

# Atonement

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     3 still remains. The people of Israel were still sinful. Human condition had not changed, and God's holy character had not changed either. And so the very reason that Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden in the first place still remained. And in fact, if we looked at Exodus, we would have seen the people of Israel behaving just like Adam and Eve. Not long after they'd been rescued, they started worshipping the golden calf instead of God. They started grumbling when they didn't have food, when they didn't have water. In fact, God's holiness was too much for the people to bear, such that when they were at Mount Sinai, the people could not approach the mountain where God was present. And God had said that no one could see him and still live. So the question remains, how is God going to live up to his promise in Exodus 19? What can God do to enable himself to dwell with his sinful people, to dwell with his treasured possession? And that's where this book comes in. This book, Leviticus, which I keep stumbling over, is dedicated to answering this one big question. How can a holy God dwell with a sinful people? And essentially, that's what the word atonement means. Atonement is the act of bringing sinners into a right relationship with God.

It is God reconciling himself to humans and dwelling in their midst in spite of their sinfulness, dwelling with them without obliterating them. And so it's almost like an impossible task.

It's as if God was like the sun. And it's so hot, anything that approaches the sun is melted or consumed. And that's the way with God's holiness in the face of human sin. But I want you to notice that the question is how a holy God dwells with sinners and not, as many people expect, how sinners can approach a holy God. That is, it is God's initiative. We saw in Genesis and Exodus that the promise of salvation and the rescue came first. And then only afterwards is the law and other commandments being given. Obedience was not a condition of God's election and rescue, but actually it's what God wants as a response to salvation. Further, God did not just save them only for them to require them to work out how it is that they were going to live in his holy presence.

God himself was going to provide the answer to that. And so we have in this book a series of instructions from God to his people via Moses. God keeps saying, tell the people to do this or that and do this or that. It's not the people trying to work out by trial or error how to please him.

So with that as an introduction, let's look into the book and the structure of Leviticus. Now if you turn to the next page, you'll see a structure which I believe is reflective of the structure.

[ 3 : 3 0 ]     And so we've got 27 chapters in Leviticus. And what you see is that from verses 1 to 7, there's a lot of descriptions about the sacrifices and offerings. Then in chapter 8 to 10, we have instructions of the ordination of the priests, the people that will conduct the rituals and the sacrifices.

And then from chapter 11 to 15, we have what is called the cleanliness code or the cleanliness rules, where God goes into what is clean and what is unclean and what, if it's unclean, they were to do with it.

And then we have right in the middle, chapter 16, the Day of Atonement, which Alex read for us tonight. Beyond that, we have 17 to 20, which is a further series of instructions called the holiness rules or the holiness code, where again, God goes into what is holy and what is unholy.

And then we have chapter 21 and 22, specific rules on holiness for the priests. 23 to 25 are summaries of the festivals and the special years that they were meant to observe.

And then by way of conclusion, chapter 26, the rewards and penalties for obeying or disobeying the law. And then chapter 27, an appendix on vows, vows made over and above what was required of them.

[ 4 : 57 ] But I think chapter 16 from this structure has been deliberately placed in the middle of the entire book because it serves as a bit of a linchpin or capstone upon which the rest of the book hangs together.

It neatly divides the sacrifices and offerings on the one side and then the need to maintain holy living on the other. As it were, things to do with the cleansing of wrongdoing leading up to the Day of Atonement and then beyond that, things to do to maintain right doing.

I don't want to push the structure too far, but it could even be that the structure of Leviticus is a bit like the structure of the Pentateuch, where you have the first two books being about preceding, they are entering the Holy Land, so about the promise and the rescue and then beyond that, the expectation to live holy lives.

So let's look now then at the Day of Atonement and let's see what that's all about. Well, in the first ten chapters of Leviticus, we've, as I said, had a lot of detailed instructions about what people needed to do when they realized they had sinned.

So there are instructions there about things to do, whether they had sinned intentionally or unintentionally. But what they do is that they imply a knowledge of wrongdoing. Also, it was tended more to be sacrifices to achieve individual atonement or atonement for a particular household.

[ 6 : 24 ] But what about the sins which people unknowingly did? What about corporate sin? Well, I think the Day of Atonement is meant to act as a bit of a catch-all, something done once a year to deal with all sin, whether done intentionally, unintentionally, knowingly or unknowingly.

