



The Day of Atonement

**A Program and Study in Celebration of
the Day of Atonement**

Introduction

What you will need ...

- As the Day of Atonement has traditionally been a fast day, there is no festival meal planned on this day. As fasting was a significant part of the rituals performed on this day for ancient Israel, many in the Church of God continue that practice still today.
- There are others who hold the belief that fasting on the Day of Atonement is no longer required. For those who do not fast, plan your meal separate from the service.
- The following service is in two parts:
 - **The first part** addresses the rituals of national Israel under the Sinai Covenant and the reasons for them.
 - **The second part** addresses the freedom of the Sovereign Father's earthly children during the gospel age under the new covenant.
 - **An optional break** is offered between the two parts.
- The bible texts printed in the service portion of the program are from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the bible, unless otherwise noted. If you desire a different translation, you will need your bible. The bible translations in the study portion of the program are varied and of the author's choice.
- There is no additional study for the day added or recommended. The service is longer than normal and includes the study as an integral part of the service. However, you may add any additional study of your choice to your day if you desire.

Order of Service

Part One

Call to Worship

It is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Heb. 10:10, NRSV)

God said, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Heb. 10:17-18, NRSV)

Opening Comments

We are gathered today to observe the Day of Atonement, probably one of the most complex, mysterious, and misunderstood of God's festivals. God's annual festivals all work together to reveal God's plan for the salvation of mankind. In order to understand fully the meaning behind the Day of Atonement, it is important to understand that Israel's physical deliverance from Egypt, while a real event in history with meaning for its own time, was also prophetic of being freed from the bondage of sin and its death penalty through the atoning blood of Christ's sacrifice. We will explore both meanings today as we obey God's commandment to observe the Day of Atonement.

*O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the
rock of our salvation!*

Hymn #109 (CHORAL ARRANGEMENT)

O Lord, Thou Art My God And King!

Psalm 145

Dwight Armstrong

O Lord, Thou art my God and King! I'll Thee exalt, Thy praise proclaim!
I will Thee bless, and gladly sing forever to Thy holy name!
The Lord our God most gracious is; in Him compassions also flow;
In mercy He is rich to bless, but unto anger He is slow.

To all the Lord is very good; O'er all His works His mercy is;
Thy works all praise to Thee afford; Thy saints, O Lord,
thy name shall bless.
Thy Kingdom's glory they shall show; they shall Thy power also tell;
So that men's sons His deeds may know, His kingdom's grace that
doth excel.

Prayer of Confession

As this Day of Atonement points to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, let us confess before God our own sins and those of the whole body ...

Our God, and the God of our forefathers, may our prayer come before you. Do not ignore our supplication, for we are not so brazen and obstinate as to say before you, Almighty God, that we are righteous and have not sinned — rather, we and our forefathers have sinned. We have become guilty, we have betrayed, we have robbed, we have spoken slander. We have caused perversion, we have caused wickedness, we have sinned willfully, we have extorted, we have accused falsely. We have counseled evil, we have been deceitful, we have scorned, we have rebelled, we have provoked, we have turned away, we have been perverse, we have acted wantonly, we have persecuted, we have been obstinate. We have been wicked, we have corrupted, we have been abominable, we have strayed.

You let us go astray. We have turned away from your commandments and from your good laws but to no avail. But you are righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have acted truthfully while we have caused wickedness. What can we say before you, who dwells on high, and what can we relate to you, who abides in the highest heavens for indeed, everything that is hidden and revealed you know. You know the secrets of the universe, and the hidden-most mysteries of all the living. You probe all innermost chambers and test thoughts and emotions. Nothing is hidden from you and nothing is concealed from your eyes. And so may it be your will, Almighty God and the God of our forefathers, that you atone for us for all our errors, and you forgive us for all our iniquities, and you pardon us for all our willful sins.

For the sins that we have sinned before you under duress and willingly;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through hardness of the heart.
For the sins that we have sinned before you without knowledge;
for the sins that we have sinned before you with the utterance of the lips.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through immorality;
for the sins that we have sinned before you in public or in private.

For the sins that we have sinned before you with knowledge and with deceit;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through harsh speech.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through wronging a neighbor;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through inner thoughts.
For the sins that we have sinned before you in a session of vice;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through insincere confession.
For the sins that we have sinned before you by showing contempt for parents
and teachers;
for the sins that we have sinned before you willfully and carelessly.
For the sins that we have sinned before you by exercising power;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through desecration of the Name.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through impure lips;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through foolish speech.
For the sins that we have sinned before you with an evil inclination;
for the sins that we have sinned before you against those who know and
against those who do not know.

*For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us and pardon us through
Jesus' atonement for us.*

For the sins that we have sinned before you through denial and false
promises;
for the sins that we have sinned before you by subservience through bribery.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through scorning;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through evil talk.
For the sins that we have sinned before you in commercial dealings;
for the sins that we have sinned before you with food and drink.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through interest and extortion;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through haughtiness.
For the sins that we have sinned before you with the idle chatter of our lips;
for the sins that we have sinned before you with prying eyes.
For the sins that we have sinned before you with haughty eyes;
for the sins that we have sinned before you with brazenness.

*For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us and pardon us through
Jesus' atonement for us.*

For the sins that we have sinned before you in throwing off your yoke;
for the sins that we have sinned before you in judgment.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through entrapping a neighbor;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through a begrudging eye.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through light-headedness;

for the sins that we have sinned before you with obstinacy.
For the sins that we have sinned before you with legs that run to do evil;
for the sins that we have sinned before you by gossip-mongering.
For the sins that we have sinned before you through vain oath-taking;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through baseless hatred.
For the sins that we have sinned before you in the matter of extending a hand;
for the sins that we have sinned before you through confusion of the heart.

For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us and pardon us through Jesus' atonement for us.

And for the sins for which we are obligated to bring an elevation-offering;
And for the sins for which we are obligated to bring a sin-offering;
And for the sins for which we are obligated to bring a freewill-offering;
And for the sins for which we are obligated to bring a guilt-offering for a definite or a possible sin;
And for the sins for which we incur lashes for rebelliousness;
And for the sins for which we incur forty lashes;
And for the sins for which we incur the death penalty at the hands of the heavenly court;
And for the sins for which we incur excision and childlessness;
And for the sins for which we incur the four death penalties of the human court: stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling.

For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us and pardon us through Jesus' atonement for us.

For a positive commandment and for a negative commandment, whether it can be remedied by a positive act or whether it cannot be remedied by a positive act; those that are revealed to us and those that are not revealed to us. Those that are revealed to us we have already declared before you and confessed them to you; and those that are not revealed to us are revealed and known to you.

As it is said, the concealed sins are for Almighty God, but the revealed sins are ours and our children's forever, that we may fulfill the words of the Torah. For you are the forgiver and the pardoner in every generation, and besides you we have no king who pardons and forgives — only you.

My God, before I was formed I was unworthy, and now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed. I am dust in my life and will surely be so in my death. Behold — before you I am like a vessel filled with shame and

humiliation. May it be your will, Almighty God and the God of my forefathers, that I not sin again. And what I have sinned before you, may you wipe away with your abundant mercy, but not through suffering or serious illness.

My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully. To those who curse me, let my soul be silent; and let my soul be like dust to everyone. Open my heart to your Law, then my soul will pursue your commandments. As for all those who oppose me and design evil against me, speedily nullify their counsel and disrupt their design. May it be your will, Almighty God and the God of my forefathers, that human jealousy may not rise up against me, nor my jealousy upon others; may I not become angry today, and may I not anger you. Rescue me from the evil inclination, and place in my heart submissiveness and humility.

O God and King, cause your name to be unified in your world; rebuild your city, lay the foundation of your house, perfect your sanctuary; gather in the scattered exiles, redeem your sheep, and gladden your congregation. Act for your name's sake; act for your right hand's sake; act for your Torah's sake; act for your sanctity's sake. That your beloved ones may be given rest; let your right hand save, and respond to me.

May the expressions of our mouths and the thoughts of our hearts find favor before you, Almighty God, our Rock and our Redeemer. He who makes peace on high, may he make peace for us and for all Israel.

Amen.

(Prayer of Confession from Congregation Beikvot HaMashiach, Seattle, WA)

HYMN #4 (CHORAL ARRANGEMENT)

Give Ear Unto My Words, O Lord

Psalm 5

Dwight Armstrong

Give ear unto my words, O Lord, My meditation weigh;
Hear my loud cry, my King, my God, For I to Thee will pray.
Lord Thou shalt early hear my voice; I early will direct
My prayer to Thee, and looking up, An answer will expect.

For Thou art not a God who does In wickedness delight;
No evil shall abide with Thee, Nor fools stand in Thy sight.

All evil doers Thou dost hate, Cut off shall liars be;
The bloody and deceitful man, Abhorred is by Thee.

But I into Thy house will come In Thy abundant grace;
And I will worship in Thy fear Toward Thy holy place.
Because of watchful enemies, O lead me by Thy grace,
And in Thy righteousness, Thy way Make straight before my face.

Let all who trust in Thee be glad, In shouts their praise proclaim;
Thou savest them; let all rejoice Who love Thy Holy Name.
For Lord, unto the righteous man Thou wilt Thy blessing yield;
With favor Thou wilt compass him About as with a shield.

