

# **Leviticus-Numbers**

## **July 5, 2009**

### **“Take Him; Not Me”**

### **Leviticus 16**

#### **I. Day of Atonement**

The Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur (literally yom hakkippurim), is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, even today. The original wording meant “day of ransom” or “hush money.” The word for ransom is used 16 times in the chapter.

The Day of Atonement was on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri—mid September to mid October) and in between two other festivals. From Numbers 29, the sequence is:

- Day 1– Trumpets blow to signify the new year (Rosh Hashanah)  
-It expressed joy and thanksgiving to God
- Day 10- Day of Atonement  
-Its significance was the removal of sin from the people and nation  
-It restored fellowship with God
- Day 15-22- Feasts of Booths/Tabernacles  
-God’s protection and guidance in the desert  
-Renewal of Israel’s commitment to God and trust in his guidance and protection

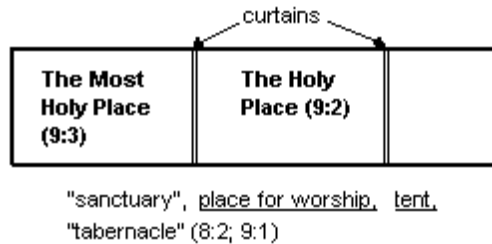
#### **II. Leviticus 16:1-2: Most Holy Place**

**Lev 16:1-2**

**16:1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. 2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.**

**NIV**

- Verse 1: A reference back to Lev. 10. Aaron’s sons had done wrong. He is being warned not to violate the sanctity of the LORD by entering before Him in an unauthorized way without proper preparation.
- Verse 2: Several Important terms appear in this verse:
- **Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies:** The inner most room of the Tabernacle, where the LORD “resided.”
  - **Atonement Cover, or Mercy Seat:** Physically, this refers to a slab of gold that rested on top of the ark of the covenant. God was literally thought on it; at times, the visible presence (cloud) of God appeared above. When God spoke invisibly in the Most Holy Place, His voice was heard as coming from above the cover.
  - **Curtain:** It separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, as in this schematic which includes references to it from Hebrews:



Aaron could enter the Holy Place but not the Most Holy Place.

(From Hebrews 9:2-5, we see the layout of this section is:

- 2a Contents of the outer room
- 2b Name of the outer room
- 3a The curtain
- 3b Name of the inner room
- 4-5 Contents of the inner room)

### III. Chapter 16:6: Aaron's Sacrifice for His Own Sin

**6 "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. NIV**

This is a key verse in comparing the Aaronic priesthood to that of Jesus'.

Some key points of the difference are:

- Jesus qualified as a merciful and faithful high Priest by becoming a man of the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:14-18)
- He did not assume the office of high priest Himself for glory (Heb. 5:5), but was called by God to the office, and not of the order of Aaron but Melchizedek (Heb 5:6)
- He had no need to sacrifice for His own sins, for He had no sin (Heb. 7:25-28)
- The Aaronic priests offered the blood of animals that could not take away sin, but He offered His own blood (Heb. 10:1-4, Heb. 9:12-13)
- His sacrifice was "once for all" (Heb. 9:26, 10:10, 10:12), not annually.
- The repetition of Aaron's sacrifices was a constant reminder of the persistence of sin. Christ's once-for-all sacrifice secured permanent forgiveness of sin (Heb. 10:1-18)
- He is eternal; they are not (Heb. 7:26)
- He performs His ministry in Heaven (Heb. 4:14, 9:11, 9:24), while they perform in an earthly sanctuary.
- He is seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12); they are not.
- There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

### IV. Heb. 16:7-10: Sin Offering for the Nation

**Heb. 16:7-10**

**7 Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8 He is to cast lots for the two goats — one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. 9 Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin**

offering. **10 But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.**

NIV

As noted above, the first step is for Aaron to offer his own sin offering. After that is completed, he can then offer sacrifice for the nation. Then, he takes two goats; one is chosen by lot for sacrifice, and is sacrificed in the typical way, apparently to remove sin from the Most Holy Place and the Tent of Meeting. The other is used differently than any other sacrifice in the OT.