It's a bit like if you're Chinese and, you know, you, I don't know whether Chinese keep this tradition anymore, but you're meant to spring clean your house before Chinese New Year and not on Chinese New Year itself.

And so once a year, you do that big clean to sweep out all the dirt, clear up all the mess before the start of the New Year. And so I think there's a bit of that sort of thing going on with the Day of Atonement.

There's once a year a big spring clean, a big cleansing for the people of Israel. But I think there's also another problem, and we see that when we look in chapter 16 and verse 1.

It says, The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron when they drew near before the Lord and died. Now that's a clear reference back to chapter 10 when two of Aaron's son had brought unholy fire before God and were therefore killed or judged.

[ 7 : 35 ] And so what it indicates, too, is that the Day of Atonement was meant to deal also with the sinfulness of the priesthood itself. The priests themselves were defiled and in need of cleansing.

And so it would appear, too, that the entire setup, the Tent of Meeting, the altar, everything is tainted because it was in the midst of a sinful people. So the Day of Atonement was intended to provide a very clear picture of God's holiness on the one hand and the people's sinfulness on the other, total sinfulness in respect to everything, including the apparatus that was meant to make people clean.

And the entire ritual is acted out to demonstrate what God was doing to bring his people to himself. In other words, God is using visual and physical means to point to a spiritual reality.

It was symbolic of a deeper reality. And so God begins in verse 2 with a general prohibition. The Lord said to Moses, Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary, inside the curtain, before the mercy seat, that is, upon the ark, or he will die, for I peer in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

And so we did that exercise early on. We would try to work out where the various bits and pieces were. But the Tent of Meeting has been structured to symbolize God's presence among his people.

[ 9 : 06 ] And the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, is meant to be representative of that very center of God's presence. If you read the other parts of the Old Testament, it's actually described as God's footstool.

So can you see the symbolism in the layout? There is a gulf that exists between God's presence in the Holy of Holies. And it is separated from the people by firstly the curtain, then by the cloud upon the mercy seat.

And then when we read in verse 12 and 13, by the smoke that comes out from the fire of the incense. And then no one is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, except Aaron, once a year.

So it's a very restricted access. Only once a year, only one person, and only for one purpose. Is God still present with his people? Of course.

But there are obstacles because of sin. And the relationship between God and man is, as it were, tenuous because of that sin.

[ 10 : 13 ] There's a painting, as many of you are familiar, in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo, of God and man. And that whole thing about God just being able to touch man.

And I think with Michelangelo, he meant that to represent God's transcendence versus human insignificance. But I think here, the picture is one of sin separating God and man.

And furthermore, as we read, there are very instructions, very strict instructions on what Aaron must do. So I think the chapter is structured so that verse 3 to 10 is a summary of the preparations that are required.

And then from verse 11 onwards, is the detail or the step-by-step instructions of what to do. So we don't have a lot of time to look through at everything verse by verse. But let me give you a few observations.

So first, in verses 3 to 10, we notice the following. We notice that Aaron and his house, verse 3, are to bring a bull and a ram for their offering. On the other hand, the rest of Israel, in verse 5, bring two goats and a ram.

[ 11 : 20 ] And so there are two types of offerings there. The sin offering being brought in relation to the bull and the goat, and then the burnt offering in relation to the ram. And then in verse 4, there's a very simple attire that Aaron had to wear when he came before God.

This is not the linen or the vestments that he normally wears when he performs his sacrifices. And I think it's meant to symbolize the impoverished state with which he comes into God's presence.

And then further on, in verse 8 to 10, we get a description that lots will be cast for the two goats. One will be sacrificed, as in the sin offering, and the other will be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

And I'll come back to what Azazel sort of means in a short while. Next, we move on then to verse 11. And there's a bit more detail as to what Aaron had to do.

Again, let me offer a few observations. The first, we see that the whole process of atonement starts from the most holy place and then proceeds outwards. And so we get in verse 11 that Aaron takes the blood of the offering inside the curtain, into the holy of holies.

[ 12 : 38 ] And it's only after that that he comes out and he moves into the tent of meeting. And then lastly, in verse 18, he comes out to the altar, which is for the burnt offering.

