

Week 2

A Holy God, An Unholy People - Ritual States, Sacrifice and Atonement

Review

Setting/Authorship

Leviticus was written to answer (among other things), two primary questions:

1. How to live _____.
2. How to live _____.

The Theology of Leviticus is primarily about the *tabernacle* and *covenant relationship*. The tabernacle was the palace-tent of the heavenly King. It is the place where he would meet with his people and they would display their honor and give their sacrifice. The covenant relationship, in which the people of God are intended to flourish, is a *suzerain-vassal* type and was intended to display God's holiness and mercy.

In its theology, Leviticus shows us how the Lord brings order to the world by separating things into their proper place and calling his people to do the same. God separates his people from the rest of the world and promises to bless them. These blessing are accompanied by a calling to follow him. He has separated them to reflect his image in the world. The Israelites are the ones who represent God on earth and who display how to live and experience the life God intended for his creation.

A Holy (Covenant) God

The initiating party in a suzerain-vassal covenant was the king. The king delivers the covenant _____, in particular, _____. In the case of the Israelites, the king they were in relationship with was distinctly _____. By virtue of this relationship, the law reflected its giver. In this case, then, the law was holy.

Discussion Question: What assumptions can you make from the fact that God's law is holy? How does its holiness inform its veracity, application and authority?

To better understand these assumptions and the overall nature of the law, we need to consider the source of the law - the holiness of God.

a. God's holiness is _____. (Lev. 9:23b-24a)

b. God's holiness is marked by his _____ and his _____. (Lev. 19)

c. These attributes are the embodiment of a redeeming God. God's displays himself as:

-The Lord who redeemed them to be _____.

-The Lord who redeemed them to be _____.

-The Lord who redeemed them to be _____.

Summary: The Holy Law of the Covenant King exists to reflect the law giver (goodness and holiness) and to show how to walk with the King. The astounding grace of God addresses (and changes) the heart and the law of God addresses sin and all of its effects.

An Unholy (Covenant) People

God initiated a relationship with an unholy and impure group of people. This means our chief concern in this relationship is the sin problem and impurity that exists in our lives.

What is sin? The essence of sin is the _____.

How is sin defined/categorized? The Pentateuch defines three types of sin:

1. Unintentional sins

Means of forgiveness:

2. "High-handed" sins

Means of forgiveness:

3. Intentional, but not high-handed sins

Means of forgiveness:

A study of sin also includes an understanding of ritual states, since Levitical atonement must be made for both sin and impurity. An important distinction, however, is that though both are addressed by atonement, one is rooted in wrongdoing (_____), while the other is a state of being (_____). We know this because there are many regulations regarding ritual states related to natural and prescribed activities (childbirth, sexual intercourse, etc.)

The three ritual states were _____, _____ and _____.

[Movement between ritual states, illustration]

The Hope of Sinners - Sacrifice and Atonement

Sacrifice and atonement were the answer to the question, “How do we live in relationship with a holy God, when we are such an unholy people?” “How can the holy dwell in our midst?”

a. Atonement as ransom.

The characteristics of a ransom payment:

b. Atonement as cleansing.

c. Atonement as “ransom-purification.” Levitical atonement addresses the problem that sin and impurity both _____ and _____.

d. The important role of blood.

Conclusion

Discussion Questions: Where do you see a ‘Savior in the Shadows’ in tonight’s lesson? What are the key attributes of God that you see displayed in the holy covenant and in the provision of sacrifice and atonement?

“The ability of guilty sinners to ransom their lives by means of a sacrificial lifeblood was a gracious gift from the Lord. Sacrifice was something that the Israelites gave to the Lord, but it was first and foremost something he granted to them, in his grace, as a means for atoning for sin and achieving the forgiveness they so desperately desired. This is the very opposite of the common human impulse to earn salvation from God. It is a bold declaration that salvation comes only when God in his grace grants it to us.”