

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 05

GOD'S GOOD CHARACTER



EXODUS 19–40; LEVITICUS



MEMORY VERSES

“The LORD—the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished.”

—Exodus 34:6-7



GOD'S GOOD LAW

CORE PASSAGE: EXODUS 20:2-17

CONTEXT

God delivered the Israelites from cruel slavery in Egypt by His mighty hand. Then the Lord led them to Mount Sinai despite their doubts. God demonstrated His concern for human welfare, righteousness, and flourishing of His image-bearers by His giving of the Ten Commandments to His people. By giving the law on Mount Sinai, God showed His love by instructing His people how to live moral and devoted lives that bring blessing.

KEY CONCEPT

God's law reveals His good and holy expectations for His image-bearers.

As you examine Exodus 20:2-17:

- Consider that God deserves exclusive worship for His glory but also for our benefit and good.
- Identify ways the Ten Commandments direct believers toward living with holiness in their interactions with one another.



TIMELINE

God Leads Israel Out of Slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13–15)

SESSION STUDY: God Gives His People the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)

God Gives Instructions for the Tabernacle and Priests (Exodus 25–31)

God Provides for His People's Needs (Exodus 15–17)

God Gives Further Laws (Exodus 20–24)

Daily Readings

- Day 1:** Exodus 19:1–20:21
- Day 2:** Exodus 20:22–24:18
- Day 3:** Exodus 25:1–27:21
- Day 4:** Exodus 28:1–29:46
- Day 5:** Exodus 30:1–31:18
- Day 6:** Psalm 101



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 20:2-11

GOD IS SUPREME AND HOLY AND DESERVES EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP.

Highlight the “do nots” in this passage. Underline the “fors” and “because.”

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. **3** Do not have other gods besides me. **4** Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. **5** Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, **6** but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. **7** Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name. **8** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: **9** You are to labor six days and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. **11** For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

WORSHIP: While many reduce worship to an event or the singing of worship songs, worship is first and foremost something of the heart and extends to all areas of life. The aim and focus of worship is God, giving Him the exact due of praise and adoration that He deserves. Worship should be carried out not only at a personal level within a Christian's life but also in joining with other Christians in the corporate act of worship and stewarding our gifts for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a witness to non-believers of the greatness of God.

Key Concept: God's law reveals His good and holy expectations for His image-bearers.



This passage emphasizes the significance of our worship as a response born of love for God, which highlights His unrivaled character. At the very beginning of His law, God declared, “I am the LORD your God,” the One who freed the Israelites from slavery. Verse 2 establishes God’s one-of-a-kind character and sovereign authority as the reason why His people were to obey the following commandments. More than an obligation, our worship and obedience should be a heartfelt response to the majesty and mercy of God. The commandments inspire us to demonstrate reverence and obedience toward God because of who He is and what He has accomplished for us.

The first commandment prohibits the worship of any other gods in any form. The second commandment also addresses how we worship the one true God, warning against creating idols of God or heavenly beings for worship. These commands govern our worship practices and should motivate us to refrain from placing anything above God or in place of God in our worship.

How does your understanding of God being the one true God impact the way you approach Him in prayer and devotion?

The first four commandments teach that God alone is worthy of our undivided worship. We must give God alone the glory that is due Him and recognize His absolute lordship over our lives. This is also good for us as it brings us into harmony with His will and divine intentions, which in turn brings blessings.

In obeying the Lord’s commandments, we also escape the anguish and condemnation that come with sinful pleasures. We avoid the snare and slavery of idolatry when we worship God alone. We guard our tongues as we show respect for God’s name, and we also will walk faithfully in the world as we take His name upon us. Furthermore, we will work responsibly and rest worshipfully as we obey God’s Sabbath commandment. Putting God first in our lives provides honor to Him and helps us find fulfillment and direction.

How have you placed other things or people above God in your worship, and what were the consequences of doing so?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 20:12-17

WE ARE TO LOVE OTHERS AS GOD LOVES US.

Underline each negative commandment.

Write a positive interpretation of each commandment in the space below.

12 Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. **13** Do not murder. **14** Do not commit adultery. **15** Do not steal. **16** Do not give false testimony against your neighbor. **17** Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus came to fulfill the law in our place so that we might be saved by His perfect righteousness (Matthew 5:17).

