

The Day of Atonement

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atonement |ə'tɒnmənt|

noun

reparation for a wrong or injury

The English word atonement is derived from the two words “at onement” and denotes a state of togetherness and agreement between two people. Atonement presupposes two parties that are estranged, with the act of atonement being the reconciliation of them into a state of harmony.

The New Bible Dictionary

1 to 7	Rules for Sacrifices	8 to 10	Role of the priests
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Many contemporary scholars insist that chapter 16 must follow directly after chapter 10, since it begins with a solemn reminder of the death of the two sons of Aaron for either their carelessness or arrogance in the exercise of their priestly ministry. But a case can also be made for maintaining the given order of the chapters. The intervening chapters (11–15) teach the people the importance of carefully observing the differences between the clean and the unclean. Now they are better able to understand why the standards for the priests, in offering the sacrifices in the tabernacle, are so very strict.

Gary W. Demarest, The Preacher's Commentary: Leviticus

Leviticus Week 4

Why does this chapter follow the laws about clean and unclean practices rather than death of Aaron's sons?

Scan Lev 10 again. Why did Nadab and Abihu die? How were their bodies removed? What directions were given to Aaron?

What is the purpose of the first sacrifice?

What else does Aaron do in preparation to enter the Tabernacle?

Azazel means scapegoat. How does that fit into the rites described in Lev 16?

What differences are there between the sacrifices Aaron makes and those described in previous chapters?

Read Hebrews 9. What has changed in the sacrificial system?

Does Yom Kippur work?

Leviticus 16 - The Day of Atonement

The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died. ² The Lord said to Moses:

Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary inside the curtain before the mercy seat that is upon the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. ³ Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and shall have the linen undergarments next to his body, fasten the linen sash, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy vestments. He shall bathe his body in water, and then put them on. ⁵ He shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

⁶ Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷ He shall take the two goats and set them before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting; ⁸ and Aaron shall cast lots on the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel. ⁹ Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering; ¹⁰ but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

¹¹ Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house; he shall slaughter the bull as a sin offering for himself. ¹² He shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, and two handfuls of crushed sweet incense, and he shall bring it inside the curtain ¹³ and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the covenant, or he will die. ¹⁴ He shall take some of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times.

¹⁵ He shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the curtain, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. ¹⁶ Thus he shall make atonement for the sanctuary, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins; and so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which remains with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. ¹⁷ No one shall be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the sanctuary until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ Then he shall go out to the altar that is before

the Lord and make atonement on its behalf, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, and put it on each of the horns of the altar. ¹⁹ He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and hallow it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

²⁰ When he has finished atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. ²¹ Then Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated for the task. ²² The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.

²³ Then Aaron shall enter the tent of meeting, and shall take off the linen vestments that he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴ He shall bathe his body in water in a holy place, and put on his vestments; then he shall come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, making atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ The fat of the sin offering he shall turn into smoke on the altar. ²⁶ The one who sets the goat free for Azazel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward may come into the camp. ²⁷ The bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp; their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be consumed in fire. ²⁸ The one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward may come into the camp.

²⁹ This shall be a statute to you forever: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. ³⁰ For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord. ³¹ It is a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever. ³² The priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the linen vestments, the holy vestments. ³³ He shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴ This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the people of Israel once in the year for all their sins. And Moses did as the Lord had commanded him.

Hebrews 9 - The Earthly and the Heavenly Sanctuaries

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ² For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. ⁴ In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail.

⁶ Such preparations having been made, the priests go continually into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties; ⁷ but only the high priest goes into the second, and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. ⁹ This is a symbol of the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right.

¹¹ But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹² he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

¹⁵ For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. ¹⁶ Where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ Hence not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment had been told to all the people by Moses in accordance with the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you." ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed,

under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sin

²³ Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.