Secondly, we see that he needs to do the offering both for himself as the high priest and his house, and then secondly, for the people. And all the instructions up to verse 18 appear as well to be related to the sinfulness of the sanctuary, even though that's an inanimate object.

And the idea in verse 16 is that, and let me read that for you, thus he shall make atonement for the sanctuary because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions.

And so the idea is that just by being in the midst of the people, the sanctuary itself was being tainted. And only after Aaron has dealt with the atonement of the sanctuary does he then move on to deal with the sin of the people.

And so we read earlier that lots would have been placed on which goat would live and which would be sacrificed. And the one that was to be the live goat, Aaron was to place the sins of the people on that goat for Azazel.

[ 13 : 56 ] Azazel. Now, there's sort of a lot of views as to what Azazel sort of means. Some people think it refers to a goat demon. Some think it's a place out in the wilderness to which you send the goat.

Or it could simply mean, the Hebrew word, could be the goat that escapes. That's the sort of possible meaning for Azazel. I think it's probably the last one, although I might be wrong.

But whatever the real meaning is, what is clear is that the goat is meant to be substitutionary. That is, the goat takes the sin of the people on itself as it's being let out into the wilderness.

And that's very clear when we read verse 22. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region, and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.

Then as we move into verse 23, there is a transition. Aaron becomes someone who is in need of atonement himself, now takes off the linen vestments, washes himself, and then put on the vestments of the priest, and starts to perform the priestly role of the priest.

[ 15 : 11 ] Verse 24, although still suggests that he is offering burnt offerings on his own behalf. But what happens here is that there is also final instructions about two other people.

First, there was the person who was appointed to take the goat out into the wilderness, and then there's another person who was appointed to take the remains of the sin offering outside the camp to burn it, all of it.

Both of them are instructed to wash their clothes and wash themselves before they reenter the camp. So again, what we see here is a very clear sense of the pervasiveness of sin, that everything that touches something sinful becomes sinful.

You know, even though the goat was symbolic only in terms of taking on the sin, yet because the person was the one that let it out to the wilderness, he too becomes unclean, and he too becomes sinful as a result of doing that task.

Sort of reminds me of children, you know, little boys that don't want to touch girls because they get goat germs and all that, and, you know, if a boy touches the goat, then the other boy can't touch him because then he'll pick up the goat germs as well.

[ 16 : 22 ] There's a bit of that sense going on that, you know, sin is so pervasive that, you know, every time something touches something, there's just, the sin, people just get tainted. And that's the picture that we get.

In this whole process. But what we also get with this is a step-by-step systematic process by which God deals thoroughly and completely with the sin of the people.

So that at the end of that process, they become holy, they become cleansed of their sin. Now it's quite an elaborate process, but I do have to say that it's very important to remember that all this is entirely symbolic.

This is, in one sense, nothing magical about the blood that's being shed and being sprinkled. The people themselves aren't being changed, literally, because of this process.

And so finally, we get to verses 29 and 34, where I think we get to the heart of what the people's response should be. I'm going to read it out in full, because I think it's important.

[ 17 : 26 ] And then I'm going to read the corresponding passage as well in chapter 23 and verse 26. So you might want to put your finger in there as well as we go there. But what I would like you to do as I read it is to listen carefully to see what the emphasis is, what is being repeated over and over again in these few verses.

Don't forget that both these sections give us the rationale and the purpose for the Day of Atonement. So verse 29. This shall be a statute to you forever.

In the seventh month of the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves and shall do no work, neither the citizens nor the alien who reside among you. For on this day, atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you from all your sins.

You shall be clean before the Lord. It is a Sabbath of complete rest to you and you shall deny yourselves. It is a statute forever. The priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement wearing the linen vestments, the holy vestments.

He shall make atonement for the sanctuary and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. And he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.

[ 18 : 42 ] This shall be an everlasting statute for you to make atonement for the people of Israel once in the year for all their sins. And Moses did as the Lord had commanded. And then when we turn to chapter 23 and verse 26.

This is the summary of the day of atonement. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Now the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you.

You shall deny yourselves and present the Lord's offering by fire and you shall do no work during the entire day for it is a day of atonement to make atonement on your behalf before the Lord your God.

