

Title: God Prescribes the Way to Him

Text: Leviticus 1: 1-2

Date: July 31, 2014

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Leviticus 1: 1: And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.

The only way to find acceptance with God, and to worship God, is to come to God in the way God has prescribed. Christ is God's Way. Christ is the sacrifice God has accepted. Faith in Christ is God's Way. Christ is the believer's only acceptance with God. We must come trusting Christ.

That is what we see in these first two verses of Leviticus. Here God makes a statement concerning offerings. Every aspect of these ceremonies pictures Christ and the sinner's way to God only through faith in Christ.

In Hebrews 9, the Holy Spirit tells us that the law was not given by God to take away sin. God used the law to give pictures of Christ who by himself perfected his people by his one offering. Even under the old covenant, true believers beheld Christ in the ceremonies.

Hebrews 9: 8: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10: Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11: But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Hebrews 10: 1: For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect...9: Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.

This whole book uses physical, earthly things to teach spiritual, heavenly things:

- God is Spirit—John 4:24: God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
- The law is spiritual—Romans 7: 14: For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
- The book is discerned spiritually—it is not discerned naturally—the book is spiritually discerned—1 Corinthians 2:14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Earthly promises made to natural men in this book is to picture spiritual promises made to God's spiritual people. Miss this and miss salvation by grace; miss this and miss salvation by Christ alone through faith in Christ alone.

Proposition: In Leviticus 1, we will take the first two verses, and see, by way of a picture, that sinners can only come to God in God's prescribed Way—and that one way is through faith in Christ the Way.

I. FIRST, GOD INITIATES COMMUNICATION HOW HE WILL AND TO WHOM HE WILL.

God is First to Call

God will receive all the glory for teaching and calling his people. We are sinners with no desire to come to God. Therefore, it is God who must first initiate the work of grace toward us—**Leviticus 1: 1: God called...**

In eternity, it was God who first called Christ his Son and his people in his Son. In time, it is God who first calls his people.

Romans 9:11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)...16: So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

We are born dead in sins so we are not the first to seek God.

Romans 3:11: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

If we learn this about ourselves then we will rejoice to know the truth:

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

God Communicates Only Through a Mediator

Also, we see here that God only communicates through a Mediator—**Leviticus 1: 1: God called unto Moses....** he told Moses to **Leviticus 1: 2: speak unto the children.** Moses stands here as a type of Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5: For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

God is holy and a Spirit. We are sinners and human flesh. The only way God will communicate to a sinner, or accept a sinner, is through Christ the Mediator, who is both holy God and sinless Man in one person.

Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we **must be saved.**

God Speaks From Heaven to his Church

Also, notice the particular place where God spoke through the Mediator—**Leviticus 1: 1: out of the tabernacle of the congregation.**

The tabernacle pictures two things: One, it pictures God's heavenly abode—the holiest of holies—from where Christ our Mediator, Mercy Seat and High Priest speaks.

Hebrews 8: 1: Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2: A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man....9: 24 For Christ is not

entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Two, it pictures Christ's church, the congregation which Christ assembles, and each of his people in particular.

Ephesians 2: 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We have seen in Ephesians 4, how Christ speaks from heaven—from the sanctuary, the holiest of holies above—through his gospel—into his body, the tabernacle of the congregation, into the heart of his child.

- So it is in the picture in Leviticus, God spoke to Moses who spoke to the people, as they congregated at the tabernacle of the congregation.

This past weekend you heard God's faithful preachers declare that the most important aspect of our lives is to congregate together in the public worship of Christ. This is where God will speak to his people through Christ through the declaration of his word. That is the picture we have in our text. God promised to meet with the children of Israel from the mercy seat in the tabernacle of the congregation. So it is in this gospel age. God speaks through Christ our Propitiation from the holiest of holies in heaven to his church into the hearts of his people.

God Speaks to His Elect

Also, note, God only communicated to the children of Israel—**Leviticus 1: 1: And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2: Speak unto the children of Israel,...**

At this time there were millions of people outside of and surrounding the children of Israel. But God did not command the Mediator to speak to the people outside of Israel. God commanded the Mediator to speak only to the children of Israel.

The children of Israel are a picture of God's elect scattered all over the world. God's elect are God's spiritual Israel. Scriptures are crystal clear on that fact.

Roman 9: 6: Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8: That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

The natural children of Israel—the natural sons of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—are not all the true spiritual Israel of God simply because they are natural sons—but it is the elect who God counts as his true Israel.

“In Isaac shall thy seed be called” means in Christ shall thy children be called.” That was the promise God the Father made to Abraham and to Christ his Son.

Galatians 3: 7: Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham....9: So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham...29: And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The children of the promise are the elect called out from both Jew and Gentile races. The elect are called out from every nation, tribe, tongue and people on earth. That is why God said to Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” (Gal 3: 8; Gen 12: 3)

Brethren, we must not imagine God will do some future special thing for the political, natural Israel simply because they are the natural sons of Abraham. To do so, is the same as saying God’s salvation is based on blood [natural ancestry], or on the will of man or on the will of the flesh. But scripture says clearly that those born of God are born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (Jn 1: 13)

What about the promises God made to the natural sons of Abraham? Every good promise God promised to the natural seed were earthly promises which God fulfilled. So was every evil promise God promised and fulfilled

Joshua 23: 14: And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. 15: Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. 16: When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

God gave the natural sons of Abraham all good things he promised to show us a picture that God fulfills all spiritual promises to the true spiritual Israel who believe on Christ. Also, because of Israel rejected Christ our Savior, Christ said “your house is left to you desolate”. God destroyed them from off their land just as God promised to show us that those who seek to come to God some way other than Christ shall be destroyed in God’s wrath. So all God’s elect in Israel were scattered to the four-winds amongst the Gentiles in 70 AD. When all God’s elect—no matter their ancestry—are called out from among the Gentile nations then shall all God’s true, spiritual, Israel be saved. That is declaring salvation by grace, not by blood or by works; that is giving God the glory rather than showing a respect unto man based on race.

