidence?
- How do these verses motivate you to share the gospel?
- How can you more & more live your life to please the Lord?



Let's check in on our friends. Has anyone been able to take a next step this week? Is there anything we can celebrate or pray for? Is there a conversation you hope to have this week; what do you think you'll say?

Even if everyone in our church shared their faith with 1 non-Christian friend & that friend became a Christian, we'd still only have reached about 550 of the 400,000 people in our region. That's more of a trickle of lifelong disciples than a flood!

In our own strength, there's no way we can do this. But we trust that God is the one who ultimately does this work. He's so much more powerful than we are & He's at work in all things.

Pray to finish, for three things in particular:

- Faithful gospel work being done in the Illawarra. Give thanks for other churches around us & other ministries, like the Uni Bible Group.
- Pray for those in our city who don't know any Christians. We pass many people every day who don't know anyone who could tell them about Jesus. Ask God to convict them of their need for Jesus, & to bring Christians into their lives to share the hope of the gospel with them – maybe even you!
- Pray for the specific people you want to take a next step with.

SHARE HOPE WK 3 • 5-9 AUG

DIRECTION: This week, check in your friends & family to see if people have taken next steps, to pray & to encourage each other as we try to share our hope together. Also look at 2 Corinthians to see our role in mission: Christ has chosen us as His ambassadors, holding out the hope of reconciliation to God & urging people to be saved while they still can.

PRAY TO START: Father, you've reconciled us to you by your Son. May you reconcile our unsaved friends & family to yourself also. Amen.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

- How is someone reconciled to God?
- Why is being reconciled to God important?
- How does it feel to hear that you're 'an ambassador for Christ'? What could that look like for you this week?



Let's check in on our friends. Has anyone been able to take a next step this week? Is there anything we can celebrate or pray for? Is there a conversation you hope to have this week; what do you think you'll say?

"Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more." (John Piper)

- What do you think about this quote?
- Pray we'd be so convinced of Jesus' worthiness to be worshipped that we'd urge others to worship Him too, & that our motivation for mission wouldn't be duty but worship. Pray more people in the Illawarra & Australia will give glory & praise to Jesus.

LEVITICUS: HOLY

Leviticus has a bad rep these days among Christians. On first impression it's a dry dull read, many of the laws and rituals seem archaic & random, the sacrificial practices seem cruel, and God seems unstable when He sometimes blesses and sometimes judges His people. Basically, it's a book of the bible to endure rather than enjoy. We read it because we believe 'all scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...' (2 Tim 3:15) - and it certainly *is* God's word to us; 56 times Leviticus says 'The Lord said to Moses...' - but we're left scratching our heads and wondering *how* is it useful to us? It seems more confusing or boring than useful. **Why does God think we need to hear the message of Leviticus?**

Because of Holiness. God is Holy - as He says countless times throughout Leviticus: 'I the Lord your God am Holy' (19:2). In His very being God is altogether different from everything He has made. He is completely pure and perfect. He is immortal, all powerful, all knowing, all present. God's holiness can never be compromised or trivialised. It is not possible for unholy people to be in His presence and live. So God commands His people Israel: 'Be Holy because I, the Lord your God, am Holy' (19:2).

And there is the problem. When we left Israel at the end of Exodus they had been chosen by God, rescued from slavery in Egypt, & brought to the foot of Mount Sinai where God made a covenant with them: '...if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Ex 19:5-6).

Israel has just finished building the tabernacle (a big tent) according to God's instructions so He could live among them. The glory of the Lord filled that tent, which means the Holy God is living with His people!

But God's people are unholy, unfaithful, sinful, disobedient, unclean and impure. **How can a Holy God and His unholy people possibly live together?**

In his breathtaking kindness, God not only rescues Israel and makes a covenant with them; **God provides a way for His unholy, unclean and unfaithful people to live in His Holy presence.** Not by reducing His holiness. Not by completely transforming them so they're incapable of sin. But by providing rituals (the sacrificial system and festivals), priests, and laws for cleansing, so Israel can be made fit to live with God in their midst.

