

#104 Who Shall Ascend the Mount of the Lord

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Confessing Our Hope

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William Hill: Welcome to another edition of Confessing our Hope, the podcast of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Today is January 27, 2016. This is broadcast number 104 and today we're pleased to have Dr. Michael Morales in studio to talk about his newest book that just came out in the New Studies of Biblical Theology series. I don't know how many volumes there are and I know there are quite a few but, anyway, it's put out by InterVarsity Press, right, IVP, and it's what it sounds like, it's a book that deals with biblical theology and so we're going to talk with Dr. Morales about this new book that has just been released, "Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord: A biblical theology of the book of Leviticus." We'll talk with him in just a minute.

Let me do just a few quick housekeeping things and items to keep people up to speed with what we're doing. Again, I just want to remind you that we do have a mobile app that you can use to listen to not only the podcast but conference lectures; the GPTS Spring Theology Conference which is on the horizon, really, it's very soon to have the 2016 edition which is going to be dealing with marriage, family and sexuality. That's March 8th through the 10th at Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church. If you haven't signed up for it by now, I would encourage you to do so. Don't miss out. It's an important subject topic for our day and so you can get information about that at our website gpts.edu. But you get the mobile app and it has the conferences, it has chapel lectures, both audio and video, as well as this podcast so take advantage of that. It's on both Apple and android varieties.

Also, our website confessingourhope.com, we do stream live broadcasts from time to time and so you can listen right there at our website confessingourhope.com as well as all the archives, resources, documents, whatever that is related to this podcast. So take advantage of those items.

Now, as I mentioned, we're going to be talking with Dr. Morales this morning, well, it's morning where I am right now. It may not be morning where you're listening but it's morning here at this moment, but we're going to be talking with him about his newest book and Dr. Morales is the Professor of Biblical Studies at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and he's one of our newest professors and I've had the pleasure to get to know him and to sit under him as he has instructed on these matters and it is a fantastic study.

So, Dr. Morales, it's great to have you back and we've talked a little bit about biblical theology before and maybe we'll cover that a little bit as an introductory thing but, anyway, it's good to have you back in the room.

Dr. Morales: Thank you for having me, Bill.

Bill: Yeah, both of us, in case you're listening carefully, both of us are probably suffering a little bit with what's going around the hallowed halls of the seminary. I have a cold right now. I think it's a cold, my wife thinks it's the flu but it's not contagious. You can't catch it over the air so don't worry but listen closely.

The book "Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord," give us some background. What was... it's a pretty thick book and so obviously a lot of time and effort went into this but what was the genesis of it? No pun intended, well, close enough. But what was, you know, what was circulating and how did it become a book?

Dr. Morale: A lot of what became this book was just sort of picking fruit from some of my labors for my dissertation where I kind of develop in seed form an approach to biblical theology and then as I've taught Old Testament biblical theology and the New Testament theology in various institutions including here, the idea of putting it all together for a biblical theology book was really appealing to me but specifically to focus in on Leviticus.

Bill: And as I've been in your classes, of course, I know your passion for the book of Leviticus and I've got to tell you, you know, the first time you mentioned Leviticus is the heart of the Pentateuch, I remember you saying that and my ears perked up and I thought, "Why?" You know, when you read it just not really grasping the full overarching theme of what's going on, you read it and you're like, "Man, I just can't wait to get to the end of this thing." It's just one thing after another, almost you drudge along, "Okay, good, I'm out of Leviticus, I'm in Numbers. Phew. I made it." But why Leviticus? Of all the books that you could have done a biblical theology on, you picked Leviticus.

Dr. Morales: As I've approached doing an Old Testament theology, it's been very important to me and I've seen the, I guess, the appropriate rationale for building a biblical theology based off of the Torah or the Pentateuch, it really is the foundation for the rest of the Scriptures even into the New Testament and so if you get the Pentateuch right, it really helps to ensure that you get the rest of the Canon right, that you understand where the prophets are coming from, etc. And as I've studied the Pentateuch, I've come to the understanding that Leviticus is really the heart of it as you just mentioned a few minutes ago and in the Ancient Near East, this was common to when you had a work that the heart of that work was typically placed in the center, so if you want to understand the gist of the Pentateuch, it's major theme, you would find it in the center. And by and large, Judaism today, that's well understood. Leviticus would probably be the first book you'd teach your child whereas, as you were saying, in most of our Christian circles, it's the book we avoid like the plague.