Key Concept: God's law reveals His good and holy expectations for His image-bearers.

The focus of the Ten Commandments shifts from rules pertaining to respect for God to rules pertaining to human relationships in verses 12-17. Honoring parents, respecting life, being faithful in marriage, and speaking with integrity are all expectations from God's laws that emphasize the significance of fostering healthy relationships in the context of God's holiness.

God's people are known by the way they treat one another; therefore, love and care go beyond individual devotion to include caring for the community. Following these rules will lead to a society that reflects the divine image imprinted on humans, one in which compassion and love for God and others reign supreme. These commands aim to shape the moral compass of individuals and shape the social fabric of entire communities. We can see God's love and His desire for us to love like Him modeled in these verses. God's commandments teach us to love one another and all people who share His image.

How does your understanding of God's love for you shape the way you interact with others?

These commandments go beyond legalistic rules. Merely refraining from murder and adultery falls short of their intent. According to Jesus, God's commandments aim for our hearts, from which our actions overflow (see Matthew 5:21-30). Even the tenth commandment—"Do not covet"—specifically addresses an issue of the heart.

Every commandment, from respecting parents to avoiding coveting, addresses an expression of love from our hearts toward others. Goodness, righteousness, and compassion flourish in relationships and communities whose members uphold from the heart these prohibitions against murder, adultery, theft, and dishonesty.

Exodus 20:12-17 functions as a moral compass that directs believers toward living virtuously and with holiness in their interactions with one another. God's law promotes a community that mirrors His integrity and kindness, emphasizing that our loving treatment of one another is an expression of our love and respect for the God who first loved us (1 John 4:19).

In what ways are you demonstrating God's goodness and holiness in your interactions with others?

GROUP EXPERIENCE



FOR GOD'S GLORY AND OUR GOOD

Record what the Ten Commandments reveal about God and how we should be shaped by them.

WHAT DO THESE COMMANDMENTS REVEAL ABOUT GOD

HOW DO THESE COMMANDMENTS SHAPE US

EXODUS 20:2-11

EXODUS 20:12-17

How can we determine that our obedience to God's commandments is an overflow of a heart of faith, as Jesus taught, and not just surface-level compliance?



Key Concept: God's law reveals His good and holy expectations for His image-bearers.



HEAD

How should your worldview be impacted by the uniqueness and holiness of God?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 101, examining King David's powerful vows to worship God and punish sins denounced in the Ten Commandments. Then pray through the psalm, thanking God for His grace and patience with you in Christ and committing yourself to His "way of integrity" (Psalm 101:2,6).



HEART

How does reflecting on these commandments encourage you to love God and others more?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What actions will you take this week to reflect God's nature?



GOD'S JEALOUS LOVE

CORE PASSAGE: EXODUS 34:1-14

CONTEXT

With many miracles, Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. At Mount Sinai, they received God's laws. As Moses returned to the mountaintop to receive additional instructions, the people created a golden calf to worship, violating the first and second commandments. Moses shattered the tablets to show that the people had broken their covenant with God. Moses then returned to Mount Sinai and pleaded with God for mercy. In response, God showed mercy by equipping Moses to lead and renewing His covenant with the people.

KEY CONCEPT

**God is compassionate and gracious,
and He is also a jealous God.**

As you examine Exodus 34:1-14:

- Identify God's characteristics, such as the Lord is compassionate and gracious, yet just.
- Reflect upon the fact that we are to destroy idols in our lives, keeping God first in everything.



TIMELINE

God Gives Israel the Law Through Moses at Mount Sinai and Establishes His Covenant with Them (Exodus 20–31)

SESSION STUDY: God Renews His Covenant with Israel (Exodus 34)

The Israelites Worship a Golden Calf as Their God, Breaking the Covenant (Exodus 32)

The Israelites Faithfully Contribute to and Construct the Lord's Tabernacle (Exodus 35–40)

Daily Readings

- Day 1:** Exodus 32:1-14
- Day 2:** Exodus 32:15-35
- Day 3:** Exodus 33:1-11
- Day 4:** Exodus 33:12–34:8
- Day 5:** Exodus 34:9-35
- Day 6:** Psalm 145



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 34:1-8

WHEN WE RETURN TO GOD AFTER SINNING, HE IS GRACIOUS TO FORGIVE.

