

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 14

MEMORIZE

- For those with 1st-5th graders at Brook Hills, focus on the verses that they are memorizing in Children’s Ministry for this unit, from now through the end of April.
 - 1st Grade – John 10:11, 27-29
 - 2nd Grade – Romans 10:9-11
 - 3rd Grade – Revelation 21:3-5
 - 4th Grade – Colossians 1:13-14
 - 5th Grade – Philippians 2:4-8

READ

As our church reads through the Bible for the next two years, each day will include a chapter from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As a family, decide if you want to read one or both of these passages. The Faith Family Worship Guide will look ahead to the readings for the upcoming week.

Read: Leviticus 16:6-10, 20-22, 32-34

Questions:

- What is “atonement”?
- Why was the Day of Atonement so important for Israel? What was the significance of this day?
- How does this day point to Christ?

Bottom Line: People can only access God by the blood of a perfect sacrifice and by the removal of sins.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children throughout the week (at the dinner table, in the car, during a family worship time, etc.).

Preschool

- Read Leviticus 16:32-34.
- Who is all-powerful?
- Why did God send His son, Jesus, to earth?
- Discuss what happened to Jesus on the cross.
- Who really deserves the punishment or death? Jesus?
- What did Jesus do for us?

Children

- Read Leviticus 16:6-10 and ask your children what these verses say about sacrificing animals. What was the purpose of the animal sacrifices? Emphasize that these were sacrifices to the Lord and provided a way for the Israelites to be holy before God.
- Have one of your children read Leviticus 16:20-22. Ask them to explain what Aaron is doing in this passage. Re-read the verses if necessary.
- Read Leviticus 16:32-34. Ask your children if they understand the meaning of and purpose of atonement. Why did the Israelites have to continue making these sacrifices every year?
- Ask why we no longer have to go to the priest or sacrifice animals to pay for our sin. Can they explain why Jesus had to die only one time to pay for our sins?
- Spend some time praying with your children thanking God for His perfect life, His death, His resurrection and the gracious gift of salvation he offers.

Students

- As we have been reading through the Bible, we have seen gospel threads throughout. In this discussion of atonement, make sure to highlight the first two threads of the gospel (1. Holiness of God 2. Sinfulness of Man) that require the need

for the atonement.

- What are the purposes of the two goats? What do they represent?
- How often does the Day of Atonement take place?
- Every year, the Israelites took part in this ritual in order for God to forgive their sins. Today, we receive forgiveness of our sins differently because of the work of Christ.
 - How did Jesus atone for our sin?
 - Imagine that a mother was home with her two small children. A fire started in the home and they were trapped inside. The mom saw her children suffering, unable to breathe, and burns imminent. So she gathered her two children and lay down on top of them to protect them. She gave her life so that they might live.
 - Jesus died so that we could live.
 - Read 1 Peter 3:18.
- We can see the beauty of Christ's atoning work as we study the forgiveness that God gives to the people in Leviticus.

SING

This week our Family Worship Song is the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy". Let us ponder in our hearts the weight of God's holiness as we see it displayed in the scriptures this week. God is so pure, altogether holy and set apart. He is worthy of our worship and praise. Furthermore, it is in the light of His holiness that we can see the dark contrast of our sin. As the hymn writes, "Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee, though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see." But praise be to God that we stand before God redeemed and cleansed, white as snow, through God's only, beloved Son, Jesus our Savior. Let's exalt His name together.

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for April 7-13

Leviticus 10-17 and Psalm 11-21

Where We Are In The Story (Old Testament)

Background of Leviticus: Everything in Leviticus points to the holiness of God. His perfection and man's sinfulness stands as the reason for all of the sacrifices, laws, and regulations included in this book, for Leviticus explains how a covenant between a righteous God and a sinful people practically plays out in everyday life in the era before Christ's resurrection. Written by Moses as Israel wandered in the wilderness, it contains divine speeches that Moses delivered to the people of Israel about how to worship God and how they should live. Modern readers of Leviticus may tire of reading the many laws and regulations, but for Israelites in the Old Testament era, Leviticus provided relevant information for how they were to go about their day-to-day lives.

Structure of Leviticus:

- Leviticus 1-7 explain the rituals of the different sacrifices.
- Leviticus 8-10 give instructions for the priests of Israel.
- Leviticus 11-15 instruct the people on cleansing and purification.
- Leviticus 16 details the sacrifice and instructions for the Day of Atonement.
- Leviticus 17-27 provide directions regarding the festivals, the holy days, and how the people should live.