Introduction to the Study

The Day of Atonement under the Old Covenant

The Rituals and Their Meaning

God Dwelled with Israel

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt because he had a job for them to do and a purpose for their existence as a nation. They were to reveal God and his righteous ways to all of the nations of the earth. But, in order to ensure their success in what he planned for them, he needed to dwell among them and guide them. In order to dwell among them, he had to protect them from the power of his spirit-presence.

God is a spirit-being from the spirit dimension of existence, and there are certain laws that govern his ability to interact with the physical dimension of existence when he is in his spirit form. Because God was going to dwell among the Israelites, there were certain things that he required them to do in order for him to be able to continue to dwell among them. The dwelling of God with his people was one of the major reasons for the celebration of the Day of Atonement.

God is Holy

From what is said in the scriptures pertaining to the Day of Atonement, it is apparent that one of the laws God laid down is directly concerned with protecting the physical world from the energy of God's spirit presence.

Leviticus 11:44-45 ESV For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. 45 For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

Leviticus 19:1-2 ESV And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

Leviticus 20:26 ESV You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

God is a holy righteous being whose very nature and being requires that all things that come into close contact with him be of the same quality of existence. Any thing or person that is not in harmony with these laws of holiness or does not exhibit a holy and righteous nature cannot interact with God in his spirit-presence without being destroyed unless God himself protects or shields the physical thing or person from the power of his spirit presence.

This process of being protected or shielded from the power of God's spirit presence and the ultimate transformation of humans into spirit-beings are two of the awesome lessons that are taught through the Day of Atonement.

The Meaning of the Day

The central theme of the Day of Atonement (past and present) concerns the process by which sin is removed from God's chosen people in order for God to be able to dwell in his spirit presence among and within them.

The Day of Atonement under the old agreement with Israel detailed the process by which the nation of Israel could be physically and spiritually reconciled to God once a year in order for him to continue dwelling among them. The process by which Israel was reconciled to God and through which they maintained their contact and communication with him was also prophetic and symbolic of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ through whom access with God the Father is gained and maintained.

The Day of Atonement pictures the removal of all sin and the reconciliation between God and man through the forfeiture of an innocent life as a substitute for the life of the one who is guilty of violating God's laws.

Why Atonement is Necessary

Isaiah 59:1-2 ESV Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; 2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record that sin separates a person from fellowship with God. It is because of this separation that God devised a method by which this barrier (sin) between him and his people could be removed. The removal of this barrier makes it possible for there to be communication and fellowship between God and humans.

The scriptures clearly show that, when the spirit presence of God comes into contact with impurity, the impurity is destroyed. Therefore, the Israelites were given very strict rules as to how to perform the necessary rituals to remove physical contamination in order to be protected from destruction while being in close contact with God's spirit presence.

Through a sacrificial system and the rituals of purification, God is able to alter, transform, or shield people and things from the power of his spirit presence in order to dwell or commune with them in his spirit form.

The English word "atonement" is not a translation of the Hebrew word *kippurim* or *kippur*, nor does it mean "at-one-ment," as some have assumed. The word "atonement" is only an interpretation of the Hebrew and it is a purely theological concept, which refers to the process by which physical defilement (impurity) and spiritual and moral sin is covered or set aside.

It is important to understand that the word *kippurim* and its cognate verb forms are applied to the purging away of ceremonial and physical defilement as well as setting aside the penalty of spiritual and moral offenses.

Often, when reading scriptures concerning sacrifices for sin, it is difficult to determine whether it is physical or spiritual and moral defilement (i.e., sin) that is being addressed. There is a great distinction made in the sacrificial system between those things that were done in order to cover or remove

ceremonial and physical defilement and those that were done to set aside the penalty for spiritual and moral defilement.

However, the purpose of atonement was the same for each type of sin, whether physical or spiritual. The goal was to keep the tabernacle or temple and the Israelites in a pure and sinless condition in order for God to dwell among them and commune with them.

Leviticus 15:31 ESV "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."

Inviting God's Presence at our Study

Grant me, merciful God, knowledge and true understanding of your word, that I may know what your will is, and also may show in my life those things that I do know; so that I may not only be a knower of your word, but also a doer of your word, through my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The First Study **Day of Atonement Rituals**

by B.L. Cocherell

This study examines the Day of Atonement rituals using Leviticus chapter 16 as a guide to show why God designed the Day of Atonement and why he required the high priest to enter the Most Holy Place once a year to perform the rituals of atonement.

Editor's Note:

There is some dispute among Bible scholars as to the chronological order of the rituals during this day. Because of this dispute and the complexity of the rituals, this study does not attempt to place each ritual in chronological order; instead, each ritual is analyzed as an individual event.

It is also important to note that the scriptures do not give exact details concerning how each ritual was to be performed. It seems that God did not feel it was necessary to record these details, because they are not essential to understanding the major lessons of the Day of Atonement.

An Overview

Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:27-32 and Numbers 29:7-11 give an overview of what was required of the Israelites concerning the formal worship of God on the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16:29-34

“And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger among you” (v29 KJV).

God commanded the Israelites to keep a national fast on the Day of Atonement. This command was for anyone who was considered part of national Israel, whether they were an Israelite by birth or an Israelite by choice (i.e., a proselyte. See Ex.12:19; Deut.31:12). This day was a day of cessation from all labor, including food preparation.

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (v30 KJV).

Notice that fasting is connected with the priest making the atonement for the people. This was a day when all sins (physical defilement and spiritual and moral sins) were purged from national Israel.

In verse 30, the English words ‘cleansed’ and ‘clean’ are translated from the Hebrew word ‘tahir,’ which is almost exclusively used to denote ritual and moral purity.

In Zechariah’s prophetic vision (Zech.3:1-5), the high priest Joshua is pictured exchanging his filthy garments (unrighteousness) for rich apparel (righteousness), including a clean (tahir) turban. The clean turban is symbolic of his new pure and sinless condition and the authority that he would have as a righteous and sinless representative of God.

“It shall be a Sabbath of rest to you, and you shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever” (v31 KJV).

This day was a day of cessation from all work and a day of fasting (not eating or drinking). On this day, the entire nation’s attention was supposed to be focused on the meaning and purpose of this day’s events.

“And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whose hand he shall consecrate to act as a priest instead of his father, shall make atonement, and shall put on the linen garments, the holy garments. And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, he shall make atonement; yes for the priest, and for the people of the congregation he shall make atonement” (vs.32-33 Para.).

These specific rites of atonement had to be performed in order to cleanse the Most Holy Place within the tabernacle, the tabernacle as a whole, the two altars, the priesthood, and the nation.

This atonement process for the removal of sin was to be performed once a year as long as the nation of Israel existed under the sacrificial system:

"And this shall be to you a never-ending statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel, because of their sins, once a year" (v34 Para.).

Leviticus 23:27-32 KJV

The Day of Atonement is an extremely important festival, and those who refused to observe it were subject to the same punishment as those who refused to keep the Passover and eat unleavened bread on the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The Passover, the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and the Day of Atonement all had to do with the elimination of sin from God's chosen people, and God will not dwell where sin is:

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And you shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that does any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people" (vs.27-30).

The following scriptures show the festival, the command to assemble together for the purpose of worship, and the requirement to perform a national fast as a part of the day's worship are given:

"You shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall you celebrate your Sabbath;" (vs.31-32).

Numbers 29:7-11 KJV

"And you shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and you shall afflict your souls: you shall not do any work therein:" (v7).

Because all of the animals noted in verses eight through eleven are to be offered as burnt offerings as a sweet savor to the Lord, it is very unlikely that any of the eleven animals, except one of the goats mentioned in verse eleven, were to be used in the rituals concerning the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, and the altars of sacrifice and incense. If this assumption is true, ten animals were to be offered as a part of the Day of Atonement's formal worship service, in addition to the two lambs of the daily sacrifice (Num.29:1-8; Ex.29:38-45) and the special atonement rites that were to be performed by the high priest (the bull and two goats):

"But you shall offer a burnt offering to the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be to you without blemish: And their meat [meal] offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin

offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings” (vs.8-11).

Overall, God’s instructions to keep the Day of Atonement contain the following important aspects of this festival:

- It was a Day of Atonement for sin. All physical defilement (sin) and spiritual and moral defilement (sin) were to be purged from the nation of Israel, the priesthood, and the tabernacle.
- It was a day of fasting from evening to evening.
- No work was to be done on this day.
- Those who refused to observe this festival were to be put to death.
- Although it is not stated directly in the above scriptures, this festival was also a festival of rejoicing. See Lev.23:1-2,4.

THE ATONEMENT RITUALS

LEVITICUS CHAPTER 16

“The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who were killed when they offered unholy fire to the Lord” (Lev.16:1 GNB).

In the beginning of his instructions concerning how to perform the specific rites of atonement concerning the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the altars, the priesthood, and the nation of Israel, God inspired Moses to mention the deaths of Nadab and Abihu that resulted from their failure to pay attention to the laws of purity.

Aaron’s Two Sons

The two sons of Aaron disregarded the instruction that God gave concerning keeping all physical contamination out of his presence. By bringing unholy fire within the confines of the tabernacle, they had committed a serious violation of the law concerning purity and the tabernacle. By placing the impure fire in their censers, they defiled themselves as well as their censers, which made them impure and unfit to minister before God.