For anyone who does not practice self-denire during that entire day shall be cut off from the people and anyone who does any work during that entire day such a one I will destroy from the midst of the people.

You shall do no work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your settlements. It shall be to you a Sabbath of complete rest and you shall deny yourselves on the ninth day of the month at evening from evening to evening you will keep your Sabbath.

[ 19 : 57 ] So I wonder what you've noticed there. Well first I think it's very clear that the entire ritual is for the purpose of atonement. I don't know how many times I haven't counted it but there's numerous times where the word atonement is used.

And what the purpose is is to cleanse everything and everyone people, priests, sanctuary, tent of meeting from all their sins. The picture here is that God values holiness and we value and the people had to value holiness too if they wanted to be alive.

But secondly I want you to notice what the response of the people should be. Two things. First there's very clear instructions do not work.

It is the Sabbath of complete rest. And then secondly they were to deny themselves. A more literal translation would be to afflict your souls.

And it's not clear what that actually means what they actually have to do. But it's come to in the later years come to mean things like fasting and abstaining from pleasures like sex and positively dedicating themselves to prayer and reflection.

[ 21 : 08 ] it's quite striking isn't it because up to this point the people are totally passive in this whole process. They're totally powerless in everything that's happened before.

They might have been watching Aaron do all that but they were standing afar. They couldn't even approach the tent of meeting. Now God asked them to respond by doing two things to rest and to deny themselves.

And I think what it's intended to reinforce is the fact that they cannot work to cleanse themselves. They can only rest in what God is doing. They could only rest and have a Sabbath of complete rest.

At the same time too as they are resting they are asked to deny themselves. That is not to distract themselves with other things or the pleasures in this world but to reflect on what actually is going on on that day.

And it's a measure of how seriously God takes it that in chapter 23 there's a threat of being cut off or being destroyed if you did not obey those two instructions.

[ 22 : 18 ] Further I think rest is not only a reminder that this is God's word but God's work but it's also a reminder of what they've lost through their sin. It's in a sense reminding them that they've lost their place in Eden.

they've lost their rest in God's rest. And further by denying themselves what they are reminded of is why they've lost that rest.

They're reminded of their own sin. They're reminded of what they've lost because of that sin and the gulf that exists between themselves and God. They also I think reminded of the costliness of this day of atonement and the amount of sacrifices that have to continue to be offered to God to cleanse them from their unrighteousness.

And so I think the people's response is intended to mirror in their hearts what God was actually doing through Aaron at the Tenth of Meeting. Because as I said the external sacrifice is entirely symbolic and it was actually useless without a corresponding inner response.

Well this is what God demanded of the Israelites back then. And the question is how is that relevant for us today? Is this something that God still requires of us?

[ 23 : 42 ] What is the key to trying to apply this text? Well I think the way to do it is to ask two questions or ask the one question and is to say what has changed between then and now and what hasn't changed?

And so those of us who believe in Jesus know that Jesus' death on the cross that Good Friday that very first one not the one that we keep celebrating that Good Friday now supersedes the Day of Atonement.

What God commanded Moses and Aaron to do on the Day of Atonement was merely a shadow of what Jesus Christ would do and has already done on the cross. And if you read the writer to the Hebrews he says that the entire sacrificial system in general and the Day of Atonement in particular was powerless to actually take away sin.

It was only just the blood of animals and Aaron was just an ordinary man. But in Jesus we have the perfect high priest who brought not only the blood of goats or bulls but his own very precious blood into God's presence.

And he didn't enter into a sort of makeshift tent or meeting with a flimsy curtain but he entered into God's very own presence in heaven. And it's by his death on the cross which was actually outside the camp outside the city Jesus became the ultimate scapegoat taking the sin upon himself in the place of people.

[ 25 : 10 ] Look, let me read to you Hebrews which I've printed out. In a sense I could have just read Hebrews and you would have understood Leviticus because he expounds the book of Leviticus but here are some verses which I think go to the heart of what he's talking about.

So reading from verse 6 of chapter 9 When everything had been arranged like this the priest entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry but only the high priest entered into the inner room and that only once a year and never without blood which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the most holy place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the present time indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper.