Bill: Yeah. You mention it's the foundation for the New Testament which is, again, I was raised under a dispensational environment and so that would be, if you would have said that to me when I was 15, I'd have probably been offended by that comment, but why is Leviticus really the foundation to understand rightly the New Testament?

Dr. Morales: Okay.

Bill: I asked a loaded question there, I realize.

Dr. Morales: I guess to begin with how it's a foundation of the Pentateuch so, again, it's the central book and my first chapter in "Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord," I look at a broad overview of the Pentateuch and you can basically approach it like climbing a mountain, which fits well with the title, and the summit of the mountain then is Leviticus and after you hit Leviticus, you're descending so Leviticus is about the tabernacle system and the explanation of it and the very center of Leviticus is the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16. So you can think of the narrative leading up to Leviticus as setting up this theological crux. God is a holy God, he has created humanity to dwell and have fellowship and communion with humanity, but by Adam's rebellion and sin, humanity is kicked out of his presence, kicked out of the garden of Eden and Leviticus is really explaining the way in which God has opened up for humanity, specifically Israel, to enter his presence once more. So answering your question leads into various other themes like considering how the tabernacle represents a return to Eden but also the way to that presence, the various cultic sacrifices, the sin offering, the burnt offering and, again, the Day of Atonement. So to sort of cut to the chase, we can say that the heart of the Pentateuch is the need, humanity's need for the blood of atonement in order to be reconciled to God and so that gives us Spurgeon's beeline to the cross. The very foundation of the Canon is the Gospel, it's that God has provided atonement for his people to have fellowship and enjoy reconciliation with him.

And, of course, the tabernacle is a model so the way, as you know I explain this in class, is that the tabernacle is almost like a drama to stage and it's really prophetic; it's God saying, "This is what I'm going to do in the real world," as it were, so that the Day of Atonement needs to be accomplished, not with the blood of bulls and goats but it needs to be a true substitute which is the heart of the Gospel message.

Bill: Yup. I received a twitter...I know you don't, well, I don't know if you do or not but it doesn't really matter, but from the publisher, actually, that asked the question: should, and this is somewhat related but not entirely, but should have Adam sacrificed for Eve after she ate of the fruit? Now, this was from your publisher so....

Dr. Morales: Yeah.

Bill: I don't know how that relates but it was an interesting question. I thought I'd throw it out there and maybe put you on the spot.

Dr. Morales: Yeah. I've a little excursus on that and I don't want to make much of it because it's really speculation. We know what Adam did not do. We know what he did do, he joined the woman in sin and fell with her and chose her over God, chose rebellion. But the question of once the woman has fallen into sin and you have Adam, her head, and he's a righteous man, the way that I tried to pose this is: what do we see commended to us in the rest of the Pentateuch? And there are examples like when Judah finally demonstrates the fruits of his conversion and he offers himself instead of Benjamin when the Pharaoh's cup is found in his sack. This idea of offering one's self for another, Moses when Israel falls to the apostasy with the golden calf. He actually says, "Let me ascend the mountain and see if I can make atonement for you," and he basically offers himself, "Lord, blot me out if you will not forgive them." And so I think it should be without controversy that whether or not God could have accepted such a substitute, it certainly would have been the godly response for him to bring his wife before Yahweh and offer himself. And I just hint at that because this is looking in retrospect of the second Adam, what he does for his bride. This is, again, the beauty of the Gospel.

Bill: Yeah, like I said, I threw that question out there because IVP tweeted it and directed it right at us knowing we were going to talk today and I had heard that thrown out before. I'm not sure if it was from you or somebody else, but I had heard that and it was interesting but with what you said, there's obviously a great deal of speculation that goes there and in this subject you have to be careful not to over-speculate. I think you'd agree with that.