This blatant violation of God’s law brought a swift and fatal response from the presence of God. The law was very clear on this subject. All physical things (people or inanimate objects) that came into the presence of God while he was in his spirit form within the Tabernacle had to be in a condition of physical and ceremonial purity:

“And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord” (Lev.10:2 Para.). See also Lev.10:1,3, 9-10,12.

The Most Holy Place

“He said, ‘Tell your brother Aaron that only at the proper time is he to go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place, because that is where I appear in a cloud above the lid on the Covenant Box. If he disobeys, he will be killed” (Lev.16:2 GNB).

Within the heart of the tabernacle was the Most Holy Place. In this most sacred place was the ark of the covenant (i.e., the mercy seat) where the presence of God resided. The ark of the covenant contained the Ten Commandments written in stone by the finger of God, Aaron's rod which signified his authorization to meet with God and intercede for the people of Israel, and some of the food that God gave from heaven to sustain the Israelites as they traveled in the wilderness.

Who Was Aaron?

Who was Aaron and what were his responsibilities before God?

Aaron was the brother of Moses and his spokesman to the Pharaoh before Israel's exodus from Egypt. After the exodus, God appointed Aaron to administer the sacrificial worship system and represent the nation of Israel before him.

One of the reasons that God brought Israel out of Egypt was for the purpose of representing his system of worship and his way of life to the world: they were to be a nation of priests. Although Moses was first in authority in Israel as the prophet of God and the civil ruler, Aaron was the high priest who governed the priesthood serving at the tabernacle and he stood before God as the highest representative of Israel as a national priesthood.

Aaron's primary responsibility was to be a bridge between God and the people in all matters concerning the sacrificial system of worship. Because of this responsibility, Aaron and all subsequent High Priests were prophetic and symbolic of the coming Messiah who would offer the perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity and be the perfect and final mediator between God—the Father and humanity.

The Performance of the Atonement Rituals

Although other members of the priesthood could officiate in various duties within the tabernacle, only Aaron as the high priest (and his successors) could perform the special rituals that were necessary for the atonement of the tabernacle and the people. Only Aaron could go behind the veil into the Most Holy Place where the presence of God resided upon the ark of the covenant:

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

This is the one day of the year when God would appear upon the mercy seat in his glorified spirit-form. Because God himself would appear, the awesome power of his presence would be extremely intense; therefore, great care had to be taken in order to prevent the accidental death of the high priest.

It is said that, because of the extreme danger involved in performing the rites of the Day of Atonement, at the close of the day during the time of the second temple, the High Priest would invite his friends to a banquet to celebrate his successful performance of the services.

Aaron's Preparation

Prior to actually entering the Most Holy Place as the representative of the nation of Israel, Aaron had to prepare himself by performing specific ritual sacrifices, washings, and other acts in order to make sure that he and the priesthood were in a condition of physical purity and any sins that they might have been guilty of were atoned for.

This preparation was necessary to guarantee that the High Priest would survive his meeting with God. Coming so close to the presence of God was extremely dangerous and required that the rituals of atonement were performed in exact detail in order to remove all physical impurity from the High Priest and the priesthood. If the high priest failed to perform these acts of purification correctly, he would die.

Under the agreement with ancient Israel, the priesthood, the people, and all things that came into close contact with God had to be purified and kept clean, simply because God will not dwell where there is sin (Lev.19:2; 1.Pet.1:15-16), whether it is sin of physical defilement (Ex.29:36-46; Deut.23:14) or spiritual or moral sin. Absolutely nothing that is physically or spiritually sinful under the terms and conditions of the agreement with ancient Israel could come into the presence of God without being destroyed by the power of his presence.

The Holy Garments

"Before Aaron goes into the Most Holy Place, he must take a bath and put on the priestly garments: the linen robe and shorts, the belt, and the turban" (Lev.16:4 GNB).

The clothing that Aaron was commanded to wear during the Day of Atonement rituals was different from the usual golden clothing that he wore when officiating as high priest.

Each time he would change from the golden attire into the holy linen clothing (see Lev.16:32) or the reverse, he was required to wash his hands and feet and take a ritual bath. It is said that this process occurred five times during the Day of Atonement rites.

The white clothing that was to be worn during the Day of Atonement rituals had great symbolic meaning for that day and the future. The scriptures clearly shows white clothing as symbolic of righteousness, and, by extension, the one wearing the white clothing is symbolic of a righteous individual who stands before God as pure and sinless. See Dan.7:9-10; Matt.17:1-3; Rev.3:4-5,18; 7:13-14; 19:7-8.

"And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there" (Lev.16:23 Para.).

This record does not indicate the reason Aaron was to leave the white linen clothing within the tabernacle. Some Bible scholars believe that this clothing was not to be used again and was to be destroyed. Others believe that it was left there to be used the next year. However, it seems logical that, whether it was destroyed or used again, it was left because it symbolized righteousness and righteousness can only exist where God's spirit is present.

The Bull and the Ram

"He may enter the Most Holy Place only after he has brought a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering" (Lev.16:3 GNB).

The Bull

The bull was to be a sin offering. The word 'sin' in verse 3 is a translation from the Hebrew word 'hattat.' This word appears many times in both Leviticus and Numbers and it alternates in meaning between 'the reality of disobedience to God', 'sin-offering', and 'the means of removing guilt and penalty'. In this context, the noun is closely associated with the Hebrew word 'asham', which is often translated as 'guilt-offering'.

Because God says that the young bullock was to be offered as a sin offering, it can be assumed it was being offered to expiate unintentional sin and to remove personal and physical defilement. See Ex.chp.29.

The Ram

A ram was one of the animals that could be offered as a voluntary act of worship, an expression of devotion and complete surrender to the will of God, or for expiation of unintentional sin.

Although verse 3 notes that Aaron could enter the Most Holy Place after these two sacrifices were made, it is very likely that the sacrifice of the bull and the ram were a part of the day's formal worship and not a part of the special atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the two altars, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole.

Aaron's Sin Offering

It is only after Aaron had made these two sacrifices that he was prepared to proceed with the rest of the special purification rituals.

"And Aaron shall bring near the bullock of the sin offering, which is his own, and shall make atonement himself and for his house" (Lev.16:6 Para.).

"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" (Lev.16:11 KJV).

The instruction for Aaron to sacrifice a bull as a sin offering for himself and his house is mentioned a total of three times (the number three is symbolic of divine perfection). The sacrifice of this bull not only atones for Aaron but also for those of his house (i.e., those of the priesthood).

Purification of the Altar of Incense

Exodus 30:1-10 contains the instructions for the construction of the altar of incense that was to be placed before the veil of the Most Holy Place:

“And you shall make an altar to burn incense upon . . . And you shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat. . . where I will meet with you. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning . . .” (Ex.30:1,6-7 KJV).

“And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it [the altar of incense] once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once a year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy to the Lord” (Ex.30:10 KJV).

This is the requirement to make an atonement for the altar of incense once a year, which was necessary in order to remove all impurity from the altar before Aaron could take coals from it to place in his censer. Remember that, when God’s spirit-presence comes into contact with impurity, impurity is destroyed. Therefore, the altar of incense had to be purified so that it would not contaminate Aaron and cause his death when he entered into the Most Holy Place to meet with God.

“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:” (Lev.16:12-13 KJV).

At some point after Aaron had made the appropriate sacrifices for himself and his household, he took burning coals from the altar of incense, placed them in the incense burner that he carried with him into the Most Holy Place behind the veil and placed a large amount of incense on the coals, which caused the pleasant smelling smoke to fill the room.

From the scriptures, we know that it was very dangerous to come into close contact with or to look upon the glorified spirit-form of God (Ex.33:18-23; Lev.10:1-2); therefore, it is logical that Aaron would purify the altar of incense before taking live coals from it and going behind the veil to meet God.

The following could be reasons why the cloud of incense was necessary:

- This is where Aaron was to meet with God in his glorified form; therefore, it is logical that the cloud of incense was in some way used to shield Aaron from the power of God’s presence. See Ex.16:10; 33:18-23; Lev.10:1-2.
- Incense has a symbolic relationship to the prayers of the saints, which is shown in the Old and New Testaments.

“Lord, I cry unto you: make haste unto me; give ear to my voice, when I cry to you. Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Psa.141:1-2 KJV).

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” (Rev.8:3-4 KJV). See also Rev.5:8.

Symbolically, it seems that the censer was the vehicle that held and carried the prayers of the people as they beseeched God to accept the offerings that were made for spiritual and moral sin and purification from physical defilement.

Purification of the Mercy Seat

After the sacrifices for the atonement of the altar of incense, it seems logical that the next ritual was the purification of the mercy seat with the blood of a bull:

“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” (Lev.16:14 Para.).

This is the blood of the bullock that was offered for the sins of Aaron and his house in order to expiate their unintentional sins and remove their physical defilement. We know this because the bull is called a sin offering, not a burnt offering which the bull was called. This is noted in the list of animals to be sacrificed separately from the special rituals of atonement on this day (Num.29:7-11). Moreover, sin offerings were mandatory for purification rites, whereas burnt offerings were voluntary and given as acts of fellowship and worship.

Note:

This blood was sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat seven times. The number seven is symbolic of divine perfection.

The Two Goats and the Ram

“From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering” (Lev.16:5 NIV).

