
a *Grace Notes* course

History II

The Temple

Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Christ
by Alfred Edersheim

Lesson 16 – Chapter 16, The Day of Atonement

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Instructions for Completing the Lesson

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

1. Read the lesson notes carefully.
 2. Look up and study each passage of the Bible that is mentioned.
 3. Complete the answers to the QUIZ and send your response to Grace Notes. The instructions for returning the Quiz are at the end of the lesson.
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Chapter 16, The Day of Atonement

Weakness of the Law

It may sound strange, and yet it is true, that the clearest testimony to 'the weakness and unprofitableness' 'of the commandment' is that given by 'the commandment' itself. The Levitical arrangements for the removal of sin bear on their forefront, as it were, this inscription: 'The law made nothing perfect'--having neither a perfect mediatorship in the priesthood, nor a perfect 'atonement' in the sacrifices, nor yet a perfect forgiveness as the result of both. 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect' (Heb 10:1). And this appears, first, from the continual recurrence and the multiplicity of these sacrifices, which are intended the one to supplement the other, and yet always leave something to be still supplemented; and, secondly, from the broad fact that, in general, 'it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins' (Heb 10:4).

It is therefore evident that the Levitical dispensation, being stamped with imperfectness alike in the means which it employed for the 'taking away' of sin, and in the results which it obtained by these means, declared itself, like John the Baptist, only a 'forerunner,' the breaker up and preparer of the way--not the satisfying, but, on the contrary, the calling forth and 'the bringing in of a better hope' (Heb 7:19; see marginal rendering).

The Day of Atonement

As might have been expected, this 'weakness and unprofitability of the commandment' became most apparent in the services of the day in which the Old Testament provision for pardon and acceptance attained, so to speak, its climax. On the Day of Atonement, not ordinary priests, but the high-priest alone officiated, and that not in his ordinary dress, nor yet in that of the ordinary priesthood, but in one peculiar to the day, and peculiarly expressive of purity. The worshippers also appeared in circumstances different from those on any other occasion, since they were to

fast and to 'afflict their souls'; the day itself was to be 'a Sabbath of Sabbatism' (rendered 'Sabbath of rest' in Authorized Version), while its central services consisted of a series of grand expiatory sacrifices, unique in their character, purpose, and results, as described in these words: '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' (Lev 16:33).

But even the need of such a Day of Atonement, after the daily offerings, the various festive sacrifices, and the private and public sin-offerings all the year round, showed the insufficiency of all such sacrifices, while the very offerings of the Day of Atonement proclaimed themselves to be only temporary and provisional, 'imposed until the time of reformation.' We specially allude here to the mysterious appearance of the so-called 'scapegoat,' of which we shall, in the sequel, have to give an account differing from that of previous writers.

Its Names

The names "Day of Atonement," or in the Talmud, which devotes to it a special tractate, simply "the day" (perhaps also in Hebrews 7:27), and in the Book of Acts 'the fast' (Acts 27:9), sufficiently designate its general object.

In that case we should translate Hebrews 7:27, 'Who needeth not on each day (viz. of atonement), as those high-priests, to offer up his sacrifices,' etc.

It took place on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), that is, symbolically, when the sacred or Sabbath of months had just attained its completeness. Nor must we overlook the position of that day relatively to the other festivals. The seventh or sabbatical month closed the festive cycle, the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15th of that month being the last in the year. But, as already stated, before that grand festival of harvesting and thanksgiving Israel must, as a nation, be reconciled unto God, for only a people at peace with God might rejoice before Him in the blessing with which He had crowned the year. And the import of the Day of Atonement, as preceding the Feast of Tabernacles, becomes only more striking, when we remember how that feast of harvesting

prefigured the final ingathering of all nations. In connection with this point it may also be well to remember that the Jubilee Year was always proclaimed on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9).

According to the Jewish view, it was also the day on which Adam had both sinned and repented; that on which Abraham was circumcised; and that on which Moses returned from the mount and made atonement for the sin of the golden calf.