Dr. Morales: Right. And one of the reasons in bringing it up at all is just to show that the Levitical system of sacrifices is only typological and temporary and we really get the carpet pulled out from that in Genesis 2. You know, Genesis 2, many scholars are coming to the understanding that Eden is sort of your archetypal, the original Holy of Holies that the tabernacle and the later temple is trying to recapture, and it's amazing when we get sort of a view behind the curtain what's going on in the Holy of Holies. We see this matrimony. We see, you know, Genesis 2 is almost completely about this point. It begins with a lack; God for the first time says something is not good and that the man is alone. Then we have this strange parade of animals before Adam and the remark that he didn't find a helpmate for himself and then God creates the woman out of his side. So we're being given this theology that he is one flesh with her and once she has fallen, at the very least it should be very obvious that no animal can be her substitute.

Bill: Right. Absolutely. But you would agree that certainly in the garden after the fall when God confronted them and then the promise was given, Genesis 3:15, that there must have been a sacrifice of some nature because he clothed them. I mean, again, it doesn't state that explicitly but...

Dr. Morales: Right, and that's a common understanding and I think there's a lot of exegetical fodder for it.

Bill: And in that, maybe just building on that a little bit, does that picture for us what's coming in Leviticus? Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. God

expels Adam and Eve but he clothes them. Certainly sacrifice was given so that he didn't have to annihilate them, again, that would be my understanding, but it's driving then home because then we start seeing sacrifices, sacrifice and then we get to Leviticus and we see the full unfolding of that. Is that....

Dr. Morales: Yeah, I think that's part of the theme building up to Leviticus and that's why in the book I have a preliminary chapter covering Genesis and then Exodus. What we find in Genesis is that humanity descends further and further away from the presence of God so Adam and Eve are exiled just outside the gates of Eden and then we find that in the next narrative, Cain and Abel results in Cain being further east of Eden, exiled to the land of wandering, the land of Nod, and this avalanche of the growth of sin and the expression of sin reaches its culmination, of course, with the flood when God just wipes humanity off the face of the earth, sparing Noah, of course, and his family. But then it starts over again and he scatters humanity from the Tower of Babel so that by the time you get to the exodus, the knowledge of God is, has just disappeared. In fact, Moses says, "Okay," when he's meeting with Yahweh at the burning bush and he says, "Okay, when I tell them the God of our fathers has sent me to them, they're going to ask me, 'What is his name?'" You know, so and that sets up, sort of, again, the path toward Leviticus where God not only needs to deliver his people but he needs to in such a way as to reveal who he is so that there is a knowledge of God coupled with the restored presence of God.

Bill: Yeah, and just listening to you talk about it and, of course, I've taken your class, the book, your dissertation, obviously, all of this is feeding into this. But as I mentioned to you off air, as a family we're reading through the historical accounts of Israel particularly so we're starting in Genesis and reading all the way through the Chronicles, Kings and Chronicles. But because of the biblical theological understanding of the central themes that are driving through it, it's become more, I don't want to say dramatic, I mean, but there is a drama and that's one of the things that you pick up on in the book. I mean, you specifically have titles that mention this dramatic drama type narrative that is driving towards Leviticus and then you get to Leviticus, chapter 1 through 10, you have a whole chapter on that. Can you maybe in summary give us 1 through 10? What's the issue there?

Dr. Morales. Yes, good question. To do that, we need to set up from the end of Exodus so in Exodus, you have the tabernacle being constructed; the glory cloud moves from Mount Sinai to over the tabernacle and we read that the glory of God fills the tabernacle and the cloud covers the tent of meeting and we find something really odd, namely that Moses is unable to enter and this is significant. We sort of take it for granted because we have a similar account with Solomon's temple and I deal with those parallels in the book, but for our purposes, this is a dramatic cliffhanger with which the book of Exodus ends. It's not a neat ending and especially given that Moses is described to us as the man par excellence who is able to enter God's presence. So while Israel stays at the foot of the mountain, he ascends into the cloud. He is there 40 days, 40 nights in the presence of God. He is the one able to ascend into his presence and then suddenly we read he's not able and that's the problem that Leviticus 1 through 10 is going to resolve.

