

INTRO:

Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. **(Proverbs 30:5)** [Prov. 30:5 (KJV says “pure”)]

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

Is that true for all of Scripture? Is there any part that is not pure? Is there any part that is not profitable?

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. **(1 Corinthians 10:11)**

At the time it was written, what did that point to? What portion of Scripture?

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **(James 1:5)**

All of Scripture is grace. It is a progressive unfolding of the revelation of God’s grace to His people. I want to look at two points of grace displayed in this passage.

1. Grace displayed in the fact that God speaks.
2. Grace displayed in the picture of the Gospel.

GRACE DISPLAYED IN THE FACT THAT GOD SPEAKS

¹The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel,

Have you ever stopped to wonder at the sheer grace of God that He speaks to us?

[Prayer to the unknown god – 7th century BC] Begins:

May the wrath of the heart of my god be pacified!

May the god who is unknown to me be pacified!

May the goddess who is unknown to me be pacified!

May the known and unknown god be pacified!

May the known and unknown goddess be pacified!

The sin which I have committed I know not.

The misdeed, which I have committed, I know not.

Cultures surrounding Israel had visual gods – calves, birds, cats, bugs, blocks of wood with exaggerated features. Some were very ornate and beautifully constructed...but they never spoke. **They never told their worshippers what pleased them.** It was a guessing game – Molech: burn children; Ashtoreth: fertility rites; Baal: self-mutilation...but all of that was a guess.

³ Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? (Deuteronomy 4:33)

The amazing thing about God speaking is that He lets us know how to please Him. How can a man be right with God? Yahweh commands that no visual representation be made of Him. To what will you compare Him? He is not to be reduced to the position of a creature.

The act of God speaking words to His people places upon us a duty to hear Him, to study what He says, and to obey His voice. He speaks, and we must respond.

GRACE DISPLAYED IN THE PICTURE OF THE GOSPEL

The Cleanliness Code is part of an overall command of God for His people to be distinct and separate from the other nations. The Israelites were supposed to stand out among the nations as God's own special people. Distinct from the pagans around them.

³¹ "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst." (Leviticus 15:31)

By constantly calling the Israelites to ritual purity in all aspects of life, the Lord was reminding them of their need for also seeking after moral purity in all aspects of life (20:24–26).

²⁴ But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. ²⁶ You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. (Leviticus 20:24-26)

Studying these laws is important because they enable us to understand how the work of Christ saves people, since the sacrifices point to different aspects of the meaning of Christ's sacrifice of Himself.

TYPES OF OFFERINGS

For example,

Burnt Offering – underscores prayers of petition or praise, or to gain acceptance

Two types of atonement sacrifices:

Sin Offering-atonement of a committed sin; metaphor of purification [sin of nature]

Guilt Offering-atonement of a committed sin; metaphor of compensation for wrongdoing [sin of commission]

Final offering look at,

Peace Offering-fellowship with the Lord by having a communion meal

THE MECHANICS OF THE RITUAL – WHY A LAW ON CHILDBIRTH?

Nothing wrong or immoral about giving birth. The problem is the blood. The loss of blood signifies that one is incomplete and unclean. Three steps are required to move from defilement to purity:

- (1) the woman is to remain unclean for 7 or 14 days, depending on the gender of the child;

She must wait seven days (14 for girls).

Why seven days (or a multiple of 7)? [Hebrew number of perfection, from imperfect]

Then what happens, if male? Circumcised on eighth day as a sign of covenant membership and being identified with people of God...they belong to God.

- (2) she then moves into the second stage, which lasts for 33 to 66 days in which she is neither pure nor impure; and

In this second step, mother is no longer ceremonially unclean, but this period serves as an interval between cleanness and uncleanness. 33 days.

What do you get for the total number of days between steps 1 and 2? [40, or multiple]

What is the significance? [40 marks a major social transition or a complete period of endurance such as in fasting (Jesus in the wilderness) or punishment (Israel and Moses in the wilderness). Here - the significant change in the family from birth of a child.]

During this time, she is specifically barred from communal worship, which means that she cannot participate in peace offerings. This underscores that the unclean must be kept separate from the holy.

- (3) finally, she offers sacrifices in order to enter into full communion with the covenant people.

In our passage, the first is the burnt offering primarily to gain acceptance of the offeror by God, a reconciliation. Second, the sin offering is for purification, or atonement.

What does the mother gain from these sacrifices? [readmitted into religious life of Israel; restored into right relationship with God, to the community, to the sanctuary.]

Do you see what happens if she can't afford a lamb? [two doves or two pigeons; kindness of God to provide a means for access to Him from where we are]

PICTURE OF THE NATURE OF MAN AND GOD'S GRACIOUS PROVISION

What is this a picture of for us on this side of the Cross?

First, what does childbirth remind us of in our relationship to God? [Gen 3] Woman can't help the blood loss here, it is just part of her nature.

Does this not speak of the sinful nature that we all have from birth? Eph 2:3, by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. Ps. 51 – I was conceived in iniquity. God graciously provides a symbol, a picture, of our innate unclean rebellious hearts. *We forget who we are before Him. We don't get our sin and God provides a graphic representation of that corruption from birth in this ritual.*

Second, who provides the means of purification?

God diagnoses the problem of our sinful condition: **How can a sinful and unholy people dwell in the presence of a holy God?** He also graciously provides the solution. Is that not a picture of the Gospel?

GRACE DISPLAYED IN CHRIST WHO BECAME AN OUTCAST TO RESTORE OUTCASTS

You know this story, but I hope you see it a little differently after our discussion of this passage. **(Luke 8:42-48 [47-woman saw she was not hidden])**

Who touched Him? What do we know of this woman?

1. She was defiled and unclean because of the unceasing flow of blood.
2. She could never make atonement or be restored to fellowship. She was outcast because anyone who touched her would be unclean.
3. What was she doing in a crowd? Do you think that's why she was trying to sneak up on Jesus so she wouldn't be noticed?

⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

4. He calls her out and makes a very public issue out of her touching Him...why, isn't that cruel? To restore her publicly.
5. Go in peace – immediately restored to fellowship, no waiting period, get to the peace offering, the fellowship in the presence of God and with His people – for He Himself is our peace.
6. **He is not made unclean by touching the unclean. He makes the unclean clean.**

Whom did she touch?

Luke 2:22-24 records that Mary also went through this purification ritual in the infancy of Christ. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day. In God's grace, Mary offers the offering of the poor, two birds, for the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **(Galatians 4:4)**

This Lamb would also abolish *ritual* distinction for national Israel for *relational* distinction in those redeemed from every nation, tribe, people and language.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. **(Ephesians 2:14-16)**

He's the peace. He's the fellowship. He's the meal with God. We consume Him through the Word, and Spirit, and the means of grace found in the Community of His people.

CONCLUSION

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **(Romans 15:4)**

I do not pray the prayer to the unknown God because He has spoken and what He has spoken is grace. Every word of God proves true. Every word of God is pure. All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable...Because all Scripture testifies of Him.