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BIBLE STUDY

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**THE ATONEMENT**

**Leviticus 16:1-14**

***Leviticus 16:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;"***

***Leviticus 16:2 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy [place] within the veil before the mercy seat, which [is] upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."***

This chapter comprises the ceremonial and theological pivot on which the entire Book of Leviticus turns. Even though today the temple and sacrificial systems have disappeared, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) remains the holiest day in the Jewish year. Falling in the month of Tishrei (September or October in the Gregorian calendar), it marks the culmination of the 10 Days of Awe, a period of introspection and repentance that follows Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The emphasis in this chapter is on the necessity of sin being atoned for so that God’s people may be forgiven and reconciled to him. The ministry of the high priest was crucial in facilitating this. God set the regulations for the Day of Atonement in the context of priestly disobedience and made it inextricably clear to Aaron that he must follow the Lord’s commands to the letter. The introduction to the chapter is given in verses 1 and 2, with an emphasis on safeguarding the sanctity of the Most Holy Place, as Aaron was forbidden that he “come not at all times” into the holy place before the mercy seat. The Hebrew phrase translated here “come not at all times” could imply a total prohibition against entry, but the context makes it clear that with proper precautions the high priest may enter the Holy Place once a year. The translation “not to come whenever he chooses” gives the meaning clearly. Aaron was the central figure in this drama of redemption. He could not enter whenever he wanted into the holy place behind the curtain where the ark of the covenant was. If he did, he would die. Why? Because, the Lord said, I appear there in the cloud above the mercy seat the gold cover over the ark. In other words, this small cubicle in the tabernacle, and later the temple, literally housed the glorious, holy presence of God. Thus, God alone would decide who could enter his throne room and under what circumstances it could happen. The 2 sons of Aaron had brought strange fire into the temple, and a fire came out from God and killed them. We must remember that they had been instructed on the holiness of God, and they disregarded that. There are several things the strange fire could have been. One of the things most scholars believe it was, was that they were drinking alcoholic beverages. We also remember that Aaron was not allowed to grieve for them, or to bury them. He was separated for the things of God, and their cousins came and got them in their coats. Remember that Moses and Aaron had the same mother and father; Amram and Jochebed. They were of the tribe of Levi. Aaron could not go into the holy of holies whenever he wanted to, even though he was the high priest. To go into the holiest place without God's permission would be certain death. The presence of God was in the holiest place in the cloud above the mercy seat. The veil separated the holy place and the holy of holies. We will find that this veil symbolizes the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything in the holy of holies must be pure gold or 24kt. pure gold overlay. Where God dwelled must be holy. Gold means the purity of God. This warning could have been given to Aaron just after the death of his sons.

***Leviticus 16:3 "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy [place]: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering."***

Aaron will not only represent himself before God, but will be the entire congregation's representative, as well. Of course, this young bullock symbolizes the Lord Jesus Christ who was our sin offering. Jesus took our sin upon His body that we might receive His righteousness. The ram for the burnt offering is, also, symbolic of the Lord as our burnt offering. We remember that Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac to the Lord when God stopped him and gave him a ram substitute.

***Genesis 22:13 "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind [him] a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."***

This ram will be totally burned up as a sweet savour to the Lord. Remember, this offering shows the total surrender to God by the person being offered for. In the sin offering Jesus is our Saviour, in the burnt offering He is our Lord.

***Leviticus 16:4 "He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these [are] holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and [so] put them on."***

When Aaron is representing God to the people in the sanctuary, he wears the fancy garment of the high priest. The garment was the one with the breastplate with the 12 stones. It, also, had the ouches of gold on each shoulder with the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on the stones. The high priest carried the people he represented on his shoulders and on his heart at all times. When the high priest appears in the holy of holies before God for his sins and the sins of the people, he wears a very different garment. The garment the high priest wears when he presents the people and himself before God, is very plain. The linen in the garment, in the britches, and in the mitre shows righteousness. This washing of his body, before he puts on the garment, symbolizes water baptism. When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we are baptized in water and we put on the robe of righteousness that Jesus provided for us. We read in Revelation that this robe is so white, because it has been washed in the blood of the Lamb. This garment the high priest wears, shows that we stand before God with nothing cleansing us, but the blood of Jesus. We stand in the robe of all believers that Jesus has provided. No flesh must be showing. Flesh has been left behind. We are a Spirit man.

***Leviticus 16:5 "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering."***

He not only takes a sacrifice of the goats, and a ram for us, but takes one for himself, as well. Notice that the offering for the high priest is the same as the offering for the whole congregation. We must, also, see that the daily sacrifices were not enough. The fact that this offering was made just one day a year foreshadows the fact that Jesus would make one perfect offering for all time for everyone.

***Leviticus 16:6 "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which [is] for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house."***

***Leviticus 16:7 "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."***

***Leviticus 16:8 "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat."***

Theologians tend to use the term atonement to summarize Christ’s work on the Cross, it occurs only once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament.

