

Unit 5, Session 4: Worship at the Tabernacle

Big Picture Question: Why do we need to be saved? People are sinful and cannot save themselves.

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 2:2 – “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

Christ Connection: God instructed the Israelites to sacrifice animals to demonstrate the forgiveness and removal of sin. God gave His one and only Son, Jesus, as the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of their sins and made clean forever.

Bible Passage: Leviticus 16; 19; 26

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

The book of Leviticus, when read only as law, can often feel tedious and overwhelming. With stipulations for different offerings, guidelines for cleansing, and even laws for bodily functions, who can keep track of everything that needs to be done for every kind of situation? Instead of looking at the stipulations given in Leviticus only as law, consider reading it through the lens of relationship. All relationships have boundaries, guidelines for how each party interacts with one another. When the guidelines are followed, the relationship remains healthy and both parties can fulfill their roles properly. If the guidelines are not followed, or there are none, the relationship quickly experiences tension and conflict. Boundaries cannot guarantee a good relationship, but they do help to facilitate interactions between both parties. This, of course, is the point. The Law given by God was not intended to save but to steer. The Law reveals the holiness of God compared to the human need for salvation. Human effort was never going to be able to close the gap between God and humanity, but the Law, when carefully observed, allows the people to worship God the way that he deserves. It provides a way for God's people to live in right relationship with him.

Because of who God is (Creator, holy, just, etc.; Ex 34:6-7), he deserves our worship. While God's Law was given to guide the Israelites in their physical worship of the Redeemer, the heart with which they worshiped the Lord was the key (Dt 5:6; Is 29:13; Ez 14:5). Similarly, Christians are called to worship the Redeemer “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23-24). Though today we are no longer required to present physical offerings of grain or goats, the Lord still demands our worship. His law has been written on the hearts of believers and continues to facilitate the relationship between God and his people, mediated by our great High Priest (Jer 31:33; Rom 2:15; Hb 4-5; 8:10; 10:16). His character remains the same, demonstrated in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Hb 13:8; Col 1:15), and he will always deserve our worship.

The Israelites worshiped God at the tabernacle. God gave them specific instructions for how to worship Him on a special day each year. This day was called the Day of Atonement. On this day, **the high priest, Aaron, would present animal sacrifices to the Lord for the sins of all the people.** These were special offerings made in addition to all the animal sacrifices made by the people throughout the year. Here is how God instructed them.

Before he could go to the mercy seat, in the most holy place, Aaron had to prepare himself. The most holy place was a very special area of the tabernacle that no one was allowed to enter except the high priest on this one day a year. **After Aaron bathed in water and put on the special clothes, he was to sacrifice a bull as an offering to God for his sin and sprinkle its blood on the mercy seat. Then he would take on goat and sacrifice it for the sins of all the people.**

After sprinkling the blood of this goat in the most holy place, Aaron would take another goat and confess all the Israelites' sin over it. Then the goat would be sent into the wilderness. This was to be a picture of how God had removed the sin of the Israelite people.

He gave the Israelites many commands to show them what was right and what was wrong. He told them to leave some of their crops for the poor to have something to eat, to be honest and fair when they had disagreements, and to treat everyone equally. He told them not to steal, not to lie, and not to hate each other. **If the Israelites followed these rules and all the rules God gave, then they would be holy just as God is holy.**

God told them that if they would keep all of His commandments, then they would be blessed. They would have peace with other nations, have plenty to eat, and live well. **God knew His people would not obey Him, and there would be consequences for their sin.** He said they would live in exile in the lands of their enemies because of their disobedience, but God also said He would not destroy His people. **When His people confessed their sin, He would remember the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and be their God forever.**

If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at ssievers@lenexabaptist.com.