We find some of these laws and rituals off-putting, but we can't afford to miss the bigger picture - by God's sheer kindness He tells His people how to be holy and clean so they can live with Him and come to no harm.

But even with the laws, the priests and the sacrifices, **Israel's hope of being with their God forever doesn't lie with them, it lies with God.** It rests in God's promise: 'I am the Lord, *who makes you Holy*' (20:8).

Similar to Israel, we Christians are chosen and saved by God, we're called into a covenant with Him, & we're **told that 'just as he who called you is Holy, so be Holy in all you do'** (1 Pet 1:15). But unlike Israel we *have* been made irreversibly holy: by a better sacrifice, from a better and holy High Priest, that brought atonement not for another day or another year but once and for all, that has made us Holy in God's sight and fit to live with Him: '...now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight' (Col 1:22).

Our hope of being with our God forever doesn't lie with us, it lies with God. We can live with our Holy God as Holy people through Jesus' death and resurrection. And we can live Holy lives now, not just by knowing how to be Holy, but by the power of the Holy Spirit in us transforming us. So we agree with Paul who is: 'confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Php 1:6).

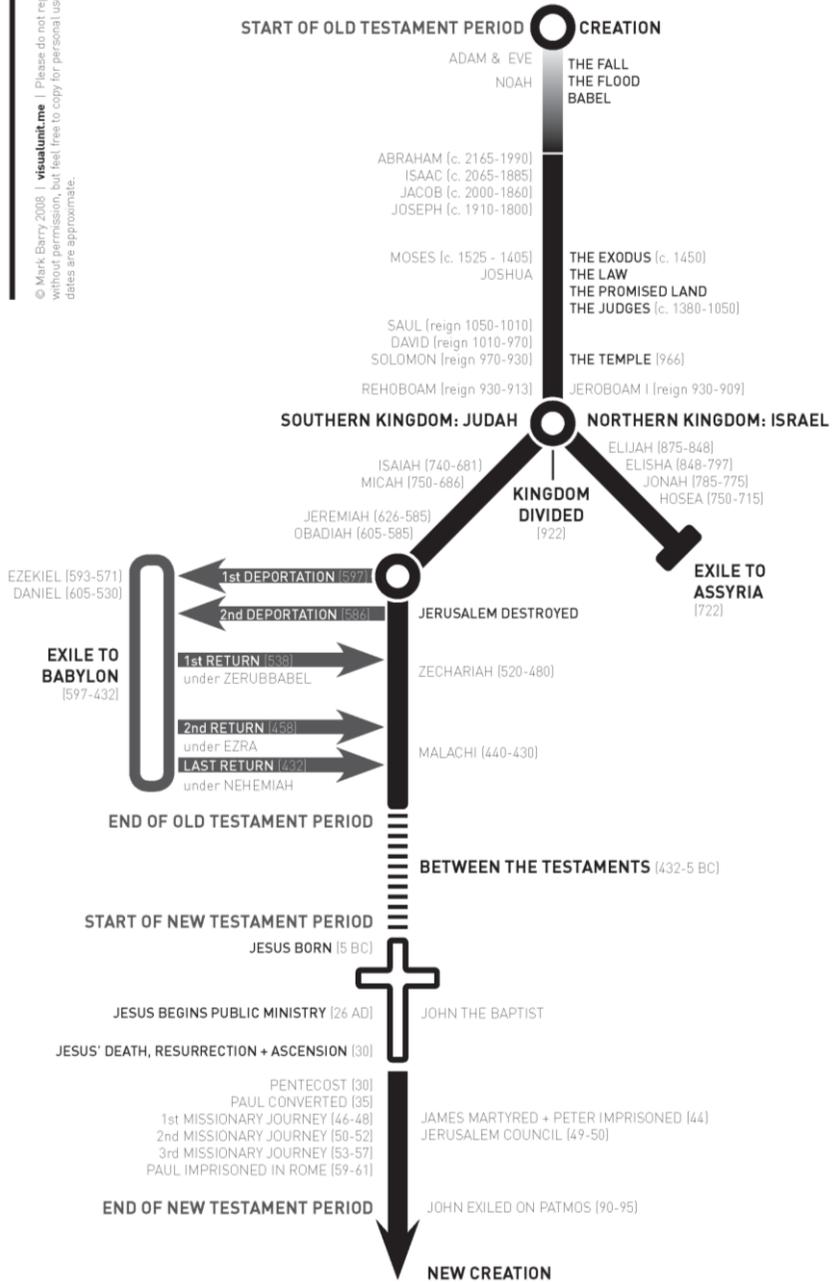
Leviticus is surprisingly important because it shows us the biggest difference between God and people - God is Holy and we are not. Leviticus is surprisingly full of truth about what our God is like, surprisingly full of hope, surprisingly helpful as we see how Christ has made us Holy & as we strive to be Holy like Him.