The way I describe the tabernacle, again, is something like a microcosm. It's a new world filled with the glory of God. It's a dramatic role like Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. It's just a microcosm of the creation, but because creation is polluted with the presence of sin and the stain of death, God can't dwell in the presence of his people so he needs to create, as it were, this second micro-world, the tabernacle, and it's filled with his glory but Moses can't enter in. In one sense, you could say this is the new creation filled with the glory of God but there is no new Adam yet to be brought in. And so what happens in Leviticus is God begins to speak from the tabernacle giving them the instructions for how someone can approach him so, you know, God has moved into your neighborhood but you can't just go up and knock on the door. He's got to give you instructions and so Leviticus 1 through 10 highlights the need to approach God only in the way that he has revealed and that way only.

So what is that way? Well, chapters 1 through 7 reveal the system of sacrifices and then 8 through 10, you get the ordination, the installation of the priesthood to offer those sacrifices; chapter 10 is the actual first or chapter 9 into 10, the opening inaugural worship service. So the resolution to the end of Exodus comes at the end of Leviticus 9 where we actually read, it's narrated that Moses and Aaron enter into the tent of meeting and so we have that resolution where God has revealed that this is how you approach me, through the blood of sacrifice. So that first obstacle is overcome but then, as you know, in Leviticus 10, Aaron's sons, as soon as the door is open, decide to approach in a way that God had not revealed and this is very important for understanding the full picture. Once the door is open doesn't mean we can just willy-nilly and it really undergirds the regulative principle, God consumes them.

Bill: Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up because we're talking about Nadab and Abihu, of course, and Leviticus 10. Now, you make an interesting point and I'd like you to even expand on that because I think in the contemporary church, I'm talking 21st century, there is this sense, this idea because they don't rightly understand a number of things, there is a sense in which we can just because of the work of Christ we can now just approach God any way we want, willy-nilly as you indicated, how does that practically just these first ten chapters of Leviticus, how does that practically affect the way we worship today?

Dr. Morales: Well, it should underscore, I think, first of all, the nature of God. I mean, this is the whole theological question that's set up and, again, by that question that I've titled the book with, "Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of Yahweh," or who shall abide in his holy place, God is utterly holy and, yes, he has descended to dwell in a tent in the midst of his people but that doesn't mean they can just approach him. So when you really study deeply the approach that he has opened up, the bloodshed, all of the theology of sacrifice, all of it serves to underscore that we are unworthy to be in his presence and it underscores that it should only be in the acceptable way, the way that he has revealed.

And so Nadab and Abihu, it's really fascinating. I mean, we would need something like PowerPoint to really bring out some of the parallels but the worship service that we get in chapter 9 is mirrored by Nadab and Abihu's approach. One example is the inaugural worship ends in chapter 9 with the people shouting. It ends in chapter 10 with the silence

of Aaron. God is glorified and his glory is revealed in chapter 9. He is glorified in chapter 10 but by consuming Nadab and Abihu. They belong together in this image or sort of this complete picture. How that relates to our worship today, I think the theology has not changed. God's character hasn't changed and certainly the accomplishment of Christ wasn't to allow what God had forbidden in the old covenant, and I think, you know, that's particularly clear in Hebrews 12 where we are bidden to...yes, we approach God with confidence but with awe and so worship him, you know, with reverence and awe acceptably which shows that there is an unacceptable way. So when we see how Christ himself fulfilled the theology of the sacrifices and all that he suffered and endured, it should not lead to a light view of approaching God but actually it hallows it even more so that we should be filled with more awe and come with joy and trembling into his presence. But that's something that is easier said and it really takes the meditating upon, I think, the theology of Leviticus and that's one of my hopes in writing this book is that that idea or that theology will make a fresh impact by the Holy Spirit.

Bill: Yeah, it would be wonderful. I remember having a brief discussion with my daughter because she would ask these contemporary questions, you know, why can't we worship this way? Why do you think that's unbiblical? Why do you think that's wrong? You know, we have these terms now: traditional worship, contemporary worship, which I hate, it's biblical or unbiblical, let's just cut to the chase. And I asked her, I said, "When you read the Bible and you see all the times that men, a man, met God face-to-face, as it were," I said, "what was the response? Was it goofiness and this uncontrolled attitude and response or was it reverence and awe and sometimes falling on their face and trembling and all of these other facts, what is that communicating?" It's communicating God's holiness and how we approach him and so Leviticus 1 through 10 really sets that up and it really begins this drive towards what is the heart of Leviticus which is chapter 5 in your book, now we're going to cleanse the house of God and why would the house of God have to be cleansed?