Two goats were to be provided by the people of Israel to be used in the special rituals on this day. It is not clear from the scriptures whether this ram is the same ram noted in verse three or a different ram, which was to be offered at a different time. What is certain, however, is that no time-frame is given for the sacrifice of a ram, except that a ram was to be offered before Aaron went behind the veil.

“And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Lev.16:7 KJV).

During each of the annual festivals one goat was offered for atonement of sin; however, on the Day of Atonement, there were two goats brought before God. These two goats were led to the

door of the tabernacle, but not allowed to pass through it alive, which was the case with all animals used as sacrifices.

“And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat” (Lev.16:8 KJV).

There was a distinction made between the two goats; one was for the Lord and the other was for something different. Notice that God made the selection between the two goats, which may be symbolic of God the Father’s selection of Christ as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity. See Psa.40:6-7; Heb.10:7-9; 1.Pet.1:18-20.

Although the scripture states that the goat is for the Lord, by extension, this goat was also for the people; without the sacrificial blood of this goat being placed upon and before the mercy seat for its purification from physical defilement, neither God nor his presence would be able to dwell among the people of Israel.

“And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord’s lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering” (Lev.16:9 KJV).

After Aaron went behind the veil and sprinkled the blood of the bull upon and before the mercy seat, he had to kill the goat that God had chosen to remove the physical defilement from the people of Israel.

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat” (Lev.16:15 Para.).

Again, blood had to be sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat seven times, but this time, the blood of the goat was sprinkled.

“And he shall make an atonement for the sanctuary because of the pollutions of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions for all their sins. And so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, which is dwelling in the midst of their pollutions” (Lev.16:1 Para).

Chapter 16 shows that the atonement was necessary because of the pollutions and transgressions of the Israelites.

Pollutions

In Leviticus 16, verse 1, the English word ‘pollutions’ is translated from the Hebrew word ‘tuma’, which means ‘uncleanness’. ‘Tuma’ is associated with physical defilement (i.e., ceremonial impurity) which must be kept away from anything that is holy. Therefore, it was necessary for the Most Holy Place and the rest of the tabernacle to be purged of any physical defilement that might have slipped in during the year.

Transgressions

Atonement was necessary because of the transgressions of God's law. In verse 1, the English word 'transgressions' is a translation of the Hebrew word 'pasha', which means 'rebellion', 'revolt', or 'transgression'. This word is predominantly used to describe rebellion against the law and covenant of God; therefore, as it is used in verse 1, 'pasha' denotes the sum of misdeeds and a fractured relationship between man and God.

As far as God is concerned, there are only two ways that 'pasha' (transgressions) can be erased: through punishment or a renewal of the covenant relationship.

Because the presence of physical impurity and spiritual and moral sin causes a breach between God and humanity, this breach had to be repaired in order for God and his people to continue to fellowship with each other. It was for the reason of renewing and maintaining this fellowship relationship that atonement for the Most Holy Place and the tabernacle was necessary.

Purification of the Altar of Sacrifice

"And he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement 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" (Lev.16:18 KJV).

Some believe that the altar noted in verse 18 is the altar of incense; however, this is highly unlikely because it was necessary to purify the altar of incense before Aaron took live coals from it in preparation to go behind the veil to meet with God.

"And with his finger he shall sprinkle blood on it seven times, and cleanse [Heb. tahor] it, and shall purify [Heb. qodesh] it from the uncleanness of the sons of Israel" (Lev.16:19 Para.).

In verses 18-19, the high priest is told to take the blood of both the bullock and the goat and put it upon the altar for the purpose of removing physical defilement and restoring it to a condition of ceremonial purity.

The altar is atoned for by the blood of both the bull and the goat, which had also been taken into the Most Holy Place. It is through this blood that the altar is made 'tahor' (i.e., ceremonially pure) and it is through this blood that the altar is consecrated to the sphere of the sacred 'qodesh' (i.e., made holy).

The blood of both the bull and the goat was used for the expiation of defilement from unintentional sins and this blood symbolically represents the blood of Jesus Christ whose perfect sacrifice makes it possible for all sin to be removed.

The Burning of the Bull and Goat

Only the blood of the bull and the goat was used in the atonement process; their fat had to be burned upon the altar of sacrifice for a peace offering. See Lev.4:26,31.

"And the fat of the sin offering shall he [Aaron] burn upon the altar" (Lev.16:25 KJV).

It is important to remember that these offerings were mandatory, not voluntary. Because they were mandatory, perhaps the offering of the fat indicated that God had accepted the blood of atonement and delighted in the sweet savor (smell) offering because he could be at peace with the Israelites.

“And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung” (Lev.16:27 KJV).

Once the atonement process had been completed, the carcasses of the bull and the goat that were sacrificed for the atonement of the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the altars, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole, were taken outside the camp and burned.

“And he that burns them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and after he shall come into the camp” (Lev.16:8 KJV).

The fact that the carcasses of the bull and the goat had to be burned outside the camp and the one who burned them had to bathe and wash before entering the camp, indicates that these animals were sacrificed for the purpose of purification. See also Ex.29:1-14; 30:20-21; Num.19:1-21.

The necessity for the atonement of the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the altar, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole once a year reveals that, without the power of God's spirit, it is impossible to preserve an object or a person in a condition of physical and spiritual purity for very long.

The Live Goat

Some people believe that the live goat represents the devil, and the sins of the people were put back upon him. However, this idea is inconsistent with the plan of God for the salvation of humanity; in that, salvation can only be obtained through the sacrifice and name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-12). The scriptures clearly say that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev.12:10), but he has no part whatsoever in their justification to the Father or their ultimate salvation. Satan is the originator of sin and, therefore, he could never, in any way, have a part in being an atonement for sin.

The Scapegoat

Once the sacrificial process of atonement had been completed for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the altar, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole, the live goat was brought to the high priest for the final ritual concerning the removal of sin from Israel:

“And when he has made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat” (Lev.16:20 KJV).

At this point in time, the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole were all in a condition of purity before God. The bridge between God and his people was maintained, and formal relations between God and his people could continue for another year.

Why the Live Goat?

During each of the other annual festivals, only one goat had to be offered for the atonement of sin, which is also true of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement. However, on the Day of Atonement, one live goat was required in addition to the goat of the burnt offering:

“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, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, . . .” (Lev.16:9-10 KJV).

If the atonement process was completed with the blood sacrifices that had already been given, and the tabernacle and the nation as a whole were already reconciled to God, why was there a need for a second goat? What sin could be left to atone for if all sin had already been atoned for?

What is a Scapegoat?

The English term ‘scapegoat’ used in the King James Version denotes a person, animal, or object upon which a community’s impurity or guilt was transferred and then removed. Today, ‘scapegoat’ often refers to an innocent person whom people blame for misfortunes, faults, or sins.

The word ‘scapegoat’ is a translation of the Hebrew word ‘azazel’, which only appears in Leviticus 16. The exact definition of this word is uncertain. In all four usages it has the preposition ‘to’ attached to it, which seems to indicate that something is to be done to the goat. Various meanings that have been proposed are: ‘the goat that departs’, ‘the goat that is banished’, ‘the goat that is removed’, or ‘the goat that is sent.’

Regardless of the precise meaning of the word ‘azazel’, this goat had to have the people’s sins placed upon it and it had to be sent far from the people.

The Second Goat Remains Alive

Under the Law of Offerings, the animals offered for atonement were always killed. There is no example in the Law of Offerings in which a sin offering must be left alive; all sin offerings were to be slain by the hand of the one making the offering. This is a very important point to understand, because the sacrificial animal symbolically bore the punishment for the guilty person and symbolically paid for their transgression by literally giving its life (See Heb. 9:22 and Lev.17:11). In view of these facts, why would the sins of the people ever be placed on a live goat?

Although the King James translation uses the words ‘sin-offering’ and ‘atonement’ in reference to the live goat, it is obvious that this goat is not offered as a blood sacrifice for the atonement of sin. Because the second goat remained alive, it must be symbolic of something entirely

different from the sacrificial process of atonement for ceremonial, physical, spiritual, and moral defilement.

The key to understanding what the live goat literally and symbolically represents can be found in the original Hebrew language. Moreover, understanding the Hebrew words that are translated into the English words 'sin-offering' and 'atonement' in Leviticus 16, verses 5 and 10, will help clear up the confusion about the meaning of the live goat.

Sin-offering

"From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering [Heb. 'hattat'] and a ram for a burnt offering" (Lev.16:5 NIV).

The Hebrew word 'hattat' appears many times in the books of Leviticus and Numbers, alternating in meaning between 'the reality of disobedience to God', 'sin-offering', and 'the means of removing guilt and penalty' (i.e., atonement/expiation of sin).

Because one goat was slain and the other was left alive, it seems that a more conceptually accurate translation of the word 'hattat' in verse 5 would be one of the following:

- to bear the reality of disobedience to God
- to bear the people's sins against God
- to bear and remove the guilt of the people

Atonement for Sin

"But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat [azazel] shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat [azazel]" (Lev.16:10 NIV).

As stated before, the word 'atonement' (kippurim) concerns the means by which a person who is estranged from God is placed back into harmony with him. The conceptual meaning of 'kippurim' contains both the method and the result. When the method is properly carried out, the breach between God and man is healed; the result of sin is removed.