Highlight God's self-description of His mercy, and underline His self-description of His justice.

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. **2** Be prepared by morning. Come up Mount Sinai in the morning and stand before me on the mountaintop. **3** No one may go up with you; in fact, no one should be seen anywhere on the mountain. Even the flocks and herds are not to graze in front of that mountain." **4** Moses cut two stone tablets like the first ones. He got up early in the morning, and taking the two stone tablets in his hand, he climbed Mount Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded him. **5** The LORD came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, "the LORD." **6** The LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed: The LORD—the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, **7** maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation. **8** Moses immediately knelt low on the ground and worshiped.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The Lord Jesus is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and truth. He will judge sin, yet He is faithful to forgive and save all who come to Him in repentance and faith.

Key Concept: God is compassionate and gracious, and He is also a jealous God.



This passage describes the great encounter that took place between God and Moses on Mount Sinai that ultimately resulted in the renewing of God's covenant with the Israelites. The Israelites had quickly and blatantly violated God's commandments with a golden calf (Exodus 32), a breach illustrated when Moses smashed the tablets of the law. But God told Moses to cut two new stones, and He came down to meet with Moses to write the laws again. There God revealed the glory of who He is—He is just and patient, loving, forgiving, faithful, and He will not abandon His people.

This seeming paradox—or self-contradictory statement—between mercy and justice demonstrates how God can forgive those who have committed sins without compromising His own righteousness. When people turn away from their sins and turn to God for forgiveness, God greets them with open arms, demonstrating His love and faithfulness. On the other hand, God will judge and hold accountable those who do not show any signs of repentance for their sins.

How should acknowledging God's mercy help us change our outlook when we sin?

After God's self-revelation of His glorious character—"all [His] goodness" (Exodus 33:19)—Moses bowed down in worship, a response we should all have. Moses himself was not guilty for the sin with the golden calf; he had interceded for the lives of his sinful people and stood strong for the holiness of God against his sinful people (32:7-35). Yet hearing that the Lord is both merciful and just resulted in praise.

By virtue of the fact that this self-revelation of God was recorded, it was meant for more than just Moses. The Israelites received this word, as have we many centuries later, and we all find ourselves in this divine mystery. We have sinned, we are "guilty," and we deserve punishment, but God forgives "iniquity, rebellion, and sin." Repentance and faith are key for the differing outcomes, but atonement must still be made (32:30). God forgives, showing mercy, but He must also fulfill His justice. God has satisfied both aspects of His divine nature in Jesus, the perfect Mediator between God and man (Romans 3:26; 1 Timothy 2:5).

How can believing that God forgives iniquity, rebellion, and sin encourage us to engage in genuine worship?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 34:9-14

THE LORD KEEPS HIS PROMISES AND DESERVES OUR EXCLUSIVE LOYALTY.

Highlight God's promises, and underline what the Lord required of the Israelites.

9 Then he said, “My Lord, if I have indeed found favor with you, my Lord, please go with us (even though this is a stiff-necked people), forgive our iniquity and our sin, and accept us as your own possession.” **10** And the LORD responded, “Look, I am making a covenant. In the presence of all your people I will perform wonders that have never been done in the whole earth or in any nation. All the people you live among will see the LORD’s work, for what I am doing with you is awe-inspiring. **11** Observe what I command you today. I am going to drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hethites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. **12** Be careful not to make a treaty with the inhabitants of the land that you are going to enter; otherwise, they will become a snare among you. **13** Instead, you must tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, and chop down their Asherah poles. **14** Because the LORD is jealous for his reputation, you are never to bow down to another god. He is a jealous God.

Key Concept: God is compassionate and gracious, and He is also a jealous God.

Moses asked God to remain with the Israelites, appealing for His favor and presence. To this end, God emphasized His faithfulness to His promises, restated His covenant with His people, and reminded them that He deserved their undivided devotion. In His grace, God promised them a home and described the extraordinary things He would do for them to obtain it.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS GRACIOUS: God's nature is to delight in giving unmerited favor to those who are undeserving (Ephesians 2:8-9). His grace toward sinners is found most clearly in the salvation He has provided through Christ. Because of sin, humanity is undeserving of salvation—all of us have turned our backs on God, and as a result, we deserve death (Romans 6:23). However, instead of leaving people in their sins, God has demonstrated His graciousness by providing atonement and forgiveness for our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).

