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The Day of Atonement

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Leviticus 16:11-19

Introduction: This chapter treats of the **day of atonement**, and of the rites, sacrifices, and services of it, directs when Aaron should come into the holy of holies, Leviticus 16:1; and in what habit he should then appear, and with what offerings both for himself, and for the people, Leviticus 16:3; and that having slain his **OWN sin offering**, and that for the **PEOPLE**, he should offer incense before the **mercy seat**, and sprinkle that with the **blood** of both, Leviticus 16:11; and by these offerings **make atonement** for the holy place, the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, Leviticus 16:16...

Atonement, expiation (the act of making satisfaction for an offense by which the guilt is done away and the obligation of the offended person to punish the crime is canceled.).

...and having done this, he was to take the live **goat**, lay his hands on it, confess over it, and **put upon it ALL the iniquities of the children** of Israel, and then **send it away** by a fit man into the wilderness, Leviticus 16:20; upon which he was to put off his linen garments, **wash** his flesh, and put them on again, and offer the **burnt offering** for himself, and for the people, Leviticus 16:23; also he that let go the goat, and he that carried and burnt the **sin offerings** without the camp, were to **WASH** themselves and clothes also, Leviticus 16:26; the observance of this day, ONCE a year, which was on the tenth of the seventh month, as a day of affliction and atonement (expiation), was to be a statute for ever to the children of Israel, Lev. 16:29. (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:1-5, And the LORD spake unto **Moses** after the **death** of the **two sons of Aaron**, when they offered before the LORD, and died; And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the **holy place** within the **vail** before the **mercy seat**, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the **holy place**: with a **young bullock** for a **sin offering**, and a **ram** for a **burnt offering**. 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 (**official turban**) shall he be attired: these are **holy garments**; therefore shall **he wash** his flesh in **water**, and so put them on. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel **two kids (he-goat)** of the **goats** for a **sin offering**, and **one ram** for a **burnt offering**.

NOTE: In his office as High Priest, Aaron was a type of the Son of God himself, our Great High priest. Of course, there were inevitably some great dissimilarities. Jesus had no need to offer sacrifices for himself, as did Aaron, but in other particulars there is an amazing correspondence. It will be remembered that Jesus, being first arrayed in that **gorgeous purple, scarlet**, and (perhaps also) **blue robe**, had it stripped from him prior to the crucifixion, and was clothed again with his own clothes which were of a very **humble**

variety, even as were those which Aaron wore here after having been divested of the **formal dress** of the **High Priest**. There was also another distinction:

"When the high priest went into the **Holy of Holies** on the **Day of Atonement** (expiation), he had to wear a simple **linen garment** without seams, a garment of the type Jesus wore when he went to the Cross as our sacrifice (John 19:23,24)."

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:6-10, And Aaron shall offer **his bullock** of the **sin offering**, which is for **himself**, and make an **atonement** (expiation) for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the **two goats**, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the **two goats**; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the **scapegoat**.

And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and **offer him** for a **SIN offering**. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the **scapegoat (goat of departure)**, shall be presented **alive** before the LORD, to make an **atonement** (expiation) with him, and to let him go for a **scapegoat** into the **wilderness (desert)**.

NOTE: The goats, though used in different ways, constituted only **one offering**. They were both presented before the Lord, and the disposal of them determined by lot—a solemn appeal to God (Proverbs 16:33) which Jewish writers have thus described: The priest, placing one of the goats on his **right hand** and the other on **his left**, took his station by the **altar**, and cast into an urn TWO pieces of gold exactly similar, inscribed, the one with the words, "**for the Lord**," and the other, **for "Azazel" (the scape-goat)**. After having well shaken them together, he put both his hands into the box and took up a lot in each: that in his **right hand** he put on the head of the goat which stood on his **right**, and that in his left he dropped on **the other**. In this manner the fate of each was decided.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:11-14, And Aaron shall bring the **bullock** of the **sin offering**, which is for himself, and shall make an **atonement** (expiation) for himself, and for his house, and shall **kill** the bullock of the **sin offering** which is for **himself**: 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: 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**: And he shall take of the **blood** of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger **UPON (NEAR TO) the mercy seat eastward**; and before the mercy seat shall he **sprinkle** of the **blood** with his finger **seven times**.