Both goats are a part of the atonement process by which the breach is healed between God and man. Each goat atones for the sins of the people; however, each goat does this by an entirely different method. One goat is slain to eliminate the result of sin and the other goat lives to eliminate the result of sin.

Bible Translators

When the Bible was translated into English, the translators often did not know the exact meaning of certain words, so they made their best guess based on textual context, the theology of the day, and personal preferences. This seems to be the problem with the words 'hattat' and 'kippurim', which have been translated into 'sin', 'sin-offering', and 'atonement'.

Understanding that the translation and interpretation of the Hebrew words 'hattat' and 'kippurim' is dependent upon the context in which each is used is a major key to understanding the literal and symbolic meaning of the live goat.

Because the slain bull and goat had already fulfilled the function of substituting a life for a life in payment for the penalty of sin, the live goat, not being a blood sacrifice for sin, was still a part of the atonement process, as noted in verse 10. But what part?

The Bearer of Sin

When we view the live goat as only a bearer of sin and not a sacrifice for sin, the literal and symbolic meaning of it becomes very clear. The live goat was an atonement for sin, in that it bore the sins of Israel and carried them away from Israel. Thereby, it performed the function of an atonement by removing Israel's sin from God's view:

"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" (Lev.16:21 Para.).

Because the live goat was to bear the whole nation's sins, it is obvious that these sins still existed. But why? These sins still existed because the people were still guilty of sin, even after being purged of it through the blood of the sacrifices. The whole nation, including the priesthood, were still guilty of something.

To gain a clear understanding of what was placed upon the live goat, it is important to know the meaning of the Hebrew words that have been translated into the English words 'iniquities', 'transgressions', and 'sins' in Leviticus 16:21.

Iniquities

The English word 'iniquities' is translated from the Hebrew word 'awon', which means 'iniquity,' 'guilt,' or 'punishment.'

Transgression

The English word 'transgression', which is used to describe the type of sin being atoned for in both Leviticus 16 and Numbers 29 during the special atonement rituals is the Hebrew word 'pesha', which can only mean 'rebellion', 'revolt', or 'transgression'. This word denotes the sum of misdeeds and a fractured relationship between God and man.

Sins

The Hebrew word used here for 'sins' is the noun 'hattat', which is usually used with the word 'pesha'. 'Hattat' pertains to the reality of guilt before God (i.e., sin).

Although all iniquity, all transgressions, and all sins of the nation of Israel were atoned for by the blood sacrifices, all of these sins existed and were to be symbolically placed upon the live goat. But, if Israel's sin had already been atoned for, why did it still exist?

Israel's Spiritual and Moral Sins Were Not Forgiven

There can be no doubt that the covering and removal of Israel's physical defilement (ceremonial and physical impurity) and the setting aside of the punishment for their spiritual and moral sin had been accomplished through the blood of the sacrifices.

There is also no doubt that their spiritual and moral sins had not been forgiven, because these sins were symbolically placed upon the live goat.

Israel's Sins Were Set Aside, Not Forgiven

The reason that the sins of Israel still existed after they were atoned for, is that they could never have been truly forgiven and forgotten. Before the advent of Jesus Christ, there was no forgiveness of sin as we think of forgiveness under today's agreement with God. Prior to Christ's death and resurrection, forgiveness of sin was temporary. Sins were forgiven, in that the punishment for certain violations of God's law were temporarily set aside.

The writer of Hebrews explains why sins under the sacrificial system could never be totally forgiven.

Hebrews 10:1-4 Paraphrased

"For the law being a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of these things, can never with the sacrifices which they continually offered year by year make the offerers perfect. If these sacrifices had made the offerers perfect, then why would they have to continually offer sacrifices? Would not they have ceased to offer sacrifices? If the worshipers were purged, then they should have no more consciousness of sins. But in these sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

The sins of Israel were brought to remembrance every year on the Day of Atonement because they were not forgiven or forgotten. The reason they could not be forgiven or forgotten was that the sacrifices were not perfect; they had no power to forgive sins. Therefore, the sins still existed and the people were still guilty of their sin.

Although the blood of bulls and goats was symbolic of the cleansing and forgiving power of Christ's blood, it could never forgive sins.

Israel's Sin Sent Away

"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:" (Lev.16:21 KJV).

At the time these instructions were given, Israel was camped in Sinai, which was a very large and mostly uninhabited area. The English word 'wilderness', in verse 21, is translated from the Hebrew word 'midbar', which generally describes three types of country: pasture lands,

uninhabited land, or the area of Sinai. Regardless of the exact meaning of the Hebrew word that was translated into 'wilderness' in verse 21 and 22, the inference is clear; the live goat had to be taken away from the camp of Israel and set loose:

"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" (Lev.16:22 KJV).

Although the live goat bore all the sins of Israel upon it and these sins were taken away from the camp of Israel, the punishment for these sins had not been exacted and the penalty had not been paid. The live goat could only atone for these sins by temporarily removing them from Israel, just as the slain goat could only atone for sin by providing a temporary substitute for the life of those who were guilty of sin.

The blood of bulls and goats could not forgive sin, it could only act as a temporary substitute for the life of the offender.

These sins still existed, the people were still guilty of sin, and the next year on the Day of Atonement these same sins and any committed during the year would be remembered and would have to be atoned for by the blood of bulls and goats and symbolically sent away from the nation of Israel for another year.

This atonement process had to be repeated year after year because, under the terms and conditions of the agreement between God and ancient Israel, only the life of the law breaker could pay the penalty for their sin. Animal life was only a substitute payment, which would be made until payment was made either by the law breaker or another substitute whose life was more valuable than that of the law breaker.

The Live Goat Was Defiled by Sin

"And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh with pure water, and afterward come into the camp" (Lev.16:26 Para.).

The man who came into contact with the live goat had to be physically cleansed before he could come back into the camp, because he had been in contact with an animal that was symbolically defiled with the sins of Israel.

The Two Goats

Together, these two goats were symbolic of Israel's reconciliation with God. The slain goat symbolically paid the price of sin, whereas the live goat symbolized the removal of the sin.

These goats were both symbolic and prophetic of the perfect process of atonement. The blood of the slain goat represented the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, whereas the live goat represented sins awaiting Christ's perfect sacrifice in order to obtain total forgiveness of sin and its removal forever.

SUMMARY

The Creator God brought the Israelites out of Egypt because he had a job for them to do and a purpose for their existence as a nation. These people were called to be a nation of priests who would represent God to the world as they practiced his religion to perfection; thereby, he would show his plan for the salvation of humanity.

The perfect situation would have been for Israel to have maintained physical purity and righteousness through perfect obedience to God's law. However, Israel could not do this because the entire physical existence was contaminated with physical defilement from which it was impossible to remain isolated for very long. Righteous behavior was also extremely difficult for the Israelites to maintain, because they did not have perfect character and were subject to human weaknesses.

The best that could be hoped for in this situation was that each time an infraction of the law was brought to light, it was atoned for at the earliest opportunity. Although atonement could be made for individuals daily and it was made daily for the nation as a whole, as time passed, unresolved sin of all types accumulated over the year.

Therefore, once a year on the Day of Atonement, all of the various types of sin that had accumulated over the past year were to be atoned for, so that God could continue to dwell among his people.

The Major Lessons of The Day of Atonement:

- God wants to dwell with his people and commune with them.
- The violation of God's law causes a breach between God and humanity.
- God will not dwell where there is a condition of sin (a violation of his law), whether this sin is physical impurity or spiritual and moral impurity.
- Those whom God chooses to represent him must maintain themselves in a sinless condition in order to fellowship with him.
- It is impossible to obtain total forgiveness for sin through the sacrificial blood of animals.

The Atonement for Sin

The special rituals on this day were performed for two basic reasons:

1. To cover and remove physical defilement (ceremonial and physical impurity) from the Most Holy Place within the tabernacle, the tabernacle itself, the altar, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole.
2. To set aside spiritual and moral defilement (sin) of the nation of Israel that was done unintentionally or through ignorance. Once these two things had been accomplished, the nation of Israel was reconciled to God and he could continue to dwell within the tabernacle and commune with his people.

BREAK

There is a lot to digest in the study and service today. A break at this point is recommended before continuing with a study of the meaning of the Day of Atonement during the Gospel Age. Take a half to a full hour, go for a walk, get some fresh air, or, for those who do not fast on this day, now might be a good time to serve your meal.

Order of Service

Part Two

Opening Prayer for Part Two

Almighty God, and most merciful Father, who commanded the children of Israel to offer daily sacrifice to you, that thereby they might glorify and praise you for your protection both night and day; receive, O Lord, my sacrifice which I now offer up to you; I yield you humble and hearty thanks that you have preserved me from the dangers of the night past, and brought me to the light of this day; and the comforts thereof, a day which is consecrated to your own service and for my own honor. Let my heart, therefore, Gracious God, be so affected with the glory and majesty of it, that I may not do my own works, but wait on you, and discharge those weighty duties you require of me; and since you are a God of pure eyes, and will be sanctified in all who draw near you, who does not regard the sacrifice of fools, nor hear sinners who tread in the courts, pardon, I beseech you, my sins, remove them from your presence, as far as the east is from the west, and accept of me for the merits of your son Jesus Christ, that when I come into your temple, and compass your altar, my prayers may come before you as incense; and as you would hear me calling upon you in my prayers, so give me grace to hear your calling me in your world, that it may be wisdom, righteousness, reconciliation and peace to the saving of my soul in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that I may hear it with reverence, receive it with meekness, mingle it with faith, and that it may accomplish in me, gracious God, the good work for which you have sent it. Bless my family, kindred, friends, and country; be our God and guide this day and forever for his sake, who lay down in the grave and arose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by George Washington, 1732-99

Hymn #75 (CHORAL ARRANGEMENT)

Holy, Mighty Majesty!

