

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## LEVITICUS 14-16

In Luke 17 we're told Jesus entered a certain village, and met ten lepers crying out for mercy. We're told when Jesus saw the lepers, "He said to them, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed."

Hey, Jesus healed all ten lepers, and sent them to the priest so they could be pronounced clean – and begin a new life. But as they set out for the Temple one of the healed turned around, and returned to Jesus to thank Him for the miracle. That's when Jesus asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

Two thousand years later, millions of people the world over, have been healed by Jesus... but if we listen we can still hear Him ask, "Didn't I heal John and Jim... save Beverly and Becky... comfort Andy and Ashley... but where are they?"

Guys, are we among the nine? *No where to be found!* Or are we among the few who've taken the time to say thanks to Jesus for His cleansing power?

This is the obvious, applicable lesson that springs from Luke 17 – *we need to be grateful*. But there are a few more subtle lessons taught in this passage.

Notice, Jesus sent the healed lepers to the priests to make their cleansing official. As we learned in Leviticus 13 priests had the responsibility of inspecting cases of leprosy. A priest had diagnosed their leprosy – now, for these ten men to return to the community, a priest would have to confirm their purification.

Jesus was not only concerned about their healing, but their reconciliation to the community. The work of Jesus always restores us to God, but also to each other.

*Yet I think there's an even more fascinating reason why Jesus sent them to be pronounced clean by the priest...* For when they got to the Temple, and the priest observed their healing, he would perform a ritual. And in that ceremony these ten recipients of grace would behold a beautiful picture of Jesus – both His crucifixion and His resurrection. They would get a glimpse of the work of Jesus that ultimately pays for their healing, and for all our healing... *which brings us to Leviticus 14...*

Verse 1, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest.

And the priest shall go out of the camp,” That’s where the lepers lived – outside the camp. “And the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper, then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.” Jesus healed countless lepers. It was one of the signs given to John the Baptist that he was the Messiah.

But prior to Jesus, healings of lepromatous – the malignant, lethal form of leprosy – were rare. There’s only one recorded healing in the Old Testament.

A Syrian General, Naaman, obeyed Elisha’s command and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times. When he came up out of the water for the last time, we’re told, “his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was

clean.”

But there’s another form of leprosy – tuberculoid leprosy – which was benign. It would plague a person for one to three years – then it would naturally disappear.

In the cases of miraculous healing, and natural healing the former leper was inspected by the priest before he was readmitted to society. If indeed he’d been cleansed he offered a sacrifice involving five ingredients... *two birds – a few pieces of cedar – a strand of scarlet thread – a branch from a hyssop plant.*

Verses 5-7 provide a bird’s-eye view of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.

“**And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.**” Isn’t this what happened to the Son of God.

He came to earth as a man – a human made from the dust of the ground. Like the rest of us, Jesus came in an earthen vessel... And while a man He was killed – but His death was not a waste. In a sense Jesus was crucified over running water, and thus its merits will flow across continents and centuries to all who believe.

Actually, *water* in the Scripture is symbolic of God’s Word.

*Living water, or running water,* is a type of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God predicts Jesus’ death. The Spirit of God transmits its effects throughout the ages. The Word and Spirit combine to form running water.

Verse 6, “**As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet**

and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.” Notice these items that accompany the birds...

Cedar wood reminds us of the cross – the wood to which Jesus was nailed.

The strand of scarlet is the color of blood – the payment for our sin.

The hyssop branch reminds us of the Roman soldiers who dipped a sponge in sour wine - tied it to a hyssop branch – then lifted it to Jesus’ mouth so He could moisten His lips – and utter His final words, “It is finished”, literally “*paid in full*”.

The priest takes the living bird, the cedar wood, the scarlet, and hyssop...

“And he shall sprinkle (the blood of the first bird) seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.” Jesus is the bird that died for our sin, *but He’s no longer dead*. He’s also the living bird who was turned loose in the open field.

Yes, Jesus died! But don’t leave Him in the grave. Today, He’s alive and on the loose. He’s a living Savior and He’s busy cleansing folks from the leprosy of sin.

We’re guilty of a big mistake. We’ve made the bunny rabbit a symbol of Easter. Forget bunnies, a better Easter symbol is a bird that’s living and on the loose.