The Teaching of Scripture about the Day

In briefly reviewing the Divine ordinances about this day (Lev 16; 23:26-32; Num 29:11), we find that only on that one day in every year the high-priest was allowed to go into the Most Holy Place, and then arrayed in a peculiar white dress, which differed from that of the ordinary priests, in that its girdle also was white, and not of the Temple colors, while 'the bonnet' was of the same shape, though not the same material as 'the miter,' which the high-priest ordinarily wore. The simple white of his array, in distinction to the 'golden garments' which he otherwise wore, pointed to the fact that on that day the high-priest appeared, not 'as the bridegroom of Jehovah,' but as bearing in his official capacity the emblem of that perfect purity which was sought by the expiations of that day.

Thus in the prophecies of Zechariah the removal of Joshua's 'filthy garments' and the clothing him with 'change of raiment,' symbolically denoted--'I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee' (Zech 3:3,4). Similarly those who stand nearest to God are always described as arrayed 'in white' (see Eze 9:2, etc.; Dan 10:5; 12:6). And because these were emphatically 'the holy garments,' 'therefore' the high-priest had to 'wash his flesh in water, and so put them on' (Lev 16:4), that is, he was not merely to wash his hands and feet, as before ordinary ministrations, but to bathe his whole body.

Numbers 29:7-11

From Numbers 29:7-11 it appears that the offerings on the Day of Atonement were really of a threefold kind--'the continual burnt-offering,' that is, the daily morning and evening sacrifices, with their meat- and drink-offerings; the festive sacrifices of the day, consisting for the high-priest and the priesthood, of 'a ram for a burnt-offering'

(Lev 16:3), and for the people of one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year (with their meat-offerings) for a burnt-sacrifice, and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering; and, thirdly, and chiefly, the peculiar expiatory sacrifices of the day, which were a young bullock as a sin-offering for the high-priest, his house, and the sons of Aaron, and another sin-offering for the people, consisting of two goats, one of which was to be killed and its blood sprinkled, as directed, while the other was to be sent away into the wilderness, bearing 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins' which had been confessed 'over him,' and laid upon him by the high-priest.

Before proceeding further, we note the following as the order of these sacrifices--first, the ordinary morning sacrifice; next the expiatory sacrifices for the high-priest, the priesthood, and the people (one bullock, and one of the two goats, the other being the so-called scapegoat); then the festive burnt-offerings of the priests and the people (Num 29:7-11), and with them another sin-offering; and, lastly, the ordinary evening sacrifice, being, as Maimonides observes, in all fifteen sacrificial animals.

According to Jewish tradition, the whole of the services of that day were performed by the high-priest himself, of course with the assistance of others, for which purpose more than 500 priests were said to have been employed. Of course, if the Day of Atonement fell on a Sabbath, besides all these, the ordinary Sabbath sacrifices were also offered. On a principle previously explained, the high-priest purchased from his own funds the sacrifices brought for himself and his house, the priesthood, however, contributing, in order to make them sharers in the offering, while the public sacrifices for the whole people were paid for from the Temple treasury.

Only while officiating in the distinctly expiatory services of the day did the high-priest wear his 'linen garments'; in all the others he was arrayed in his 'golden vestments.' This necessitated a frequent change of dress, and before each he bathed his whole body. All this will be best understood by a more detailed account of the order of service, as given in the Scriptures and by tradition.

The Duties of the High Priest

Seven days before the Day of Atonement the high-priest left his own house in Jerusalem, and took up his abode in his chambers in the Temple. A substitute was appointed for him, in case he should die or become Levitically unfit for his duties. Rabbinical punctiliousness went so far as to have him twice sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer--on the 3rd and the 7th day of his week of separation--in case he had unwittingly to himself, been defiled by a dead body (Num 19:13).

During the whole of that week, also, he had to practice the various priestly rites, such as sprinkling the blood, burning the incense, lighting the lamp, offering the daily sacrifice, etc. For, as already stated, every part of that day's services devolved on the high-priest, and he must not commit any mistake. Some of the elders of the Sanhedrim were appointed to see to it, that the high-priest fully understood, and knew the meaning of the service, otherwise they were to instruct him in it. On the eve of the Day of Atonement the various sacrifices were brought before him, that there might be nothing strange about the services of the morrow. Finally, they bound him by a solemn oath not to change anything in the rites of the day. This was chiefly for fear of the Sadducean notion, that the incense should be lighted before the high-priest actually entered into the Most Holy Place; while the Pharisees held that this was to be done only within the Most Holy Place itself.