## V. Heb. 16: 20-22: Scapegoat

Heb. 16:20-22

**20 "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins — and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. 22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.**

NIV

The still-living goat is called a scapegoat in Lev. 16:10. This word was made up by Tyndale when he made his translation. The Hebrew word (*Azazel*) means literally "an entire removal," but that does not translate very well as a name...hence, the need for the word scapegoat.

While the goat is a clear type of Christ (taking on the sins of the people and away from them), the mechanism of sin removal is not really clear beyond an allusion to Jesus in this passage (or any OT passage). As such, there were many Jewish legends that arose to explain this situation more fully, such as Azazel was really a demon to which sin is sent; others try to translate the word differently such as it being the name of a desert place where the goat might perish from a lack of food or from being thrown (released) from a high place.

The foreshadowing of Jesus is probably the only interpretation that makes much sense.

## VI. Lev. 16:23-28: Clean-Up Time!

Not only does the High Priest have to prepare for giving the sacrifice, including a sacrifice for himself, he must also see that the clean-up proceeds as instructed.

## VII. Lev. 16:29-31: Summary

Lev. 16:29-31

**29 "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work — whether native-born or an alien living among you — 30 because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. 31 It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance.**

NIV

While Aaron and others have active parts, note that it is the LORD who does cleanse sins.

What does it mean when the text says “to cleanse you” or “you will be clean from all your sins”?

Remember that their actions show what is in their hearts.

### **VIII. Atonement vs. Propitiation (vs. Expiation)**

While most English translations use atonement in Lev. 16, there is controversy on how to translate the Greek word used for translating references to it in the NT, i.e. using as atonement or propitiation. It has been my experience that the Bible versions use these terms fairly synonymously, but some people, especially strong Calvinist, make a big deal about the differences. Propitiation is probably the better term, although if you worry about such trivial differences, you might want to try some new experiences in your life. In any case, here is how one person (Adrian Ow, from Singapore) expresses some feelings on the topics

Definitions: *(quoted from the Oxford Dictionary of Current English)*

**Atonement** -- make amends (for a wrong)

**Expiation** -- pay the penalty for or make amends for (wrong doing)

**Propitiation** -- appease (an offended person) [*appease--to satisfy*]

“The first 2 words, 'atonement' & 'expiation' basically mean that someone has to make amends or to pay the price for something that someone did wrong. That's fine and dandy but if you notice, nothing in both words really describes well what that wrong doing was. In the NIV, 'sacrifice' is added to 'atoning' to indicate that something valuable and precious had to be given up to make amends.

“Which brings us to 'propitiation'. This word is different as compared to the other two. Simply spelt out, it speaks of mending the relationship with that someone who's angry by something you did. This brings out a new dimension that someone, somewhere is angry. And in the context of the Bible, 'propitiation' paints a clear picture that God is angry with us. Why? Sin. Sin absolutely repulses God. Sin absolutely disgraces God's holy name. In fact, from Rom 3:23 (look above), sin is to "fall short of God's glory". Therefore, angry is too... mild a word to begin describing God's attitude toward sin. Rather, the word 'Wrath' is used to describe this strong, holy, divine anger that God has toward sin.

“Therefore, 'Propitiation' brings forth the point that God's wrath is against all man because of how they have desecrated his glory. And God's holiness, justice and righteousness disallows sin to be let off scot-free. *(I mean, come on... if God lets sin pass by patting your knee and saying to you, "It's all right, I'm sure you won't do it the next time..." or "You didn't mean it right?", what kind of God will He be? Surely not a god that demands our total allegiance and worship)* So, the wrath of God which was toward **all man had** to be averted. And this aversion is found in the death of Jesus Christ.

“In a nutshell, this is propitiation: God averting his wrath toward man through the death of His Son.”