

The Day of Atonement  
Leviticus 16  
Leviticus Series #12  
August 28, 2022

### Introduction

- Kids coming near to me: help w/ problems, affection, goodies, injuries, fears
- Kid not coming near: handle it myself, I don't want to bother, they don't care

### Life With God

**Leviticus 26** <sup>11</sup> I will place my residence among you, and I will not reject you. <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

- Many problems: God's perfect holiness, our sin, our impurity, priests who lead poorly
- Answer to all the problems is The Day of Atonement

**Jay Sklar** By this point in Leviticus, it is clear that the Israelites' sins and impurities defiled not only themselves, but also the Lord's sanctuary. This created a serious problem, because defiling a king's home was viewed as a treasonous act to be met with swift justice. Ideally, the Israelites would have addressed such defilement by the sacrifices and rites of Leviticus 4–5 and 11–15. But in reality, some would have been unaware of their sin or impurity, while others may have been aware but defiantly refused to address it. As a result, the Lord's sanctuary remained defiled, and his justice an imminent threat. The Lord, however, was Israel's redeeming King, who always desired to continue in covenant fellowship with his people. He therefore provided this day—the 'Day of Atonement'—to make full atonement for their sin and impurity, thus removing the threat of his judgment and assuring the Israelites that they could continue in covenant fellowship with him.

- Yom Kippur, or just "The Day" | The Centerpiece of the Torah

**Roy Gane** Here at the heart of Leviticus, the central book of the Pentateuch, are a few small steps for a man (the high priest), but a giant leap for humanity toward the heart of God.

(big idea) God desires that we draw near to him

### Five Problems Addressed

1) Distance, 2) Disobedience, 3) Death, 4) Demonic, 5) Direction (leadership)

### The Problem of Distance

**Leviticus 16** <sup>1</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of two of Aaron's sons when they approached the presence of the Lord and died. <sup>2</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he may not come whenever he wants into the holy place behind the curtain in front of the mercy seat on the ark or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud above the mercy seat..."

- Chs. 11-15 were a pause in the storyline
  - Priestly instruction, sacrifices set up, priests ordained, first worship service!

- Remember chapter 10? Nadab and Abihu didn't follow God's instruction
  - They sinned and suffered the consequences of their sin...death in the tent!!
- Chapters 11-15 were a pause in the storyline | All the ritual purity was about death
- Picking up here: "we've had sin and death here in the tent, so now what do we do?"

### The Problem of Distance

**Psalm 99** <sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns! Let the peoples tremble. He is enthroned between the cherubim. Let the earth quake.

- **Exodus 25 reference: Ark, lid / mercy seat, cherubim, throne**

### No More Distance

**Leviticus 16** <sup>11</sup> "When Aaron presents the bull for his sin offering and makes atonement for himself and his household, he will slaughter the bull for his sin offering. <sup>12</sup> Then he is to take a firepan full of blazing coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense, and bring them inside the curtain. <sup>13</sup> He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, so that the cloud of incense covers the mercy seat that is over the testimony, or else he will die. <sup>14</sup> He is to take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle it with his finger against the east side of the mercy seat; then he will sprinkle some of the blood with his finger before the mercy seat seven times. <sup>15</sup> "When he slaughters the male goat for the people's sin offering and brings its blood inside the curtain, he will do the same with its blood as he did with the bull's blood: He is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front of it.

- No longer can the people say "God is too far away!"

### The Problem of Disobedience

**Leviticus 16** <sup>16</sup> He will make atonement for the most holy place in this way for all their sins because of the Israelites' impurities and rebellious acts...<sup>20</sup> "When he has finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar, he is to present the live male goat. <sup>21</sup> Aaron will lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the Israelites' iniquities and rebellious acts—all their sins. He is to put them on the goat's head and send it away into the wilderness...

- Iniquities: wrongdoing or something guilt-inducing. Root word "to be bent"
- Rebellious acts: often translated as "transgression," crossed a line you shouldn't
- Sins: miss the mark, go wrong
  - Different types of sin: intentional, accidental, and bent and warped
- If the people want to come close to God, he has made forgiveness possible

### The Problem of Death

**Leviticus 16** <sup>15</sup> When he slaughters the male goat for the people's sin offering and brings its blood inside the curtain, he will do the same with its blood as he did with the bull's blood: He is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front of it. <sup>16</sup> He will make atonement for the most holy place in this way for all their sins because of the Israelites' impurities and rebellious acts. He will do the same for the tent of meeting that remains among them, because it is surrounded by their

impurities...<sup>19</sup> He is to sprinkle some of the blood on [the altar] with his finger seven times to cleanse and set it apart from the Israelites' impurities.<sup>20</sup> "When he has finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar...

