

## Peace with God - Union with Christ Atonement Leviticus 16

A couple of years ago a friend of mine was leading a group of people on a tour of Israel to see all the Holy places in the Holy Land. When they came to the Wailing Wall he noticed a strange sight. An orthodox Jew was setting up chairs near the Wall. My friend asked the man if he was setting up for some special event or a worship service they could join. "No" the Orthodox Jew replied, "We are having a ceremony to honor a number children. They have finished memorizing the whole Torah – all of the first five books of the bible." Can you imagine that?

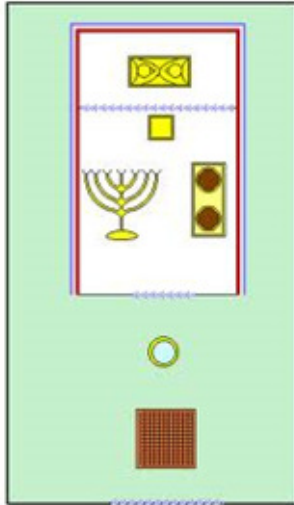
Memorizing the first 5 books of the bible has been a spiritual practice for the people of Israel since OT times. What is interesting about this is that the memorization program that helps these children learn the Bible by heart begins with the book of Leviticus. Leviticus is the center book, the heart of the Torah. Leviticus is the worship manual for the people of God. It explains the dynamics and the essentials of worship. How God desires to be worshipped. It's an explanation of Spirit and truth worship. We are made to worship – that is our nature. God created us to live in a relationship with him. We have in us a deep desire and longing for the glory of God, a longing to find our life in him, to find our peace in him.

One of the old text books of Faith starts off with this question *Q. What is the chief end, main purpose of human beings?* A. Our chief end, our primary purpose in life is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. And that is the heart of what Leviticus is all about. How do we commune with God, and how do we worship and love God and enjoy all the blessings of his glory. How do we using the words of John 17, our theme chapter for 2011, How do we become one with Jesus and one with God and one with each other, knowing and experiencing the love of God?

The problem of worship is that God is holy, and we are not. God is perfect, and we are not. God is pure and we are not. God is spirit and we are not. God is fire and we are dust. And when we who are unholy, we who are imperfect, we who are impure enter the holiness and the purity and the perfection of God the fire of God can burn us and destroy us. That is the force of sin. The result of sin is death.

Today by way of introduction to the book of Leviticus we are invited to get right to the heart of this worship manual. What we read and hear in chapter 16 is what worship is all about. Finding atonement with God. Unholy people, sinful people, imperfect people, broken people like us finding peace and joy and love in the presence and glory of God without getting burned.

To understand this chapter I need to show you again the layout of the tent of meeting.



**Holy of Holies**  
ark w/mercy seat

**Holy place**  
altar of incense

**Water/wash basin**

**Altar of burnt offering**  
sweet aroma

**entrance to tent of meeting**

The tent of meeting has a big court yard with one door, one entrance. When you come into the tent of meeting the first thing you see is the altar for giving the sweet aroma offerings, and behind the altar is big bronze wash basin. Then comes the actual tent. The tent was made up of two parts. The front part was the Holy Place. It also contained a smaller altar, the altar of incense. And at the back separated by a ceiling to floor curtain was the Holy of Holies or the most Holy place. In the Holy of holies was the golden ark of the covenant. The ark had a golden lid called the mercy seat. And on the mercy seat were two wall to wall angels. And according to Leviticus chapter 16 God's earthly presence and power and fire hovered above the mercy seat under the wings of the angels.

In this tent of meeting the great atonement event described in chapter 16 occurs. Before we read this chapter, however, I need to tell about the blood. In Chapter 17:11 God explains that the life of a person was in the blood and it is the blood that atones. The people of God were not allowed to eat any kind blood.

So when we read this chapter note the role of the blood. There is an old song that we used to sing "there is power in the blood." That was especially true for the people of God.

Secondly, pay attention to the goats in this chapter. The word "goats" is mentioned 14 times, double perfection 2 x 7. It is what happens to the goats that defines atonement. The meaning of worship and peace with God is shown in what happens to the goats. The word atonement is also mentioned 14 times. 2 x 7. Double perfection. This is the definition of atonement. This is the pattern, this is the essence of entering the glory of God, at-onement with God, being right with God, experiencing the peace of God.

So let's read Leviticus 16.

At the tent of meeting entrance: bring Bull, ram,  
High priest gets dressed in special once a year Holy clothes  
2 goats and a second ram are brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting  
the goats are presented and designated by lot as sin offering & scapegoat  
Bull sin offering is made for the priest  
Smoke fills the Holy of Holies so priest cannot see God or God cannot see him.  
Blood from bull is sprinkled on mercy seat and on the floor 7X  
Priest is now pure to offer  
Sin Offering Goat is killed for the people  
Blood is sprinkled on mercy seat and on the floor 7X  
Blood of the bull(priests) and blood of goat (people) is sprinkled on Altar of incense 7X

When all the rooms, altars & people are cleansed and sanctified by the blood  
the sins of all the people are placed on the scapegoat and  
the scapegoat is sent out into the godforsaken wilderness to die.

High priest takes off the special once a year Holy clothes and  
puts on the official High priest clothes

High priest offers the two rams, as pleasing sweet aroma offerings to the Lord on the  
burnt offering altar and the altar of incense.

This is Yom Kipper the Day of Atonement.  
This is how atonement is always made  
- to cleanse you from all your sins before the Lord.

This annual Day of Atonement was commanded by God so we could understand the full  
impact of what happened to Jesus when his blood was spilt on the cross. When we  
celebrate the Lord's Supper we follow the eternal and everlasting pattern for atonement  
God established through Moses in Leviticus 16. We even today are still made clean the  
same way. Even today all our sins are forgiven when the high priest atones for us in the  
Holy of Holies of the tent of meeting, not a tent made with human hands but with God's  
own spiritual hands.

Today we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Through the Lord's Supper we remember and  
participate in the atoning ministry of Jesus our high priest. As we celebrate the Lord's  
supper we become aware, and we bring to memory that the blood of Jesus was shed for  
the forgiveness of sin and that on him were laid all our sins and he was sent out of the  
Holy City and was crucified in that godforsaken place John calls the place of the skull.  
The place of destruction. That is where our sins were buried and we were made clean  
before God. It is there that the curtain of the Holy of Holies was torn open by God  
himself and we were invited into the very presence and communion with God through the

blood of Jesus. The eternal statute of the Day of atonement, that everlasting ordinance still stands, although today it is followed and obeyed in the life and death of Jesus. The bread that we eat is a reminder that the body of the scapegoat took upon itself the sins of the people and the juice reminds us of the blood of sin offering goat whose blood was shed for the purification of our sins. So come to the Lord's Supper Table for the Day of Atonement is now. Today we have communion with God, communion with Jesus and communion with our brothers and sisters in this church and around the world.

Read Hebrews 9:1-14 10:19-25