In this series we will:

1. Understand what God's Holiness is - that it's the core of His being
2. Celebrate how God makes it possible for His people to live with him - for Israel by providing rituals, priests & laws; for us by providing a Saviour, new laws, new hearts & the Spirit
3. Understand how Jesus fulfils the 'typology' of Leviticus - as the better sacrifice, better High Priest, the ultimate Day of Atonement, & the grounds & source of our holiness
4. Take practical steps to live holy lives as Christians, fuelled by the promise that God has made & is making us holy

BIBLE TIMELINE

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LEVITICUS 1 • 12-16 AUG

DIRECTION: This is our first week in the book of Leviticus. The big points that come out of this first chapter are: 1) God will be worshipped how He wants to be worshipped; & 2) Israel was made right with God through temporal animal sacrifices, but we're now right with God through a once-off permanent human sacrifice in Jesus. Peace with God is the ultimate aim of sacrifice. How good it is to be holy before God through His Son!

PRAY TO START: God, the old has passed & the new has come. We're so thankful for your plan in saving the world through your Son as the best & last sacrifice. Amen.

LAUNCH: What's something or someone you've sacrificed for?

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- Tell me everything you know about the book of Leviticus, go!
- **Read Exodus 40:34-38.** Where is God in these verses?

Read Leviticus 1:1-17

OBSERVATION & MEANING: There's a lot of detail here, why do you think there are so many details about how to do the sacrifices?

In order to atone for sin, the animal was to be of the standard God demanded. Though the sacrifice could never take away the sin but only cover it, the best animal in a person's flock was to be used as a way of giving your most important possessions, in this case an animal, to God. Sin is serious, and the cost of atonement shows that.

- The person who brings the sacrifice to the priest helps kill the animal, why do you think this is?

The worshipper's sins are dealt with by the person who committed them. They were to help sacrifice the animal and so to be involved in dealing with their own sin. This meant they could be cleansed and were able to remain within the nation of Israel.

- Look at v3-4. what does the burnt offering achieve?

The burnt offering was sacrificed twice a day for the sins of the people. The sacrifice did not take away sin but only covered sin for a temporal time. A worshipper must sacrifice a burnt offering to be 'accepted before the LORD.' The sacrifice would atone for a person's sin which would ultimately maintain the peace between them and God. In God's view this atonement of sin was a 'pleasing aroma to the LORD.' (1:17)

We don't sacrifice animals for our sins now as Christians, so let's see what the New Testament has to say about the Old Testament sacrificial system.

Read Hebrews 10:1-4 & 10:10-12.

- What does this say about the sacrificial system?

Israel continually sacrificed to God in order to remain clean & part of the nation. Their relationship with God was conditional, so they had to offer sacrifices when they failed to obey. The writer of Hebrews is saying here that if the original sacrificial system actually kept a person clean & they remained clean without needing ongoing sacrifices, then there was no need for Christ to die. Verse 4 also shows us that the Levitical sacrificial system only dealt with sin for a moment. Jesus ultimately does away with the Levitical sacrificial system in His sacrifice: the offering of His own body that is without blemish, as a 'once for all' time sacrifice - IT IS FINISHED!