Dr. Morales: That drama actually is set up with what we were just talking about, with Nadab and Abihu, so God consumes them and suddenly you have in this tabernacle which, again, is sort of architectural recreation of Eden, the mountain of God, restoration with God, and suddenly you have death there and that is as odd as it would be to read in Revelation that something dies on the new earth; it breaks the symbolism. So, for example, Aaron who sort of represents the Adam of this new Eden, he is commanded not to mourn because mourning smacks of death and you have to keep the symbolism. But what happens then is you have the worst form of pollution and that's the corpse pollution there in the tabernacle premises, but also Nadab and Abihu and I take this and there's some debate on this but there's a general consensus that what they were trying to do with their censers was that, "Hey, God opened the way for us to meet with him." You'll notice that God appeared, his glory consumed the sacrifice on the altar so he appeared outside and they wanted to take it further, "Let's go into the tabernacle and meet with God in his house." So it's a twofold problem: 1. now that this Eden has been polluted with the stain of death, what can we do about it? Is it all loss? Does everything just have to collapse? And then, secondly, is there a possibility in the Mosaic covenant for us to have near access to God. And both of those tensions are resolved by Leviticus 16 where you have

Aaron, the high priest, penetrating into the presence of God in the deepest way possible in the old covenant; he actually enters into the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement. But then also that ritual accomplishes the cleansing of the tabernacle as well as the people, so God in his condescension sets up a way for the tabernacle regularly to be cleansed so that it can keep functioning as a place of meeting between Israel and God himself.

Bill: And it's a fantastic connection between the death issue and I'm glad you said that because this whole idea of death in God's presence is very odd, it would be very odd just like you mentioned in Revelation. You kind of moved into chapter 6 and that's okay, with Leviticus 16 and 17, this movement now where Aaron is meeting with God in the most central place possible on earth in the tent which is Eden represented in the tabernacle. Take us through, briefly, the importance of the Day of Atonement as it pertains to this entire narrative and how that relates directly to the Great High Priest who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Morales: Wow, briefly, you said. Okay.

Bill: Yeah, it's the exam, you know how they always tell you briefly and it's like, "Yeah, sure, I can do that in three minutes." Not.

Dr. Morales: Yeah, if the Mishnah is to be believed as accurate, when the second temple stood, on the Day of Atonement or for the Day of Atonement, God's people would hear read Genesis 1 through Leviticus 16. They would read this as a complete narrative and that's how I'm approaching it in this book. So you have Adam who is exiled from the presence of God from Eden. He is made to descend the mountain of God due to his sin and, as I mentioned, the narrative then continues with the estrangement of humanity from God. Leviticus 16 represents the reversal of that and to understand that, maybe it would help to give the background of how the tabernacle also represents a mobile mountain of God.

So this is perhaps the most clear in the Sinai narrative where at the worship of God in Exodus 24, you see the mountain is divided in a threefold manner: you have the summit, Moses alone approaches; the mid-section where the elders, along with Moses and Aaron, approached; and then the people at the foot of the mountain. When the glory cloud moves from Mount Sinai to the tabernacle, that's catechism that the tabernacle is now the new portable mountain of God and so we see that Aaron takes the place of Moses. He alone is allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies so that represents the summit. The rest of the priesthood into the holy place, that's the mid-section. Then God's people in the outer court. And the reason why that's important is because when you understand that that connection is being made and understood, then you realize whenever a priest enters into the tabernacle, he's actually ascending a mountain, and when he's coming out, he's descending with God's word to the people just like Moses ascended and descended Mount Sinai.