NOTE: "Now," say the Jews, "he must again put his hands on the head of the bullock, and repeat the confession and supplication he had before made, and **kill** the bullock with his own hands, to **make atonement** (expiation) for **himself first** (for how could he make reconciliation for the sins of the people till he was himself first reconciled?) and for his house, not only his **own family**, but all the **priests**, who are called the house of Aaron," Ps. 135:19. This **CHARITY** must begin at home, though it must not end there. The bullock being killed, he left one of the priests to stir the blood, that it might not thicken, and then, 5. He took a censer of burning coals (that would not smoke) in one hand, and a dish full of the sweet incense in the other, and then went into the **holy of holies** through **the veil**, and went up towards the ark, set the coals down upon the floor, and scattered the incense upon them, so that the room was immediately **filled with smoke**. The Jews say that he was to **go in side-ways**, that he might not look directly upon the ark where the divine glory was, till it was covered with smoke; then he must come out backwards, out of **reverence** to the divine majesty; and, after a short prayer, he was to hasten out of the sanctuary, to show himself to the people, that they might not suspect that he had misbehaved himself and died before the Lord. 6. He then fetched the blood of the bullock from the priest whom he had left stirring it, and took that in with him the second time into the **holy of holies**,

which was now filled with the smoke of the incense, and sprinkled with his finger of that blood upon, or rather **towards**, the **mercy-seat**, once over against the top of it and then **seven times towards** the lower part of it, v. 14. But the drops of blood (as the Jews expound it) ALL fell upon the ground, and none touched the mercy-seat. Having done this, **he came out of the most holy place, set the basin of blood down** in the **sanctuary**, and went out. (Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/leviticus/16.html>)

NOTE: Upon (NEAR TO) the mercy seat eastward.] This and the following verses signify, saith one, that even **heaven itself is defiled** unto us by our sins; **until** it be **made clean by the blood** and obedience of Christ, who is entered thither, "not by the blood of goats and calves, but by **his own blood**," and thereby **hath** "**purified the heavenly things themselves.**" [Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 9:23]

(Source: <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/jtc/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Hebrews 9:11-15, But **Christ** being come an **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by **his own blood he entered in once** into the **holy place**, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, **sanctifieth** to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the **mediator** of the **new testament**, that by means of **death**, for the **redemption** of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:22-24, And almost all things are by the law **purged with blood**; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the **heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these**. For **Christ** is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the TRUE; but into **heaven itself**, now to appear in the **presence of God** for us...

Leviticus 16:15, Then shall he **kill the goat of the sin offering**, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the **vail**, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the **bullock**, and **sprinkle it upon** (NEAR TO) the **mercy seat**, and **before the mercy seat**...

NOTE: That upon which the lot came for the Lord, Leviticus 16:9; the high priest having sprinkled the blood of the bullock, came out of the most holy place, and went into the court of the tabernacle to the altar of burnt offering, and on the **north side** of that **slew the goat** for the **sin offering**, the place where all such were killed; see Leviticus 1:11. This was a type of Christ, of his being slain, and made an offering for the sins of his people:

and bring his blood within the vail: it being received into a basin, as before the blood of the bullock was, he took it, and with it went in a THIRD TIME into the MOST HOLY PLACE: **and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon** (NEAR TO) **the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat**; it should be rendered "toward the mercy seat" it is by Noldius^{F17}Concord. Ebr. partic. p. 704. No. 2013.; See Gill on Lev. 16:14. (source: <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:16, And he shall make an **atonement** (expiation) for the **holy (most holy) place**, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in **all their sins**: and so shall he do for the **tabernacle** of the **congregation**, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

NOTE: ...that is, whereas the people by **their sins** had provoked God to take away those tokens of his favourable presence with them, and rendered even that **holy place unfit** to be the **habitation** of the **holy God**, **atonement** (expiation) was hereby made for sin, that God, being reconciled to them, might continue with them. 2. He must then do the same for the outward part of the **tabernacle** that he had done for the inner room, by sprinkling the blood of the bullock FIRST, and THEN that of the goat, without the veil, where the table and **incense-altar** stood, **eight times** each as before. The reason intimated is because the tabernacle remained among them in the midst of **their uncleanness**, v. 16. God would hereby SHOW them how much their hearts needed to be PURIFIED, when even the tabernacle, only by standing in the midst of such an **impure** and **sinful people**, needed this **EXPIATION** (act of making satisfaction for an offense by which the guilt is done away and the obligation of the offended person to punish the crime is canceled.); and also that even their devotions and religious performances had much amiss in them, for which it was necessary that **atonement** (expiation) should be made. During this solemnity, **none** of the inferior priests must come into the tabernacle... (Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/leviticus/16.html>)

Leviticus 16:17, *And there shall be no man in the **tabernacle** of the congregation when he goeth in to make an **atonement** (expiation) in the **holy (most holy) place**, until he come out, and have made an **atonement** (expiation) for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.*

