

THE PENTATEUCH III: LEVITICUS-NUMBERS

WEEK 2

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OUTLINE

TABERNACLE CULTUS

- Spatial Barrier: The Tabernacle
- Dynastic Barrier: The Priesthood
- Ritual Barrier: The Sacrifices
- Summary and Application

BRONZE SNAKE

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OLD TESTAMENT “COSMOLOGY”

Within the Old Testament, certain imagery is repeated and forms a kind of “cosmology,” or conceptual framework for understanding the world:

1. *Chaos, Disorder*-This is often represented by Water and/or Wilderness.
 - ▶ Cf. Gen 1:2-The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.
 - ▶ Satan (Lord of chaos) is frequently represented in the Old Testament as a reptilian sea monster.
2. *Creation*-God’s work to overcome chaos so he may dwell
3. *Dwelling place*-Place where God communes with His people
4. *Intercessor(s)*-Mediator between God and Man

OLD TESTAMENT “COSMOLOGY”

Cosmology	<i>Origins</i>	<i>Deluge</i>	<i>Sinai</i>	<i>Cultus</i>
Chaos	Waters	Flood	Re(e)d Sea	Wilderness
Creation	Divide, Fill	H ₂ O Retreat	God's Descent	Built Tab.
Dwelling	Eden	Ararat	Sinai	Holy Place
Intercessor	n/a	Noah	Moses	Aaron

The Bible seems to exhibit different grades of dwelling and presence. These “motifs” don’t distinguish them.

1. Highest- Throne Room of God (apotheosis)
2. Medium- Tabernacle, Eden
3. Weakest- Ararat, Theophanies (Burning Bush, Abrahamic Theophanies)

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TABERNACLE AND GOD'S DWELLING

There is a structural similarity to what we see God requiring on the mountain and in the tabernacle:

	Tabernacle	Sinai	Eden
Center	Most Holy Place Only Aaron	Mountain Top Only Moses	Tree of Life (Adam)
Inner Ring	Holy Place Only Priests	Partially Ascent Only Elders	Garden (Adam)
Outer Ring	Courtyard Israelites	Around Mountain Israelites	East of Gate Seth/Abel
Beyond	Sheol Gentiles	Sheol Gentiles	East of Eden Cain

(Pre-Fall)

TABERNACLE ARTICLES

What should we learn from all these ritual objects in and around the tabernacle?

- ▶ *Lamp & Bread*—There are twelve loaves and the priest-tended Lamp shines on them \implies God's on-going favor towards Israel, mediated by priests (Numbers 6:23-27)
- ▶ *Incense Stand*—
 - ▶ In Holy Place, priests burn incense regularly as an offering to God \implies total consecration
 - ▶ On Day of Atonement, priests use the incense to hide themselves \implies Veil has opened but the priests are “unseen” (Lev 16:13)
- ▶ *Altar*—In Courtyard, all sacrifices occur here (except those of the Day of Atonement) \implies Contact with God only occurs by those people and in those place ordained by God (Cf. “high places” in time of the Kings).

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AARON, THE LEVITE

Just like the tabernacle, there are grades of holiness among the people:

1. High Priests-Only person who may enter the holiest of holies, only once per year. (Aaron and his singular successors; cf. Nadab, Abihu)
2. Priests-Only Sons of Aaron, perform the various duties around the tabernacle while functioning. Levites may assist in various duties (Numbers 3:6; II Chronicles 29:34)
3. Levites- Various responsibilities are given to the wider tribe of Levi (disassembling, carrying tabernacle materials)
4. Israelites- Priests to the nations; participate in in Ritual activity but do not perform the rites. (Exodus 19:6)

ETERNAL PRIEST

What are differences between Christ and Aaron?

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What are differences between Christ and Aaron?

