

STANDING IN BETWEEN

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Numbers 16:46-48 (NIV)

46 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the LORD; the plague has started." 47 So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. 48 He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.

(Note: Atonement is defined as reconciliation. Thus, the call is to bring reconciliation between God and the rebellious.)

Introduction:

"The gaping earth was scarcely closed, before the same sins are again committed, and all these warnings slighted. They called the rebels the people of the Lord; and find fault with Divine justice. The obstinacy of Israel notwithstanding the terrors of God's law, as given on mount Sinai, and the terrors of his judgments, shows how necessary the grace of God is to change men's hearts and lives. Love will do what fear cannot. Moses and Aaron interceded with God for mercy knowing how great the provocation was. Aaron went, and burned incense between the living and the dead, not to purify the air, but to pacify an offended God. As one tender of the life of every Israelite, Aaron made all possible speed. We must render good for evil. Observe especially that Aaron was a type of Christ. There is an infection of sin in the world, which only the cross and intercession of Jesus Christ can stay and remove. He enters the defiled and dying camp. He stands between the dead and the living; between the eternal Judge and the souls under condemnation. We must have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins. We admire the ready devotion of Aaron: shall we not bless and praise the unspeakable grace and love which filled the Savior's heart, when he placed himself in our stead, and bought us with his life? Greatly indeed hath God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Ro 5:8." (Matthew Henry)

The calling demonstrated here is that of being an instrument of reconciliation between God and those dying in their sins!

I. THE PROBLEM—REBELLION.

A. The people were too shortsighted to see their own need.

B. The people were too sick and too sinful to save themselves.

II. THE PLAGUE—DEATH

A. The plague was death.

B. The death brought by the plague was the consequences of sin.

III. THE PROVISION—ATONEMENT

A. The provision was an answer to the intercession of those who cared.

- The altar was the place of God's presence.
- The coals of the fire contained the consumed sacrifice.
- The incense represented intercession.
- The calling was to take the presence and saving power of God into the midst of the dying people.

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B. The provision was evidence of God's mercy.

CONCLUSION

For the Christian the call remains the same, be an instrument of reconciliation between God and those dying in their sins!