

B90 2

Radiation and God's Presence

[Leviticus 16:1-5](#)

INTRO:

This week we spent a lot of time in *Leviticus* in our reading for the Bible in 90 days. **Have you ever read *Leviticus***? There's a lot of **repetition** and **blood** in there. **What did you think about all that?**

Dr. John Walton imagines we may have thought something like, **"This is in my Bible and I know it is supposed to be important, I just don't know how it is important to me?"** He also says, **"In the end the Law is part of God's revelation of himself."**

ME:

I get weary and distracted when I read *Leviticus*. But I know it has an important role to play in the **context** of the revelation of God. It is a bit like when you are reading a novel and you breeze through the narrative until you hit a section that doesn't quite seem to fit. But you keep reading and as you continue it *flows* into that narrative and even unlocks and reveals a foundational part of the story.

When you are reading *Leviticus*, or *Revelation* for that matter, or any part of Scripture, look for and use context clues to see how it all fits together.

YOU:

Do parts of the Bible leave you scratching your head too? Let's be sure to give God the time needed for us to get it and understand him as he really is.

As we prepare to read Leviticus . . . let's pray together...

GOD:

Leviticus 16:1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died. 2 The LORD said to Moses:

Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary inside the curtain before the mercy seat that is upon the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. 3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and shall have the linen undergarments next to his body, fasten the linen sash, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy vestments. He shall bathe his body in water, and then put them on. 5 He shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

WE:

Because there is this mention of the death of the two sons of Aaron, this means that chronologically this law of the Day of Atonement was not given until towards the end of the stay at Sinai. They say that is why this is not found in *Exodus*. The reason for this law was to protect the priests in their ministry. It seems that Nadab and Abihu had entered the Most Holy Place. This *privilege* and *duty* was now limited to the high priest who:

“entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance” (Heb 9:7).

Christ, as the book of Hebrews highlights, has entered heaven itself once for all with his own blood, **“having obtained eternal redemption”** (Heb 9:12).

We see that Leviticus is about **Holiness**. Dr. Walton shared Wednesday night that God’s holiness is not one of his *attributes* or *characteristics*.

God’s holiness is the result of all of Gods attributes and adjectives.

His holiness separates him from us. Our holiness is when we are godlike and this will distinguish us from those around us. It is when we imitate God.

We are holy when we are acting godlike. Which is not to say when we are playing God, but living transformed lives by his grace.

In his recent book, Daniel Rice shares the story of Pastor Matt Chandler who came home one night and found his son in the living room playing a game on his Xbox, instead of cleaning his room. After asking his son to clean his room Chandler said:

After a pause he went to clean his room and start on his other main household chore—vacuuming the house. As I left to start unloading the dishwasher, I heard him turn on the vacuum—for about forty-five seconds. Reid found me and happily reported, "I'm done."

I said, "**You vacuumed the whole house?**"

"**Uh-huh.**"

"**Son, Superman could not vacuum this whole house in forty-five seconds.**"

"**I did, Dad.**"

So I did what a loving father would do. I grabbed his hand and said, "**Let's just walk around and see.**" We walked around the house, and over in this corner, we found an entire bag of Goldfish crackers that looked like someone had intentionally dumped them on the floor and danced on them.

I said, "**Reid, did you vacuum this?**"

"**I didn't see it.**"

"Okay, but it's on the floor. You're supposed to vacuum the floor. I don't know how you missed this."

We vacuumed. We walked around and I showed him other obvious things he failed to see. It reminded me of the line in the Gospel of John when Jesus says, **"We will make our house with you"** because that is what the Holy Spirit does for us. He takes us around the house of our heart and says, **"Hey, look at these crushed up Goldfish. It's going to be awesome for them to be gone. Bugs are going to get in here, and bad stuff is going to happen. There's going to be a smell in here. Let's get this cleaned up. I'm going to help you get that cleaned up. He wants to clean up places that we didn't even know were dirty."**

The Law is part of God's revelation of himself. As we remembered last week God took the initiative in the **covenant** to restore his **presence** to humanity. In Exodus God's **presence** was experienced in the fire and cloud that led them through the wilderness.

Do you have a Babel problem? The video for the B90 program said that the Babel problem is a distorted idea about God that is solved by God **revealing** what he is really like.

Many of us have a distorted ideas about God. *That's why we are reading the Bible!* So we can get an accurate picture of who God is from God himself.