1. Frequency: Aaron sacrificed both daily and annually. Jesus sacrificed once for all.
2. Holiness: Aaron had to elaborately cleanse himself to serve. Jesus was already clean.
3. Sacrificial Efficacy: Aaron's sacrifices did not succeed in atoning for sin (except symbolically). Jesus sacrificed himself (Cf. Psalm 49:7-9).
4. Location: Aaron served in a tent and his sons in a "house of cedar." Jesus entered God's presence directly, not a copy.

Aaron is still a *type* of Christ, but Christ is not an Aaronic priest.
(Cf. Psalm 110)

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DIFFERENT GRADES OF SACRIFICE

The Day of Atonement (one with which we might be most familiar) is only one of a vast litany of sacrificial rituals. They tend to go in a certain order:

1. Purification-Sin or guilt offerings, required blood (Cf. Justification)
2. Ascension-Burnt Offerings, exhibit total consecration (Cf. Sanctification)
3. Peace- Fellowship, grain offerings—involves eating a portion, signifying friendship, union (Cf. Glorification)

DAY OF ATONEMENT

Read Leviticus 16 together.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

The English Standard Version reads:

Lev 16:80- And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel.

What is Azazel?

- ▶ This word a *hapax legomenon*, which means we have no other clues as to what it means outside of this passage.
- ▶ Some traditional Jewish groups understand this to be Satan or even some special demon. (Cf. Hengstenberg's discussion of the Egyptian Set, the desert chaos god of Egypt)
- ▶ LXX and other Jewish traditions translate it as scapegoat. This is carried into the KJV and other early Reformed Bible translations.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

Either way, the second goat symbolizes exile/sheol. Both goats are clearly represented on the cross:

SIN Christ died a physical death, corresponding to the shed blood of the goat. (For the Lord)

SCAPEGOAT Christ is forsaken of God (Mark 15:34) and sent, still alive, into spiritual exile (For Azazel)

Can you think of any reasons pro or con for the Azazel-as-Satan theory?

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SOME LESSONS

In your own words, what is being communicated here?

Psalm 5:4-6—For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. 5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. 6 You destroy those who speak falsehood;

SOME LESSONS

In summary, there are numerous barriers erected between us and God due to our sin. (In this system, Gentiles are not even welcome in the courtyard.)

- ▶ Spatial Barriers
- ▶ Dynastic Barriers
- ▶ Ritual Barriers

The whole system is screaming, “I am holy, you are not! Stay back!”

DIVINE PROVISION FOR MEETING

But! God still provides a measured form of presence with Israel.

What is the difference between God's unapproachability in Exodus 40 and his being approached in Leviticus 9? The answer is, fundamentally, that the problem of divine Presence amidst a sinful people required divinely revealed cultic legislation—in short, God is approached through sacrifice and an ordained priesthood to offer them. (Morales, 121)

This divine revelation/initiation with us is particularly striking when compared with the Judgment of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10): our initiation with God (if there is such a thing!) attempts to step into his presence on our terms, not His.

FORESHADOWING

Read Revelation 21:1-4

Cosmology	<i>Cultus</i>	<i>Heaven</i>	<i>Summation</i>
Chaos	Wilderness	N/A	Sea (Fire?)
Creation	Built Tab.	N/A	New Heavens, Earth
Dwelling	Holy Place	Throne Room	New Jerusalem
Intercessor	Aaron	Jesus	Jesus (Completed)

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CHRIST AND THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS

In John 3, Jesus says:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

He doesn't explain it, he doesn't elaborate. This is all he says.

Turn to Numbers 21:6-9. What similarities are there between Christ and the Snake?

CHRIST AND THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS

What similarities are there between Christ and the Snake?

1. Because of unbelief, the people are doomed to death.
2. God provides a special means to survive this death.
3. This special means requires very little of the recipient of the gift (cf. the tabernacle cultus).
4. The people are only forgiven if they appropriate this gift themselves (by looking).
5. Both are “lifted up” on a pole. (This would ordinarily be totally uninteresting but this also serves as a prediction of the cross.)

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3. Morales, L. Michael. *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the book of Leviticus*. IVP, 2015.