

Baseball and the Bible

Leviticus 21–27

Baseball is one of my favorite sports. One of the reasons I like it is that it's easily understood. A young boy or an elderly woman can enjoy watching the World Series even though they may not understand all the complexities of the game, because the basics are easy to discern. Two young boys with a whiffle ball and an imagination can play baseball for hours in the backyard.

But another reason I like baseball is that it's very complex. You can be a part of the game for years and still learn something new. While driving home from a speaking engagement, I was listening to a radio broadcast of the World Series. When a runner chose not to advance from second to third on a ball that got away from the catcher, the announcer said that the runner made a good choice because there was no advantage to being on third with two outs.

Ex-Cincinnati Reds second baseman Joe Morgan was the color-commentator for the game. He disagreed with the announcer saying, "I never used to try to steal third with two outs, but I noticed that Maury Wills often did, so I asked him why. He said, "Joe, there are nine ways to score from third with two outs that you can't score from second."

Morgan said when he asked Wills to list the nine ways he responded, "Joe, you figure them out." Then he added, "I did. And Maury Wills was right!" The announcer then asked, "Joe, what are those nine ways?" Joe Morgan said, "You figure them out!"

Now, I think I know a little about baseball but I spent the next 30 miles trying to list those nine ways and could only think of seven! Baseball is simple; baseball is complex. That's what makes it so interesting and perhaps so durable.

The Bible is such a fascinating book because it is so simple. Even a child can understand the basics. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "God so loved the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God has kept the fundamentals of salvation simple for us.

But the Bible is so complex that it confounds and stimulates the minds of the greatest theologians. Some passages of Scripture are so perplexing, scholars are still motivated to dig in. Even the angels desire to look into them.

That's a good principle to remember when reading the book of Leviticus.

There are some events and commandments in the Old Testament that are types and symbols which have dramatic New Testament fulfillment. Although we are no longer under the Levitical law, it is given as a schoolmaster to help us understand God's New Covenant. The consecration of priestly garments, the anointing of the High Priest, the seven major feasts, the principle of the kinsman-redeemer, the requirement of a perfect sacrifice for sins, the Day of Atonement, and many other Levitical teachings are so rich with symbolism that the most brilliant scholar will not understand it all fully until we get to Heaven.

In the meantime we can study, speculate, and learn to appreciate the depth of God's Word. The fact that the Bible is so simple that a child can understand enough to be saved, yet it is so complex that it stimulates the thinking of the best Bible scholars, is just more evidence that "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). ■

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Day by Day With the Bible

Use this guide to read through the Bible in 12 months. Follow Bob Russell's comments on the highlighted text in every issue of THE LOOKOUT.

- Day 1 Matthew 20:17–34
 Acts 27:27–44
 Psalm 45
 Leviticus 21–23

- Day 3 Matthew 21:12–22
 Acts 28:17–31
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- Day 5 Matthew 21:33–46
 Romans 1:18–32
 Psalm 49
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- Day 2 Matthew 21:1–11
 Acts 28:1–16
 Psalm 46
 Leviticus 24, 25

- Day 4 Matthew 21:23–32
 Romans 1:1–17
 Psalm 48
 Numbers 1, 2

What Do You Think?

1. How would you describe the respect you have for God's Word?
2. How does your respect for God's Word motivate you to read and study it?