God's promises are sure because He is faithful to His word, yet He still has expectations of His people. In the promised land that He would give the Israelites, they were to refrain from forming alliances with the pagan nations inhabiting the promised land, emphasizing the danger of being ensnared by ungodly, worldly influences and insisting on complete allegiance to Him alone. God's jealousy over His people's faithfulness was clear as He ordered the demolition of idols and altars dedicated to other gods.

The jealous desire of God for His people remains consistent for us in the new covenant, highlighting the importance of prioritizing God above all else and remaining faithful to His commands. Worldly entanglements can lead to spiritual compromise and distance from God. Therefore, we must be vigilant to identify and eliminate any idols or distractions hindering our devotion to God. God's jealous love for His people requires us to give Him His rightful place as the sole object of our worship and allegiance.

What are modern idols or distractions in your life that compete with the Lord's desire for your exclusive allegiance and worship?

How should the assurance of the Lord's faithfulness to keep His promises reshape your priorities and commitments in life?

GROUP EXPERIENCE



WHO IS THE LORD?

Record definitions and explanations of God's self-revealed character in Exodus 34:1-14, and locate examples of God's character in Scripture.

COMPASSIONATE AND GRACIOUS (EXODUS 34:)

SLOW TO ANGER (EXODUS 34:)

ABOUNDING IN FAITHFUL LOVE (EXODUS 34:)

ABOUNDING IN TRUTH (EXODUS 34:)

FORGIVING (EXODUS 34:)

WILL NOT LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED (EXODUS 34:)

JEALOUS (EXODUS 34:)

Which characteristic of God in Exodus 34:1-14 stood out to you this week or today? Why?



Key Concept: God is compassionate and gracious, and He is also a jealous God.



HEAD

How does considering God's jealous love and His perfect character prompt you to assess your spiritual priorities and allegiances?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 145. Reflect on each characteristic of God and consider how God has demonstrated each characteristic in your life. Then pray through Psalm 145:17-21, expressing your thanksgiving and commitment to the Lord in response to who He is and what He has done for you.



HEART

How should recognizing God's jealous love for you help you endure difficulties and doubts in life?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

With whom will you share about the character and works of God, especially in Jesus, that they may believe in Him and be saved?

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

By Matt Rogers

God reveals Himself to His people. This reality may seem like common sense, but there's nothing that requires God to make Himself known to His creation. He certainly could have hidden from those He made. But from the very dawn of creation, we see God walking with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). He was among them. He wanted to be known by them.

After sin entered the world, God could have isolated Himself from the rebels He'd created. People are often like this. If you've ever been hurt by a friend, you've likely been tempted simply to write off that person. At best, you probably wouldn't allow them to get close again since they wronged you in the past. If God were like us, the sin of all humans could have led God to do the same.

But God chose to make Himself known so that people could worship Him. He wanted humans to know Him—understand who He is—so they could rightly orient their lives to His character. This self-revelation was vital after humankind's sin in the garden. Had a holy God not wanted to be known, people would have no way of having a relationship with Him restored and their sins forgiven.

GOD'S CHARACTER

Moses was not the first person to meet God, but He was given a unique view of God's glory. God didn't reveal physical attributes to Moses; instead, He showed Moses His character. He wanted Moses to know what He is like, so He displayed His glory. In Exodus 34 we read: "The LORD—the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished" (Exodus 34:6-7). Here we have God's glory summarized with character traits—God is compassionate, gracious, patient, faithful, loving, forgiving, and just. This is the God who wants to be known and worshiped.

This gracious self-disclosure was one example among many of God making Himself known to Israel, though they continued to persist in their waywardness. Even though God continued to reveal Himself, the people rejected Him in favor of the rival, pagan, pseudo-gods of the day. Though the true God was among them, they worshiped idols and turned away from the God of love.