They are only a matter of food and drink and various commercial ceremonial washings external regulations applying until the time of the new order. When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made that is to say not a part of this creation.

He did not enter by the means of goats and calves but he entered the most holy place once for all by his own blood having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

[ 26 : 47 ] How much more then will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God.

And then a few more verses later on in verse 24. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself now to appear for us in God's presence.

Now did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again the way the high priest enters the most holy place every year with blood that is not his own? Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world.

But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people and he will appear a second time not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Now this is just one writer and the rest of the New Testament actually is full of references to this actual day of atonement. So if you read for example Paul's letter in Romans chapter 3 21 to 26 he refers to this he refers to the mercy seat and then the passage that we Christians read for us in 1 John tonight Jesus was the one who atones for our sin referring again to this very day of atonement.

[ 28 : 19 ] And so thanks to Jesus and his work we no longer have to offer sacrifices of blood any longer. So there is no longer for us an annual day of atonement and we don't need to rely anymore on the imperfect ongoing system of blood and sacrifice but only on the perfect and completed work of Jesus.

What a wonderful salvation we have in Jesus. And if you here tonight have not put your trust in Jesus then can I urge you to do that because he is the only one that can save us from our sin.

But the other question to ask is what hasn't changed? And many people think oh yeah everything has changed and you know because of Jesus none of this applies. But I want to say that actually the sober reality is that we are still sinful and God is still holy.

The sun still remains burning as fiercely as ever and we are no better than the Israelites who came out of Egypt. We are still made of the same stuff as Adam and Eve.

We still turn our backs on God. We still grumble. We still rebel against him. We do all the same things that the people of Israel did. And without the atoning blood of Jesus we too will have nothing to shield us from the fury of God's holiness.

[ 29 : 43 ] And yet the amazing thing is and I will turn you to the next page just behind here. The writer to the Hebrew says in chapter 10 and verse 19 we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way open for us through the curtain.

That is it's not just Aaron that goes in there all of us can now enter into that very holy of holies. But brothers and sisters we must never become blasé about our salvation.

Those of us who trust in Jesus must never forget the costliness of Jesus' sacrifice. You know to me to sacrifice animals for the sake of saving humans well it's costly but in a sense that's sort of understandable you know humans are more valuable than animals but for God to sacrifice his son his divine son perfect son to us humans I don't know how that works except for the super abundant love and mercy of God.

If you had been living during the time of the Israelites you would have had a constant reminder of God's holiness and your own sinfulness. As you stepped out of the tent day by day you would have smelled the burnt offerings you would have seen the smoke rising from the altar and year by year you would have had to observe a day of complete rest and denial.

Now friends I think that we actually also continue to need constant reminders not of the day of atonement but of Jesus death.

[ 31 : 31 ] Yes it is a once in history event but we need to continue to remind ourselves of that event. So in a sense what hasn't changed is our need to observe the day of Sabbath the Sabbath of complete rest and the denying of ourselves so that our hearts our inner beings might reflect what Christ has already done on the cross.

So that the work of Christ in us will match the work of Christ that has been achieved for us. Now it's still God's work it's not ours but I think there is in that description in verses 29 to 34 an application for us.

And when I mean Sabbath I'm not a Sabbatarian as well but I think we need to try and work out what it means for us to have a Sabbath of complete rest and to deny ourselves in order that we can remind ourselves again and again of what Jesus has done.

And unfortunately we live in a world that conspires against that don't we? We live in such a frantic world that sort of robs us for any time for Sabbath rest and we live in such a distracting world that prevents us from slowing down to deny and many of us being evangelicals are rightly suspicious of rituals you know we think it's so easy for them to be for us to slip into being saved by works of doing rituals somehow superstitious and sort of Celtic and I think that's right by and large and further as young people were even more resistant to tradition and sort of doing the same things over and over and over and over and over again we just don't like it but the truth is actually that all around us the world is full of rituals isn't it so if you observe someone's or you celebrate someone's birthday or for that matter celebrate