Psalm 99

Dwight Armstrong

The Eternal reigneth high above; He is mighty, He is great!
There between the cherubim He sits; let the people praise His name!
He is King and He maintains the right; He restoreth equity;
Worship and exalt the Eternal One! Holy, Mighty Majesty!

The Eternal One is God and King, and He spoke unto His priests;
In the pillar of the cloud He spoke, unto them who kept His law.
Moses is among them, Aaron too; they extolled the Lord their God.
Samuel also called upon His name; God did hear, and answered them.

O Eternal, You did answer them; You forgave and you avenged;
So, exalt the One Eternal God, Who in Zion is most great!
He is King and He maintains the right; He restoreth equity;
Worship and exalt the Eternal One! Holy, Mighty Majesty!

Invitation for God to Bless the Study

Lord, you have given us your word as a light to shine on our path; grant that we may so meditate on that word, and follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

The Second Study
The Festival of Atonement During the
Gospel Age of Salvation

by B.L. Cocherell

The observance of the Day of Atonement during this age of salvation is very different from its observance under the original covenant with ancient Israel. Today, atonement is given through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ's sacrificial blood, which provides perfect, complete, and final atonement for all types of sins.

Under the first agreement with national Israel, only certain types of sin could be atoned for by the blood sacrifices. Anyone who committed a sin for which there was no atonement had to be put to death.

Although certain sins such as physical defilement and spiritual and moral violations of the law could be atoned for, they were never absolutely removed or forgotten, because the blood of sacrificial animals was of less value than the human life for which it was substituted. Therefore, sin that was atoned for by the blood of animals was only temporarily set aside.

Under the new agreement, all sins, including capital crimes (except for blasphemy), can be forgiven, forgotten, and removed forever through the application of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

For the elect of God, there is no need to be reconciled to God and have their past physical defilement and spiritual sin atoned for through the blood of an animal because they have been purged of all sin forever through the sacrificial blood of Christ.

Under the first agreement with national Israel, the Day of Atonement was a time when the nation of Israel was commanded to assemble together to worship God. On this day, they were also commanded to perform a physical fast in order to humble themselves before God in anticipation of being reconciled with him, having their physical defilement removed from the nation, and having their punishment for their spiritual and moral sins set aside, so that God would dwell among them for another year.

Contemporary Meaning

Under the new agreement with the elect of God, the Day of Atonement celebrates the fact that the elect of God are totally reconciled to God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and they can always stand before him as righteous individuals who have the spirit of God dwelling within them.

Today, the Day of Atonement should be celebrated with the understanding that past sins are totally forgiven and forgotten through Christ's atoning blood, and that any present or future sin will automatically be forgiven upon request to the Father, through the application of Jesus' atoning blood. Moreover, the sinlessness and righteousness of the elect is maintained before the Father through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

A Holy Nation

The elect of God under the new agreement are called to be a holy nation as were the Israelites:

"Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for the earth is mine: And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . ." (Ex.19:5-6 KJV).

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1.Pet.2:9 Para.).

In order to understand the meaning of the Day of Atonement for those under the new agreement, it is necessary to review the Book of Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10, and many other scriptures that speak of the removal of sin—past, present, and future.

The Book of Hebrews

There are three basic ideas about reconciliation presented in the Book of Hebrews:

1. The system of worship at the tabernacle and temple was only a shadow, a replica, an imperfect imitation of heavenly things. It was through these shadows and imperfect copies of heavenly things that access to God could be made and maintained.
2. The sacrificial worship system provided a way through which people could be brought back into fellowship with God after they had been found guilty of violating his law.
3. The Book of Hebrews was written to the elect of God who had been washed clean of all sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and stood as righteous individuals before God the Father.

Note:

Hebrews chapters nine and ten explain the process of reconciliation to God the Father through the sacrifice of Christ in the context of the Day of Atonement.

Because of the extreme importance of the subject being discussed, the writer to the Hebrews goes over the same points many times using different examples and analogies. Perhaps, he does this to make sure that there is no doubt about what he is saying about the atoning power of the blood of Christ in relation to justification, reconciliation, forgiveness of sin, and the purity and holiness of God's people.

Hebrews 9:1-28 KJV

"Then Truly the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God" (vs.1-6).

The tabernacle and all the things in it were for the purpose of being able to fellowship with and formally worship God.

"But into the second [the Most Holy Place, behind the vail] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (v7).

Verse 7 clearly shows the two major aspects of the Day of Atonement concerning the Most Holy Place for which the blood of atonement was necessary:

1. The blood was used to cover and remove physical defilement (ceremonial and physical impurity) from the Most Holy Place within the tabernacle, the tabernacle itself, the altar, the priesthood, and the nation as a whole.
2. The blood was also used to set aside spiritual and moral defilement (sin) that was done unintentionally or through ignorance.

In verse 7, the writer to the Hebrews uses the Greek word 'agnoema', which can mean 'to make an error' or 'to err unintentionally or through ignorance'. He uses this word to distinguish the type of sins that were atoned for under the first agreement with national Israel from the ones that were totally forgiven and erased under the new agreement, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is important to know that, throughout the new agreement when the word 'sin' is used, it almost always refers to spiritual sin rather than physical defilement (ceremonial and physical impurity).

"The holy spirit thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:" (v8).

While the sacrificial system of worship was still in effect together with the existence of the tabernacle and temple, no one except the high priest could come before the glorified presence of God. The way was closed to all others until the manifestation of Jesus Christ as the spiritual high priest.

"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (vs.9-10).

The tabernacle and the temple that came after it were a type of substitute. They were a prophetic and symbolic representation to be used until the reformation of God's worship system under the terms and conditions of the new agreement.

Although sacrifices were performed in exact detail, the person offering these sacrifices could not be made perfect by them. The reason for this is that all humans live in an impure world (i.e., a world full of physical impurity). By virtue of their physical existence, all humans are subject to physical impurity and all humans sin (i.e., violate the law of God). Therefore, anything that is imperfect to begin with cannot be made perfect by something that is only symbolic of perfection.

"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;" (v11).

Jesus is the spiritual high priest who administers God the Father's worship system through the heavenly temple. Therefore, during the gospel age of salvation, the worship system that required a priesthood to be in attendance at a specific physical location on earth is no longer necessary for the elect of God.

“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” (v12).

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would bring the blood of the bull and the goat into the Most Holy Place to make atonement for the nation of Israel. However, through the sacrifice of his own blood, Jesus Christ entered the Most Holy Place in heaven to make the final atonement for the sins of all humanity.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies 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?” (vs.13-14).

An animal sacrifice could only temporally atone for physical impurity that placed a barrier between God and man, but the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ totally eliminated the need for any further sacrifice. Thereby, his sacrifice opened the way for direct worship, contact, and fellowship with God the Father. Because Jesus was sinless, having the presence of the holy spirit dwelling within him (Jn.3:34), he had no need to come before God with a sacrificial animal to expiate physical impurity. Additionally, because he was ceremonially pure and spiritually sinless, he could present himself before God the Father as the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of all sin.

“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” (v15).

Because Christ was both physically and spiritually sinless, he could offer the perfect sacrifice; thereby, he replaced the Aaronic priesthood with a spiritual priesthood of a higher order.

Jesus Christ is the spiritual high priest, mediator, and administrator of the agreement between God the Father and the sons of his new creation.

Another extremely important point in verse 15 is that all those who were called by God to salvation prior to Christ's death and resurrection and lived a righteous life will also participate in the benefits of the new agreement between the elect and God the Father. Those people have retroactively received the total forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God the Father that was promised to them concerning the Messiah. Therefore, they have also received salvation through Christ's sacrificial blood:

“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives” (vs.16-17).

The old and new agreements and the death of the one making the testament are all connected. Under the first agreement, an animal's life was used as the symbolic death of the one who made the will (i.e., the Creator God), and through this death, the testament was purified and sealed as a holy document:

“Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry” (vs.18-21).

Here, the writer mentions blood, water, scarlet wool, and hyssop. This is important because it is the only place in the scriptures where these are mentioned together in reference to Moses and the ratification of the covenant (Ex.24:8). Moreover, all of these items were used in the atonement and purification rituals that were done to set people and things apart for holy use (Lev.14:4,49-52; Num.19:6).

The Scarlet Wool

The scarlet wool is particularly interesting, because it is used in the rituals of purification and the designation of heirs; moreover, it is symbolic of the promise of salvation. See Gen.38:28-30; Josh.2:18-21.

