

FEBRUARY 20

Leviticus 9:7-10:20

Just a note before we begin today. I've made a big deal about the *Urim and the Thummim*. Today I was reading my German Luther translation, and Luther did something none of our English translations do (or the other German ones for that matter). He actually used the meaning of the words rather than simply pronouncing them. So when you read his translation, what it says is "light and truth." Now, going to the Greek translation in the Septuagint, the words are as follows. *Urim* means "bringing to light, manifesting" and *Thummim* means "Truth." These two things were sort of like dice and were used to find answers, to manifest things, bringing them to light in order to find the truth. I don't know what that does for you, but I think it's pretty cool. And once again, I'm thankful for my Lutherbibel.

Leviticus 9:7-24

V. 7 Now that Aaron and his sons are consecrated to serve, Aaron is doing the actions, actually serving as a priest. His first step is to offer sin offerings for himself and the people.

Laura brought to my attention how all of this is prefaced by words like, *as the Lord commanded*. Find those words and underline them. Unfortunately, these words are very important, as we're about to see.

Vs. 8-11 This is the *sin offering* for Aaron. Aaron was also supposed to take the blood into the Holy Place and smear it on the horns of the altar of incense (Exodus 30:10). Here, it appears that he only does this outside on the altar of burnt offering. Notice that in this case Aaron is the worshiper and his sons are acting as priests, catching the blood. Apparently it was a little more complicated when the high priest had to atone for his own sin. Jesus, our high priest, never had to do that.

It is also interesting to note that Aaron's first sacrifice in serving Israel involved a calf. There was also a calf involved in his first sin in serving Israel. Somewhat ironic.

Vs. 12-14 This is Aaron's *burnt offering*.

Vs. 15-17 This is the *sin offering that was for the people*. I suppose once you got this down, you could do it in your sleep. Or not. We'll see what happens in the next chapter.

Vs. 18-21 This was the *peace (fellowship) offering*. Aaron and his sons would have a part of this to eat in celebration before the Lord.

Vs. 22-24 Aaron blessed the people, but it wasn't until Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle and returned that God showed all of the people His glory. Whatever happened, it was visible to everyone. Unfortunately we'll see this fire again, twice, and it will have a different meaning.

I'm going to make a bridge here into the next section by just saying that what God commanded here was not as tricky and unstable as making nitroglycerine. The commands were only dangerous if you didn't take God seriously. Sometimes, at the beginning of a new movement, God judges harshly in order to emphasize His holiness and to underscore obedience. (In Acts, you have the story of Ananias & Sapphira.) Later, you see all kinds of deviations, and God doesn't judge immediately, but instead, lets sin build up until His judgment comes.

Leviticus 10

Vs. 1-7 The censers were to be filled with coal or fire from the altar. That would have been holy fire. Nadab and Abihu must have filled their censers from their own personal fires. It was March and it was probably cold in the wilderness, and one fire is as good as the next, right? This probably happened to them when they came into the entrance of the compound, passed the altar

of burnt offering and were headed toward the tabernacle. The coals were to have come from the altar. Notice that the fire came out from the tabernacle without burning anything but these guys.

V. 3 This is Moses' explanation. Poor Aaron.

Vs. 4-5 The priests couldn't touch them because they would become unclean and unable to serve. Notice that they were carried outside the camp like the bad parts of the sin offering.

Vs. 6-7 This must have been hard. They couldn't mourn or leave the compound. They had to keep serving the people.

As disciples, it is good to remember that God doesn't play favorites, and He is not some fuzzy, forgetful grey-bearded relative. He is God. I've done electrical work, and I always fear the open breaker panel, knowing that if I stick my hand in there or even get careless, it's all over. God's power and presence would be lethal to us if not for His grace. To play fast and loose with God is wrong. He's like a zillion volts and a million amps.

Nadab and Abihu ate on the mountain with God. They saw stuff few people have ever seen. They were consecrated for seven days in the tabernacle and they saw holy fire come out of the Holy Place and consume the sacrifice. Being "cool with the old boy" didn't help them. That same fire came out now to punish their sin.