APPLY: This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).

- What are some ways Christians worship God now? How can Leviticus 1 impact your worship of God?
- Are there areas in your life where you're not worshipping God?
- In Leviticus it took a big effort to deal with sin, how much effort does it take to deal with our sins?
- In the OT they had to keep offering sacrifices, but Christ has finished it for us! Yet often we try to do things to feel right with God again. Where in your life do you do this?

PRAY TO END: Thank you Father God that your Son fulfilled the sacrificial system. May we remember that you are a God who will be worshipped your way & that our sin is dealt with once & for all. Amen.

LEVITICUS 8-10 • 19-23 AUG

DIRECTION: There's laws for priests to offer sacrifices to deal with sin. But the priests are not Holy yet, & there's no High Priest in operation. So now it's time to prepare one. The High Priest stands between God & Israel. They offer sacrifices for the people's sins to make them clean & right before God. After Aaron is cleansed, God is satisfied with Aaron being the High Priest on behalf of Israel. We have a greater High Priest in Jesus - Aaron & his sons had to sacrifice for their own sins, but Jesus is our perfect sinless High Priest. Jesus stands between us and God to make peace.

PRAY TO START: That we'd understand Christ better from the OT today.

LAUNCH: Have you ever represented someone else before? E.g. school

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- What did we learn about priests in Leviticus from last week?

Read Leviticus 8:1-13, 9:1-7 & 9:22-10:3

OBSERVATION & MEANING: What does Moses do to Aaron and his sons? Why do you think he does that? (8:1-13)

This is how Aaron is set apart as the high priest and these are the instructions that God gives to Aaron in order that he can sacrifice on behalf of Israel to God.

- Why did Aaron have to sacrifice before God? (9:1-7)

He had to sacrifice because of his own sin, because of the peoples sin, & in order for the glory of God to appear, i.e. for God to be present with His people.

- What's ironic about the command to Aaron in 9:1-2, 8? Think about the word 'calf'.

In Exodus 32:1-4, Aaron sets up an idol in the shape of golden calf and led Israel into idolatry. After a week long ordination ceremony in which Aaron is now able to sacrifice on behalf of Israel as High Priest, God chooses another calf for him to sacrifice. Though there's humour, it also symbolises Aaron 'killing' his and Israel's past sin of idolatry as they now have God dwelling with them.

- After Aaron has finished the sacrifices (9:22), what happens? Why do you think the people shouted and fell on their faces in 9:24?

The people are rejoicing that God is pleased with the sacrifices and that he now resides with them. After God gave multiple instructions to Israel about how he was to be worshipped, God is now pleased and shows this by consuming the sacrifice.

- Why did Nadab & Abihu die in 10:1-3? Do you think that was fair?

God told Moses how the priests should behave in order for God to be pleased with their offerings. Aaron has just done everything God commanded. But immediately Aaron's sons don't obey God's commands! God went through the sacrificial system methodically with Moses in Exodus and Leviticus. It is a mockery to behave in such a way that was not commanded. Though the phrase 'unauthorised fire' is hard to understand, it's clearly something the LORD 'had not commanded them' (v1). Aaron staying silent in verse 3 suggests that he knew their actions were not in line with what God wanted.

It was so important for Israel's High Priest to obey God so he could deal with the people's sin. Let's see how we Christians fit in this story.

Read Hebrews 7:23-8:1

- What does this say about Jesus being a High Priest? How is Jesus a better High Priest?

APPLY: This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).

- How does Jesus being High Priest change the way you live your life?
- When Israel sinned they'd go to their High Priest. What does it look like for us to go to our High Priest? How is God with us today?

Check out Hebrews 7:25. Jesus is still working for us, permanently interceding as our High Priest from Heaven.

- The death of Nadab & Abihu shows the importance of approaching God on His terms. What would it look like for you to treat God with more respect, reverence and awe?

PRAY TO END: God, you dwelt with your people in Israel because you were pleased with them. You are now pleased with Christians because Jesus became a High Priest for us. We thank you for this beautiful thing!