NOTE: ...**no man in the tabernacle of the congregation**,.... Not any of the priests, as Aben Ezra, no, not in the holy place where they ministered, nor in the court of the tabernacle, nor in any of the courts, nor indeed any of the people: all places were cleared **when he**, the HIGH PRIEST: **goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place...**; this in the mystery of it was to signify, that atonement for sin is made only **by Christ our HIGH PRIEST**; he himself, and no other, **bore our sins**, and he himself purged them away, or by his sacrifice alone expiated them; his own arm wrought salvation, and of the people there were none with him to help and assist him; when he the **Shepherd** was smitten by the sword of justice, the sheep were scattered, all his disciples forsook him and fled; there were none to appear for him, or stand by him, or in the least to lend an assisting hand in the great work in which he was engaged; he is the **only Mediator, between God and man**, BOTH of REDEMPTION and of INTERCESSION; he is the alone Saviour, to him only are sinners to look for salvation, and he is to have all the glory; he had no partner in the work, and he will have no rival in the honour of it: **made an atonement for himself, and for his household**; his **whole family**, and all the priests, by the bullock of his sin offering, as Aben Ezra observes, and by carrying in the BLOOD of it within the vail, and SPRINKLING it there: **and for all the congregation of Israel**; by the goat of their sin offering, as the same writer notes, and doing with the blood of that as with the blood of the bullock; all typical of the atonement (expiation) of Christ for his mystical self **the church**; for the whole family and household of God; for the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:18, *And he shall **go out** unto the **altar** that is before the LORD, and make an **atonement** (expiation) for it; and shall take of the **blood** of the **bullock**, and of the **blood** of the **goat**, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.*

NOTE: **go out unto the altar that is before the Lord**,.... The golden altar, the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place without the vail, over against the **most holy place**, where Jehovah dwelt, and so is said to be before him; of this altar the Misnah^{F18}Yoma, c. 5. Sect. 5. understands it, and so do Jarchi and Ben Gersom; and, according to Ex. 30:10; **once a year** Aaron was to make an **atonement** on the **horns of it**, with the blood of the

sin offering, which plainly refers to this time, the day of atonement; but Aben Ezra is of opinion, that the **altar of burnt offering** is meant; and Bishop Patrick is inclined to think so too, because he supposes the high priest's going out signifies his coming FROM the sanctuary, where the **golden altar** was, and which **HAD BEEN cleansed**, Leviticus 16:16; and because, if the ALTAR of BURNT OFFERING is not here meant, no care seems to be taken of **its cleansing**; but it should be observed, that the holy place, Leviticus 16:16, means the **HOLY of HOLIES**, and **not** the **holy place** where the **altar of incense** stood; and that the altar of burnt offering WAS ATONED FOR and CLEANSED, when the **tabernacle of the congregation was**, IN which it stood, and from which, this altar is manifestly distinguished, Lev. 16:20; wherefore the reason given for the **altar of burnt offering** holds good for the **altar of incense**, since **IF** that is not intended, no care is taken about it; add to this, that the last account of the high priest was, that he was in the **most holy place**, and **NOT** the **holy place**, Leviticus 16:17; out of which he now came into the HOLY PLACE, where the **altar of incense** was: **and make an atonement for it**; where incense was daily offered up, signifying the prayers of the saints, which having many failings and imperfections in them, yea, many sins and transgressions attending them, need atonement by the blood of Christ, of which this was a type:

and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat; mixed, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; and so Jarchi asks, what is the atonement of it? he takes the blood of the bullock, and the blood of the goat, and MIXES them together: the account given of this affair in the Misnah^{F19}Ibid. Sect. 4. is; he **poured** the **blood** of the **bullock** into the **blood** of the **goat**, and then put a full basin into an empty one, that it might be well mixed together: and having so done, he did as follows:

and put it upon the horns of the altar round about; upon the **FOUR HORNS** which were around it; and it is asked in the Misnah^{F20}Ut supra. (Misn. Yoma, c.5. sect, 3.) , where did he begin? at the **northeast** horn, and so to the **northwest**, and then to the **southwest**, and (ended) at the **southeast**; at the place where he began with the sin offering on the outward altar, there he finished on the inward altar, and as he went along he put the blood on each horn, which was the **atonement for the altar**.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:19, *And he shall **sprinkle** of the **blood** upon it with his **FINGER seven times**, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.*