In our passage, the “**Most Holy Place**” behind the curtain is often called the “**Holy of Holies**.” It was the inner shrine where the ark of the covenant was kept. The golden lid of the sacred chest, the “**atonement cover**,” is also called the “**mercy seat**.” This is better be understood as “**the atonement place**” than the “**mercy seat**.” In the symbolism of the tabernacle, this inner shrine was the **dwelling** place of God; and the place above the ark was the place where he would meet with humans. But the holiness of God was so awesome that for people to approach him carelessly and without an atoning sacrifice could be deadly—as it was for Nadab and Abihu. Today God cannot be approached by sinful people unless they come through Christ’s atoning blood (John 14:6).

Some think that the garments mentioned here in Leviticus 16:4 are simple and undecorated as a symbol of **humiliation**. Similar to the humiliation of Christ. The emphasis in this verse is on their special sacredness more than anything else. It would seem that they were the priestly garments used only for this special occasion.

*The high priest would **never** enter the Most Holy Place without these garments.*

It is all about cleanses and uncleanness. It is like **Radiation and God’s presence**. Dr. Walton encouraged us to think of this cleanness as how we think about **radiation**.

If we knew we were going to come into contact with radiation, we would be sure to take all the right precautions.

The right clothing, the right covering, we'd be all taped up because we know that this is dangerous stuff.

We want to make sure that we do it right!

If we do it wrong, bad things can happen.

It is like in 1987, when The New York Times reported on a radioactive contamination accident in Brazil that caused four deaths and left 112,000 people with radioactive contamination. Several houses had to be destroyed and it was labeled as "**one of the world's worst radiological incidents.**"

It all began when a private radiotherapy institute moved to a new site and accidentally left behind a container of radioactive material inside an obsolete unit used for cancer treatments. Two men illegally entered the partially demolished building and disassembled the unit. The container with radioactive material was thought to have scrap value so they wheeled it home. There one of the thieves poked a small hole in the container's thick window "**allowing him to see a deep blue light coming from the tiny opening he had created.**"

The thieves sold the container to the owner of a local scrapyard. He "**noticed the blue glow from the punctured capsule. Thinking the capsule's contents were valuable or even supernatural, he immediately**

brought it into his house. Over the next three days, he invited friends and family to view the strange glowing substance."

As several other workers took the machine apart ... inside, they found the shiny bluish dust which, they later told doctors, glowed in the dark. Attracted by the pretty powder, several people handled it, examined it, and even rubbed it on their skin. Soon many people became very sick. A medical physicist used a device to confirm the presence of radioactive materials and alerted the authorities. But the damage was done.

Even though radiation is dangerous stuff there are some benefits to having it around. It's the same thing with electricity. We know it can be life threatening, so it has to be handled properly. The **benefits** of electricity make it worth while. That's how it was with God's presence. Having his presence in their midst was a great privilege and a great benefit. They knew it had to be handled properly or else there was danger.

***Fearing** God is about the relationship side and the danger side because God is Holy. The sacrifices are there to make sure God's presence was kept in its proper condition.*

The Temple was not like a church where people gather for worship. It was a place where God dwelt. The holy of holies - there was no access except the high priest once a year. There was access to the Holy of Holies, but it was tightly **controlled** access. They say the priests were like the **secret**

service as guards to God's presence not just teachers and those involved in the sacrifices.

As Christians we need to be concerned with caring for God's presence in **us** not in a **building**. Leviticus is focused on God's presence and can help us care for God's presence in our lives.

Eugene Peterson said,

*Sometimes I think that all religious sites should be posted with signs reading, "**Beware the God.**" The places and occasions that people gather to attend to God are dangerous. They're glorious places and occasions, true, but they're also dangerous. Danger signs should be conspicuously placed, as they are at nuclear power stations. Religion is the death of some people.*

Holiness is not about perfection, in that we can never reach a level where improvement is not longer needed. Holiness is about maturity and learning from our mistakes. It is becoming wholly oriented to God in response to his love.

We read more that Leviticus this week! We read Numbers which is about the rebellion of the people. It also has to do with transition from the generation that died in the wilderness to the generation that will live in the promised land. The transition from that failed generation to the generation that will set up in the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy is God's charter. The renewal of the covenant before the people enter the land through the retelling of Israel's history. The Ten Commandments tell us as much about us as they do about what God expects from us.

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

If we know we were going to come into contact with radiation or God's Presence, we will be sure to take all the right precautions.

YOU:

How will you prepare yourself to come into contact with God's presence?

A great way to start is through prayer . . .

Let's pray together now . . .