LEVITICUS 16 • 26-30 AUG

DIRECTION: Once a year Aaron is able to enter into the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place, the very centre of the Tabernacle, as close as possible to God's presence! This is the highpoint of the book as an unholy man is 'called' (Lev 1:1) into the presence of the Holy God. What he enters to do is to worship God & sacrifice for Israel's sins, on the special 'day of atonement'.

Atonement is about making peace between God & His people: it is at-one-ment. On the Day of Atonement Aaron puts on special clothes, sacrifices for himself & the other priests, takes 2 goats, confesses the sins of Israel on the head of 1 goat & sacrifices it, then lets the 2nd goat (the 'scapegoat') free into the wilderness, to symbolise the sins of Israel being 'carried away'.

The Day of Atonement maintains good relationship between God & Israel. But Christ on the cross has achieved once for all time what the High Priests had to do every year. More than that, Christ has *permanently* brought us into the Most Holy Place to live in God's presence!

PRAY TO START: That we'd appreciate how good we have it as Christians.

LAUNCH: What is a day when you were younger that you looked forward to more than any other day? (Can't be birthday or Christmas).

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- From what we've seen in Leviticus so far, how is sin paid for?

Read Leviticus 16:1-34

OBSERVATION & MEANING: Why couldn't Aaron normally enter into the Most Holy Place?

There were two rooms in the tabernacle; the holy place and the holy of holies (most holy place). Aaron was not allowed to enter into the holy of holies because that's where the presence of God was.

- For Aaron to enter it, what needs to happen? What does this show us about God?

Aaron needs to put a new garment on, make a burnt offering with a bull, take a goat for a purification (sin) offering and take another goat to transfer Israel's sin upon it and let it go into the wilderness. I.e. it's a big deal!

- Why does Aaron enter the Most Holy Place? What does he do there?
- Why did a goat walk into the wilderness with the sin of Israel on it?

Aaron was to transfer all of Israel's sin upon the animal. Remember there were people within Israel who weren't sacrificing due to disobedience. The goat would symbolise all sin that wasn't atoned for within the sacrificial system. The goat is sent out in order to take sin away from Israel and thus maintaining a good relationship between God and his people. It was a powerful visual aid that demonstrated the reality of sin and the need to eliminate it.

- **Read John 1:29** – What does this remind you of?
- **Read Hebrews 9:6-8, 9:11-14 & 10:19-22** – What has Jesus done for us, compared to the High Priests in the OT?

APPLY: This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).

- Have you ever felt far away from God?
- What sort of access do we have to God now?
- Christians have a permanent & intimate access to God, yet we're also told to 'draw near to God'. How do these 2 things fit together?
- What would it look like for you to 'draw near to God' (Heb 10:22)? How could you do that more?
- What do you tend to do when you sin: draw near to God or run away from God?

PRAY TO END: We thank you that your Son is the greatest High Priest the world has ever seen. Thank you for His sacrifice which takes away our sins & gives us permanent & intimate access to you God. Amen.

LEVITICUS 18 • 2-6 SEP

DIRECTION: How do you submit to God when the world around you tells you to do the opposite? In this passage in Leviticus, God sets the ground rules for Israel's sexual relations: what does holy sexuality look like for Israel? It doesn't look like the lives of the nations around them. God still cares about this for us. He wants us to live in accordance with His purpose and design for us, because God is holy and he calls His people to be holy in all of our lives.

PRAY TO START: we'd joyfully submit to God's good design for our lives.

LAUNCH: When have you stood out as a Christian & felt different to the people around you?

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- In Leviticus, how can Israel approach God?

Read Leviticus 18:1-19:2

OBSERVATION: *This is about getting an overview of what the passage says.*

- How does this passage make you feel, first impressions?
- How would you break up this passage? What sections are there?

MEANING: *This is about deciding what big idea/s the author is explaining to us*

- Why do you think God give the laws & decrees that follow? What's the reason for them?
- Look at 19:2 - why do you think God cares so much about His people being Holy like He is holy?