NOTE: This was done with his **right finger**, or **forefinger**, as the Targum of Jonathan, And seven times, to denote the **PERFECT CLEANSING** of the **altar** with it. Jarchi observes, that after he, the high priest, had put the puttings (of blood) upon the horns of it, he sprinkled of it **seven sprinklings on the top of it**: the Misnah says^{F21}Yoma, c. 5. sect. 6. , upon the **PURE PLACE** of it, that is, upon a place of it, from whence the coals and ashes were removed, and where the gold appeared:

cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel; by sprinkling the blood upon it; Jarchi's note is, "and cleanse it" from what was past, "and hallow it" for time to come.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)

Leviticus 16:20-21, *And when he hath made an end of reconciling the **holy (most holy) place**, and the **tabernacle** of the **congregation**, and the **altar**, he shall bring the **LIVE GOAT**: And Aaron shall lay **BOTH** his hands upon the head of the **live goat**, and **confess** over him **ALL** the **iniquities** of the children of Israel, and **ALL** their **transgressions** in **ALL** their sins, **PUTTING them** upon the head of the **goat**, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness...*

NOTE: The high priest having presented unto the Lord the **expiatory sacrifices**, by the sprinkling of their blood, the remainder of which, it is probable, he **poured out** at the foot

of the **brazen altar**, **1.** He is next to **confess** the sins of Israel, with **both his hands** upon the **HEAD** of the **scape-goat** (v. 20, v. 21); and whenever hands were imposed upon the head of any sacrifice it was always done with confession, according as the nature of the sacrifice was; and, this being a sin-offering, it must be a **confession of sin**. In the latter and more degenerate ages of the Jewish church they had a set form of confession **prepared** for the high priest, but **God** here **prescribed none**; for it might be supposed that the high priest was so well acquainted with the state of the people, and had such a tender concern for them, that he needed not any form. The confession must be as particular as he could make it, not only of all the iniquities of the children of Israel, but **ALL** their transgressions in all their sins. In one sin there may be many transgressions, from the several aggravating circumstances of it; and in our confessions we should take notice of them, and not only say, **I have sinned**, but, with Achan, "**Thus and thus have I done.**" By this confession he must put the sins of Israel upon the head of the goat; that is, exercising **faith** upon the **divine appointment** which constituted such a translation, he must transfer the punishment incurred FROM the sinners TO the sacrifice, which would have been but a jest, nay, an affront to God, if he himself had not ordained it. **2.** The goat was then to be sent away immediately by the hand of a fit person pitched upon for the purpose, into a wilderness, a land not inhabited; and God allowed them to make this construction of it, that the sending away of the goat was the sending away of their sins, by a free and full remission: **He shall bear upon him ALL their iniquities...** (Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/leviticus/16.html>)

Isaiah 53:6, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD (Yahweh) hath **LAI**D ON HIM the **iniquity** of US ALL.

NOTE: ...this was typified by laying of hands, and laying of sins upon the sacrifice, and **putting** the **iniquities** of Israel upon the **head** of the **scapegoat**, by whom they were bore, and carried away. (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=isa&ch=53#1>)

2 Corinthians 5:21, For he (God the Father) hath **MADE** him to **BE SIN** for us, who **KNEW** no sin; that **WE** might be **MADE** the righteousness of God **IN** him.

Leviticus 16:22, And the **goat** shall **bear upon him** **ALL** their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

NOTE: ...let go the goat in the wilderness; 'The manner of conducting this whole affair was this; they made for him a causeway (i.e. for the man that had the goat committed to his care, to have it out of the court, and out of the city), because of the Babylonians, who would pluck him by the hair, and say, Get out, be gone, get out, be gone. The nobles of Jerusalem accompanied him to the first booth, for there were ten booths from **Jerusalem** to **Zuck**, which were **ninety furlongs, seven and a half** to every **mile**; (i.e. twelve miles) at every booth they said to him, Lo food, lo water, and they accompanied him from booth to booth, excepting the last of them; for there was not one went with him to Zuck, but stood afar off, and observed what he did: what did he do? he parted a **scarlet line**, half of it he bound to the rock, and half of it he bound between his horns (the goat's), and pushed him backwards, and he rolled and went down, but before he came half way down the mountain he was **dashed to pieces**; then he (the man) went and sat under the last booth until it was dark-they **SAID** to the **high priest**, **the goat is got to the wilderness**; but from whence did they know that the goat was got to the wilderness? they made watchtowers or beacons, and they waved linen cloths, and so knew when the goat was **come to the Wilderness**^{F11}Yoma, c. 6. sect. 4, 5, 6, 8. . But the Scripture is entirely silent about the **DEATH** of this goat, though it no doubt **died** in the **wilderness...** (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=le&ch=16#1>)