This Week in Leviticus: Leviticus 10 tells how Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons who were also priests, received the death penalty from God for bringing "unauthorized fire" into the sanctuary. While we do not know what was wrong about the fire, the point is that these two priests disobeyed God's instruction and faced His judgment. As a result of this incident, the priests were especially cautious, which is why they did not eat the sacrifice portion. Since priests had engaged in sin, they did not think it would please God for them to partake of the sacrificial meat.

Leviticus 11-15 contain laws that distinguished between what is clean and unclean and that provided instruction on how to respond when defiled or made unclean. These chapters of Leviticus encompass food (Lev. 11), childbirth (Lev. 12), skin diseases (Lev. 13-14), and bodily discharges (Lev. 15). If something was unclean, it did not mean that it was necessarily bad or sinful; for example, a woman was considered unclean after she gave birth, but childbearing occurs by God's design and is part of the creation mandate in Genesis 1. Uncleanness was not a permanent state, for Leviticus explains the

process by which the unclean individual can be made clean. This process involved either a prescribed time to pass (7 days, 66 days, etc.) and/or a ritual to be performed. However, anyone who was impure for whatever reason could not worship in the sanctuary, for impurity bars a person from entering God's presence. Also, just because something was clean did not make it holy (set apart), so for something to become holy where it could be used in the service of the Lord, it had to be dedicated to the Lord with a blood sacrifice.

In Leviticus 11:44, God instructs the people to "be holy, for I am holy." Because He is holiness or set apart from all others, God requires that His people reflect His holiness in the way that they live. While Christ-followers today do not have to observe all of the instructions in Leviticus 11-15, 1 Peter 1:16 reiterates God's command from Leviticus 11:44-46 in charging Christ-followers to be holy as God is holy. We are to live distinct from the world, for God desires that His people imitate and reflect Him.

Leviticus 11 provides the basis for Jewish dietary laws, and it establishes that God's people should honor Him even in the way that they eat (see how this theme continues in 1 Cor. 10:31). However, this chapter does not prescribe kosher laws, which stipulate that dairy and meat products cannot be eaten together. Kosher laws come from rabbinic interpretation of Exodus 23:19 and Deuteronomy 14:21; however, the rabbinic interpretation of these verses is probably incorrect since the practice of boiling a kid in its mother's milk was a Canaanite practice. Therefore, God's instruction served as a distinctive between His people and the practices of the surrounding people. Leviticus 11 taught the people to distinguish between clean and unclean foods, and because of their distinct diet, it prevented the Israelites from establishing close relationships with the neighboring nations since an inability to eat with another inhibits fellowship with that person. The organization of the animals in Leviticus 11 corresponds with the three groups of animals in Genesis 1 – those who fly in the sky, those who swim in the water, and those who walk on the land, and this structure in Leviticus 11 reflects God's design in creation and what was incompatible with the order of creation.

In Mark 7:14-22, Jesus nullified the Jewish dietary laws, and He emphasized that a person's uncleanness stems from his heart rather than what he or she ingests. As the gospel spread to the Gentiles after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God gave Peter a vision in which He clearly declared all foods to be clean (Acts 10:9-48). Even with this vision, the issue of food laws remained unsettled in the early church, which prompted the Jerusalem Council to advise the Gentile believers to abstain from food that had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from that which had been strangled in order not to offend the Jewish believers (Acts 15:1-34). Whereas the dietary laws were meant to separate the Israelites from the nations under the old covenant, the dietary laws were abolished under the new covenant in order to encourage the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and to unite the Jews and the Gentiles, for according to Ephesians 2:11-22, under the new covenant Christ made one new person (the body of Christ) out of two (the Jews and the Gentiles).

Celebrated once a year, the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur* in Hebrew) served as the holiest day of the Jewish calendar (Lev. 16), because on this day, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and made atonement for himself and for the sins of the people of Israel. To prepare for this day, the people bathed, fasted, and prayed in order to spiritually prepare and to become clean before the Lord. After the high priest bathed and offered a sin offering for himself, this ceremony involved the high priest burning incense on the Altar of Incense in front of the veil to the Holy of Holies. By sprinkling the blood of his sin offering and of the sin offering for the people on and in front of the mercy seat, the high priest made atonement for the holy of holies because of the people's uncleanness (Lev. 16:16). The sin of the people polluted the sanctuary, requiring that the sanctuary be purified by blood. By cleansing the sanctuary, God enabled the people to continue to come into His presence.

