

Vayikra (He Called)

Leviticus 1:1-5:26

Isaiah 43:21-44:23

Romans 8:1-13

Hebrews 10:1-14; 13:10-16

Take Possession

This week we begin the Book of Leviticus. For many people it is a book of meaningless details, but in truth it is a glimpse into the Father's Heart. In order to grasp Father's Heart we must first open our hearts to Him. Let us stop now to invite Him to reveal Himself to us through the entire book of Leviticus. May we not rush through the verses, but meditate on Father's purposes. As a royal priesthood let us ask, "Is there something more for us written between the lines?"

In Jeremiah 17:9 we read that Father knows our hearts better than we do and declares it to be a very dark place. From previous teachings, we have found this word heart to not be the organ in our chest, but rather our inward man, that part of us which makes us...well, us.

In order to cleanse this inner man an offering was brought to the Tabernacle and presented to the priest. At one level we would understand this as a substitution sacrifice pointing to the complete work of Messiah. Notice in chapter one, verse 4, that the person presenting the offering did not simply leave his sacrifice at the "drop off" door of the Tabernacle. Instead the person brought it to the door for inspection, then led it to the Altar of Sacrifice and laid his hands upon it. He was to cut the throat of the innocent animal, skin it and cut it into pieces. You may wonder what the priest's role was during that time. They were there to assist, *if* the person could not go through with the bloody procedure.

What is the message here? Why could the man not just let the priest do the work? After all, that is what they were getting "Paid" to do. It was their "Job."

In order for sins to be atoned for the man had to own up to his sin and take possession of it. He could not simply present the offering out of some duty or instruction. Rather, in the act of placing his hands on the animal, he acknowledged it was personal. On a side note, it is recorded that many men could not follow through with the task. When they came to the understanding the guiltless animal was being put to death in their place, reality set in. The priest would then have to intervene and finish the task.

In just a few short days most of us will be celebrating the Feast of Passover. Except for a few people, we do not have sheep or goats to slaughter, "**Not Sacrifice**", for our table. We will go to the store, and purchase a nicely wrapped lamb roast for our celebration. When taking the roast out of the package, maybe we will get a few drops of blood on our hands, but it can be quickly washed off without meaning. We were not there when the lamb was slaughtered by a disinterested party. In fact, we can go through our complete Seder and really not think of the price paid for our sin. Caught up in the motions, we may forget the judgment of death we had

on our lives and the sacrifice which took place to atone for it. We can just enjoy the meal as we would any other and dream of the chocolate covered matzah at the end. We can, but will we? That is an individual question.

The Torah portion goes on and speaks of various sins and offerings. Notice in chapter 5, verse 5, the person is to confess the sin he or she committed. Now I am not saying we should all drive down to the Catholic Church around the corner and sit in the little booth behind a curtain! Instead, I suggest James 5:16, "Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

As Passover approaches let us make it a point to not spend all of our time on the outward appearance of which plates and glasses we will use, but look to the "inner part" of the matter, the "Heart" of Passover. Spend some quality time asking Holy Spirit to do a leaven search of your inner man. Take pause before Passover to consider those things which need to be confessed unto Him or to another. Make amends with those you may have offended. If you are serving lamb, take a moment before your knife cuts the meat to think of the man instructed in Leviticus to take a knife, not just to the piece of roast on the plate, but to the throat of the innocent animal before him. Spend a quiet moment considering the lamb before you and the work done in our place by Messiah. Let us celebrate this season with clean hands and a pure heart! His Great Love willingly paid a high price for us!

As a last note. Rabbinic writings state a principle I would like to expound on. If a man brought an offering but did not bring his own inner man of repentance and humility, the offering meant nothing. It was as if he were not honoring the One the offerings were looking to and would harden him to the true message. We could see then that his last state would be worse than his first state for he had not drawn closer to Yah, but closer to spiritual death. Could this be the same message Saul (Paul) was speaking in 1Cor 11:23-32? You read it and be the judge. Judge of your own life that is!