

Over the past seven weeks we have been studying key passages in the first two books of the Bible, not simply understanding what the passages meant to ancient Israel but also seeing how each passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible and ultimately points us to God's work of redemption in Christ. We know from Jesus' words in Luke 24 that all of Scripture ultimately points us to him and his work on the cross: **"And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."** (Luke 24:25-27)

Recap... True and Greater Adam, Covenant, Joseph, King, Redemption, Provision, Presence...

This morning, from the much neglected book of Leviticus, we are going to see how Jesus is our . . .

### **"The True & Greater Access"** **Leviticus 10:1-3 & 16**

**The Point: Come boldly to God through our true priest and greater sacrifice.**

#### **I. Jesus is our true and greater high priest who mediates for us (Leviticus 10:1-3; 16:1-6).**

The book of Leviticus has one mega-theme: the holiness of God. We find the theme verse stated twice: **"You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."** (Leviticus 11:45 & 19:2) All of its contents are designed to teach us how sinful man can relate to a holy God. We find this in God's instructions for the priesthood, with Aaron and his sons. The opening chapters of Leviticus detail how the priests were to make offerings before the Lord. Chapter 9 ends with Aaron's solemn sacrifice and God's pleasure over the sacrifice made. Look at vv.22-24.

As we move into chapter 10, we encounter a stark contrast.

- While Aaron offered an acceptable sacrifice before the Lord, his sons, Nadab and Abihu, chose a different route taking matters into their own hands. *Read 10:1-3*
- What is happening here? They offered unauthorized fire. They did not follow the Lord's command. Their worship was of their own design.
- They were very presumptuous and entered God's presence in an unacceptable way. God is glorious and his holiness is pristine. Nadab & Abihu treated the holiness of God with levity, and grave consequences followed.
- Nadab & Abihu died for their sin. We respond to this with such amazement because their sin cost them their life, but listen, the wages of sin is death for everyone (as Romans 6:23 tells us). It's only a matter of time. Our sin must be dealt with or we *will* suffer the consequences.

*T:* This episode launches us into one of the most significant chapters in the Bible, Leviticus 16.

This chapter details "The Day of Atonement." The Jews called it *Yom Kippur*. "The covering over. The covering up." The rabbis often simply called it "The Day." This is the Good Friday of the OT.

We first discover how the priests are to act in vv. 1-6.

- Aaron, Moses' brother, was the first high priest of the people. The high priest, not only represented the nation, but also all of the other priests in the priesthood.

- The high priest only entered the holy of holies (most holy place) on the Day of Atonement, and he did so in a very specific way. Extreme care had to be taken in light of God's extreme holiness.
- Because the priest is also a sinner, he must go through extensive cleansing rituals and change his garments (vv. 3-4).
- He has to make atonement for himself and his house (verse 6.) But he also must make atonement for the nation. No one else can go in. The high priest represented the nation, and make no mistake, the nation was watching! The payment is being paid.
- Here's the good news for us: As we fast forward to the coming of Christ, we discover that Jesus is the truer and greater high priest... **"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." (Hebrews 7:26)**
- Jesus, the perfect one, is our access to a holy God. He is our mediator before God. We come to God through him.
- **"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:11-12)**

Jesus is the priest, but he is also the sacrifice. "He offered himself." This offering refers to his sacrifice on the cross. And this, in very vivid and weighty way, was display on the Day of Atonement.

## II. Jesus is our true and greater sacrifice who paid the price for our sin. (Leviticus 16:7-34).

*Read 6-10.* This is holy ground. Two goats. The scapegoat. The other is the sacrificial lamb.

We see this in the goat that was sacrificed. **(Jesus is our Sacrifice.)** *Read 15-19*

- This lamb was killed as a sin offering before God.
- Why is this such a bloody scene? Because shed blood represents death. When blood is in our bodies, it symbolizes life. When it is shed, it represents death. Read LEVITICUS 17:11
- This was necessary because the sin of the people could not be treated as inconsequential before God. Thus, for God's people to have a relationship with him and maintain fellowship there had to be a substitute. One death taking the place of another.
- Theologians call this penal substitutionary atonement. Christ bore the penalty of our sin by bearing the wrath of God when he died in our place. He accomplished our salvation through his death on the cross.
- We see the work of Christ foreshadowed in the sacrifice. . . .

**We see this in the scapegoat** as well. *Read 20-22*

- Single figure taking the place of many... One goat has the sin of the nation placed upon it.
- The goat is led out into the wilderness never to be seen again.
- This scapegoat represented the sins of the people being carried away from the people.
- If you are consistently weighed down with a sense of your guilt before God, you need this truth!
- This image would have surely led David to give great praise when he said in **Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."**
- The devil wants to accuse and condemn. But we are uncondemnable. Romans 8:1, "There is no now condemnation for those who in Christ." No charge can stick.
- When we sin, we acknowledge it, look to Christ and his cross work for us, and we can know that our sin has been forgiven and our guilt has been taken away!

