

Leviticus 11-20

DESCRIPTION:

This detailed exposition of Leviticus 11-20 focuses especially on the text's rhetoric of pollution and purity. While engaging a wide variety of contemporary scholarship on Leviticus, it also shows the book's historical influence on Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices from antiquity to the present day. Leviticus's rhetoric aimed to persuade ancient listeners and readers to identify themselves as Israel by observing YHWH's Torah, as exemplified especially by their diets and purification practices. It used prohibitions on illicit sexual intercourse to stigmatize pollution with sexual innuendo. The book makes purification and forgiveness available through personal and priestly rituals. Leviticus also emphasizes the importance of all kinds of divine commandments, including acting out of love for neighbors and immigrants. Leviticus's rhetoric has therefore echoed in later Jewish and Christian cultures around issues of pollution, atonement, sex, and ethics, especially treatment of women and ethnic others.

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