

Leviticus 16:18-34 | Sunday June 15, 2025

Last week we started studying the Day of Atonement which is known today by Jews as Yom Kippur. Even with all the various offerings in Leviticus, there were still sins left unaccounted for. This is what makes the Day of Atonement so important, all sins were included through the special sin offering. It was the one time a year the high priest dressed in humility would enter the Holy of Holies into God's presence. He would go behind the veil **and present blood to make a covering for sin**. The blood the High priest presented though **was wholly inadequate**.

Hebrews 9:22 ESV

(22) Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, **and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**.

Hebrews 10:4 ESV

(4) For **it is impossible** for the blood of bulls and **goats to take away sins**.

Blood must be presented to forgive sin. Yet, the blood of the goat presented in the Holy of Holies was not able to pay for sin it was **powerless, lacking capability**. God gave these instructions to temporarily cover sin and to show Israel and us how sin would ultimately be dealt with. The day of Atonement was to draw our eyes to what Jesus' blood would accomplish.

Ephesians 2:13 ESV

(13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off **have been brought near by the blood of Christ**.

1 John 1:7 ESV

(7) But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, **and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin**.

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV

(18) knowing that **you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,
(19) but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Colossians 1:19-20 ESV

(19) For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
(20) and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of His cross**.

Revelation 5:9-10 ESV

(9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and **by Your blood You ransomed people for God** from every tribe and language and people and nation,
(10) and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

The Word of God puts incredible emphasis on the blood of Jesus and all it accomplished. The entire sacrificial system pointed to its need. The day of Atonement showed how Jesus would offer His perfect blood once and for all to deal with sin. **We will spend eternity praising Jesus for what His blood accomplished**. The instructions for the day of Atonement are not over yet, once the

High Priest left the Holy of Holies there was more for Him to do.

Leviticus 16:1-34 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. (18) **Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD** and make atonement for it, and shall **take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around.** (19) And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel. (20) "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. (21) And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. (22) The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the

wilderness. (23) “Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and shall take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the Holy Place and shall leave them there. (24) And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. (25) And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. (26) And he who lets the goat go to Azazel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. (27) And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. Their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned up with fire. (28) And he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. (29) “And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. (30) For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins. (31) It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. (32) And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments. (33) He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. (34) And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.” And Aaron did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Aaron was to take some of the blood and also sprinkle it on the altar of Incense or the bronze Altar, or most likely both of them. They both had horns on them, and both were involved in various ways in dealing with sin. Everything involved with paying for sin needed to be covered in blood. Our sin is that polluting. Then Aaron's attention was to turn to the live goat. The blood has been presented in the Holy of Holies, but **the sin offering is not fully complete**. Verse 5 is clear that the Live goat was viewed as being apart of the sin offering. This second part of the offering shows what happens to our sins when the blood payment has been made.

Leviticus 16:20-21 ESV

(20) “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, **he shall present the live goat.**

(21) And **Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins.** And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

The High Priest took his hands and laid them on the goat as He confessed over it the sins of Israel. Notice emphasis on all the various kinds of **iniquities, transgressions, and sins**. Each represents a different facet of our rebellion and sinfulness. **We transgress the law** of God and do not obey Him. Our **sin causes us to fall short** of His holy standard. Our **iniquity is all the twistedness** and corruption that come from these sins and transgressions. Aaron had to bring all this out into the open and confess who they were at their core. Our default is to hide these things instead of bringing them to the light.

Psalms 32:3-5 ESV

(3) For **when I kept silent, my bones wasted away** through my groaning all day long.

(4) For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

(5) I **acknowledged** my **sin** to you, and I did not cover my **iniquity**; I said, “**I will confess** my **transgressions** to the LORD,” and **you forgave the iniquity of my sin**. Selah

David describes the heartache and emptiness that hidden sin causes. He had to confess these sins, iniquities and transgressions. He knew his rebellion against God had many layers and went deep into his own heart. We work so hard at keeping our sins hidden, when God desires for them to be confessed so they can be forgiven.

There is no way Aaron could have known every single sin of Israel. This confession was in general agreeing with God, **that we are sinners**. Notice **there is not a ceremony here for each person to come forward** in a long line to confess all their sins. As Aaron laid His hands on the goats head it represented laying all of these innumerable sins onto the living goat.

This is the confession for salvation, we are a sinner in need of a savior. Then comes the confession for our growth where individual sins are dealt with. This is shown throughout the year when Israelites **would come forward with their guilt offerings or personal sin offerings** and confess what specific sin they had committed. This confession by the High Priest shows that all the sins that had been covered through the presented blood are laid onto the live goat. Once the High Priest makes this confession the goat is sent out into the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:22 ESV

(22) **The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area**, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

The goat was sent out into the wilderness to a remote place. Eventually this part of the ceremony was formalized and according to the Mishnah Yoma (200 AD) 10 booths were formed to verify the goat went deep into the wilderness. The name for this goat emphasizes this important part of the sin offering.