- Interesting that the tabernacle itself needs to have atonement made
- This is representative of the forces of death, all those ritual impurities that people brought
- Day after day, people showing up who may have accidentally been impure
  - Even death can't keep God's people away from him

### **The Problem of Demons**

**Leviticus 16**<sup>6</sup> Aaron will present the bull for his sin offering and make atonement for himself and his household.<sup>7</sup> Next he will take the two goats and place them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting.<sup>8</sup> After Aaron casts lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other for [Azazel]<sup>9</sup> he is to present the goat chosen by lot for the LORD and sacrifice it as a sin offering.<sup>10</sup> But the goat chosen by lot for [Azazel] is to be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement with it by sending it into the wilderness for [Azazel]...<sup>20</sup> When he has finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar, he is to present the live male goat.<sup>21</sup> Aaron will lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the Israelites' iniquities and rebellious acts—all their sins. He is to put them on the goat's head and send it away into the wilderness by the man appointed for the task.<sup>22</sup> The goat will carry all their iniquities into a desolate land, and the man will release it there...<sup>26</sup> and the one who sent the goat away to [Azazel] must wash his clothes, bathe his body in water, and afterward he may reenter the camp.

- Surface level: Scapegoat ritual, take the sin and impurity far away from us
  - Wilderness desert is itself a symbolic representation of the land of death
- Deeper level: who or what is Azazel?
- The word Azazel appears only here in the entire Bible | 4 times in 3 verses
- Compound word of going-away-goat? Location? Abstract word meaning removal?
- Strongest tradition is that of a demonic, rival deity
  - Leviticus 17 talks about goat-demons
  - This animal is not sacrificed, it's just sent away
  - Apocrypha 1 Enoch talks about this passage as a goat-demon
- Clearly set up as a rival of YHWH

**Roy Gane** The Lord directed the Israelites to transport their sins on a goat to Azazel, who ended up with this noxious load. This would be like sending someone a truck full of chemical waste or dumping a load of reeking, maggot infested chicken manure all over his front lawn—not a friendly gesture. Here, Azazel, get a load of this!

### **The Problem of Direction** (leadership)

<sup>3</sup>"Aaron is to enter the most holy place in this way: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.<sup>4</sup> He is to wear a holy linen tunic, and linen undergarments are to be on his body. He is to tie a linen sash around him and wrap his head with a linen turban. These are holy

garments; he must bathe his body with water before he wears them.<sup>5</sup> He is to take from the Israelite community two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.<sup>6</sup> Aaron will present the bull for his sin offering and make atonement for himself and his household...<sup>23</sup> Then Aaron is to enter the tent of meeting, take off the linen garments he wore when he entered the most holy place, and leave them there.<sup>24</sup> He will bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes. Then he must go out and sacrifice his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering; he will make atonement for himself and for the people.

- A true priest will make himself right before God,
- Normally, the high priest wears kingly clothes. But today, he's going to the true king's house
- All this private work that only he can do, but then he goes back out to lead the people

Every excuse that the people could think of has been removed! God has made us pure and drawn us near!

- Just one problem: sin. It just kept coming. Priests just had to keep sacrificing year after year. Even the priests are problematic, so many corrupt and sinful themselves. Death and demonic evil still seems to grow by the day. Eventually, God's presence departs.
- Until Jesus shows up...

### **The Final Day of Atonement**

**Hebrews 10**<sup>11</sup> Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins.<sup>12</sup> But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.<sup>13</sup> He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool.<sup>14</sup> For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified.<sup>15</sup> The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after he says: "<sup>16</sup>This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, the Lord says, I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds,<sup>17</sup> and I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts."<sup>18</sup> Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus—<sup>20</sup>he has inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)—<sup>21</sup>and since we have a great high priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.

### **Jesus, Ultimate Atonement**

1. Jesus removes the distance
2. Jesus forgives our disobedience
3. Jesus defeats the demonic \*Scapegoat taken outside the camp\*
4. Jesus conquers over death
5. Jesus provides direction

(big idea) What keeps you from drawing near to God?

- Too busy? Too fearful?
- Too smart? Too dumb?
- Too sinful? Too broken?
- Come in prayer (Spirit)
- Come to him in the Bible
- Come to the Table