

## Leviticus 16:1-17 | Sunday June 8, 2025

The entire book of Leviticus emphasizes chapter 16, the Day of Atonement. It is the central point. The rabbis would often refer to it simply as **“The Day”** because of its importance. Each offering has a unique emphasis. The whole burnt offering shows a complete surrendering and setting aside to God. The trespass offering was used when you had wronged someone. The sin offering was for unintentional sins. Even with all these offerings, there are still sins that need to be dealt with that do not fit into one of the categories yet. We see this need especially after learning how deeply permeated by sin’s curse, we have become through chapters 11-15. This is why the Day of Atonement is so crucial, **it will deal with all sins and all uncleanness**. To accomplish this **a new part of the tabernacle will need to be used, the Most Holy place**.

### Leviticus 16:1-17 ESV

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died**, (2) and the LORD said to Moses, **“Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die**. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. (3) But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. (4) He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. (5) And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. (6) **“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house**. (7) Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (8) And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel. (9) And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, (10) but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel. (11) **“Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house**. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. (12) And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil (13) and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. (14) And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. (15) **“Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat**. (16) Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. (17) No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.

The day of atonement is a unique sin offering that happened once a year, and it dealt with all the sins of Israel. It was far reaching and atoned for sin issues that were not addressed by the other offerings. **It was the only day that the High Priest would go into the Most Holy Place behind the veil.** As God gives the instructions, the context of Nadab and Abihu is mentioned. Aaron's two sons tried to approach God and apparently His Most Holy Place in an incorrect manner and were killed because of their disobedience. God is warning Aaron and all future High Priests how careful they should be near the Most Holy Place. In all the offerings we have looked at, the priests have never gone into the Most Holy Place, it is protected by a veil. This veil is protecting the life of the priest, because if they try to enter God's presence in an incorrect manner they will die.

#### **Exodus 26:31; 33-34 ESV**

(31) **“And you shall make a veil** of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. **It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it.**

(33) And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. **And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy.**

(34) You shall put **the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place.**

The veil separated the Tent of meeting into two compartments, the **Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place.** In the Holy Place was the Golden Lamp Stand, **the only light for the entire tent,** the Altar of Incense, and the Table of Showbread. The Most Holy Place is a perfect cube, 10 cubits in each direction. **The veil separated God and man.** It served as a reminder of how Holy and perfect God is. Inside the Most Holy place was the ark of the covenant, where God's presence dwelt.

#### **Leviticus 16:2 ESV**

(2) and the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother **not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.** For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.

The veil was the stopping point. God was willing to dwell with His people and yet due to our sin and its curse a separation was needed for safety. By ourselves, in this sinful body, humanity it not prepared to be directly in God's presence. This is what makes the next verse so amazing.

#### **Leviticus 16:3 ESV**

(3) **But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place:** with a bull from the **herd for a sin offering** and a ram for a burnt offering.

God did not leave us separated from Him. He was willing to dwell with us and **He was willing to give us a path to approach His presence.** It would require a unique sin offering and every detail is going to point to Jesus who is the true sin offering. The burnt offering will not be used until after all the sin offerings are given. First, the High priest needed special clothing.

#### **Leviticus 16:4 ESV**

(4) He shall put on the **holy linen coat** and shall have the **linen undergarment** on his body, and he shall tie the **linen sash around his waist,** and wear the **linen turban;** these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on.

These **are not** the typical clothes for the high priest, that we studied back in Leviticus 8. Those were meant for **glory and beauty (Ex 28:40)**. These are much simpler, and speak of a purity and humility. The high priest could not enter into God's presence in any splendor or glory of his own. This wardrobe change points to Jesus putting off His splendor and glory and being willing to take the form of a humble, pure servant.

#### Philippians 2:6-8 NLT

(6) **Though He was God**, He did not think of equality with God **as something to cling to**.

(7) Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; **He took the humble position of a slave** and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form,

(8) **He humbled Himself** in obedience to God **and died a criminal's death on a cross**.

Jesus took off His glory and splendor and was willing to humble Himself and be taken on full humanity. He emptied Himself and became a servant even willing to die a criminal's death. The High Priest could not approach God in His clothes of glory and beauty because Jesus was going to be the sin offering in full humility.

#### Leviticus 16:5-10 NAS95

(5) "He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel **two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering**.

(6) "Then Aaron shall offer **the bull for the sin offering which is for himself**, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household.

(7) "He shall take **the two goats** and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

(8) "Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, **one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat**.

(9) "Then **Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering**.

(10) "But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.

(11) "Then Aaron shall offer **the bull of the sin offering which is for himself** and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself.

There are multiple steps to the Sin offering for the Day of Atonement. God is giving the instructions on what all needs to be offered. **The High Priest is to start with a bull for a personal sin offering**. The High Priest is a sinner and needed to deal with His own sin before He could help anyone else. Then two goats are presented and a lot is cast to determine which one should be killed and have its blood offered to God and which one will become the scape goat. The scape goat is part of the sin offering but will not be dealt with until the High Priest comes out of the Most Holy Place. Once these preparations have been made the High Priest is ready to enter the most Holy Place.