Hey, what a picture of the crucifixion and resurrection. If you don’t see both portraits in the ritual of these birds... then I suppose you’re just a bird-brain.

Verse 8, “He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean.” Historically speaking, this was

a sanitary precaution that protected from spreading the leprosy. If some lingering remnant of the disease was still active this would prohibit its spreading...

But I also think this is a picture of everyone who's cleansed from the leprosy of sin. When Jesus washes away our sin we become a new creation. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, we become "born again". We're as pure as a newborn baby.

The former leper shaved off his adult hair and washed all his clothes. He looked like a grape. But he was starting over... All things had become new...

"After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows - all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean." After 7 days he shaved again.

Hey, as Christians I think we need to shave over and over. We need to always approach God with a freshness, and newness, and innocence – with the faith of a little child. When you think you know it all – that you've finally arrived – you need to shave again. Remember your former leprosy... and approach God humbly.

"And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb" Remember the verse, "old things have passed away, behold all things have become new..." The leper was considered brand new. He was given a fresh start.

It should be a “ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil.” The ephah was a dry measure - about a bushel. The log was a liquid measure - about a pint.

“Then the priest who makes him clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

And the priest shall take one male lamb & offer it as a trespass offering, & the log of oil, & wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering & the burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering. It is most holy.

The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.” Remember Leviticus 8 this is also how the priest was dedicated. He belonged to God from head to toe.

Since the majority of people are right-handed, God deals with our right side. In other words, our strengths, not just his weaknesses should be dedicated to God.

Dedicate your ear to God... to listen to His Word.

Dedicate your hand to God... to do His will.

Dedicate your foot to God... to walk in His ways.

Since the leper was healed by God, he should show his gratitude by living a life

dedicated to God. This is also how we show our gratitude for all God does for us.

“The priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD.

And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put some on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering.” The oil goes on top of the blood. Of course, the oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. And notice the oil is not to be placed where the blood has not already been applied. This is strategic.

The Holy Spirit will not anoint and empower what the blood of Jesus has not previously cleansed. There are New Age practitioners who claim to possess the power of God’s Spirit. They talk about the Spirit, but deny the necessity of Jesus’ blood. Hey, this is not the Holy Spirit. He only anoints what the blood cleanses.

Here’s another application, I think it’s possible to assume that all we need is the power of the Holy Spirit - when in reality we need to confess our sin, and receive a fresh cleansing of the blood of Jesus? *God empowers only what He first cleanses.*

Verse 18, “The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.” This is very interesting. In ancient Israel there were only four groups of people who were anointed on the head – oil poured out on their head.

*Kings* – those who ruled. *Prophets* – those who spoke for God. *Priests* – those who stood before God on behalf of the people. Remember the word “**Messiah**” means “anointed” - it speaks of Jesus ministry as prophet, priest, and king.

But there was a fourth group anointed with oil... lepers. Can you believe it?

People eaten up by sin were also anointed with oil. Hey, God wants to anoint us all with the power, and peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit. And so He picks out four groups... and we all fit into one of these four groups. *Where do you fit...*

Here is a testimony of God’s grace... He not only anoints and uses prophets, priests, and kings... He can also take a humble leper and use him for His glory.

Verse 19, “Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

But if he is poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take...” And verses 19-32 describe the exceptions made for the poor. God opens the door to everybody.

Verse 33, “And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: “When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession...”

At the time the Israelites were living in tents. But when they enter the land of Canaan they’ll build houses, and every homeowner knows there’ll be problems.



*Mold and mildew... fungus, and bacteria, and wood rot, and carpet stains...*

Some translations render the word “leprosy” a “spreading mildew”. What exactly Moses had in mind we’re not sure. He was obviously concerned about an active infection that could spread and make the family and community sick.

Verse 35, “And he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that there is some plague in the house,' "then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes into it to look at the plague, that all that is in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house.” It’s no different than today, when you invited the pastor to come over you have to clean out and clean up the house.

“And he shall examine the plague; and indeed if the plague is on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall, then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.” In other words, the house should be quarantined.

“And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed if the plague has spread on the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. Then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house.” It would be like a team from the EPA in protective gear removing asbestos from a

house.