Father's Day that's a ritual year 12 students getting to muck up day every year that's a ritual getting drunk on a Friday after hard weeks work that's a ritual and as a society we have many rituals as well so just take the Anzac Day Parade the Remembrance Day we do all these things because they're very powerful symbols reminding us or reinforcing in us the things that we hold dear and so Jesus not surprisingly has instituted two rituals as well or two sacraments that of baptism and the Lord's Supper and I think both of them are powerful symbols and reminders of his work on the cross his victory over sin and God actually commands us to perform them not because we are saved or we save ourselves through them but because they are acts of faith and as we do them we appropriate what

[ 34 : 34 ] God has done through Jesus into our lives so I want to say that rituals are not all bad and I think they can be helpful provided we know that they are symbols of a deeper reality and that we don't ascribe power to them in and of themselves we don't do it robotically without reflecting on its true significance we need to practice these I think both individually and corporately service leaders that I sort of talk to sometimes as they prepare leading the service know that I have this big thing about always wanting to have corporate confession every week and I hope I'm not by doing that being sort of legalistic or pedantic but I think it's just so good that we remind ourselves constantly the basis on which we gather each week and the basis on which we are able to come before God each week and I mean by confession not just us confessing but also us hearing

God's promises of assurance of forgiveness so that we know that we are saved by Jesus blood so hopefully you can go away tonight and think about what other disciplines and practices we could do to nurture our faith practices that would mirror that Sabbath of complete rest and then of denying ourselves whether it's a discipline of prayer of devotion and reading God's word because unless we keep doing some of these things it will be just so easy to forget the basis on which we are saved to either then think we can do it by our own works or else to be ridden with guilt not knowing that Jesus' blood has cleansed us from our sins well I'm going to conclude shortly but I just wanted to touch on one thing tonight and that is to suggest that this principle of what I've done to say what's changed and what's not changed to ask those questions I think can be equally applied to the rest of the book when we look at the other chapters and work out what we should do with them so

I think the question to ask is as we're reading the rest of Leviticus how has Jesus coming his death and resurrection changed our understanding of that particular passage on the other hand what are the underlying principles or truth that remain unchanged and therefore is still helpful for us to apply as we read those chapters so with Leviticus 16 I've said that the sacrifices need not be observed because Jesus has taken their place but then the principle of complete rest and of denying ourselves are still underlying principles that still hold and we need to work it out what that means in practice not exactly how the passage describes it but nevertheless it is still applicable so hopefully many of the instructions and commandments in that book are symbolic in nature they point to a deeper truth so let me give you one example the idea of what's clean and unclean

I think is symbolic of something that's deeper I think and some scholars have said it's actually reminding the Israelites of the serpent the unclean animals actually remind the people of the serpent and therefore remind the people of the fall for the and what we don't but others because the instructions that are intrinsic to God's order continue to need to be obeyed because Jesus has not come to replace them in fact he's come to make them more true in one sense anyway so that's the general rule it's not you probably have to try and work it out in detail and sometimes it's not easy but hopefully that's a useful framework for actually quite difficult to get to grips with if you don't have that big picture and so the big picture as I conclude is that a permanent and lasting solution has been found and achieved and that

God now is able to dwell with his people brothers and sisters the dividing line is no longer that curtain that separates the holy of holies from us in fact I think the dividing line is now between God and his people on one hand and the rest of humanity on the other and the only way to get from one side to the other is by the blood of Jesus and that's why in this book God can say to the people be holy because I the Lord your God am holy we have become in Christ God's tent of meeting and his Holy Spirit dwells with us and dwells in us the Holy and the divine can now dwell with the human and Jesus is the perfect example of that in fact he came in order that we could do that and so God's spirit now dwells in us provided we too are cleansed by the atoning blood of

[ 40 : 20 ] Jesus so friends we are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper tonight to remind ourselves of that great truth to reinforce that wonderful reality in our lives and so I for one am looking forward to really celebrating that with you tonight let's pray oh God and heavenly father we thank you that you sent your son Jesus perfect eternal and so we don't have to go through this annual process of bringing sacrifices before you and we thank you that this is a lasting and perfect sacrifice that the blood of Jesus is without blemish it's foolproof it gives us full assurance to come before you into the holy of holies into your holy presence and still live and so Lord we thank you for that and we ask that in our lives together as individuals that you continue to remind us of that great truth so that we might not rest on our own works but only on the work of

Jesus we pray this Lord in Jesus name Amen