

# The Book of Leviticus

## The Day of Atonement

### Introduction:

1. The book of Leviticus has emphasized the importance of atonement (27 times thus far; 15 times in this chapter; 7 times afterward – total of 49 times).
2. It has emphasized the things necessary for atonement:
  1. Sacrifice (Chapters 1 – 7)
  2. Priesthood (Chapters 8 – 10)
  3. Purity (Chapters 11 – 15)
3. This chapter summarizes the previous teachings and brings them to their culmination in the most solemn day of the Jewish year – the Day of Atonement.

### I. A Solemn Occasion (Leviticus 16:1-2)

- A. The instruction begins with a reminder of the sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu.
- B. This was a solemn occasion which must be performed exactly as God specified.
- C. The High Priest was not allowed to come into the Most Holy Place at any other time than the Day of Atonement.

### II. Offering of the Bullock (Leviticus 16:3-6)

- A. When he came into the Most Holy Place, it must be with the blood of a sacrifice.
- B. The High Priest was to offer a young bullock as a sin offering.
- C. He also was to offer a ram as a burnt offering.
- D. This was to make atonement for himself and his house – the priesthood (cf. Heb. 9:7ff).
- E. On this occasion, the High Priest was to wear different garments than he normally wore.
  1. Linen girdle, pants, coat, and mitre (hat)
  2. All were white – thus, similar to the priests' garments, but without color
  3. He must bathe himself before putting on these clothes.

### III. Offering of the Two Goats (Leviticus 16:7-10)

- A. The two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the Tabernacle.
- B. Lots were cast to determine which goat would be killed and which would be released.
- C. These were not two separate offerings, but one sacrifice illustrating two principles.
  1. The sin offering was killed, showing the price that must be paid for sin.
  2. This represented the justice and judgment of God.
  3. The scapegoat was released, showing the results of forgiveness – sin removed.
  4. This represented the mercy of God.

### IV. Before the Mercy Seat (Leviticus 16:11-25)

- A. The High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place with a censer, filling the room with smoke.
- B. Then, the bullock would be sacrificed and his blood brought into the Most Holy Place.
- C. The, the goat would be killed and his blood brought into the Most Holy Place.
- D. Thus, atonement was made for the High Priest, the priests, and the people.
- E. Also, atonement was made for the Holy Place, the Tabernacle, and the Altar.
- F. Finally, the sins of the people were confessed upon the scapegoat and he was released.

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- G. Then, the High Priest would come into the Tabernacle, remove his garments, bathe again, and dress in his usual attire.
- H. Lastly, he would offer the two rams as burnt offerings for himself and the people.
- V. **Ritual Cleansing** (Leviticus 16:26-34)
- A. The one who carried the scapegoat into the wilderness had to bathe in order to be clean.
- B. The one who burnt the remainder of the sacrifices outside of the camp also had to bathe in order to be clean.
- C. This solemn day was to be observed once every year on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month.
- D. It was to be a day of fasting and rest – no labor was to be performed.

## Pulpit Commentary:

The high priest's acts on this day, so far as they are recounted in this chapter, were the following.

1. He bathed.
2. He dressed himself in his white holy garments.
3. He offered or presented at the door of the tabernacle a bullock for a sin offering for himself and his house.
4. He presented at the same place two goats for a sin offering for the congregation.
5. He cast lots on the two goats, one of which was to be sacrificed, the other to he let go into the wilderness.
6. He sacrificed the bullock.
7. He passed from the court through the holy place into the holy of holies with a censer and incense, and filled the space beyond the vail with a cloud of smoke from the incense.
8. He returned to the court, and, taking some of the blood of the bullock, passed again within the vail, and there sprinkled the blood once on the front of the mercy-seat and seven times before it.
9. He came out again into the court, and killed the goat on which the lot for sacrifice had fallen.
10. For the third time he entered the holy of holies, and went through the same process with the goat's blood as with the bullock's blood.
11. He purified the other part of the tabernacle, as he had purified the holy of holies, by sprinkling with the atoning blood, as before, and placing some of it on the horns of the altar of incense ([Exo. 30:10](#)).
12. He returned to the court, and placed the blood of the bullock and goat upon the horns of the altar of burnt sacrifice, and sprinkled it seven times.
13. He offered to God the remaining goat, laying his hands upon it, confessing and laying the sins of the people upon its head.
14. He consigned the goat to a man, whose business it was to conduct it to the border of the wilderness, and there release it.
15. He bathed and changed his linen vestments for his commonly worn high priest's dress.
16. He sacrificed, one after the other, the two rams as burnt offerings for himself and for the people.
17. He burnt the fat of the sin offerings upon the altar.
18. He took measures that the remainder of the sin offerings should be burnt without the camp.