Israel (from Exodus 19 & throughout Leviticus) are meant to be a nation that are separate & different to the nations around them, so they can represent God on earth & attract people to God.

When it comes to their sex lives, Israel is meant to live out God's design too & so to stand out. From Genesis 2:22-25 we get a glimpse of what sex is for: sex is a good gift from God to serve a marriage. As a man & woman leave their families, marry as husband and wife, & unite to each other as 'one flesh' - one new family unit, joined together - sexual intercourse & physical intimacy is a way to express that one-ness & to unite and cleave together.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:11-20

- What does Paul say about who we are united to as Christians?
- How does being united to Christ affect how we use our bodies and sexual desires?

APPLY: This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).

- What do you think the nations at the time would have thought of the Israelites & the different way they treated everything to do with sex?
- How are your views of sexuality different from the world or your unbelieving friends? Are they very different?
- What ways do you want to honour God more with your body and thoughts?
- What would you say to a Christian friend who felt guilty for past sexual sin? What would you say to a Christian friend who was still living in sexual sin?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that we've been forgiven for *all* our sins in Christ. Pray as we learn to keep trusting God's design for our lives that we'd long to please Him & would live lives that are starkly different from the world around us.

LEVITICUS 20 • 9-13 SEP

DIRECTION: God is a God of purpose. God saved Israel to belong to Him & called them to be “Holy”, i.e. different & separate to the nations around them. God commands His people to therefore live out who they now are, i.e. “to be holy”. God shows them what holiness will look like in the different parts of their lives in the OT laws. And it matters! In chapter 20 we learn God will cut off from Israel anyone who is *not* pursuing holiness.

But we also hear God tell us ‘I am the Lord who makes you holy’ (Lev 20:8). God not only saved Israel for Himself and called them to be Holy, God also works to *make* them Holy. How much more true is that for you, who have God’s Holy Spirit in you transforming you as you trust the gospel & cling to Jesus. Holiness is something we have (we *are* God’s, called to be different) & something we’re growing in (more & more living out who we now are).

PRAY TO START: That God would grow us in understanding His Character.

LAUNCH: Who’s the holiest person you’ve ever met?

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- From what we’ve seen in Leviticus so far, how would you define ‘holiness’? What is it? What does it look like?

Read Leviticus 20:1-8 & 20:22-26

OBSERVATION: *This is about getting an overview of what the passage says.*

- What’s your first impression of the way God speaks to Israel here? What sort of language is used for people that seek other gods?

MEANING: *This is about deciding what big idea/s the author is explaining to us*

- How does Israel know what holiness looks like for them?
- Why do you think God cares so much about Israel’s holiness?
- How do you think Israel are made holy?

- How do we know what holiness looks like for us?

Read Hebrews 10:10-14

- We often don't feel Holy, but are you in fact Holy? How has that happened?

APPLY: *This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).*

- Do you think you can become more holy? What would that look like in your life? What concrete steps do you want to take this week?
- Phil 1:6 says this: *'...and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ'*. What hope does this give you as you pursue more holiness in your life?

PRAY TO END: Thank God that He has made us Holy once for all by His Son's death for our sin, & that God is making us Holy through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN • 16-20 SEP

This week in your Small Group, choose your own adventure. We'll be on Salt Away this weekend, thinking about prayer & enjoying God. So we'll take a short pause from Leviticus for 1 week before we finish it off next week.

Quick reminder of why we're doing this...

In Small Groups we normally discuss part of the bible before it's preached on, so we don't just 'let the expert' tell us what to believe but wrestle with God's word for ourselves.

One downside though is we move quick! You might have started a great chat in your group 1 week, but by the next we've moved on. This week is a chance to choose your own adventure – continue 1 of those discussions, or look at another topic / question / part of the bible your group wants to.

SOCIAL FUN TIMES:

If you haven't done a social / fun thing for a while you could use this week to do that. See chap 5 & 6 of [Getting Started as a Group Leader](#) for tips on how to use these to grow your group, so you get more bang for your buck.