The only interesting point here is the Scriptural argument on which the Sadducees based their view. They appealed to Leviticus 16:2, and explained the expression, 'I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat,' in a rationalistic sense as applying to the cloud of incense, not to that of the Divine Presence, while the Pharisees appealed to verse 13.

The evening meal of the high-priest before the great day was to be scanty. All night long he was to be hearing and expounding the Holy Scriptures, or otherwise kept employed, so that he might not fall asleep (for special Levitical reasons). At midnight the lot was cast for removing the ashes and preparing the altar; and to distinguish the Day of Atonement from all others, four, instead of the

usual three, fires were arranged on the great altar of burnt-offering.

The Morning Service

The services of the day began with the first streak of morning light. Already the people had been admitted into the sanctuary. So jealous were they of any innovation or alteration, that only a linen cloth excluded the high-priest from public view, when, each time before changing his garments, he bathed--not in the ordinary place of the priests, but in one specially set apart for his use. Altogether he changed his raiment and washed his whole body five times on that day, and his hands and feet ten times.

In case of age or infirmity, the bath was allowed to be heated, either by adding warm water, or by putting hot irons into it. The high-priest did not on that day wash in the ordinary laver, but in a golden vessel specially provided for the purpose.

When the first dawn of morning was announced in the usual manner, the high-priest put off his ordinary (layman's) dress, bathed, put on his golden vestments, washed his hands and feet, and proceeded to perform all the principal parts of the ordinary morning service. Tradition has it, that immediately after that, he offered certain parts of the burnt-sacrifices for the day, viz. the bullock and the seven lambs, reserving his own ram and that of the people, as well as the sin-offering of a kid of the goats (Num 29:8-11), till after the special expiatory sacrifices of the day had been brought. But the text of Leviticus 16:24 is entirely against this view, and shows that the whole of the burnt-offerings and the festive sin-offering were brought after the expiatory services. Considering the relation between these services and sacrifices, this might, at any rate, have been expected, since a burnt-offering could only be acceptable after, not before, expiation.

The Sin Offering

The morning service finished, the high-priest washed his hands and feet, put off his golden vestments, bathed, put on his 'linen garments,' again washed his hands and feet, and proceeded to the peculiar part of the day's services. The bullock for his sin-offering stood between the Temple-

porch and the altar. It was placed towards the south, but the high-priest, who stood facing the east (that is, the worshippers), turned the head of the sacrifice towards the west (that is, to face the sanctuary). He then laid both his hands upon the head of the bullock, and confessed as follows:-- 'Ah, JEHOVAH! I have committed iniquity; I have transgressed; I have sinned--I and my house. Oh, then, JEHOVAH, I entreat Thee, cover over (atone for, let there be atonement for) the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee, I and my house--even as it is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant: "For, on that day will He cover over (atone) for you to make you clean; from all your transgressions before JEHOVAH ye shall be cleansed.'" It will be noticed that in this solemn confession the name JEHOVAH occurred three times.

Other three times was it pronounced in the confession which the high-priest made over the same bullock for the priesthood; a seventh time was it uttered when he cast the lot as to which of the two goats was to be 'for JEHOVAH'; and once again he spoke it three times in the confession over the so-called 'scapegoat' which bore the sins of the people. All these ten times the high-priest pronounced the very name of JEHOVAH, and, as he spoke it, those who stood near cast themselves with their faces on the ground, while the multitude responded: 'Blessed be the Name; the glory of His kingdom is for ever and ever' (in support of this benediction, reference is made to Deut 32:3). Formerly it had been the practice to pronounce the so-called 'Ineffable Name' distinctly, but afterwards, when some attempted to make use of it for magical purposes, it was spoken with bated breath, and, as one relates (Rabbi Tryphon in the Jerusalem Talmud)¹ who had stood among the priests in the Temple and listened with rapt

¹ Possibly some readers may not know that the Jews never pronounce the word Jehovah, but always substitute for it 'Lord' (printed in capitals in the Authorised Version). Indeed, the right pronunciation of the word has been lost, and is matter of dispute, all that we have in the Hebrew being the letters I. H. V. H.--forming the so-called tetragrammaton, or 'four-lettered word.'

attention to catch the mysterious name, it was lost amidst the sound of the priests' instruments, as they accompanied the benediction of the people.

