

I was doing some reading in preparation for starting this chapter and ran across some thoughts from Ray Stedman that I would like to use to introduce this chapter.

“As we have gone through this book together God has taught us, first of all, the need for a substitute. Despite all the accumulation of human knowledge we cannot handle life adequately by ourselves. The offerings taught us that. We need a substitute beyond humanity, a divine substitute, one who took our place. And this we find in Jesus Christ. And then, because we don't understand the mysteries of our existence apart from someone who can explain them and apply them to us, we need a great high priest. That too is met in Christ. Then we need a standard, something to measure life by, to tell us the difference between what will hurt us and what will help us, what will advance us and what will destroy us. We need God's gracious word to understand what confronts us in life and thus to be able to distinguish between right and wrong and good and evil. That is not easy to do, but God has provided a standard.”

Leviticus 16:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;
Leviticus 16:2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

After the death of Nadab and Abihu, the LORD instructed Moses to tell Aaron that he was not free to come into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle at will. (This seems to imply that Nadab and Abihu had done just that.) It was set apart as the place of the presence of God as represented by the cloud on the mercy seat. To go in at any other time than on the Day of Atonement as instructed by God would result in death.

We who have trusted in the LORD as our Savior are privileged to have access to God's presence at all times because of the shed blood of Jesus that has redeemed us and allowed us to become part of His family. When Jesus died, the veil prohibiting access to the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom—a miracle in itself. God was basically declaring that the temple practices were no longer acceptable and that access to His presence could only be provided through faith in Jesus, His only begotten Son. Jesus fulfilled everything that the temple and its rituals represented.

*Romans 5:1–2 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: **By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**”*

*Hebrews 4:14–16 “**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**”*

*Hebrews 10:19–22 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; **Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”*

Leviticus 16:3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

Leviticus 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

The rest of this chapter sets forth instructions for the sacrifices and offerings to be made once a year on the Day of Atonement.

As the High Priest, Aaron was instructed to wash himself and dress according to God’s instructions before entering His presence. So too must we be washed and properly clothed before entering God’s presence.

Revelation 1:5 “... Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...”

Revelation 3:5 “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment...”

Aaron was also to have ready a bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering for his own use in preparation for making the required offerings.

Leviticus 16:5 ¶ And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

Leviticus 16:6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Aaron was to have ready two kids of the goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering on behalf of the people. He was also to have a bull as a sin offering for himself and the rest of the priesthood.

In Jesus the Christ we now have a sinless High Priest as declared by the writer of Hebrews.

Hebrews 7:26–27 “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

Leviticus 16:7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 16:8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

Leviticus 16:9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin offering.

Leviticus 16:10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

Aaron was to take the two goats brought on behalf of the people to the door of the tabernacle. He was then to cast lots upon the two goats—one was designated for the LORD and the other designated the scapegoat. The LORD's goat was to be offered as a sin offering. The scapegoat was to be presented alive before the LORD and then released in the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

Leviticus 16:12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail:

Leviticus 16:13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

Leviticus 16:14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

After casting lots to determine the designation of the goats, Aaron was to sacrifice the bull for himself and the priesthood. He was then to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar with a handful of incense that had been beaten small and take them into the Holy of Holies. Once inside, he was to put the incense on the fire before the LORD so that the smoke from the incense covered the mercy seat on the ark. He was then to take some of the blood from the sacrificed bull and sprinkle it toward the east on the mercy seat seven times.

Reminder – Seven is the number of completion and perfection.

Leviticus 16:15 ¶ Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

Leviticus 16:16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy *place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Leviticus 16:17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

Next, Aaron was to kill the goat designated as the sin offering for the people and take blood from goat and sprinkle it on the mercy seat in the same way he had done with the blood of the bull. This ritual served to cleanse the holy place from the contamination of the sin of the people.

No man was to be in the tabernacle during the time that Aaron was inside and serving according to God's instructions.

Leviticus 16:18 And he shall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.

Leviticus 16:19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

Next Aaron was to cleanse the altar accordingly by taking blood from both the bull and the goat and putting it on the horns of the altar seven times each.

Leviticus 16:20 ¶ And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy *place*, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

Leviticus 16:21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:

Leviticus 16:22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Once the holy place, the tabernacle and the altar had been cleansed, Aaron was to bring the live goat forward and lay both of his hands on the head of the goat. He was to confess the sins of the people, in effect transferring them to the head of the goat. The goat was then to be taken into the wilderness (uninhabited land) and released by a man chosen specifically for this task.

Leviticus 16:23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and shall leave them there:

Leviticus 16:24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

Leviticus 16:25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

Aaron was to go back into the temple and take off the linen garments he was wearing and leave them there. He was then to wash his body with water and put on his regular garments before coming back out.

Next, he was to offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people to atone for himself and the people. Point is made that the fat of the sin offering was to be burned upon the altar.

Leviticus 16:26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

Leviticus 16:27 And the bullock *for* the sin offering, and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy *place*, shall *one* carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

Leviticus 16:28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

The man who released the goat into the wilderness was to wash himself and his clothes before coming back into the camp.

The skins, flesh and dung from the sin offerings were to be carried outside the camp and burned. The one who performs this task was also to wash both himself and his clothes before coming back into the camp.

Leviticus 16:29 ¶ And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

Leviticus 16:30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that ye may be clean* from all your sins before the LORD.

Leviticus 16:31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

This practice was to be performed once a year on tenth day of the seventh month. It was to be treated as a Sabbath, a day of rest, and no work was to be done. It was to be a day dedicated to the LORD in recognition of the need for forgiveness of all one's sins. It reminds us that there is nothing we can do to earn God's forgiveness; Jesus is our Sabbath.

Colossians 2:16–20 “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ....Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances....”

“afflict your souls” – After looking at the Hebrew, this seems to be a phrase that references chastening oneself in mind and soul in light of his/her sins of the past year.

Leviticus 16:32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments:

Leviticus 16:33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the

altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

Leviticus 16:34 **And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.**

Point is made that the High Priest will designate one of his sons to succeed him in that position and to continue this practice as instructed once each year.

I think it is important to remember that each person who places their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior is a temple, and the Spirit of God dwells within him/her.

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

We should be taking care to keep that temple as clean as possible and a place in which the Holy Spirit feels welcome and at home. I have often heard Chuck Missler refer to 1John 1:9 as the Christian’s bar of soap.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When the goat was released into the wilderness, it was in effect picturing the fact that God was removing the people’s sins from them. Through Jesus we know that God has removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. In fact, He promises to remember our sins no more.

Psalms 103:12 “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

*Hebrews 10:10–17 “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all....For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**”*