Before we go further let me ask the men, *who is the priest in your home?*

If you're a husband or father it should be you! And one of your jobs is to inspect your house for leprosy. Have you been doing your job? Have you gone into your teenager's room and examined the walls... *His posters... his pictures... his CDs... the wallpaper on his cell phone or computer... the music he loads on his I-Pod.*

*"But that's none of my business..."* It is, if it's in your house!

Any privacy that exists in my house has been granted by me. And I can take it away if I feel an inspection is warranted. Don't you love your kids enough to root out leprosy? Don't say you love them by subjecting them to a house full of rot.

There have been occasions when I've taken a bedroom door off the hinges. I've let the infected child know he has no privacy until he cleans up his act.

Hey, if there's leprosy in my house it'll spread. If it's in big brother's room it'll spread to little brother's room. If it's in the bedroom it'll spread to the family room.

If I love my kids...I want them to be clean... And I'm willing to break up stones, and scrape mortar, and go through draws, and look under beds, and read emails, and examine phone calls, and do what it takes to get the leprosy out of my house.

Verse 43, **Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he**

has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, then the priest shall come and look; and indeed if the plague has spread in the house, it is an active leprosy in the house. It is unclean. And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry them outside the city to an unclean place.” Demolition is the final answer. I don’t want my family demolished because I failed to rid it of leprosy.

The rest of the chapter describes the ceremony that’s to take place after a house that once had leprosy is pronounced clean. It’s the same ritual done for the leper. Two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop... It’s the same sacrifice.

Verse 54, “This is the law for any leprous sore and scale, for the leprosy of a garment and of a house, for a swelling and a scab and a bright spot, to teach when it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law of leprosy.”

Leprosy can fester in a person, in a garment, and in a house. Likewise sin can incubate and grow in a person’s heart, wardrobe, and bedroom. As with leprosy we need frequent inspections. Inspect your heart – your closets – your walls.

Chapter 15 deals with bodily secretions... Verse 1, “And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge - whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness.’”

Here is where the Bible was way ahead of its time. It wasn't until 1873 that Dr. Armauer Hansen identified the bacterium that caused leprosy. In Europe, during the Dark Ages, people believed that leprosy was hereditary and restrictions on lepers were relaxed... Lepers even went door to door selling their wares.

As a result the disease spread. In fact the bacterium that causes leprosy is found in high concentrations in the secretions that come from the nose.

Thus a runny nose was a threat to the health of a community.

Of course this is also true today. At Calvary Chapel if your toddler has green mucous running from his nose we ask that you not put him in the nursery. He will probably infect other children... *Even we have laws concerning bodily secretions.*

And this was the concern with all bodily discharges – not just runny noses.

There were issues with boils, scabs, pussous wounds, oozing sores, infected ears, runny noses, severely chapped lips, ulcerated mouths... God cared about the spread of infection among His people... which is the reason for chapter 15

The next few verses probably deal with a genital discharge – the result of a venereal disease, or a simple infection, or perhaps a bad case of diarrhea.

By the way, did you know that diarrhea is hereditary - **It runs in your genes.**

Verse 4, **“Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and**

bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.”

Notice the importance placed on washing with water.

Understand the existence of germs and bacteria were unknown prior to the 1800s. Doctors had no idea how diseases were transmitted. In fact, it was not uncommon for a doctor to go from patient to patient never washing his hands.

Surgeons were like football players. They had the idea that the bloodier and dirtier their uniform the more respected they would be - the bloodier the better. Often they walked into rooms wearing blood-splattered gowns to impress their customers. The hospital itself was the greatest threat to the health of a patient.

Today, we have a better knowledge of how disease spreads. We emphasize sanitation and sterilization. Yet, it's amazing how dumb people can be...

Recently, the American Society for Microbiology did a study on the hand-washing habits of Americans. They observed 6,333 men and women in restrooms in five major US cities. In fact, the researchers even went to a Braves game. And they discovered that only 64% of the restroom patrons washed their hands after going to the toilet. Hey, you better be careful who you *high five* at Turner Field!

Even though it's not always practiced, health officials insist that simple hand washing is still the most important means of preventing the spread of infection. And its interesting God told us this before *microbiology* was even an *ology*!