- Do you see why the Day of the Atonement is so significant? Jesus does the work of both goats. He is the sacrificial lamb, who dies the death we should have died. AND he is the scapegoat who takes our sin away. Now God's wrath and judgment no longer fall on those who have faith in Christ, because he has absorbed that wrath on our behalf!

And what are the results of Christ work?

- **Mark 15** tells the story of the crucifixion. Verses **37-38** say: **"And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom."**
- CROSS – Veil of the Holy of Holies Torn in two (70 feet high! Thick as a man's hand!)
- And when that veil was torn, God's message to the world is this: You can enter my presence. You have undeniable access through the blood of my Son shed for you. We have the privilege of entering into the presence.
- In explaining the atonement, **Anselm said, "The debt was so great, that while man alone owed it, only God could pay it."**

Let the words of Scripture, concerning the work of Christ, bring you great comfort if you are in Christ, and if you have yet to receive Jesus as you Savior, then hear these words calling you to follow him.

- **"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."** (Isaiah 53:4-6)
- **"Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;"** Isaiah 53:10
- **"Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."** (Isaiah 53:12)
- **"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"** (John 1:29)
- **"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **"But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."** (Hebrews 9:28)
- **"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying**

like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:22-25)

- “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...” (1 Peter 3:18).
- “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

*T: When we come boldly into the presence of God through our true priest and greater sacrifice, we discover that we must . . .*

See 20-28 . . The purpose of atonement is to bring an unholy people into holy worship of a holy God.

### **III. Respond with wonder, gratitude, and devotion to Christ and him crucified.**

As we move into the Easter season, what better way to tune our minds and hearts than to meditate on the cross of Christ and our response to him. Let’s look at theseπ three ways to respond

**1) Marvel at the Foot of the Cross.** When we consider all the cross means . . . the long promised prophecies of fulfilled, the mystery of his plan now revealed, the glory of God displayed, the inestimable blessings bestowed on sinful, when we consider all of that, it should move us to amazement and wonder. Are you marveling at this? If we are not marveling at Christ and his Cross, perhaps we have lost a sense of the infinite holiness of God and the exceeding sinfulness of your sin.

*Marvel at the cost.* He gave his life for us.

*Marvel at his love.* “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

*Marvel at his grace* that is available for all who place their faith in Christ and his work on the cross. We did not deserve this. We’re not hanging out next to the cross when any sense of entitlement. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one can boast.”

*T: We should not only marvel. We should also . . .*

**2) Give Thanks at the Foot of the Cross.** When the cross rightfully understood and truly received, the reflect of our soul should be gratitude. The wonder and the amazement become so personal because he truly died for me. Do you know that to be true? Are you responding with deep gratitude?

*T: Finally. We should . . .*

**3) Live at the Foot of the Cross.** Here’s the deal: we never move away from the cross. You remember Paul’s words in Galatians 2:20 (I know you have that medimemo’ed!): “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live...”

- “Be holy as I am holy.” As image bearers of God, he wants us to reflect his holiness. We should strive to live pure lives that are set apart for every good work.
- This is important for us to hear. We just worked our way through the NT letter of Galatians where we were repeatedly told that we are accepted by God on the work of Christ alone, by grace alone.

- “For Freedom . . . “Against Legalism.... BUT also against Licentiousness “do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.”
- Grace, properly understood and properly received, motivates personal holiness. We are not accepted because of our holiness, but we pursue holiness out of gratitude for grace.
- We display our love for him by keeping his commands. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3)
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- This is why we need the light of God and his truth to shine into our lives and expose our sin and point us to holiness, so that we might honor God and find great joy in him.
- So we open the Word daily. We encourage one another daily (not simply with a –“hey nice job” – or “yea, keep your head up,” but with the truth of God. “God is sovereign. God is worthy. He is working for the good of those called according to his purpose. He will never leave you. His Spirit will guide you!”). When is the last time you spoke words of truth to someone else?
- As we saw last week, we need the fellowship of the other living stones in God’s temple. As they shine bright, as they are fighting the sin of discontentment, envy, unbelief, unwholesome words, then we will be reminded and spurred on to fight those same battles in order to honor God. Is your life as a living stone dirty and cracked? Or clean, beautiful, and whole?

#### Conclusion

- Here’s the beautiful thing: When we fulfill all God expects from us, we will experience all God desires for us. Let me say that again: When we fulfill all God expects from us, we will experience all God desires for us.
- Before Jesus was crucified, he told his disciples: **“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11)**

We are able to do so because of the work of Jesus! He has made a way. He has given us access to be one with God. He is our great high priest and true and greater sacrifice. Come boldly to God through him, today.