

Commentary on Hebrews

Review

RITUAL OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Summary: Tenth day of seventh month – a high Sabbath, Aaron has the total functions of the day. The people are assembled, the High Priest has bathed himself, taken off his beautiful garments and dressed himself in the humble white linen robes of the ordinary priest. The animals to be sacrificed have been penned seven days. He has five animals ready for the sacrifice:

- I. A young bull – Sin Offering for priestly family.
- II. A ram – Burnt Offering for priestly family.
- III. A goat – half of the Sin Offering for the people – Jehovah's goat.
- IV. A goat – half of the Sin Offering for the people – Azazel's goat.
- V. A ram – Burnt Offering for the people.

THE 13 STAGES OF THE RITUAL

- I. Stage 1 – Reception of the Pre-selected Animals**
 - A. Leviticus 16:3-5
 - B. They must be physically perfect – as they symbolize the spiritual perfection of Christ whom they represent in shadow form.
- II. Stage 2 – Presentation of the Animals to God**
 - A. “. . .and present them before the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting” (Lev. 16:7).
- III. Stage 3 – Aaron Casts Lots over the Two Goats of the People's Sin Offering**
 - A. Verse 8 – *He is to cast lots for the two goats--one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat.*
 - B. Both goats remain standing before the Lord while the ceremony of the priest's sin-offering, the bull, was conducted.
 1. One for Jehovah – scarlet ribbon tied around its neck.
 2. One for Azazel – scarlet ribbon tied around its horn.
- IV. Stage 4 – Aaron Kills the Bull of the Priests' Sin Offering**
 - A. There is no laying on of hands as in all the other Sin Offerings.
 - B. The reason possibly being to indicate ceremonially that the sacrificial animal was not really bearing the sin after all.
 - C. Nevertheless the blood of the bull will “*make atonement for himself and his house*” (v. 11).
- V. Stage 5 – The Incense Is Offered**
 - A. Aaron enters the Holy of Holies for the first time.
 - B. He takes two handfuls of incense to place on coals from Burnt Offering altar “so that he will not die.” – Leviticus 16:12-13.
 - C. His first action within the veil is to put the incense on the “fire before the Lord” (Lev 16:13), who promised on this day. “I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover” – Leviticus 16:2.

- D. The incense will “conceal the atonement cover” (mercy seat)
- E. Incense represents a prayer by Aaron that he not die because he is sinful in the presence of the sinless God.

Continuation

RITUAL OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

VI. Stage 6 – Sprinkling Blood of the Bull

- A. The second action to do within the veil is he sprinkles the blood of the bull in several places and ways (Leviticus 16:14, 18).
 - 1. First, with his finger on the “mercy seat on the east” = toward God who grants forgiveness.
 - 2. Second, “before the mercy seat seven times.”
 - a. Upon the floor for the ceremonial cleansing of the Most Holy Place where the priestly presentation takes place.
 - b. Verse 16 indicates that the residence of God among sinful men had been defiled by association.
 - c. This is where all of sin would be atoned for.
 - 3. Third, “on the horns of the altar,” after exiting the sanctuary.
- B. He leaves the rest of the blood in a vessel in Holy Place.

VII. Stage 7 – Kills Goat “For Jehovah” and sprinkles the blood

- A. The third action Aaron does within the veil is to “slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people” (Leviticus 16:15-16, 18).
- B. The goat for Azazel still stands “before the Lord” for later use.
- C. He is to do with the blood of the goat the same actions he did with the blood of the bull.
 - 1. Sprinkle it on the mercy seat
 - 2. Sprinkle it before the mercy seat
- D. Now with the blood of the bull and the goat together, Aaron steps outside of the veil and sprinkles the blood of both on the altar of the burnt offering in the courtyard.
 - 1. He first applies the blood on the horns of the altar
 - 2. Then with his finger he sprinkles blood upon the altar seven times
- E. So the multiple sprinkling of the blood, 4 times within the veil and 2 times later, on the outside, made atonement for:
 - 1. The Most Holy Place – verse 16a
 - 2. The Holy Place (tent of meeting) – verse 16b
 - 3. The Priesthood (high priest and all priests) and their families – verse 17a
 - 4. All the assembly of Israel – verse 17b
- F. Why sprinkle blood in the Most Holy Place and the Courtyard?
 - 1. First, because those quarters are the holy God’s symbolic residence in the presence of sinful men.
 - a. Verse 16 says, “because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the

Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.”

- b. God must clear Himself of any guilt by association with sinful men!
2. And as for the altar of burnt offering, as verse 19 says: [Leviticus 16:19 NIV](#) He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.
 - a. This probably has relation to the many sacrifices offered there for sins and trespasses throughout the year.
3. God is justifying the use of these vessels for granting fellowship to sinful people.
 - a. Recall how in Romans 3:25-26 the cross of Jesus shows god to be both just and the justifier.
 - b. [Romans 3:25-26 NIV](#) God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement... (26) he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.
 - c. Were it not for the blood of Christ, there would be no moral justification for God to extend fellowship to any man anytime.
 - d. Jesus’ precious blood sanctifies our relationship with Him and vindicates god in His expressions of grace and mercy to sinful man under the Old Covenant and especially today under the Spiritual Law of Christ.

VIII. Stage 8 – The Azazel Ceremony

- A. Verse 20 begins the ceremony with the goat for Azazel.
- B. Aaron lays both hands – one for priest, one for people, on the head of the goat.
 1. In all other sacrifices, only one hand was laid on the victim’s head.
 2. Here two are required: for the priests and for the people.
- C. Back in verse 10 the goat was left standing alive “before the Lord”. The original Hebrew differs from other translations in the following: “To make atonement FOR him (ASV), WITH him (KJV), or OVER him” as the original Hebrew insists.
- D. Aaron confesses “over him” (the goat) all of Israel’s sins.
- E. Verse 21 – *“and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites – all their sins – and put them on the goat’s head.”*
- F. Verses 22 says “The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.”
- G. So the confession of the sins over the goat of all the sins and transgressions against both God and man was the state of presentation of this goat before the Lord.
 1. This would probably involve a long list of all possible sins and trespasses rather than a specific catalog or record of known sins.
 2. There is no indication that the priests kept records of specific sins the people committed throughout the year. Besides. Many of the sins intended for this ceremony would be the kid they wouldn’t know they committed because they forgot or simply committed unbeknownst to them.
 3. Thus all conceivable sins were viewed as being placed on the head of the goat for Azazel.