Verse 13, “And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean. On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest.

Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.” After his cleansing a sacrifice was still needed.

Verse 16, “If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until

evening.

Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” Understand here is a normal, healthy – even sacred - sexual encounter between a husband and wife. Nothing was done immorally, yet this couple is considered “*unclean*” until evening.

As we talked about last week it’s important to understand the distinction made in the Mosaic Law between *ceremonial uncleanness* and *moral uncleanness*.

There is nothing *morally* wrong with a husband and wife having sex. In fact, the Bible teaches that marital sex is a beautiful, and pleasurable, and holy experience. Hebrews 13:4 read, “**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled...**”

There is nothing immoral about marital sex, the uncleanness was ceremonial.

Remember moral verdicts of clean or unclean were based on the good or evil intrinsic to the act, but ceremonial verdicts were based on symbolism. Nothing is immoral about marital sex, but when the Hebrews thought of human reproduction God wanted them to recall that sin has poisoned the fountain of life. We’re born in sin. And to condition us to that truth God attached a ceremonial uncleanness to reproductive acts. It was a temporary... but long enough to make you think.

Verse 19, “**If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be**

unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.”

A woman’s menstrual flow is a natural process. In no way is it morally dirty or unclean. Again, these laws concerned strictly ceremonial and symbolic issues.

“If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.” This was the problem with the woman in Matthew 9. For 12 years she had been considered unclean, and a virtual untouchable to her friends and family.

We’re told in verse 20, “And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of (Jesus’) garment. For she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.” But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.”

The Law could only pronounce her unclean. Jesus was able to heal.



Verse 31, Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.” If a person was ceremonially unclean the Tabernacle was off-limits.

“This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean.” It’s interesting that sexual relations made a person unclean and unfit for worship – thus, separating sex and formal worship in the minds of the Hebrews. This seems obvious to us, but in ancient and pagan cultures sex with temple prostitutes was a way to worship the fertility idols.

*Moving on...* I love clichés. In fact, I’m a connoisseur of clichés. It may surprise you how many of the clichés we use every day have their origin in the Bible...

For example, “Escaped by the skin of my teeth” - Job 19:20.

“A drop in the bucket” - Isaiah 40:15. “Whiter than snow” - Psalm 51:7.

“Harder than a rock” - Jeremiah 5:3. “Blind leads the blind” - Matthew 15:14.

“Rise and shine” - Isaiah 60:1. “Fuel to the fire” - Ezekiel 21:32.

“Hole in the wall” - Ezekiel 8:7. “Catch my breath” - Job 9:18.”

And here in Leviticus 16 we have another cliché – the word “scapegoat”. How many times have you heard someone say, “He made me his scapegoat.” Well, chapter 16 teaches us all about the real scapegoat and the Day of Atonement.

Verse 1, “Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died; and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.” Perhaps Nadab and Abihu had barged into the Holy of Holies – God’s throne room – irreverently or uninvited.

But now God will employ some restriction so it won’t happen again. From this point onward, only the Holy Priest will enter the Holy of Holies – and only on one day a year – the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tishri – or the Day of Atonement.

Verse 3, “Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.” He’s to be washed and dressed.

But it’s interesting for the Day of Atonement Aaron took off the garments of the High Priest and wore only the clothes of a common priest. Throughout this ritual Aaron stands as a type of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ... Who also laid aside robes of glory to be clothed as servant and to come in the form of a man.

As we’ll see the Day of Atonement was serious business. The sin of the nation was covered. The Jewish Midrash says the priest prepared for his duties 7 days.

In fact, he stayed awake the night before. Remember Jesus also stayed awake in the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before He made the ultimate sacrifice.

“And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.” These are for the nation.

And as a personal sacrifice, "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house." It's true the Day of Atonement speaks of Jesus, but this is the one part of the ritual that doesn't apply. Since Jesus was sinless He didn't have to make a sacrifice for Himself.

Verse 7, “He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.” He drew straws for the goats. One goat became the scapegoat. The other became the sacrifice.

“And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.” I guess you could say, “*the Lord got His goat.*” “But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.”

Verse 11, "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire

before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.” The smoke from the incense saved his life...