And how that sets up the drama then, maybe also involves getting into some of the parallels between Eden and the tabernacle, so perhaps just to list one: you have there on the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the holy place, woven upon it are the cherubim guarding this entrance into God's throne room and this, I think, the people would have understood given the narratives there in Genesis 2 and 3 as informed by that narrative. So when God exiles Adam and the woman from the garden of Eden, he sets up the cherubim there and so you put those two together and in many ways, I think, the Eden heirs are feeding into the people's understanding of what's going on in worship.

So all of that to come back to Leviticus 16. What we have here is the high priest as sort of a cultic Adam is ascending the mountain of God and he's going through the cherubim back into the presence of God and the clear theology that this is only done by the way that God has ordained and mainly through the blood of atonement. So that leads us to the work of Christ and maybe Luke's Gospel is a fitting example. You know, on the mount of transfiguration, he's talking with Moses and Elijah specifically about his exodus and this is basically an exodus movement out of exile back into God's presence. And when he is crucified, you know, what does he tell the repentant criminal? He says, "Today you'll be with me in paradise." And this is what we see that the full gesture of Christ's work after he sheds his own blood for our atonement, as the author of Hebrews points out, he ascends into the very presence of God. So not the architectural Holy of Holies, but the true heavenly Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement and we have to see that in all of the beauty of his humanity. We have in Christ our own humanity restored to the presence of God, not in some model or, you know, like Shakespeare's Globe, earthly temple but in the true heavenly Holy of Holies, the true Eden, the true paradise. So that full gesture of the cross, the burial, resurrection, ascension back into God's presence, this is the restoration of humanity to paradise and it's what we see in shadow form there in Leviticus 16.

Bill: Yeah, it's glorious just listening to you talk about it. I mean, I've been a Christian for a lot of years but just listening to you describe it that way, in summary, certainly there is so much more to it, but it's encouraging, it's edifying, it's convicting in some ways, but it just really ought to launch us into a great deal of praise and thanksgiving because we await now that glorious time when not in a tent, not in a church building on earth, but in the very presence of God we will see him as he is, we will be with him for eternity and he secured that and Leviticus 16 just pictures that in all of its beauty and when you understand it from the New Testament to the Old and you read it backwards and you see that, you just can't help but go, "Wow." You just stand in amazement really at the entire picture that's placed there.

As I indicated earlier, I mentioned earlier, I grew up in a dispensational world and this was just so lost. I mean, yeah, they would give the typology of the high priest and Jesus and all that stuff but the rest of it, you know, the mountain of God and, you know, the whole idea that the tabernacle and then Christ coming and he dwells with his people, as it were, as a tent in the midst of them. It's just really glorious just listening to you talk about it. It's just really amazing.

So, there is so much more we could talk about in the book, I mean, we could...there are other issues and I don't know if you have anything in mind specifically that you'd like to highlight from the book. I had jotted down a few comments that people might be wondering like how do we reconcile the issue of the high priest and Christ and Melchizedek? Maybe that's something you could comment on. That's just a thought. I don't know how that relates to the book or not but maybe it does. I don't know.

Dr. Morales: In general, it might be helpful just to give the over-arching theme so I'm trying to demonstrate that the main story of the Bible is God's desire to dwell with his people in communion and fellowship. So this was the goal of creation and after the fall, it becomes the goal of redemption and so it's to dwell with God in the house of God. And so I'll use passages like the end of Psalm 23, you know, David expresses this amazing hope, "I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever all the days of my life." How can he say that? He's not even allowed into the temple. But we understand this if we realize that the original creation of the cosmos is described analogically as a house that God wants to dwell with us in, once that house is corrupted, you need a temporary portable one. You get the tabernacle and then the little temple but that temple is like, it's a crass analogy but it's like a Barbie doll house, I mean, it's picturing God's purposes but it's not the end reality. We get the end reality in the houses, the cosmos' house there in Revelation 21:22 that God dwells with us; we see his glory in the face of Christ. And I think that it's a helpful theme, it connects a lot of the other themes in the Scriptures but also it should inform our worship. This is where we have a foretaste of that. And so in this book, I develop what you might call, you know, approaching the mountain of God, if you would have asked an Israelite, "What does it mean that you're approaching this temple?" they would have pointed to Exodus 24. This is when they approached God at Mount Sinai to worship him, this where they entered into covenant and that pattern informs their worship. Well, do we have something like that for the Christian today? And the answer is yes and I would point to Hebrews 12. We still worship God at his holy mountain but in the heavenly reality so we are approaching the heavenly Mount Zion. And there is a beautiful way you can even fit our Reformed liturgy into that from the call to worship, entering into God's presence, and as Calvin understood the sacraments, we are by faith ascending into the presence of Christ in heaven, feasting upon him. So when you realize at Lord's day, by Lord's day you're approaching God in the heavenly Mount Zion and this is a foretaste of the new Jerusalem, it just, it's very sanctifying.

