

The Tabernacle

The Day of Atonement

Lesson Overview

- References – Leviticus 16, 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11
- Takes place on the 10th day of the 7th month (*Tishri*)
- In Hebrew it is called *Yom Kippur*. The Rabbis often call it simply *The Day*.
- The High Priest performed all the principal duties for the day, including some fifteen different offerings and taking five ritual baths.
- This was the only day someone entered the Most Holy Place and the presence of God above the Ark of the Covenant.

The Order of the Day

- Note – *this is compiled from Scripture, Alfred Edersheim, and TempleInstitute.org.*
- Preparations before the Day
 - In Temple times, the High Priest left his home and dwelt in the Temple for the week leading up to the Day in order to practice and prepare.
 - During the night before the Day, the High Priest stayed up all night studying, practicing, and preparing.
 - The High Priest bathes in a ritual immersion and dons his golden uniform.
- At first light, the High Priest led in the regular morning sacrifices for the day.
- The High Priest bathes again and puts on his white linen uniform – Leviticus 16:4
- The High Priest lays his hands on the bull for the sin offering, confessing his sins and his house – Leviticus 16:6
- Lots are cast on the two goats (these two goats are considered as *one* offering) – Leviticus 16:7-10
 - One is “for Jehovah” and will be offered as sin offering. It is marked with a piece of scarlet wool tied around its neck.
 - One is “for Azazel” and will be the scapegoat. It is marked with a piece of scarlet wool tied around its horns.
 - Some hold “Azazel” to be a demon or the devil, while others as a word meaning “to dismiss” or a term for the wilderness.
- The High Priest lays his hands on the bull and confesses the sins of the priesthood – Leviticus 16:11
- The bull is killed, and its blood caught in a bowl.
- The High Priest enters the Holy Place (the curtains before the Most Holy Place are parted), places a censor of coals from the Brazen Altar before the Ark of the Covenant, pours incense on the coals, prays a short prayer, and exits walking backwards to not turn his back on the Most Holy Place. – Leviticus 16:12-3
 - It is during this time that tradition says God would strike down an unfaithful High Priest.

- The High Priest takes the blood of the bull into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkles it upward once and downward seven times before the Ark – Leviticus 16:14
- The High Priest kills the “for Jehovah” goat, its blood is caught in a bowl, and he then sprinkles this blood before the Ark as he did for the bull – Leviticus 16:15
- The High Priest sprinkles the blood of the bull and then the goat before the veil.
- The High Priest mixes the blood of the bull and goat, goes to the Golden Altar of Incense, sprinkles blood on its four horns, then sprinkles seven times on its surface. – Leviticus 16:18-19
- The High Priest now goes out to the “for Azazel” goat (scapegoat), lays his hands upon its head, and confesses the sins of the nation. – Leviticus 16:20-21
- The scapegoat is carried into the wilderness and let go.
 - In the Second Temple, the goat was carried through a series of ten stations before being cast off a cliff.
 - It was believed that if God had accepted the sacrifice, then the crimson wool would turn white.
- While the scapegoat is carried away, the High Priest cuts up the bull and goat.
- In the Second Temple, the High Priests would read portions of Scripture concerning the Day to the assembled people.
- The carcasses of the bull and goat are carried outside the city and burned at the place where the ashes from the Brazen Altar were disposed of – Leviticus 16:27
- The High Priest washes again and puts on his golden uniform. – Leviticus 16:23-24
- The High Priests offers a ram as a sin offering (Numbers 29:16), a ram as a burnt offering for himself (Leviticus 16:3,24), the prescribed festive burnt offerings with their meal and drink offerings (Numbers 29:8, Leviticus 16:24), then finally the portions of the bull and goat whose blood was sprinkled.
- After offering the regular evening sacrifice, the High Priest bathed and put on a white linen uniform again before entering the Most Holy Place to retrieve the censor and incense dish left there that morning.
- The High Priest bathes once more and puts back on his golden uniform.

Truths from the Tabernacle

- The scapegoat shows that our sins are not just covered (atoned), but that they are removed from God’s remembrance – Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 43:12, Hebrews 10:17
- The Book of Hebrews (especially chs. 8-10) can be seen as an exposition on Christ’s fulfillment of the types and shadows of the Day of Atonement.
- A.C. Gaeblein on the prophetic nature of the Day: “Before the transgressions of Israel could be confessed over the scapegoat and before the goat could be sent forever away with its burden, never to return, the high priest had to come out of the Holiest. As long as he remained alone in the tabernacle the scapegoat could not carry off the sins of the people. When the Lord appears the second time, when He comes forth out of Heaven’s glory as the King-Priest, then the blessed effect of His death for that nation (John 11:51) will be realized and their sins and transgressions will forever be put away. Then their sins will be cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19) and they shall no more be remembered (Isaiah 43:25).”