Leviticus 16:8 YLT

(8) 'And Aaron hath given lots over the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, **and one lot for a goat of departure**;

This word is rare and only found in this chapter. The translators struggle with what to do with it, so some have made an English word out of the Hebrew, **Azazel**. This is not translating the word at all. This causes some to make it a proper name, either of the wilderness or a goat demon in the wilderness. In chapter 17:7 we will see Israel was worshipping a goat demon in the wilderness but that is a different word. Nowhere in scripture are our sins presented to a demon in order for them to be paid for or taken away. **The word itself is a mash up of goat and the verb to send away**. Often it is called the scapegoat. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) it was translated as **the goat that is sent away with the evil. Our sin was not only paid for by Jesus but completely removed**.

John 1:29 ESV

(29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, **who takes away the sin of the world!**”

To pay for our sins they had to be laid on Jesus just like the scapegoat. He died for our sins and He took them away. **The goat of departure showed the complete removal of sins.** Jesus did the same, He removed our sins from us. I want to encourage you to make this personal to your own life. **He took your sin away from you,** and me as believers. It is a truth we know yet so many of us do not apply it to ourselves. We start to believe the lie that He could take other peoples' sins away, but not mine.

Psalm 103:8-12 ESV

(8) The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

(9) He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever.

(10) **He does not deal with us according to our sins,** nor repay us according to our iniquities.

(11) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him;

(12) **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

The north pole is **12,436** miles away from the south pole. That is far but measurable. There is no set distance from the east to the west. God specifically used this illustration and the scape goat to show us how completely our sins are removed away from us. These last two words are such an encouragement to me. **Our sin is removed from God's presence, but even more than that they are removed from us.** His forgiveness is that complete. He does not want us to condemn ourselves over our past sin. He desires that we rest in the truth that Jesus completely removed them from us. This is a truth found throughout scripture (Isaiah 38:17, Isaiah 44:21-22, Micah 7:18-20 and Jeremiah 50:20).

Leviticus 16:23-25 ESV

(23) "Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and **shall take off the linen garments** that he put on when he went into the Holy Place and shall leave them there.

(24) And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and **put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people** and make atonement for himself and for the people.

(25) And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.

Once the ceremonies for both goats of the sin offering had been completed Aaron would take off the humble clothing and **put back on His clothes of glory and beauty.** Just as Jesus put back on His glory after the cross and was given the name above all names (Phil 2:7-11). Finally, Aaron would present the whole burnt offering for himself and then for the people. They could fully set aside their lives to glorify God now that their sin had been deal with.

Leviticus 16:30; 34 NAS95

(30) **for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD.**

(34) "Now you shall have this as a **permanent statute,** to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins **once every year.**" And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did.

Israel was to observe the day of atonement once a year. A yearly reminder of their need for their sins to be atoned so they could be holy in God's sight. As important the Day of Atonement was, it is

fascinating that they Jews were not required to travel to the temple to celebrate it. Exodus 23:14-17 gives the list of required feast.

The feast of unleavened Bread (Immediately after The Passover), **The Feast of Harvest/ Weeks/ Pentecost** (Marked the end of the early summer wheat harvest), **The Feast of Ingathering / Tabernacles/ Booths** (Celebrated the final harvest and remembered Israel's time in the wilderness). Each of these feasts has a different emphasis and we will get to look at them in chapter 23. This raises the question of why did God not ask the nation to travel to Jerusalem for the Day of Atonement, the one day when all sin was atoned for?

The people could not contribute to what the High Priest needed to do in the Holy of Holies. They did not need to line up and confess sin, and they did not need to bring an offering. **All they contributed was their sin, then it was up to the High priest to make atonement.** The same is true for us. We cannot contribute to what Jesus accomplished on the cross. **God only asked Isreal to do one thing on the Day of Atonement.**

Leviticus 16:29; 31 NAS95

(29) "This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, **you shall humble your souls and not do any work**, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you;

(31) "It is to be **a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls;** it is a permanent statute.

Israel was to humble their souls and rest in front of God. In humility Israel was to recognize that they were sinners and needed a blood payment that they could not offer themselves. In this humility they were to rest and do no work. On the day the High priest had a lot to do, the people were to rest. **They had to trust that the High Priest would give the blood payment correctly.** It was through this humility and rest that the day of atonement applied to an individual in Isreal. God was very clear what would happen if someone refused to be humble and rest.

Leviticus 23:28-30 NAS95

(28) "You shall not do any work on this same day, **for it is a day of atonement**, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God.

(29) "If there is any person **who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.**

(30) "As for any person who does any work on this same day, **that person I will destroy from among his people.**

If someone refused to rest on the Day of atonement. If they wanted to work and provide their own way to atone for their sin then God would cut that person off from Israel and destroy them. We cannot add to salvation, or be accepted by God based on our own work. **We are to humble rest in what Jesus has accomplished!**

Matthew 11:28-30 NAS95

(28) "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, **and I will give you rest.**

(29) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, **and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS**

(30) "**For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**"