Although it is not recorded in the scriptures, there were three uses of a red wool thread in the Day of Atonement rituals which are recorded in the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishna. One red thread was tied around the neck of the goat to be slain, one was tied on the head of the goat to be set free, and one was tied to the door of the sanctuary. It is said that, when the goat that was set free entered the wilderness, the red thread tied to the sanctuary door turned white. It is also recorded that, after 30 A.D. (the year of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ), the red thread that was placed on the door of the sanctuary never again turned white. See Yoma 39b Babylonian Talmud and pages 166, 170 Mishna, by Danby.

The Prophet Isaiah records that God would remove sins that are the color of scarlet and crimson, a deep, blood-red color:

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa.1:16-18 KJV).

Clearly, the red thread represents sin and the atonement for sin that was symbolically placed upon the two goats and symbolically atoned for by each goat. The turning white of the thread tied to the sanctuary was a sign that the sin of Israel had been removed from God’s sight.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there was no need for the sacrificial system to remove spiritual and moral sin, because a new agreement had been established that removed the necessity for the sacrifice of an animal life to atone for moral and spiritual sin. Now, the blood of Jesus Christ purges away all sin. Therefore, the sign of the red thread turning white, which pictured Israel’s sin being completely atoned for through the sacrificial system, ceased.

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (v22).

Verses 18-22, clearly show that it is by the blood of atonement that all things are purified from ceremonial, spiritual, and moral defilement and made holy to God. Clearly, the punishment for sin is death; therefore, without the loss of life, the penalty for sin cannot be paid. This is why the writer to the Hebrews says *"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" (v23).

The tabernacle and later, the temple of the sacrificial system were representations of what is in heaven and these representations had to be kept in a purified condition through the blood of animals, which was also prophetic and symbolic of the blood of Christ. However, the things in heaven, which these earthly things represented had to be presented with a perfect sacrifice in order to permanently seal the breach between God and humanity.

There could be no entry into the heavenly temple where God the Father dwells unless a perfect life that originated from heaven was sacrificed to purge away the sin of humanity.

"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: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he [Jesus] often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (vs.24-26).

The sacrificial blood of Christ was not brought into a temple, his sacrifice was offered outside the temple and it was possibly offered at the place on the Mount of Olives where the sacrifices for purification were burnt. His sacrifice was accepted into the heavenly temple of God the Father as the perfect and final sacrifice for the purging of both physical and spiritual defilement (sin); therefore, anyone who becomes the Father's son can come before him pure and sinless without defilement of any kind.

Everyone must die once, but some people will die again in the resurrection to the second death; however, those who come under the sacrificial blood of Christ are judged worthy of eternal and immortal life:

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (vs.27-28).

Hebrews 10:1-23

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered continually year by year make the offerer perfect" (v1 Para.).

The law of the sacrifices was only a shadow, a pale reflection of the reality that was to come in the person of Jesus Christ. These sacrifices were imperfect; therefore, they could not remove sin or its penalty. They were imperfect, because they were only prophetic and symbolic shadows of the real thing. They were worth less than the human life for which they were to atone; therefore, the penalty for sin still remained unpaid, waiting for perfect redemption through the Messiah.

Only through a perfect sacrifice could a sinner have sins purged away, forgiven, and forgotten; thereby, the sinner is made righteous (without sin), pure, and perfect before God. This kind of atonement was not possible through animal sacrifices:

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins every year” (vs.2-3 Para.).

If it had been possible for these substitutes of human life (animal sacrifices) to pay the penalty for a guilty person’s sin, no more sacrifices would have been necessary. If animal sacrifices were sufficient to pay the penalty for sin, the sinner would not have been guilty because the punishment for sin would have been exacted, which would have made the person sinless. Therefore, there would be no sin to bring to remembrance. However, animal sacrifices could not pay the penalty for sin because they were not of sufficient value:

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (v4 KJV).

Because the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were only substitutions (prophetic and symbolic shadows of the real thing) they could not be a perfect remedy for sin.

“Wherefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering you would not, but a body have you prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have had no pleasure” (vs.5-6 KJV).

It is clear from the scriptures that there had been a heavenly plan before human existence to replace the sacrificial system with a far better system in order to allow humanity to commune with God. The sacrificial system itself did not give God pleasure; it was the result of the process in which he took pleasure, which was the dwelling and communing with his people:

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do your will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin you would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;” (vs.7-8 KJV).

The Creator God personally came to eliminate the system that prevented direct communication and fellowship between the God family and the children of God. He came to fulfill the prophetic and symbolic meaning of the Day of Atonement. What the blood of animals could not do, his blood would do.

Because Jesus Christ was perfect physically and spiritually, he was the perfect sacrifice through which all past and future violations of the law could be totally forgiven and their penalty totally eliminated and forgotten.

Then he said, Lo, I come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first that he may set up the second" (v9 Para.).

Jesus Christ came to replace the first agreement with national Israel with a new one that does not require a sacrificial system or an attending priesthood to atone for the spiritual and moral sins of humanity. Because his sacrifice was worth more than all human or animal life, it was the ultimate and final atonement for all sin. Therefore, animal sacrifices that were of less value than human life became unnecessary for the sons of God.

"By which we are set a part through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (v10).

It is through the sacrifice of Christ that those called by God the Father under the new agreement are set apart for a holy purpose and purged of all their physical and spiritual defilement, in order to become sons of the Father's new creation and a temple of the living God.

"And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" (vs.11-12 KJV).

It is clear that the sacrificial system could restore and maintain the relationship between God and man. However, this was an ongoing physical process in which the results were only temporary despite the diligence of a physical priesthood and a dedicated people. But, Christ's sacrifice did not depend upon the diligence or dedication of people, because it was perfect in every way; therefore, it only needed to be offered once in order to guarantee eternal results:

"From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (vs.13-14 KJV).

Never again will it be necessary for one man to offer sacrifices for another's violation of God's law. Anyone who comes under the blood of Christ is purged from all sin and made righteous before God the Father for eternity. However, a child of God must have a serious desire to remain righteous forever, in order for God to maintain them in a righteous condition.

"Whereof the holy spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;" (vs.15-16 KJV).

The promise God makes to place his law within the innermost being of an individual can only be kept if the person receiving the law is sinless. This is because the law of God is holy, eternal, and spiritual in nature and it must be placed within a person through the power of God's holy spirit. And the holy spirit can only dwell and continue to dwell where there is an absence of sin. Therefore, perfect redemption was necessary in order for the law to be placed

within the heart, mind, and spirit of man. This perfect redemption of the spirit of man and the separation from physical and spiritual defilement could only be accomplished through Christ's sacrificial blood:

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (vs.17-18 KJV).

Under the terms and conditions of the new agreement, which was ratified and sealed through the blood of Christ, the elect of God have perfect forgiveness of sin—past, present, and future. As the elect of God continue their daily lives, the atoning power of Christ's sacrificial blood continues to wash away their sins as they avail themselves of its cleansing and redemptive power. In this way, the life of a child of God, the atoning blood of Christ, and the prophetic and symbolic meaning of the Day of Atonement is continually fulfilled on a daily basis.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" (vs.19-20 KJV).

Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, where the Creator God's presence was once a year to make an atonement for the people's sins. Now, through the blood of Christ, the elect of God can enter into the presence of God the Father any time they want to and communicate and fellowship with him, because they stand before him as righteous and sinless individuals.

"My little children, these things write I to you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1.Jn.2:1-2 KJV). See also 1.Jn.1:5-9.

Made Holy Through Blood and Water

"And having a great priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water" (Heb.10:21-22 Para.).

Christ was the promised Messiah whom Isaiah foretold would come to atone for the sins of all humanity.

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which has not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isa.52:15 KJV). See also Heb.12:23-24; 1.Pet.1:2.

Both the sprinkling of blood and the washing with water were acts of purification and removal of impurity and unholiness.

Through the sprinkling of blood and the washing with water, objects were cleansed of their physical impurity, made holy, and set aside for holy use. Moreover, through these two rituals,

people were cleansed of physical impurity, had their spiritual and moral sins set aside, were made holy, and set aside for holy use.

Under the new agreement, it is the blood of Jesus Christ and the water of baptism through which total purification is accomplished. In fact, it is through the sacrificial blood of Jesus that our sin is forgiven and we are washed clean of the defilement that prevents us from coming before the Father to receive his spirit.

Although baptism is symbolic of a physical death and a resurrection, it actually means much more. During this ceremony, the person is washed clean from all physical defilement and purged of all sin by the power of God's spirit through the sacrifice of Christ. Moreover, the baptized person becomes devoid of sin, is righteous before God the Father, and is ready to receive the indwelling of his holy spirit.

Verses 21-22, clearly show that those who have the blood of Christ applied to them and are washed in the baptismal waters are indeed purged of all sin, whether it is physical or spiritual defilement. In addition, they are transformed into a condition of holiness before God the Father.

Paul, Titus, and John all spoke about the washing away of sin by pure water, the blood of Jesus, and the cleansing power of God's spirit:

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16 NIV).

"Do you not know that the unjust ones will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous ones, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, but you are washed; but you were sanctified; but you were justified in the nature of the Lord Jesus, and in the spirit of our God" (1.Cor.6:9-11 Para.).

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works in righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he has saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the holy spirit; Which he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Tit.3:4-6 Para.).

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev.1:5 KJV). See also Psa.51:1-12; Rom.5:9; Eph.2:13; Heb.13:12; 1.Jn.1:1-7; 3:5-6; Rev.5:9; 7:13-14.

