



SINAI – ATONEMENT THROUGH SACRIFICE

Looking at Leviticus

Timeline

- Passover: Day 1
- The Exodus: 1445 BC
- 2 months: Travel from Egypt to Sinai
- 1st Day of 3rd Month: Moses went up to the mountain for 40 days
- 1st Day of 1st Month of 2nd Year: Set Up the Tabernacle
- Leviticus: Starts here
- 8th Day of 1st Month of 2nd Year: Ordained the Priests
- 1st Day of 2nd Month of 2nd Year: Took Census (Numbers 1)

Leviticus happened within the period of one month.

Length of time that Israel was camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai: 2 years

“Be holy as I am holy” Leviticus 11:44; 11:45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8; 22:32

Overall theme of Leviticus: HOLINESS. These are the regulations for how to live with a holy, perfect God dwelling among them in the center of their tent. Both sinful actions and ritual impurity must be atoned and purified in the tabernacle and God’s people are to live a holy “set apart” life which looked different from the nations around them.

- Leviticus 1-8: describes the different kinds of offerings, including the ordination process
- Leviticus 9: Ordination of the Priests
- Leviticus 10: Aaron’s sons offered an unapproved offering
- Leviticus 11-15: laws of clean/unclean and purification rituals
- **Leviticus 16: CENTER OF THE BOOK: Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement**
- Leviticus 17-22: other laws, including special laws for priests
- Leviticus 23-25: describes the festivals, Year of Jubilee, Sabbath year, care for the poor and more, with the story of a blasphemer in the middle

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- Leviticus 26: blessings and curses of the covenant
- Leviticus 27: Vows and dedications

There are only two stories in Leviticus:

- The rebellion of Aaron's sons (Leviticus 10)
- The story of the blasphemer (Leviticus 24:10-16)

Hebrews 9:11-15

Verse 14 : "...cleansing our consciences from acts that lead to death..."

If our consciences are being cleansed, then there is something dirty/wrong with them.

Verse 13: referring to Leviticus - ceremonial, visible cleanliness, physical cleanness

What does dirt symbolize? There is a relational aversion or repulsion about it. It gets in the way of relationship. That is the physical, literal idea. There is also another kind of dirty – being objectively “wrong” or “immoral.” There is a barrier between us and God. We don't just feel guilty, we ARE guilty. The uncleanness of our hearts is a barrier between us and God. AND...God can see that. God knows our hearts better than we do.

What does “dirty politician” mean? Someone who is a crook, breaking the law. There is a legal implication to OUR dirtiness as well. We are guilty legally. Something has to be done to reconcile us to God, to make us “clean” to be dwelling with him. No matter how obedient we are to God's law, we will always fall short. But God made a way for us to be reconciled to him.

The writer of Hebrews says that that was an outward act that really only addressed outward cleanness. But the blood of Christ, who was himself the sacrifice, enacted the ultimate atonement – the cleansing of our consciences.

Verses 11-12: Christ was the high priest – he did not go into the tabernacle made with human hands – and went into not a holy place that was not a physical place. When he entered it with his own life, offering his own blood, he did it once and for all. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse our consciences.

Other offerings in Leviticus

BURNT OFFERING - Leviticus 1 (*olah*, which means “to go up”)

The burnt offering was offering completely on the altar, all of it went up to the Lord, none of it was given to the priests or worshiper to eat. The *olah* was offered twice a day, morning and evening, so that it burned continually on the altar. It was offered with bread and wine as a “meal” to the Lord.

- Because it burned continually, it represented the people’s communion with God.
- In order to be in relationship with God, they had to atone the sin that separates them from God.
- Because it burned continuously, all other sacrifices would be offered on top of it, which means their *relationship* with God was the foundation of all other sacrifices and worship.
- The offering was a “soothing aroma” to God, appeasing His wrath

NEW COVENANT “OLAH”:

- Christ gave Himself up for us as a “fragrant offering and sacrifice to God,” a soothing aroma which appeased His wrath (Ephesians 5:2).
- Christ’s sacrifice reconciled us to God so we could have communion with Him (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-22)
- Paul tells us to pray *without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Paul tells us that *our whole lives* should be a living sacrifice to God – we should offer everything we are to Him for His glory (Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:17)
- And Paul tells us that our lives are a “soothing aroma” to God (2 Corinthians 2:15)