God may use us for big things, and He may reveal Himself to us in ways that are breathtaking. But we need to remember, He will not be mocked, even by those He has chosen to use and bless.

Vs. 8-11 Notice who talks to whom. This hasn't happened since God told Aaron to go out to meet Moses at the beginning of Exodus.

The fact that this topic is mentioned here could suggest that Aaron's sons had been drinking. It is unlikely that they had been drinking wine if this happened in the morning. And, where would they have gotten wine? I know some people and groups will want to make rules regarding what God says about drinking. This only means that the priests couldn't drink just before, or on, duty. I like that rule for airplane pilots too.

Vs. 10-11 are very important verses that indicate the purpose of this book and the purpose of God in teaching the people. Most of what God says in Leviticus after this will focus on this purpose. Many of these laws were only for Israel and, for this said purpose, "object" lessons. The people were to have inner radar for "clean and unclean" and for "common and holy." In a way, it was like sending your class brat or your unruly child to a fine English finishing school. You don't just learn how to use a spoon; you learn the proper way a spoon should be held and the proper way a spoon should be moved to your mouth. You don't just get good; you get "proper."

I say this only to help us, as disciples, to understand what God is doing here. Israel couldn't eat pork. A priest could only marry certain women. And the list goes on - things that only applied to them as a nation. Care obviously needs to be taken in understanding and applying these rules, in a couple of areas.

First, we should be careful as to how we apply, if at all, some of these things to ourselves or others. Some of these rules are still for our time and some, like eating pork, are not. We need to know the difference. Remember, the focus is to make these people set apart for God, knowing His holiness.

Second, since we are under grace, we need to be careful about throwing out the *thought* that God even commanded these. These object lessons tell us something about Him. The people weren't strange, because they wanted to be. They were strange, because *God* wanted them to be. *He wanted* them to stand out. He has a sense of propriety and holiness. Even in our culture, where tolerance and freedom of custom and morals seem to be the rule, there might be things that, individually, are not for us. There may be something in our lives, where God makes the point

that it is not for us individually, and it doesn't matter if it's ok for everyone else and if everyone is doing it. God still desires holiness and He desires a people who have a spiritual sense about them for what is proper conduct on this dying planet. Disciples live to serve Christ in the harvest, and if God points out something that is getting in our way, we need to get rid of it, even if it's sold at Wal-Mart or Best Buy. And if we find a discipline or routine that serves to keep us on target in following Christ, we need to hold to it.

Vs. 12-20 After Aaron and his "remaining sons" finish their first act of service for the people, Moses checks on them to see that they fulfilled the rite in detail. They didn't. They were supposed to eat the sin offering. Interestingly, they didn't obey because of mourning for Nadab and Abihu, and God allowed this. I wonder, too, if there had been "one thousand percent extenuating circumstances" forbidding Nadab and Abihu from getting coals from the altar, like a flood or a tornado, if God would have allowed them to use coals from their own fires. I think so. In any case, they had "Light and Truth" as a way to find out.

Mark 4:26-5:20

Here is another lesson in Bible study and disciple-making. You have two parables and two stories. What points would you draw from each of these and pass on to those three other people who are arriving at your house for your discipleship cell meeting? Could you take them to the texts, discuss what Jesus is saying, and then conclude, "As disciples it is really important for us to understand that...."?

Mark 4:26-41

Vs. 26-29 Notice that the primary application is to the kingdom of God. The kingdom will grow in the world practically under the radar and without total understanding. There will be lots of time and patience involved in God growing His kingdom; but when it is time, the harvest (the coming of Christ) will happen quickly.

There are lots of secondary principles here that could even apply to outreach and making disciples. The principle I understand is that the real work is done by God. The farmer acts at the beginning and at the end. The disciple is faithful to work and patient in waiting.

Vs. 30-32 I guess what I'd say here is that the kingdom (and our work in it) seems very small and invisible, but is growing larger than we know. That gives a disciple hope.

Vs. 33-34 Just a tidy little summary. Again, the amount of time we spend (or don't spend) trying to understand the parables shows us why He spoke in parables. Funny, huh?