The elect of God are made holy through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by having their sins forgiven and washed away through the redemptive power of his blood; therefore, they can be close to God because they are people who are holy and set apart for his holy purpose.

Comment

Chapters 9 and 10 of Hebrews show the following reasons for the tremendous importance of Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice:

- When it is applied to a sinner, his sacrifice is the final and perfect sacrifice through which sin is totally forgiven and forgotten forever.
- The sacrificial system is no longer necessary to make it possible for those God chooses to be his royal priesthood and his holy nation to commune with him.
- Jesus Christ is the administrator of the agreement between God the Father and his children.
- Jesus Christ is now the high priest with the authority to intercede on our behalf before God the Father.
- His sacrifice fulfilled both the prophetic and symbolic meaning of the blood that purges away physical and spiritual defilement.
- He was the Creator God sent from God the Father to give his life as the perfect atonement for sin through which a human could be transformed into a new and holy creature in which the law and spirit of God can dwell.
- His sacrifice makes it possible for anyone who is called to salvation to come before the Father's heavenly throne anytime they want.

THE SINLESS

The Festival of Atonement is a time for the elect of God to give thanks and celebrate their ongoing condition of sinlessness and righteousness before God the Father, which was made possible through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa.103:11-12 KJV).

In this psalm, King David foretold the time when Christ would come and offer the perfect sacrifice to forgive sin and remove its penalty forever.

"Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col.1:13-15 KJV).

The apostle Paul also spoke of this reconciliation to God the Father by the blood of Christ. He said that we shall be saved from death through Christ, we are made innocent before God the Father by the death of his Son, and because Jesus lives, we are saved.

Christ, the Lamb of God

"Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy. And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot: Who truly was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1.Pet.1:16-21 KJV). See also Isa.53:4-6,12; Jn.3:16; 1:29.

“Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world” (Jn.1:29 Para.).

1 John 3:7-10 Paraphrased

The apostle John also speaks of the purity and sinlessness of those who have been reconciled to God the Father through the blood of Christ:

“Little children, let no one lead you astray; the one practicing righteousness, is righteous, even as the One is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the Devil, because the Devil sinned from the beginning. For this reason the Son of God was revealed, so that he would destroy the devil’s work” (vs.7-8).

The work of the Devil spoken of here refers to the deception of Eve and Adam, which resulted in humanity being placed under the death sentence for the violation of God’s righteous law. Christ has destroyed the Devil’s work by his righteous life and perfect sacrifice. Thereby, he removed the death sentence for those who obey God and he provided a way for them to continually stand before God the Father as righteous individuals.

The Seed

“Everyone being begotten of God does not sin, because his seed [the spirit of God] abides in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God” (v9).

It is impossible to understand what John is saying here unless one understands that the holy spirit that resides within the children of God keeps them in a sinless condition before God the Father. This sinless condition is made possible through the blood of Christ by which all sin is forgiven and washed away, in order to make the elect of God holy and a fit place for the spirit of God to dwell.

As long as a child of God is seeking to live a righteous life and does not willfully and habitually practice sin, no sin is imputed. This is so, because Christ lives in the children of God through the spirit of God. Therefore, his righteous qualifications as the sacrificial Lamb of God are also attributed to the children of God, which keeps them in a sinless condition. See Rom.8:33-34, 1.Jn.1:1-7, 2:1-2; 5:18, and our study paper concerning the indwelling of God the Father’s holy spirit:

“By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed: Every one not practicing righteousness is not of God” (v10).

In the following scripture, John’s words can be applied to the meaning of the Day of Atonement for the elect of God:

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:5-9 Para.).

The Living Temple

Everything used in the service of God and in the place where his presence resides must be clean, pure, and sinless. God will not dwell where there is sin, nor will he allow anything impure or sinful to come into his presence. See Ex.29:36-46; Lev.19:2; Deut.23:14; 1.Pet.1:15-16.

Chapters 8 and 9 of Leviticus show that preparation and purification of the priesthood was necessary in order for them to serve God in the Tabernacle. It is important to read both of these chapters in order to gain a clear understanding of the importance that God places upon the purification process.

Many do not realize that God has not changed and that, under the new agreement with national Israel and the elect of God today, he still requires all things that come into close contact with him to be free from physical impurity and spiritual sin. This is why the sacrificial blood of Christ was necessary. And it is through Christ's blood that the elect may become and remain pure and sinless before God the Father. See Mal.3:6; Heb.9:22-28.

The Temple of Flesh

“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (2.Cor.6:16-18 LBP).

Because God will not allow his spirit to inhabit an impure place, a physical and a spiritual change must be made in order for him to dwell within the elect of God. This transformation is possible because of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, which has the power to erase physical and spiritual defilement in preparation for the indwelling of the spirit of God.

In the baptismal water, the Father purifies the physical body through his spirit-power, so that his holy spirit (his spirit-presence) can dwell within the repentant believer's physical body. See 1.Tim.5:22; Tit.1:15-16; Heb.10:14-22; 1.Pet.1:22; 1.Jn.3:1-3; 4:4.

“Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the holy spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God, because he owns it” (1.Cor.6:19-20 LPB).

"Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1.Cor.3:16-17 NIV).

"Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom you are also built together for an habitation of God through the spirit" (Eph.2:19-22 Para.).

The writings of the apostles leave no doubt that the physical body of a child of God is a temple of God; it is a sacred place where the holy spirit dwells.

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love having been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because of his spirit that he has given to us" (1.Jn.4:12-13 Para.). See Lk.24:46-49; Acts 5:32.

The Most Holy Place and the Day of Atonement

Within the heart of the tabernacle and the temple that came after it, was the Most Holy Place where the high priest met with God once a year on the Day of Atonement. In this most sacred place was the ark of the covenant where the presence of God resided. Within the ark of the covenant were the Ten Commandments written in stone by the finger of God, Aaron's rod that signified the high priest's authorization to meet with God and intercede for the people of Israel, and some of the food that God sent from heaven to sustain the Israelites as they traveled in the wilderness.

Today, the Father's name rests upon his children and his presence dwells within the innermost part of their flesh through the power of his holy spirit. All those who have the name and presence of the Father dwelling within them are a temple of God on earth.

Within this temple of flesh, the law of God is written in the hearts of his children. As long as they live within this temple of flesh, they have the authority to communicate with, serve, and worship the Father, and receive daily spiritual nourishment to sustain them as they journey through life. Moreover, the Most Holy Place on earth is within the children of God; it is where the spirit of God resides and where God the Father and Jesus Christ meet with those who are called to salvation.

SUMMARY

Under the original covenant with national Israel, the blood of animals was offered so that God could remain in the presence of his people. The blood of Jesus was offered so that people could have their sins forgiven, be made a part of the Father's family, live in his presence, and have his presence within them.

The elect of God are reconciled to the Father through the blood of Christ, repentance, and baptism and they are God's temple on earth with his spirit dwelling within them.

The children of God are kept continuously righteous and undefiled through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, so that God's spirit can continuously remain within them.

There are two very important things the elect of God should always remember, celebrate, and thank the Father and Jesus Christ for on the Day of Atonement:

1. As children of God, we are a holy and righteous beings in which the presence of God dwells.
2. As children of God, we have a promise that his presence will always remain within us.

"For he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say that the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me" (Heb.13:5-6 KJV).

Closing

Closing Prayer

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, who is and who was and who is to come, Let us praise and exalt him above all for ever. Worthy are you, O Lord our God, to receive praise, glory, honor and blessing. Let us praise and exalt him for ever. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and divinity, wisdom and strength, honor, glory and blessing. Let us praise and exalt him for ever. Let us bless the Father and the Son (...). Let us praise and exalt him forever. All the works of the Lord, now bless the Lord. Let us praise and exalt him for ever. Praise God, all of you his servants, and you that fear him, both small and great. Let us praise and exalt him for ever. Let heaven and earth praise his glory, and every creature that is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. Let us praise and exalt him forever. Glory to the father and to the son (...), as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Francis of Assisi, 1181-1226

Hymn #79 (CHORAL ARRANGEMENT)

Bless The Lord Eternal, O My Soul

Psalm 103

Dwight Armstrong

Bless the Lord Eternal, O my soul, bless His holy sacred name!
And forget not all His benefits to those who fear His name.
He forgives all our iniquities; our diseases He will heal;
From destruction He redeems our life, and He crowns us with His love.

Bless the Lord Eternal, O my soul, let the heavens praise His name!
For His mercy is as high above as the heav'n above the earth.
Not according to our many sins has the Lord so dealt with us;
For as far as east is from the west He removes from us our sins!

Bless the Lord Eternal, O my soul, let the angels praise His name!
For in heaven He has fixed His throne and there He rules the earth.
The Eternal vindicates the cause of all those who have been wronged;
For His mercy is as high above as the heav'ns above the earth!

Bless the Lord Eternal, O my soul, for His love always endures!
And His loyalty is to our sons who keep all His commands.
As for man he blossoms like a flow'r, and his days are like the grass;
But from death the Lord redeems our life and He crowns us with His love.

Benediction

Bless all who worship you.
From the rising of the sun
Unto the going down of the same.
Of your goodness, give me;
With your love, inspire me:
By your spirit, guide me;
By your power, protect me:
In your mercy, receive me,
Now and Always. Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
(Num. 6:24-26)