Two goats were selected on this day – one that was sacrificed and one that was sent away into the wilderness (a.k.a. the scapegoat). By laying hands on the goat's head and confessing the wickedness of the nation, the high priest symbolically transferred the sins of the people onto the animal. When Isaiah prophesies about the Suffering Servant, he points back to this image in his description of how "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). The scapegoat pointed to Christ in its picture of a substitute who takes on the sin of the people. By sending this goat away to the wilderness, God represented how the guilt and condemnation of the people was totally removed from them. After this ceremony, burnt offerings were made for the high priest and for the people, and the remains of the bull and the goat that were offered were taken outside the camp and burned in order to signify the complete removal of defilement and sin.

The Day of Atonement provided a picture of what Christ would accomplish through His death and resurrection, for His sacrifice satisfies the wrath of God against sinners and makes amends and reparations for our sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24). Year after year, the people celebrated the Day of Atonement, yet the fact that this sacrifice had to be repeated pointed to its insufficiency. Furthermore, the presence of God could *only* be accessed through the blood of

the sacrifice being sprinkled on the mercy seat. Yet, Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:11-10:18 explains how Christ offered Himself, took our sins, and by His blood made it possible for us to enter God's presence. This was represented by the tearing of the veil in the Temple when Jesus died on the cross, and because of His sacrifice, we have unrestricted access to God.

Background & Structure of Psalms: God used many different writers to write Psalms: David, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, etc. The book is arranged in five parts, and this arrangement occurred after the people of Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian exile. A doxology concludes each book or arrangement of psalms (Psalm 41:13 for Book 1, Psalm 72:18-19 for Book 2, Psalm 89:52 for Book 3, Psalm 106:48 for Book 4, and Psalm 150:6 for Book 5), and the entire book of Psalms climactically ends with a grand doxology of several psalms (Ps. 146-150).

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

This Week in Psalms:

- Psalm 11 describes how the righteous stand firm despite attacks from the wicked because they trust in God's sovereignty and righteousness. While He allows evil to exist, He will ultimately destroy all wickedness and all evildoers.
- Psalm 12 depicts the psalmist crying out to God because of the plight of the poor and needy (v. 5) yet expressing confidence in God's deliverance and faithfulness to His promises. His words alone are true and pure in a world of deception and oppression.
- As a lament psalm, Psalm 13 begins with an introductory cry to God (vv. 1-2) followed by a description of the situation (vv. 1-2), a confession of trust in God (v. 5), a petition (vv. 3-4), and a vow of praise to God, for the psalmist promises to praise the Lord when he receives the answer to his prayer. In a lament, the psalmist cries to God in a time of need such as war, persecution, or illness, and in this psalm, the lament concerns the psalmist's enemies, his sorrow, and God's apparent absence (vv. 1-4). This psalm presents an example of how believers should earnestly and confidently pray to God in times of trouble.
- Psalm 14 portrays the godlessness of the world and the folly of denying God, but despite the corruption, the righteous can have hope because the Lord will deliver His people. Romans 3:10 quotes this psalm in its assessment of humanity's utter sinfulness.
- In contrast to Psalm 14, which depicts the ungodly, Psalm 15 characterizes the righteous by listing ten attributes of a true worshipper. This psalm may have been part of the liturgy used at the gate of the sanctuary, for before worshippers could enter the grounds of the sanctuary, they were asked who could enter and commune with God. The worshipper's response to the question served as a reminder of God's standard of holiness for those who seek to commune with Him.
- Psalm 16 stands as a psalm of trust in God. The psalmist recognizes the goodness of God and praises Him for His provision, both in this life and the next.
- In Psalm 17, King David petitions God for protection as his accusers and persecutors close in on him. Because of his uprightness, David confidently appealed to God's justice, for his cause and his life were upright while those of his enemies were not. James 5:16 and Revelation 6:10 provide confirmation from the New Testament that the prayers of a righteous person are effectual, particularly prayers for vindication.
- As a royal thanksgiving psalm, Psalm 18 records King David's praise of God for rescuing him from the hand of Saul, and David also points back to God's history of supernaturally delivering the faithful. The psalmist describes why God is worthy of praise, and he expresses his gratitude and love for God. With some variation, this psalm is also recorded in 2 Samuel 22, which provides a context for the psalm.
- Psalm 19 can be divided into three parts: God's revelation of Himself in nature (vv. 1-6), the value and sufficiency of the written revelation of God (vv. 7-11), and a prayer for preservation of sin in light of God's revelation (vv. 12-14). Increased understanding of God and His Word should lead believers to greater commitment and faithfulness to Him.
- As an intercessory prayer for the king's victory in battle, Psalm 20 expresses assurance of God's saving might.
- While Psalm 20 sought God's protection of the king in battle, the king in Psalm 21 rejoices in God's deliverance and blessings. The psalmist links God's actions to His loyal love and to the trust of the righteous in the Lord (v. 7). Because of God's character, the righteous can know security, even when facing great opposition.