Bill: Yeah, it ought to change your approach to worship. I was jotting down just some practical things that this book could generate and should generate as you read it. I'm not going...fool the listeners, it's a technical book, not everybody will understand everything in it. I don't understand everything in it, but I was just jotting down some practical benefits and one of them you already hinted on: our approach to the Lord's day. Leviticus informs us of this in how we approach God and in your opinion, how are we doing as a church in the 21st century on that subject, the Lord's day? Put you on the spot.

Dr. Morales: Yeah, I mean, well, I don't want to pander to the choir, but I think it goes without saying that those who have sort of come to appreciate the nature of God which our Reformed faith really brings out and his sovereignty, his majesty, his holiness, there

is a real desire for a new reformation. You know, even Calvin in one of his treatises expressed the need for the reformation was for the sake of the worship of God and this is what we see throughout Israel's history, the godly kings reformed worship and would that God would revise specifically the elders and the pastors of our churches and give them a new sense of soberness and awe in how they lead God's people in worship.

Bill: And then it practically, you know, you've already mentioned worship, we're not going to rehash that, but it really does inform and if we rightly understand it, you know, preparation to worship. It's not just, you know, we don't just wander into the church on Sunday morning and go, "Okay, I'm here." There is so much preparation that goes into it. Those first 15 chapters of Leviticus are really specific, in the first ten, all these preparation elements that are involved in approaching God. It's not just, we don't just fall in there but we think about, "What are we about to do?" And the call to worship does help us but even before that, you know, Saturday evening or Sunday morning and it's difficult with families and kids and maybe you have, I forgot how many children, a number, but you wrestle with this and we all wrestle with this, approaching God on the Lord's day and we read the Confession in the Larger and Short Catechisms and we are convicted by this idea of preparing our hearts beforehand but then we have kids running around and craziness on Sunday morning. Maybe practically, what kind of advice would you give pastorally to families out there that want to do it this way but struggle?

Dr. Morales: Well, I certainly can't give any advice based off of merit on my part. That's something that I do struggle with. There are good and practical applications, actually, in Piper's "The Lord's Day" book, but I think in general my wife and I, we want for ourselves and for our children for the Lord's day to be the high point and, you know, as I think it was Tertullian that said, "You don't fast on the Lord's day, this is the day of feasting." And so whether it's the kind of breakfast we have, this is a day of joy but also to make it clear that it's the whole day so we're not just attending for an hour at church and then, you know, that's it, cultivating this theology that the whole day is the Lord's tithe and so the things that we do, you know, there are certain books that our children read on Sundays and they know that there's a lot of books that are good and useful that they don't read on Sundays and so that they understand there's a distinction. But more than anything, just cultivating in their minds and reminding ourselves that, first and foremost, we are visiting God. This is what I love about even the term "tabernacle, mishkan," it's the dwelling of God. So worship is always characterized by we're visiting, we're being in his presence. So even if, you know, a three year old can't understand all the details of the sermon, the issue is that they're in God's presence and that is a covenantal right, it's a privilege, it's a glory. So, you know, even if I could remark of there's Abraham Heschel, now he was a Jewish person and he wrote a book on the Sabbath that is still very useful for Christians and he said it's a day that we enjoy but that we don't enjoy it through frivolity. You don't do cartwheels. There is a holy joy to the day. We don't want to be somber but we want to hallow the day. So for us as parents, that's things like getting the kids' clothes for church out on Saturday night and just being prepared so that we're not caught off guard or trying to catch up on our way to church. You know, just very practical things that we can do to ensure that the day is sort of reserved.