***Romans 5:11 “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”***

This word probably means “cover,” and is first used where Noah is commanded to cover the ark with pitch.

***Genesis 6:14 “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.”***

Just as the ark was a “type” of Christ in saving His people from judgment, the “cover” within and without emphasized the means whereby our salvation is secure that is, our sins are covered by the blood of Christ. This covering of sin is an expression of God’s love for mankind.

***Proverbs 10:12 “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.”***

His offering for himself and his household must be made first, before he would be worthy to make offering for the congregation. Remember in the 2 goats, that one represents death and the other represents life. We are dead in sins and trespasses, until we accept Jesus as our perfect sacrifice. The animal that is killed represents the fact that we were dead in sin. The scapegoat represents life. We have been set free to live for Jesus. These goats are offered before the brazen altar at the door of the tabernacle.

***Leviticus 16:9 "And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him [for] a sin offering."***

***Leviticus 16:10 "But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, [and] to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."***

Jesus was our substitute, just as this goat was their substitute. Just as Jesus shed His precious blood for payment of our sin, this goat would shed his blood to pay for their sin. This goat being set free and driven into the wilderness with the sins on him, show the life we receive in Jesus. The high priest laid his hands upon the goat confessing the sins of the people and then released the goat and drove him into the wilderness. Both of the goats made up the sin offering.

***Leviticus 16:11 "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which [is] for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which [is] for himself:"***

The priest could not go into the holy of holies without blood for his sins and the sins of the people. This bullock is killed at the brazen altar, the blood from the animal will be brought into the holy of holies. We have mentioned this over and over, but it is very important to remember that the blood of animals can only cover sin. The blood of Jesus Christ does away with sin.

***Leviticus 16:12 "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring [it] within the veil:"***

Aaron entered and left the most holy place three times during the day’s sacrifices and rituals. The first time was to burn fragrant incense before the Lord. The second time was to get some of the bull’s blood from his sin offering and sprinkle it against the east side of the mercy seat and before the mercy seat seven times. His third entrance into the most holy place was to bring the blood of the male goat for the people’s sin offering and sprinkle it on and in front of the mercy seat. The smoke from the incense burning will separate Aaron from the full view of God. The presence of God is in the holy of holies. When he put the sweet incense on the coals, the smoke made a veil where he could not see the face of God.

***Leviticus 16:13 "And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that [is] upon the testimony, that he die not:"***

If he entered without blood, or in any way did not fulfill all the requirements of God, he would die. The mercy seat covered the ark of the covenant and the Spirit of God hovered in the smoke above the mercy seat. The holy of holies was closed off to everyone except the high priest and was even closed to him except for one time a year. Thank goodness, Jesus opened the way into the very presence of God for all believers when he was crucified.

***Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"***

This veil had kept all out, except the high priest. The veil symbolized the flesh of Jesus. We can go boldly before the Father now in the name of Jesus.

***Leviticus 16:14 "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle [it] with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times."***

This sprinkling 7 times on the mercy seat symbolizes the complete work of mercy that Jesus gave all who will believe. This blood sprinkled completed the sacrifice for sin for that year for the priest and the congregation. The blood of the perfect Lamb {Jesus Christ} completed the sacrifice for all time for all who believe. Aaron entered and left the most holy place three times during the day’s sacrifices and rituals. The first time was to burn fragrant incense before the Lord. The second time was to get some of the bull’s blood from his sin offering and sprinkle it against the east side of the mercy seat and before the mercy seat seven times.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What had happened to 2 of Aaron's sons, when they offered before the Lord?

2. Why had the LORD killed them?   
3. Who did the LORD call Aaron in verse 2?

4. Who were Moses' parents?  
5. What separated the holy place and the holy of holies?  
6. What did this veil symbolize?  
7. What shall Aaron come into the holy place with?

8. Jesus took our \_\_\_ upon His body that we might receive His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

9. This offering shows the complete \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God by the person being offered for.  
10. In the sin offering, Jesus is our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
11. In the burnt offering, He is our \_\_\_\_.  
12. What shall Aaron wear in the holiest place?  
13. What does the white linen symbolize?  
14. Before he puts on the garment, what shall he do?  
15. In the holiest place Aaron is representing \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_.  
16. When Aaron was representing God to the people, what did he wear?

17. What 2 things showed the concern of Aaron for the people?  
18. After we Christians are baptized, what do we put on?  
19. What is offered for a sin offering for the congregation?

20. What is the fate of the two goats?  
21. How does Aaron determine which goat shall die?  
22. What does the scapegoat symbolize?  
23. Who was the substitute for the Christian?

24. Why did Aaron carry the censer full of coals and the incense into the holiest place?

25. How many times was Aaron to sprinkle the blood before the mercy seat?