

Leviticus 16:21 (J.R. Bradshaw) 52871

Christian Truth: Volume 17, Fit Man, The (16:21)

"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." Lev. 16:21.

The passage of God's Word here quoted tells us of the gracious way in which He met the needs of the people in their wanderings through the wilderness.

There was on the one hand, the Holy God in all His divine purity, and on the other, men and women like ourselves, sinful and sinners; and although God had made abundant provision for His people, and appointed the offerings they were to bring when they knew and owned their sin, there must still have been many sins committed which had been forgotten; and consequently no offering had been brought for them.

But in His eyes, with whom we have to do, these were sins as much as any others, and must be put out of His sight; accordingly, He provides for them in the verse at the head of this article.

Three distinct words are used, so as to take in every sin committed by Israel during the year: "All the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins."

God directs that all these shall be confessed over the head of the scapegoat, and then it is to be sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, bearing away on its head all these iniquities, transgressions, and sins, to a land not inhabited, out of the sight of the people. This striking type we find wonderfully answered to in the New Testament by Christ Himself, of whom it is written: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. 9:27, 28. And again: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2:24.

And we know from the narrative of the gospel that God turned his face away from the sin-bearer; for although He was Himself absolutely sinless, He was made sin; and God could not look upon sin.

But there is no divine tranquility for the Israelites as long as that goat walks about in the camp with all these sins on its head. They must be put out of sight.

So now we get the "fit man," or, as the margin gives it, "the man of opportunity." Any man picked out at random would not do; it must be one who could be trusted not to lose sight of the goat until it was in a place "not inhabited," and from whence it could not return into the camp of Israel with the people's sins on its head.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God's "fit man," God's "man of opportunity"; for in Gal. 4:4 we read, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "Made of a woman," to meet your need and mine as children of Adam; "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"; "fit" because He alone, as the sinless One, could bear my sins; and the "man of opportunity," because He came in "the fullness of time."

Yes, all your iniquities and all your transgressions in all your sins must go; and God in His grace has provided One who is "fit" to take them away into a place not inhabited, and return without them.

He too is the "man of opportunity"; and how blessed for us, for however "fit" He might have been, He would have been of no avail for us if the "opportunity" had passed before He came; so too He might have presented Himself with the opportunity, but unless He had been the "fit man" He would have been of no use.

Take, for example, the Israelites when face to face with the Philistines (1 Sam. 17). There were many men of valor among them—a Saul, an Eliab, an Abner, all mighty men—and here was the opportunity; but they lacked the fitness to meet the giant on his own ground; only God's "fit man" could do that; but God did provide the "fit man," the "man of opportunity," in the person of David.

The Lord is "fit" for two things—to be a Savior for those who receive Him (John 1:12), and also to be the Judge of those who do not (Acts 17:31). It will either be to know Him as God's "fit man" for salvation, or as God's ordained Man for judgment. But if any let the opportunity pass, if they refuse the "fit man" provided by God, there is no other that can deliver them.