GRAIN OFFERING – Leviticus 2

- Finest flour, olive oil, incense – burned by the priest on the altar, “an aroma pleasing to the Lord.” (2:2)
- To show honor and respect to God in worship
- Acknowledges that all we have belongs to God

NEW TESTAMENT:

- Professing Jesus as our Savior offers praises to God; doing good and sharing with others acknowledges that what we have in this world is a gift from God. (Hebrews 13:15)

FELLOWSHIP OFFERING – Leviticus 3

- An offering that one shared with God, to symbolize communion/fellowship with God
- Part of the offering went to God, most of it was eaten by the offerers
- Giving God the liver and kidneys = the inner person (emotions and attitudes)

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GUILT/REPARATION OFFERING - **Leviticus 5:16, 18; 6:7**

The guilt offering or reparation offering was offered when people committed sins that caused tangible damage and they also had to pay restitution for the damage they had done – the value plus 20%. This was also considered an atonement offering.

NEW TESTAMENT “REPARATION OFFERING”:

- Christ paid the penalty for our sins, made restitution for what we had done by His life, which is worth much more than 20% more than our sin, it was priceless (Colossians 2:13-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Peter 1:18)
- But we are also commanded to *make amends* with our brother when we have wronged them, before we bring an offering to the Lord (Matthew 5:23-24)
- And in the story of Zacchaeus, when He came to know Jesus, he gave back even more than 120%, he restored what he had defrauded by 400% (Luke 19:18)

Christ fulfilled all of these sacrifices for us in the New Covenant; He is the One who made atonement for our sins. And yet, in addition to offering our thanks and praise (the non-atonement offerings), we also have a responsibility to confess (purification offering), make amends (reparation offering), and offer our whole lives to the Lord as a living sacrifice (burnt offering) as well.

Revelation 5

The Blood of the Lamb

In Revelation 5, John saw a vision of the Lamb who was slain, standing at the center of the throne of God. This Lamb was the only One who was found to be worthy to open the scroll of the Lord. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders before God’s throne fell down before the Lamb and sang that He was worthy to open the scroll because:

“You were slain and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:9-10

This is Old Covenant language to describe the New Covenant redemption. In the Old Covenant, God redeemed His people from slavery in Egypt to become a kingdom of priests to the world. In the New Covenant, Christ’s sacrifice redeemed His people from sin – people from every nation, tribe, and tongue – to become the true kingdom of God. This is the long-term fulfillment of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus – a kingdom of God filled with a great multitude of believers from every nation on earth, living in the presence of God in peace, joy, blessing, and **holiness**.

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LIVING IN THE IN-BETWEEN

Paul writes that we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly bodies (2 Corinthians 5:4; Romans 8:23). While we are still here on this earth, we still struggle with sin we do not *want* to do. We don't want to sin anymore, but we have not yet been made perfect, so we will still struggle with it (Romans 7:14-20). And yet, the good news is that Christ has freed us from *slavery* to sin (Galatians 5). We still struggle with sin, but we aren't *enslaved* to sin. We are able to overcome it.

APPLICATION: In our lives right now, we pursue holiness, not as a way to earn God's favor, but because we want to live like Kingdom people. We want a taste of heaven on earth. We want to experience the joy, peace, rest, and everything else which comes from living as God's holy people in the world.

How do we do that? By walking by the HOLY Spirit. Abiding in Christ – the Vine – so that the Holy Spirit can bear His fruit in us (John 15; Galatians 5). We won't be perfect until heaven, but we can grow in spiritual maturity and holiness as we walk by the Spirit and abide in Christ (Philippians 3:7-14). Just like we can't accomplish atonement for ourselves, we can't grow in holiness on our own strength either. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, changing us from the inside out. As we walk with Him in freedom from slavery to sin (Galatians 5:1), He will grow His fruit in us – peace, patience, love, joy, kindness, and so on (Galatians 5:23-25). That is how we experience Heaven on Earth.