

18-19 Bible Study #24

3/12/19

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 9** presents the beginning of the **sacramental system**
- It started with *Aaron* offering a bull calf for himself as a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering so that he could be ritually clean in order to offer other sacrifices on behalf of the people
- He had to be sinless in order to assist the people in becoming sinless
- It is very interesting that he was called to offer a “bull calf” on Mt. *Sinai* in light of his role in the Golden Calf incident

Leviticus (Cont)

- Some scholars have suggested that the sacrificial system and kosher laws were provided as a catechesis for the people
- These rituals were a reversal of the things that the *Hebrew* people had done in *Egypt*
- The *Hebrews* were not allowed to sacrifice a lamb or a bull calf as they were considered *Egyptian* gods
- Thus, the people were required to kill a lamb and put its blood on their doorposts as a sign that they blasphemed the gods of *Egypt*
- This was a physical catechetical action which forced them to acknowledge that the *Egyptian* gods were no gods *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 10** introduces us to the first “train wreck”
- When *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered “unholy fire before the Lord,” they were devoured by fire *₂
- We do not know exactly what happened as they had just completed the seven day ordination period
- Perhaps there was some distinction between “holy” and “unholy” fire (incense) or they had too much to drink that day (**Leviticus 10:8**)*

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 11** gives us the *Kosher Laws* concerning clean and unclean animals
- If an animal parted the hoof and chewed the cud the Israelites could eat them (these were mainly herding animals)
- If either were missing, they could not eat it
- Sheep, goats, cows, deer, oxen, bulls, and buffalo were clean
- Horses, donkeys, zebra, and swine were unclean (they were mainly pack animals)

Leviticus (Cont)

- There were also distinctions for sea creatures and birds
- One theory for these rules was the biological argument designed to keep the people of Israel healthy
- Some of the forbidden animals (like swine) carried trichinosis
- Another explanation was they could not eat the animals that the Egyptians ate (i.e., swine)
- A third argument was the *Edemic* image which looked at how the animal behaved in the *Garden of Eden*

Leviticus (Cont)

- Father suggested that it could be a combination of all three of these theories
- In the end, God gave them these rules to distinguish them and keep them holy (set apart)
- But, of great importance, these rules are all out the door when we come to the New Testament where we find that the book of **Leviticus** was clearly attached to the Mosaic Law (which due to the Golden Calf Incident were not part of the original plan)
- In the New Testament we are under a new covenant

Leviticus (Cont)

- A major question for the early church was which of these laws had nothing to do with this new covenant, and what did they have to do with gentiles entering the church?
- This conflict (the *Judaizers*) was a major problem early on and in some ways remains with us today *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 12** discusses the purification requirements for a woman after the birth of a male child
- **Leviticus 13 -14** discusses the diagnosis and cleansing for leprosy *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 15** discusses when women were to be considered “clean” or “unclean”
- Father explained why menstruating women, as well as blood in general, were considered “unclean”
- The principle explanation came from the way pagan religions around Israel used blood in their sacrificial systems
- Remember, it was widely understood that blood was the life force of all animals

Leviticus (Cont)

- They wanted to collect it and use it to stall “death” and make life more vigorous
- They would drink and bath in it
- Thus, at this time, there were all sorts of bizarre pagan activities using the blood of animals and of women
- This was particularly true in those religions that believed that a woman’s blood was part of her fertility

Leviticus (Cont)

- God gave the Hebrews certain laws dealing with blood in order to direct them to stay away from it as a part of their catechetical instruction
- Blood was, therefore, considered “unclean”
- The people were instructed to stay away from animals or men (women) who were losing blood
- In fact, they were taught that if one touched blood of another, they were made “unclean”

Leviticus (Cont)

- Father pointed out that this was where the whole thing broke down because men are all filled with blood
- If blood made one “unclean,” then the inside of our bodies must all be “unclean”
- But, it was not the blood that made one “unclean,” it was what one was tempted to do when coming in contact with blood
- There was the danger that a *Hebrew* might use this blood in the same manner as the pagans did

Leviticus (Cont)

- Therefore, if a woman was menstruating, one must not get near her
- In fact, she was required to stay in the tent and avoid getting near anyone
- These laws should be seen as barriers, hedges, and boundaries established to keep Israel from falling into temptation in some sort of pagan way
- This will be a problem throughout the history of the church as well

Leviticus (Cont)

- There are some denominations today that consider menstruating women as unclean “because the Bible says so”
- Many of these rules were part of the Old Testament, but thankfully they are no longer part of the New Testament *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 16**

- This sections lays out the requirement for what became known as the ***Day of Atonement*** (*Yom Kippur*)
 - *Day of expiation*
 - *Day of cleansing*
- Most believe that this was a day when the people of Israel offered sacrifices to appease the wrath of God which had been caused by their offending sins
- This sacrifice was somehow believed to be able to balance the scales again
- But, this was not what this was about and most people have not actually read the passage *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 16:1-11**

- Begins with a reminder of the death of the two sons of *Aaron* (**Leviticus 10:1-3**)
- God then warned *Aaron* not to go into the *Holy of Holies* except for the special occasion when he was to offer sacrifices for himself and the people of *Israel*
- This was the expanded regulation for what became the *Day of Atonement*, which had previously been mentioned in **Exodus 30:10**
- This expansion may have been required due to the Golden Calf incident *

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 16:12-34**

- In this section, we are introduced to the term *Azazel*
- There are all sorts of speculation as to what this word meant:
 - A pagan god of the wilderness
 - A demon
 - Satan
- The *Hebrew* word was translated into the Greek Septuagint as *apophero* meaning “a sending away,” or “a carrying away”
- In the *Vulgate*, Jerome used the Latin word *emesario* meaning “emissary” or “the one who is going away”

Leviticus (Cont)

- The word only appears 4 times in the Hebrew dictionary and all are in Leviticus 16, where it was described as the “Scape Goat”
- This was a goat who was “turned away,” “sent away,” or the “escaping goat”
- This has been shortened to the “scape goat” (the one you blame)

Leviticus (Cont)

- Here, we see the requirements for *Aaron* to bring 2 goats to the Tent of Meeting
 - One was to be sacrificed and its blood sprinkled within the *Holy of Holies*
 - Aaron was to pray (place his hands on its head) on the other and recall all the sins of the people of Israel
 - It was then to be taken into the wilderness and left to die (later they threw it off of a cliff to its death)
 - Both had to be goats because a lamb would return to the camp with the person who took him into the wilderness
 - This beautiful liturgical image reflected the removal of the sins of the people on an annual basis *