

Message #29**Leviticus 16:1-10**

As we come to Leviticus 16, we come to what many people believe is the central chapter of the book of Leviticus. Little by little, level by level, holiness is achieved by various cleansing moments.

Leviticus 16 regulates what is to take place on the “Day of Atonement.” Two key Hebrew words are used—**Yom** meaning “day” and **Kippur** meaning “atonement.” To the Jewish people this is the most sacred day of all and they call the day “Yom Kippur.” This was the one day of the year when the High Priest could enter the Holy Place and make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people.

God cannot and will not fellowship with anything or anyone unclean. As one writer said, God will not dwell or stroll with people until uncleanness has been put out of the camp.

IF ONE IS TO ENTER INTO A DEEP PLACE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, ALL SIN AND ALL UNCLEAN THINGS MUST BE REMOVED .

INSTRUCTION #1 – Instruction concerning the time of Atonement. **16:1-2**

Now, I want you to notice carefully that God spoke to Moses and He begins by reminding him of an episode that happened clear back in chapter ten, the execution of two sons of Aaron whose names were Nadab and Abihu. The question is why does God begin here? The answer is simple—God wants to warn the priests that worship is a very serious and sacred matter. **Verse 2** makes it very clear that Aaron could not enter the Most Holy place any time he wanted. The reason why Aaron could not just go into the Holy Place any time he wanted was because this was the place where the mercy seat was; the place where the ark was and the place where the presence of God was.

According to Exodus 25:10-22, the ark was a chest made of acacia wood that was overlaid with pure gold inside and out, about 3’ 9” long and 2’ 3” wide. It was to be carried on poles of acacia wood which were overlaid in gold. These poles went through two rings on each side and were never to be removed. The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat. Inside the ark was the written Word of God and inside the Holy Place was the actual presence of God. The ark contained the written Word of God—the written testimony God gave to His people. Do we not see in this the sacredness of the Word of God and its connection to the presence of God?

INSTRUCTION #2 – Instruction concerning the offerings of Atonement. **16:3-6**

Five animals were to be used in the Day of Atonement worship ceremony: **(A)** A bull for Aaron’s sin offering (**16:3, 6, 11**); **(B)** A ram for Aaron’s burnt offering (**16:3, 24**); **(C)** Two male goats for the sin offering and scapegoat offering for the people (**16: 5, 7**); **(D)** A ram for the people’s burnt offering (**16:5**).

According to **verse 4**, the priest was to bathe and put on special clothing. Bathing was clearly a symbol of the priest being clean before he dared to involve himself in making others clean. But carefully notice Hebrews 7:26-27—the priest had to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the sins of others. The clothing described here is not the normal, elaborate priestly clothing of Exodus 28 that made a priest look kingly. The clothing here was more slavish. This is important—this was clothing that basically said I am a sinner myself and need my own personal cleansing (**16:6** - twice; 11 - three times, 17, 24).

INSTRUCTION #3 – Instruction concerning the sin and scapegoat offerings of Atonement.
16:7-10

Once Aaron had made an atonement offering for himself and his family (**16:6**), then he was to take the two goats to present them before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting (**16:7**). He was then to cast lots to determine which goat was sacrificed as a sin offering and which goat would be the scapegoat (**16:8**). Aaron was to offer the sin offering and was to release the scapegoat offering into the wilderness (**16:9-10**).

Now the big question is what is the scapegoat offering? What does it mean and what does it signify? In Hebrew, the actual word for scapegoat is Azazel. There is a major discussion concerning the meaning of the word “scapegoat.” The Hebrew radicals from which the name comes—A-z-l means to remove or take away (Gesenius, p. 619). Another Hebrew cognate root suggests the word means to go away or to depart (Gesenius, p. 26). Still another view claims Azazel is a name. Because of these different possibilities of the meaning of the word, there have been several different views as to what the scapegoat offering means:

- 1) Some Jewish interpreters say this describes a goat that is released to the wilderness area to some demon named Azazel. This goat became a rebuke to the demon saying all of the sins you have engineered have been washed by the blood of the sacrifice.
- 2) Some say the scapegoat represents a person’s sins being removed or completely taken away.
- 3) Some say the scapegoat represents the fact that when sins have been forgiven, the person will still need to spend time in a rugged wilderness world.

If we look carefully at the text, we may observe from **verse 5** that the two male goats are both classified as a sin offering. One goat gives his life and sheds his blood for the sins and the other goat illustrates that those sins are removed and taken away never to be seen again. It is exactly what David said in Psalm 103:12—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Ladies and gentlemen, think of the implications of these goats. Jesus Christ went to the cross and He shed His blood and the result for one who believes on Him is that their sins are removed and taken away never to be seen again.