

“Then Moses said to Aaron, “Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering to purify yourself and the people. Then present the offerings of the people to purify them, making them right with the Lord, just as he has commanded.” Leviticus 9:7 NLT

lectio // Leviticus 9:1-11

And so the system of sacrifice begins. The sacrifice process was detailed, serious and had to be carried out with flawless perfection. Of course, humans can't do perfection, but we can get close. Of course humans also struggle with obedience, but we can get close. And we struggle with repentance, admittance of guilt, but we can get close. This process, this system was expensive, it was supposed to cost. It was time consuming, it was supposed to be thorough. It was bloody and and mysterious, it was supposed to be experienced in their bodies, mind, soul and spirit. This system stayed in place for thousands of years, up until the time when the temple was destroyed. Even after Christ paid the permanent price of sacrifice, because he was sinless and his offering was perfect, the Jewish religious leaders still carried on with the ancient system. They didn't know or realize that God quit showing up long ago. At the end of this elaborate gathering, God sends fire to consume the totality of the offering on the altar. Judgement was temporarily sustained, and the people's hearts were partially forgiven. In the end people celebrated. For one, it was quite a show of power, with fire from the sky. The other, they were glad it wasn't them being consumed because of their sin! Does our simple belief in Christ's atonement mean that our sin is less offensive than the ancient Jews? Where does God's judgement go now to consume the sacrifice? How does God COMPLETELY forgive and purify us today? Do we have more sin than the Israelites did? Are we more arrogant, self focused than they were? Would people go through such a gruesome ritual today to be cleared of their wrongdoing? Do we even believe we are wrong, do wrong, and offend our creator with our pretense that we are our own gods now?

oratio

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

Leviticus gives me a dose of reality of just how arrogant I am today compared with how slow and stubborn I think the ancient Jews were then. They were not stupid. They were not uncivilized, uninformed, unscientifically minded people. They were extremely smart, inventive and productive. They weren't any more or less a sinner than I am! And yet, I know the partial eradication of the sin system did not work for long. It turned into a ritual, lost meaning and significance and then, over time, became corrupted just like us. Everything we touch eventually becomes corrupted by our sin. And yet, this fact is true. Christ's redemption is real, effective and thorough today and for all who believe. This is good news!

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root