GOD'S SON

And still, God did not give up. So He sent the pinnacle of His self-revelation: “When the time came to completion, God sent his Son” (Galatians 4:4). Jesus Christ is fully God—the exact expression of His nature (Hebrews 1:1-4). So when Jesus was born, God was making Himself known. John’s prologue summarized God’s revelation through Christ: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The glory that Moses briefly witnessed was on full display through Jesus’s life. To see Jesus is to see the glory of God. Jesus embodies the characteristics that God allowed Moses to witness many centuries before. Everywhere Jesus went and everything Jesus did was an example of the love, faithfulness, forgiveness, justice, compassion, grace, and patience of God.

God didn’t reveal physical attributes to Moses; instead, He showed Moses His character.

GOD'S SPIRIT

Though Jesus’s life on earth was brief—a mere three decades long—His departure from this world did not leave His followers without God’s presence. Anticipating His death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus told the disciples: “Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). The Counselor, also known as the Holy Spirit, is the long-standing deposit of the presence of God among the people of God until Jesus returns (Ephesians 1:13-14). He empowers Christians to embody the holiness that God Himself manifests (Galatians 5:22-23).

THE TRINITY

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all reveal who God is and why He is worthy of worship. While the Bible does not use the term “Trinity” to refer to God, the Scriptures clearly testify to the reality that God is one God revealed in three Persons. Each Person of the Godhead is unique yet fully divine. The Trinitarian God reveals Himself to humans so they can rightly know who God is and orient their lives as a worshipful response to His holiness (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:10).

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GOD'S HOLY GLORY

CORE PASSAGES: EXODUS 40:9-17,34-38

CONTEXT

In the last chapter of Exodus, the Israelites dedicated the tabernacle. Just as God commanded, Moses anointed all the beautiful furnishings the people made, emphasizing God's holiness. Then God fulfilled His promise to dwell among His chosen people (Exodus 29:44-46) when His glory filled the tent. Exodus 40 underscores God's unwavering faithfulness to His covenant and our response in worship.

KEY CONCEPT

Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.

As you examine Exodus 40:9-17,34-38:

- Contemplate that we cannot approach a holy God without being purified from our sins.
- Note ways that the purification required for the tabernacle underscores the necessity of holiness for approaching God and points to Jesus's redemptive work.



TIMELINE

The Israelites Worship a Golden Calf as Their God, Breaking the Covenant (Exodus 32)

The People Give an Offering to Begin Building the Tabernacle (Exodus 35)

SESSION STUDY: God's Glory Enters the Tabernacle (Exodus 40)

Moses Intercedes for the People and Receives New Stone Tablets (Exodus 33-34)

God Gifts Bezalel and Oholiab with His Spirit to Build the Tabernacle and Instruments (Exodus 35-39)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: Exodus 35:1-36:7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Exodus 39:1-43 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Exodus 36:8-38 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Exodus 40:1-38 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Exodus 37:1-38:31 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 99 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 40:9-17

GOD SET UP THE TABERNACLE TO BE SEPARATE FROM AND YET WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Highlight each item in this passage that was required to be anointed by oil.

9 “Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it along with all its furnishings so that it will be holy. **10** Anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar so that it will be especially holy. **11** Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate it. **12** Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. **13** Clothe Aaron with the holy garments, anoint him, and consecrate him, so that he can serve me as a priest. **14** Have his sons come forward and clothe them in tunics. **15** Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may also serve me as priests. Their anointing will serve to inaugurate a permanent priesthood for them throughout their generations.” **16** Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him. **17** The tabernacle was set up in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS HOLY: God’s holiness refers to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. The Hebrew word for “holy” means “separate” or “set apart.” God’s holiness also refers to His absolute purity. God is unstained by the evil of the world. His goodness is perfect, and the moral code we find in the Scriptures is a reflection of His holy nature. As people made in God’s image, we are called to holiness.

Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



The dedication of the tabernacle, God's sacred dwelling place among His people, vividly highlights Israel's journey from slavery to freedom. Meticulous attention was given to preparing and sanctifying the tabernacle's elements, underlining the holiness required for God's presence to reside among them. This passage emphasizes God's inherent holiness, demanding that His dwelling place be purified and sanctified. Every detail, from the anointing oil to the consecration of the altar, symbolized the purity and reverence necessary in God's holy presence.

Through this process, the Israelites learned the significance of maintaining holiness in worship and in approaching God. Not only were the elements of worship anointed, but so too were those who led worship on behalf of the people. Moses meticulously followed God's commands, reminding the people—and us today—that God is holy and we should approach Him with reverence and obedience.