Bill: Yeah, well said and really appreciate the nature in which you said that. It's a challenge, especially when you have children. I went through it. It's challenging without children to prepare rightly.

I want to close our discussion with something that D. A. Carson said on the back of the book and I've picked this specifically on purpose because of something you'll find out in a minute. But he says this about the book, "This book promises to give us not only a theology of Leviticus, which it does, but also a richer theology of the Pentateuch, and finally of the whole Bible." Which is what it does. "I predict this volume will spawn some excellent sermon series on Leviticus." Now, I say that and it was a quote from D. A. Carson who is the Editor of this New Studies in Biblical Theology series, but I say that because you're working now on a commentary on Leviticus. Is that right?

Dr. Morales: Almost. It's a commentary on Numbers.

Bill: Oh well, that tells you how well I pay attention. But, okay, so anyway, a commentary on Numbers but, again, it's the Pentateuch, it's these issues that conform.

Dr. Morales: In God's providence, it gives me the opportunity to actually bring forward in a more detailed way some of the fruit from that Leviticus work so it's certainly in there and I hope by God's grace it will be profitable.

Bill: Any ideas as to when the listeners might get their hands on that one?

Dr. Morales: Right now...

Bill: It's one of those questions that you get the look. This is radio, not tv. I'm fond of saying that but, you know, I got that look across the table like, "Why did you ask me that? The editors are bugging me enough."

Dr. Morales: Hopefully the listeners' grandchildren may be able to get a copy. I mean, I've made some decent work but I would say I have about a year and a half to turn in the manuscript and then I've heard from someone else who's completed a volume in that series that it took the publisher maybe two years of editing to actually get it out, and I don't know if this particular person needed a lot of editing or if that's regular.

Bill: Can you reveal the editor or is that classified?

Dr. Morales: Well, I don't know this particular editor's name but the publisher is IVP. It's the Apollo series of Old Testament commentaries.

Bill: Excellent. So, well, look forward to that at some future unknown date. We don't know when but look forward to that and, you know, really, I look at my commentaries on my shelf and, you know, I've got plenty on Genesis but when I get to Numbers, I have plenty on Exodus, but when I get to Numbers, it's pretty sparse and maybe that's because there's not a lot out there on Numbers. So it's a needed discussion and commentary and it

does feed, is fed by the study of Leviticus. So I just look forward to that and I did want to get that promo in on this discussion.

I don't know what else to say about the book. I mean, I strongly encourage people to read it. I've had the benefit of listening to Dr. Morales live and in person at Greenville Seminary and if you're thinking about going to seminary and this kind of discussion, these are the things that we talk about in class. These come out and Dr. Morales is fond of writing on the board and illustrating very clearly and plainly these matters. So if that's something that interests you, you can even audit the classes so it's not as though you have to enroll in the seminary, but you can audit classes. But it's really, it's rich, full, rich, redemptive story of the Bible and it makes you love the Lord Jesus Christ all the more when you see these things laid out for you even in the earliest books of the Bible. So I appreciate it. Dr. Morales is a scholar. I mean, you just listen to some of the things that he says and references to some of the classical works and tying these things together and illustrating it. So, I really appreciate your labors and work and I think it will benefit the church. I hope it does and pray that way.

Dr. Morales: Thank you very much, Bill.

Bill: You bet.

Let me wrap up real quick. If you want to know what's coming up on the program, I don't have the webpage in front of me so we're just going to have to wing it. I think it's Brian Croft. He is coming up to talk about pastoral ministry, especially in family life, and how that ties together and some of the dangers and pitfalls that some ministers have fallen into in this area and how you can keep balance in your life. So it's really geared towards pastors but those who may be seeking the ministry or considering it, just remember, your wife comes with you, and so family comes with you, and so you've got to keep that balance. So we're going to talk with Brian Croft about that as well as other related matters. So that's something of what's coming up on the program. We are working diligently to do other things and so stay tuned to the podcast as well as our website, confessingourhope.com. But until next time, we do thank you for listening to this particular edition of Confessing Our Hope, the podcast of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and God bless.