Vs. 35-41 After all of that heavy thinking, there's nothing to clear the mind and add vigor to the blood than a bracing voyage on the sea! Ahoy! O Weh!

Jesus was exhausted from teaching. His suggestion seems to be given in weariness, and they took Him *just as He was*. I guess that means He was kaput. So Jesus passes out into a deep sleep while these vintage seamen despair of life. When the text says, *that we are perishing*, in v. 38, the word translated *that* has a different function in Greek. In English you shouldn't even pronounce the *that*. It is more like a textual marker to prepare to yell the words that follow as "loudly" as possible. Do that and see if it makes a difference. These guys are crazy with fear.

After all of that teaching and all of that conflict, it was good for them to refocus on who Jesus was and what He could do. Anything good here for the disciple? Amen! And are they going to need it!

V. 41 Notice now they are filled with great fear for another reason. And there was more fear to come.

Mark 5:1-20

This story speaks for itself, and we covered this recently in Matthew. Jesus shows His disciples that He is not only the Lord of nature, but also Lord of the spiritual world.

Vs. 1-5 I always think this is funny. After what they just experienced, afraid for their lives, now afraid of Jesus (they were filled with fear realizing they were in the boat with a zillion volts and a million amps), they finally set foot on the safe, solid, secure ground. Then, they hear a cry like a wild animal and look to see a frothing-at-the-mouth, crazy guy, nakedly running in their direction. If I'm there, I'm standing *behind* Jesus.

Vs. 6-13 Notice that the demons begged Jesus not to send them out of the country. In the other Gospels, it has the idea of going to a place of punishment, the abyss. This apparently is where the angels from Genesis 6 were sent and are presently held. (Jude 1:6)

Notice too that this happened on the eastern, Gentile side of the Sea of Galilee. That's why there are swine there. Note, too, that in the story of the prodigal son, he goes to a far country where they also had swine; i.e., among the Gentiles.

Vs. 14-17 Now the people are begging Jesus to leave. People don't always want God around.

Vs. 18-20 Notice that the freed man is begging to be a disciple. He wanted to be with Jesus. One of the possible reasons Jesus sent him away is that he needed to be reunited with family after his long enslavement.

Another reason was most likely that this guy was a Gentile. The offer of the Messiah was still being made to Israel, and to have had a Gentile in the ranks would have been too much for the Jews, who were already frothing at the mouth.

But I think Jesus knew this guy was ready to give testimony. After His rejection after feeding the 5000, Jesus will tour the other side, the Gentile side, of the Sea of Galilee, where He'll feed the 4000, many of whom were Gentiles and some of whom heard the testimony of this disciple. Someday we'll get to meet him.

Notice that Jesus tells him to go and *tell them how much the Lord has done for you*. That is the simplest thing to do in giving testimony. This is probably what the Lord would like us to do, too.

Psalm 37:30-40

Vs. 30-31 Notice how the "heart bone" is connected to the mouth and foot bone. This is very true and kind of funny.

Vs. 32-33 Again, this truth is best seen in the perspective of our ultimate vindication as expressed in Romans 8.

V. 34 I love this verse. Apparently so did Jesus. Notice again the mention of inheriting the land.

Vs. 35-38 While this is generally true on earth, when we look around in the Millennial Kingdom and in the time thereafter, the wicked will be elsewhere.

Vs. 39-40 Amen! A lot is said in this psalm and in all the Bible about the righteous. Righteousness means living in accord to a standard or measurement. In the case of these righteous, the measure is the heart of God, not the law. Righteousness isn't a comparison of person to person, but the attempt of those who love the Lord to be like Him.

Proverbs 10:6-7

Notice how parallel this is to the reading in Psalm 37. It must be the same Spirit writing this.

V. 6 This is very much like Psalm 37:30-33. Notice how Psalm 37:30 begins with *the mouth of the righteous*, but here it mentions *the mouth of the wicked* seeking violence against the righteous.

V. 7 Compare this to Psalm 37:36.

As disciples we need to remember why we have been left here. Our focus is on following the Lord in His harvest and sharing His message and making disciples, who make disciples. That's our job. God will take care of the wicked. That's His job.