#### Leviticus 16:12-13 ESV

(12) And he shall take **a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD**, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, **and he shall bring it inside the veil**

(13) and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may

cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, **so that he does not die.**

The High Priest held censer full of coals and then was to add incense as He entered behind the veil for the first time. God wanted the smoke to obscure the view of the mercy seat, so that the High Priest would not die. God's holiness is emphasized at each step. We have a tremendously holy God.

#### **Exodus 33:18-20 ESV**

(18) Moses said, **"Please show me Your glory."**

(19) And He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you My name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

(20) But," He said, **"you cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live."**

Moses desired to see the glory of God, yet this was impossible. God was willing to reveal His goodness, and let Moses see His ever glow, (where God had been). God even wanted to reveal more of Himself to Moses, but He could not let Moses see Him face to face. God is too holy, Moses would die instantly. The High Priest had to make sure the Most Holy Place was full of smoke, for His own protection. **This makes our future because of Jesus all the more amazing to consider.**

#### **1 Corinthians 13:12 ESV**

(12) **For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.** Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

The God who had to cover His presence with a veil and then with smoke **we will be able to see face to face because of and through Jesus Christ.** Our great High Priest has given us an access to God that even the High Priest did not have. Once the Most Holy Place was full of smoke the High Priest could make the first offering of blood.

#### **Leviticus 16:14-15 ESV**

(14) And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger **on the front of the mercy seat** on the east side, and **in front of the mercy seat** he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

(15) **"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering** that is for the people **and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.**

The High Priest first entered into the Most Holy Place with the smoke of the Incense. He then would sprinkle the blood of His personal sin offering **in front of the Mercy seat.** Then once the view was obscure with smoke and His own sin dealt with, the High Priest would leave the Most Holy Place and kill the goat that was selected earlier. **He would then reenter into the Most Holy Place, with the blood** and sprinkle it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. The mercy seat was the covering/ lid to the ark of the covenant.

#### **Exodus 25:17; 21 ESV**

(17) "You shall make a **mercy seat** of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be **its length**, and a cubit and a half **its breadth.**

(21) And **you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark**, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you.

Notice there is a length and width given but no depth. **God's mercy is limitless.** The term mercy seat literally means **atonement cover. The blood was presented to the atonement cover.**

Sin was not judged but covered because of the presentation of blood.

#### Leviticus 16:16 ESV

(16) Thus he shall **make atonement** for the Holy Place, **because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins.** And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, **which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.**

All their sins were covered by the blood. All the uncleanness, all the transgressions, the blood covered them all. **This offering was a covering, it was not a perfect solution. The yearly presentation of blood pointed to the need for a permanent payment of blood.**

#### Romans 3:21-25 ESV

(21) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although **the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—**

(22) **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.** For there is no distinction:

(23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

(24) and are justified by His grace as a gift, **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**

**(25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith.** This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance **He had passed over former sins.**

The law bore witness to the righteousness of God that would be revealed in Jesus. The law was not the means to righteousness. The Day of atonement pointed to the need for Jesus. We all sin and all need our sin dealt with. We all need a blood payment. **Jesus is the propitiation by His blood. The payment that satisfies wrath.** We receive it by faith, by believing in what He accomplished. God passed over, covered the sins of the Old Testament as He waited for the perfect payment in Jesus.

#### Hebrews 9:11-14 ESV

(11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, **then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)**

(12) **He entered once for all into the holy places,** not by means of the blood of goats and calves **but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

(13) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,

(14) how much more **will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the real blood payment. He entered into the greater and perfect tabernacle that is in heaven and not apart of this creation. He entered into the Most Holy Place once for all time, not yearly. **His entry was not through the blood of goats or calves. He was granted entry through His own blood.** He brought the perfect blood payment and offered it on the Mercy seat. This is what was required to secure an eternal redemption. The entire trinity was involved. **God the son offered His blood though God the Spirit to God the Father.** His blood can

purify us and enables us to serve the living God. On Jesus could accomplish this. None of us can help!

#### **Leviticus 16:17 ESV**

(17) **No one may be in the tent of meeting** from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place **until he comes out and has made atonement** for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.

No other priest could enter into the tent of meeting when the High priest was going through the veil to make the blood payment.

Likewise only Jesus could accomplish the perfect blood payment. We do not help Him. We do not contribute to it. Jesus had to enter into the Most Holy Place.

#### **Hebrews 9:24 ESV**

(24) **For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands,** which are copies of the true things, **but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.**

Our salvation rests on the fact that Jesus entered heaven itself to appear in the presence of God on our behalf to offer His blood which was only accepted because of the perfect life in His body that He lived. God made a way for the veil, the separation between God and man to be torn down and it was through Jesus.

#### **Matthew 27:50-51 ESV**

(50) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit.

(51) And behold, **the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.** And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

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