So get the point. God has not sent Christ our Mediator to call out all men and women on the face of this earth. He is sent to call out his true lost sheep, his true spiritual Israel, the elect of God. When God gives grace to receive this, it will humble his elect child. That is the purpose.

The unregenerate man puffs up and cries not fair. Is it fair that every guilty man on death row is there? They each received a fair trial from a just judge and were sentenced fairly. So were we before God the just Judge. But if God is pleased to deliver some and God does so in a way that upholds God’s justice—God carries out the death penalty, crucifying his own Son in their place then gives each one spiritual life by the Spirit of his Son—what is unjust about that? Justice and truth have met in harmony. So cannot God do with his own what he will? Sure he can. (Rom 9: 20-21) We must first be brought to see we are sinners with no rights and that God is God with every right to do with us as he pleases. Only then will our heart be broken and contrite to receive the truth of God.

So we see God speaks first, God speaks how he will and to whom he will—through Christ the Mediator, to his people.

II. SECONDLY, GOD PRESCRIBES THE WAY IN WHICH GOD WILL BE APPROACHED BY A SINNER.—Leviticus 1: 2:… say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.

All God's Elect are Sinners in Need of a Sacrifice

First, notice, this applies to all of God's elect alike—**Leviticus 1: 2: If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD…**

The reason all God's people must come to God with an offering is because God is holy and we are all sinners, no exceptions.

Romans 3:23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

All God's Elect Must Come to God through Faith in Christ

Then note, God declares where the offering must come from—**Leviticus 1: 2: If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.** Several important points are taught here.

First, it declares, we, as sinners, can only have our sins forgiven by God through the shedding of blood. That blood is Christ's own blood. These animals best showed Christ's blood and the remission of our sins by his blood. The New Testament—the everlasting covenant—is God's will for his people, it is the Testator's will for his elect children of promise. Christ is the Mediator of that New Testament from God to his people. What is required for a child to receive the inheritance through the will and testament of his father? The Testator must die.

Hebrews 9: 15: And for this cause [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16: For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17: For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18: Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood. 19: For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20: Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21: Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23: *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26: For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27: And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So first, these offerings were taken from animals because they show the truth that sinners can only come to God who have been purged of our sins by the blood of Christ.

Secondly, these animals best pictured Christ. The ox or bullock pictured Christ in his strength and ability to labor--“I’ve laid help on one that his Mighty”, God said. (Ps 89: 19) The sheep pictured Christ for his harmlessness, innocence, and patience--“He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (Is 53: 7) The goat pictured Christ when “he made him, who knew no sin, to be made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor 5: 21) One animal, not even one sacrifice, could picture the glory of Christ. It took several animals, and several sacrifices to bring out various aspects of Christ and his glory on the cross.

Thirdly, these animals were to be taken from among the flock to picture that Christ was made like unto his brethren and chosen from among us.

Hebrews 2: 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Psalm 89:19:...**I have exalted one chosen out of the people.**

Fourthly, the offering must be of their own herds because the people were most attached to those animals and most dependent upon them for life. The offering was to be dear to their hearts so that it was a real sacrifice to them. It was to be an animal which they needed and depended upon for life so that it was a real sacrifice to them.

This was one of the great offenses of those Christ cast out who were selling animals at the synagogue. They took away the heart aspect, and the sacrificial aspect, of the offering, making it just a cold ceremony for the people.

To those given a new heart, Christ is dear to our hearts; Christ is needed and depended upon for life by us. We see Christ laying down his life as a true sacrifice for us. What we, by our sins, have done to Christ is the sorrow of true repentance!

Jeremiah 6:26: O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation:...

This is what God does in conversion when he makes us behold Christ who shed his blood to purge our sins:

Amos 8:10: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; [all your charade of false religion] and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, [repentance in the inward parts] and baldness upon every head; [God’s takes away that so-called wisdom in our head which we once trusted in] and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. [God puts a true mourning in our hearts over our sin in light of Christ]

Zechariah 12:10...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

We see an example at Pentecost:

Acts 2:37: Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

God continues to work repentance in believers by showing us our sin in light of Christ. We saw an example in the Corinthian church:

2 Corinthians 7:10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Cain and Abel—Cane came without blood; Abel came in the blood of a lamb that was dear to his heart and depended upon for life. That is why God had no respect to Cain's offering but received Abel.

What have seen here? God initiates communication how, where and to whom he will. God first speaks to man, God only speaks through the Mediator, God speaks from and into the tabernacle of the congregation, and God speaks only to his elect, the children of Israel, not to all sinners.

Secondly, God prescribes the way in which God will be approached by the sinner. We, as sinners, can only have our sins forgiven by God through the shedding of Christ's own blood. It is only through faith in the blood of Christ that sinners may approach unto God.

All of this is to humble us: to teach us to come down off our high horse and bow to holy and sovereign God who does as he will. Sinners can only come to God on God's terms in God's way, not on our terms, not in our way. In the ceremony, God's terms and God's way were the best emblems of Christ; in Christ, God's terms and God's way is simply the best.

Submit to God, repent from your way, believe on Christ, trusting his blood to be remission of your sins, confess him publicly and God will receive you. May God make it so for you today!

Amen.