A BIBLE DISCUSSION:

Alternatively, if you want to continue a previous discussion or dig into another topic / question / part of the bible here's how you could do that.

Getting Ideas:

A week or so before this, let your group know there's a 'choose your own' week coming up. Collect ideas, like a topic / question / part of the bible they want to explore. Vote to find the most popular 1 & get prepping.

Getting Prepped:

Brainstorm where in the bible the topic / question comes up. Or for a part of the bible, read it a bunch of times to work out what it means. Ask your coach & other leaders if they know good places / what the passage means.

If you feel more confident you can read up on the topic in a systematic theology / commentary (there's a bunch upstairs at 275 Keira St to borrow). If you're keen to learn more about the skill of creating studies, check out the book *Writing a Small Group Study* by Richard Sweatman.

Packaging a Discussion:

1. Use the COMA method: we use it in these notes; it stands for: Context-Observation-Meaning-Application.
2. Use the 'Swedish Method', where you read the passage together & ask:
 - a. What stands out to you?
 - b. What's a question you have?
 - c. What do you think the big point is?
 - d. What's one thing you want to do in response?
3. Or just read the passage & ask 'what do you reckon?' & see where your discussion takes you.

NEED HELP?

You don't have to have all the answers or be the expert to be a Small Group Leader, so don't stress for this week. Just get people into God's word & let Him teach & transform us by His Spirit.

This choose your own week can be a great way for your group to dig into something that's puzzling, troubling or exciting them.

Your Small Group Coach is always available & ready to give you advice too.

LEVITICUS 26 • 23-27 SEP

DIRECTION: Our God does not treat us as our sins deserve. It might not feel like that though when you read the curses that will fall on Israel if they break their covenant with God! Though there's blessings if they obey & follow their God, there are serious consequences if they don't.

But underneath this warning, we see a God who remains faithful & will not break His side of the deal. He always acts in line with His character & always keeps His promises. This should give us great joy because the same God makes a great promise to us: those who believe in Jesus are saved from their sins & united with God.

PRAY TO START: That we would see the greatness of Gods character.

LAUNCH: Do you remember a time someone broke a promise to you?

CONTEXT: *This is about seeing how this passage fits into the chapter and book*

- What big aspects of God's character have you seen in Leviticus?

Read Leviticus 26:3-22 & 26:40-45

OBSERVATION: *This is about getting an overview of what the passage says.*

- Break this passage into sections & give each section a title.

There are 3 'if-s', showing 3 outcomes depending on how Israel respond to God.

- *v3-13 has the blessings that come **if** Israel follow and trust their God.*
- *v14-22 has the curses and judgement that will come **if** they turn away from and don't listen to and follow their God.*
- *v40-45 speaks about God remaining **faithful** to His covenant even though Israel has been unfaithful to God, and God bringing Israel back from exile after their sins have been judged **if** they confess and pay for their sins*

MEANING: *This is about deciding what big idea/s the author is explaining to us*

- What does God expect from His people? Why does He ask that?
- Do you think God's judgements are fair? Why, why not?
- Is God merciful here? Why, why not?
- What reasons does He have to be merciful?

Read Hebrews 8:7-13

- What's the same & what's different between Old & New Covenants?
- Why did there need to be a New Covenant?
- Christians live under the New Covenant. How does God treat us?

APPLY: *This is about reflecting on how the passage impacts your life – your head (beliefs), heart (emotions) and hands (actions).*

- What are you thankful to God for, as you live under this New Covenant?
- Do you feel confident God has forgiven *your* wickedness & remembers *your* sins no more (v12?)
- What does God expect from us who live under the New Covenant?
- God is very misunderstood today by unbelievers. What truths about God from this chapter do you want to share as you tell people about your faith in God?
- What have you most been struck by from looking at Leviticus?

PRAY TO END: Praise God for His mercifulness to us: a sinful & wicked people. Pray we'd grow in our confidence of our state before God.



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'God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.' (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

'Be Holy because I, the Lord your God, am Holy' (Leviticus 19:2)

'I am the Lord, who makes you Holy' (Leviticus 20:8)