The burning incense formed a cloud that shielded Aaron from the brightness and intensity of God’s holiness and glory. The Midrash gives us other details... the golden censer full of coals was made of red gold – an extremely rare metal. And the priest entered the Holy of Holies sideways to also protect him from the glory.

There’s also a legend that the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with a rope tied to his ankle. If God rejected his sacrifice and struck him dead he could be dragged from God’s presence without anyone else risking their lives.

“He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.” Over time it became stained with blood.

"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.

So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” When the priest reappeared from behind the veil the people breathed a collective sigh of relief. It meant God accepted their sacrifice and their sins were forgiven. Atonement was made – their sin covered for another

year.

This is what the resurrection means to us. God accepted Jesus' sacrifice.

Verse 17, "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel."

The High Priest worked by himself. He had no help on the Day of Atonement. Jesus also went to the cross by Himself. He alone bore the penalty for our sin.

"And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Notice the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies twice, but the second time He exits He cleanses the place of the sacrifice.

This is prophetic. Jesus was in heaven - then went back to heaven. He'll exit the Holy of Holies twice. And when He comes the second time He'll cleanse the place of sacrifice – *this world*. He'll purify the earth, and establish His kingdom.

Verse 20, "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the

children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat...” Throughout the year people offered individual sacrifices, but this was a blanket sacrifice. All their sin fell on the scapegoat.

“And (the High Priest) shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.” This was why it was a *scapegoat* not a *scapelamb*. A lamb would return, but a goat would wander away and never come back. It assured the people of the completeness of their pardon.

Tradition says that in later years the goat was led out a Sabbath day’s distance then turned loose. Still later, it was taken 12 miles from camp – and then released. Each man would lead the goat a Sabbath days distance, then pass it to the next guy, until it was 12 miles from camp. Even later the goat was led over a cliff...

Jewish tradition also says a crimson sash was tied to the Tabernacle door. And after the goat was released it turned white – a symbol of God’s pardon. According to the Jewish Midrash for the 40 years after the Jews rejected Jesus the ribbon stayed red. When they crucified Jesus they rejected God’s only pardon for sin.

The scapegoat teaches us an important lesson, **When God forgives He forgets.**

It reminds me of the pastor who was tormented by a past indiscretion early in his ministry. No one knew about it but himself. He'd confessed his sin countless times, and pleaded with God - yet he could never rid his conscience of the guilt.

At the time there was a very spiritual lady in the church. She kept saying that God had told her this and that... The pastor thought it was a little presumptuous for a person to claim that God speaks to them personally. He decided to put the lady in her place. One day, she made the comment that God had told her...

The pastor said, "If God speaks to you, ask him to tell you the sin I committed early in my ministry." She said she would. Weeks later he asked her again, "Did God tell you my sin?" She said, "No He didn't. He told me He doesn't remember."

Hey, Jesus is not just our sacrifice – He's our scapegoat. Psalm 103:12 informs us, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." He doesn't say as far as the north is from the south, for you can go north only so far. But he says as far as the east is from the west. I can go east forever.

Jeremiah 31:34 also describes the forgiveness God grants those who are in Christ, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Verse 23, "Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the

people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.

The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.

And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.” This completed the rituals on the Day of Atonement.

Verse 29, "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.”

On October 6, 1965, Sandy Koufax, a Los Angeles Dodger, and a Jew, refused to pitch in the World Series because it was the Day of Atonement. Koufax was obedient to verse 29, and became a hero to Jews all across America.

Later some one summed up Jewish history, “Three thousand years of beautiful tradition: from Moses to Sandy Koufax.” That’s taking it a bit too far.

Verse 30, “For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.”



Hebrews called this day, “Yom Kippur” – “Yom” means “day”, “Kippur” means “atonement”. For the common person it was a day of confession and repentance.

To the Hebrews the phrase “afflict your souls” signifies a fast. And today, the Jews observe the Day of Atonement as a day for fasting and confession their sin.

But it was also a day of faith – *that’s why they did no work*. They spent the day trusting in the work of someone else – the High Priest. Which is a type of our faith. We too have rested from our works, and are trusting in the finished work of Jesus.

Verse 32, “And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.”