How might the detailed preparation and sanctification of the tabernacle influence our worship of God today?

This passage emphasizes the necessity of holiness to stand before God. This requirement points to the barrier between sinful humanity and God's holy presence. On our own, we can never be truly holy as God requires, so we need a mediator. Here, Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priestly mediators between God and His sinful people, though they were sinful themselves. After they made sacrifices for their own sin, they would serve God in the tabernacle and represent the people before God with sacrifices for sin.

Acknowledging this, we can see that the purification required in this passage not only emphasizes the holiness needed for approaching God but also points to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus offering Himself as the sacrifice in our place to atone for our sins, we are forgiven, and then we receive the Holy Spirit as an anointing. God purifies His people by the blood of His Son and the gift of His Spirit so we may enter into His holy presence.

How does the coming of Jesus Christ as the ultimate expression of holiness enable us to approach God in worship despite our imperfections?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 40:34-38

GOD DISPLAYS HIS HOLY GLORY THROUGH HIS PRESENCE AND HIS WORK IN HIS PEOPLE.

Highlight each reference to “cloud” and “glory” in the passage.

34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **35** Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **36** The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle throughout all the stages of their journey. **37** If the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up. **38** For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages of their journey.

WORD STUDY

GLORY: God’s glory encapsulates the totality of His divine attributes—His majesty, holiness, and splendor. It manifests in the radiant display of His presence and power, evoking awe and reverence. His glory is also veiled because mortals cannot behold God’s full glory (Exodus 33:20). Hebrews 1:3 teaches that Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory, reflecting the Father’s nature perfectly and redeeming humanity through His sacrificial death.

Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



This final passage of Exodus marks a fulfillment of God's divine plan to dwell among His people. Under Moses's guidance, the construction and consecration of the tabernacle had been completed, paving the way for God's presence among the Israelites. The cloud of glory, once settled atop Mount Sinai, now descended upon the tabernacle, symbolizing the Lord's divine approval of His people's obedience and His special presence among them.

This presence wasn't merely symbolic; it was a tangible reality that sanctified the tabernacle, transforming it into a sacred space where God resided among His chosen people in spite of their sins. Even Moses was unable to enter the tabernacle for a time. The cloud served as a visible reminder of God's presence, revealing His closeness while simultaneously veiling His full glory. It represented both God's nearness and His holiness among His people.

How does recognizing God's presence and glory in our lives transform the ordinary into the extraordinary?

The glory of the Lord descended upon, filled, and inhabited the tabernacle with the form of a cloud so that God could be near His people, with them, and lead them.

God is always faithful to His people. And to the degree the people obeyed God's leading—going where the cloud went and staying where the cloud stayed—they demonstrated to themselves and the world what they believed about the God who led them out of Egypt—that He is holy, He is worthy of obedience, and He was present with them to work through them.

What are some ways God guides His people to do His work today?

Unfortunately, the Israelites often would fail to obey God's leading, even after the tabernacle tent was replaced by a temple. Yet ever faithful, God sent His Son into the world so that He would be the perfect tabernacle (John 1:14) and temple (2:19-22) in whom sinful humanity may encounter the holy glory of God. And those who come to the Son—Jesus—in repentance and faith become part of His holy temple in the church.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God's desire to dwell with His people came to true fruition in the person of Jesus Christ, called Immanuel, God with us. God the Son humbled Himself and took on flesh to be with and to save His people.

GROUP EXPERIENCE



GOD'S TABERNACLE: THEN AND NOW

Read Exodus 40:9-38 and write down how the elements found during tabernacle worship point to God and Jesus.

POINTS TO GOD	POINTS TO JESUS
ANOINTING WITH OIL	
PRIESTHOOD	
PRESENCE IN THE CLOUD/FIRE	

What in today's passage helps you recognize the holiness of God and how we should approach Him today?



Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



HEAD

How does considering the glory of God influence your mind-set and approach to gathering to worship Him?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 99, reflecting on the marvelous ways God has revealed His glory, not only to His people Israel but also to you. Pray through the psalm praising and thanking God for His holiness and His faithful justice and forgiveness.



HEART

How does experiencing God's glory at work in your life make you feel, and what are some ways you could share that experience so others would recognize and experience the Lord's greatness?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What steps will you take to be careful to honor and obey the Lord of glory?



GOD'S PROVISION FOR REDEMPTION

CORE PASSAGES: LEVITICUS 16:1-6,15-22

CONTEXT

The book of Leviticus serves as a detailed guidebook for the priests and Levites as they served God. In Leviticus 1–15, God gave five types of ritual sacrifices for Israel, along with rules for the priests and purity of the community. Chapter 16 outlined the Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered the tabernacle each year to offer sacrifices to take away the sins of all the people. This ceremony illustrated God's grace and justice in forgiving the people while pointing toward His ultimate plan for permanent salvation through Jesus Christ.

KEY CONCEPT

God provided the sacrificial system for His people's sins to be forgiven and atoned for.

As you examine Leviticus 16:1-6,15-22:

- Identify that the sacrificial system God prescribed repaired fellowship between sinners and a holy God
- Consider that Jesus is our High Priest and all believers are part of the priesthood with free access to the Father (Hebrews 10:19-22).



TIMELINE

Rules Concerning Burnt, Grain, Fellowship, and Sin Offerings (Leviticus 1-7)

Aaron and His Sons Ordained
(Leviticus 8-10)

**SESSION STUDY: The Day of
Atonement (Leviticus 16)**

Holiness of the Priesthood
(Leviticus 21-22)

Distinctions Between Clean and
Unclean (Leviticus 11-15)

Forbidden Sacrifices and Pagan
Practices (Leviticus 17-20)

Rules Concerning Faithful Worship (Leviticus 23-27)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: Leviticus 1:1-7:38 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Leviticus 16:1-22:33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Leviticus 8:1-10:20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Leviticus 23:1-27:34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Leviticus 11:1-15:33 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 32 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LEVITICUS 16:1-6

APPROACHING GOD IS A HOLY ENDEAVOR.

Underline each requirement that must be followed to enter God's presence.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of two of Aaron's sons when they approached the presence of the LORD and died. **2** The LORD said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he may not come whenever he wants into the holy place behind the curtain in front of the mercy seat on the ark or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. **3** Aaron is to enter the most holy place in this way: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. **4** He is to wear a holy linen tunic, and linen undergarments are to be on his body. He is to tie a linen sash around him and wrap his head with a linen turban. These are holy garments; he must bathe his body with water before he wears them. **5** He is to take from the Israelite community two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. **6** Aaron will present the bull for his sin offering and make atonement for himself and his household."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

ASPECTS OF THE ATONEMENT: Christ's substitutionary death on our behalf stands at the center of His atoning work. Without this work, there is no gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3). While this substitutionary aspect is central to the atonement, His death also supremely demonstrates God's love for sinners (John 15:13; 1 John 4:10). It shows us how seriously God takes sin. It satisfies every requirement for God to be able to forgive the failures of humanity. And it puts Christ's cosmic victory over sin, Satan, and death on display through His resurrection (Colossians 2:15). Every aspect of the atonement should inspire gratitude, praise, and a desire for obedience, because it is only through Christ that we are reconciled.

Key Concept: God provided the sacrificial system for His people's sins to be forgiven and atoned for.



The actions that Aaron, the high priest, had to take in order to enter the holy place of the tabernacle were strictly defined by the Lord. As a means of protecting Aaron from the repercussions of disobedience (see Leviticus 10:1-7), God appointed the time—one day—and preparations required to approach His holy place, where His holy presence dwelled. The weight of these instructions emphasizes the holiness of God's presence. Therefore, it was necessary for Aaron to approach God with a sense of holiness, reverence, and awe to fulfill his function as a mediator between a holy God and His people.

This passage should prompt us to consider our own attitude toward God and our worship of Him. God is still holy, and we are still sinners, so we shouldn't treat our encounters with Him with casualness or irreverence.

How can we approach God with reverence and awe?

Aaron, serving as the high priest, was tasked with adhering to precise procedures on the Day of Atonement to enter the tabernacle's holy place, symbolizing the necessary mediation required for God to forgive the people's sin. Hebrews 10:19-22 shows that through Christ's sacrifice, all believers now enjoy direct access to the Father, transcending the limitations of the Levitical priesthood and enabling unrestricted communion with God. Christ's priesthood has accomplished a complete reconciliation and unity between our holy God and His people.

How should our understanding of Jesus as our ultimate High Priest reshape our perception of access to God?

BIBLICAL CONCEPT

PRIEST: The priesthood serves as a picture pointing ahead to the role of the Messiah being made a high priest superior to ones of old (Hebrews 7:11-28). Jesus is better in that His own sacrifice is perfect, without sin. He relates to His people perfectly, having been tempted as we are, yet without sin (4:14-16).

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR SINS TO BE ATONED FOR.

Circle some commonly repeated words with different colors.

15 “When he slaughters the male goat for the people’s sin offering and brings its blood inside the curtain, he will do the same with its blood as he did with the bull’s blood: He is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front of it. **16** He will make atonement for the most holy place in this way for all their sins because of the Israelites’ impurities and rebellious acts. He will do the same for the tent of meeting that remains among them, because it is surrounded by their impurities. **17** No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the most holy place until he leaves after he has made atonement for himself, his household, and the whole assembly of Israel. **18** Then he will go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He is to take some of the bull’s blood and some of the goat’s blood and put it on the horns on all sides of the altar. **19** He is to sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse and set it apart from the Israelites’ impurities. **20** When he has finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar, he is to present the live male goat. **21** Aaron will lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the Israelites’ iniquities and rebellious acts—all their sins. He is to put them on the goat’s head and send it away into the wilderness by the man appointed for the task. **22** The goat will carry all their iniquities into a desolate land, and the man will release it there.

Key Concept: God provided the sacrificial system for His people's sins to be forgiven and atoned for.

Leviticus 16 outlined the necessary steps for observing the Day of Atonement, a significant event in Israel's religious calendar. Through this annual ritual, God provided a means for the people to seek forgiveness and restore their relationship with Him. Central to the process was the role of the high priest, who represented the entire community and offered sacrifices to cleanse the sanctuary and atone for Israel's sins.

The climax of the day came when the high priest made atonement for the sins of the people by sacrificing one goat and presenting its blood in the holy place. The priest would then lay his hands on the head of a live goat, confessing over it all the sins of the people. This symbolic act transferred the sins of the people onto the scapegoat, which was then led away into the wilderness, bearing the burden of their transgressions. This ritual illustrated the removal of sin from the community and symbolized God's forgiveness and cleansing, facilitating a renewed fellowship between the Lord and Israel.

How does understanding the sacrificial system deepen our gratitude for God's grace and provision for forgiveness?

The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ in that the high priest, representing the people,

made atonement for their sins by offering a blood sacrifice for the sins of the people and releasing the scapegoat, symbolizing the cleansing of sin and the removal of guilt from the community.

These annual sacrifices served as a temporary solution, offering a glimpse of the forgiveness and reconciliation that would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus not only cleanses us from sin but also removes it completely, offering eternal redemption and reconciliation with God. The Old Testament sacrifices, therefore, serve as a prophetic precursor to the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, emphasizing His role as the fulfillment of the law and the ultimate means of restoring humanity's relationship with God.

In what ways does Jesus's sacrificial death on the cross fulfill and surpass the temporary atonement provided by the Old Testament sacrificial system?

CHRIST CONNECTION

The Lord graciously prescribed animal sacrifices as a part of His law so His people could be temporarily forgiven and their sins atoned for. Jesus came to pay the price through His death to atone for our sins once and for all (Hebrews 10:10).

GROUP EXPERIENCE



HOLIEST DAY

*Read the text and write the instructions for receiving atonement.
How did Jesus fulfill the requirements of atonement?*

LEVITICUS 16	JESUS
VV. 1-6	
VV. 15-22	

How does the fact that Jesus removed the necessity for the Day of Atonement reveal His fulfillment of all the Law?



Key Concept: God provided the sacrificial system for His people's sins to be forgiven and atoned for.



HEAD

In what ways does considering the details of the Day of Atonement impact your perception of God's grace and mercy?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 32, reflecting on God's grace in forgiving your sins. Let the joy of forgiveness prompt you to thank God for His mercy. Then pray through Psalm 32:1-5, expressing your own experience of joy and gratitude in response to God's forgiveness of your guilt.



HEART

How does considering the great lengths that God has gone through to provide forgiveness for our sin cause us to love Him more?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How can you align your life to acknowledge God's grace and replace sinful habits and actions?