Choosing the Scapegoat

The first part of the expiatory service--that for the priesthood--had taken place close to the Holy Place, between the porch and the altar. The next was performed close to the worshipping people. In the eastern part of the Court of Priests, that is, close to the worshippers, and on the north side of it, stood an urn, called Calpi, in which were two lots of the same shape, size, and material--in the second Temple they were of gold; the one bearing the inscription 'Ia-JEHOVAH,' for Jehovah, the other 'Ia-Azazel,' for Azazel, leaving the expression (Lev 16:8,10,26) (rendered 'scapegoat' in the Authorized Version) for the present untranslated.

These two goats had been placed with their backs to the people and their faces towards the sanctuary (westwards). The high-priest now faced the people, as, standing between his substitute (at his right hand) and the head of the course on ministry (on his left hand), he shook the urn, thrust his two hands into it, and at the same time drew the two lots, laying one on the head of each goat. Popularly it was deemed of good augury if the right-hand lot had fallen 'for Jehovah.' The two goats, however, must be altogether alike in look, size, and value; indeed, so earnestly was it sought to carry out the idea that these two formed parts of one and the same sacrifice, that it was arranged they should, if possible, even be purchased at the same time. The importance of this view will afterwards be explained.

The Goat Shown to the People

The lot having designated each of the two goats, the high-priest tied a tongue-shaped piece of scarlet cloth to the horn of the goat for Azazel--the so-called 'scapegoat'--and another round the throat of the goat for Jehovah, which was to be slain. The goat that was to be sent forth was now turned round towards the people, and stood facing them, waiting, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him, and he would carry them forth into 'a land not inhabited.' Assuredly a more marked type of Christ could not be conceived, as He was brought forth

by Pilate and stood before the people, just as He was about to be led forth, bearing the iniquity of the people. And, as if to add to the significance of the rite, tradition has it that when the sacrifice was fully accepted the scarlet mark which the scapegoat had borne became white, to symbolize the gracious promise in Isaiah 1:18; but it adds that this miracle did not take place for forty years before the destruction of the Temple!

The Confession of Sin and the Sacrifice

With this presentation of the scapegoat before the people commenced the third and most solemn part of the expiatory services of the day. The high-priest now once more returned towards the sanctuary, and a second time laid his two hands on the bullock, which still stood between the porch and the altar, to confess over him, not only as before, his own and his household's sins, but also those of the priesthood. The formula used was precisely the same as before, with the addition of the words, 'the seed of Aaron, Thy holy people,' both in the confession and in the petition for atonement.

Then the high-priest killed the bullock, caught up his blood in a vessel, and gave it to an attendant to keep it stirring, lest it should coagulate. Advancing to the altar of burnt-offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then ranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it. Ordinarily, everything brought in actual ministry unto God must be carried in the right hand--hence the incense in the right and the censer in the left. But on this occasion, as the censer for the Day of Atonement was larger and heavier than usual, the high-priest was allowed to reverse the common order. Every eye was strained towards the sanctuary as, slowly bearing the censer and the incense, the figure of the white-robed high-priest was seen to disappear within the Holy Place. After that nothing further could be seen of his movements.

The Mercy Seat

The curtain of the Most Holy Place was folded back, and the high-priest stood alone and separated from all the people in the awful gloom of the Holiest of All, only lit up by the red glow of the coals in the priest's censer. In the first Temple the

ark of God had stood there with the 'mercy-seat' over-shadowing it; above it, the visible presence of Jehovah in the cloud of the Shechinah, and on either side the outspread wings of the cherubim; and the high-priest had placed the censer between the staves of the ark. But in the Temple of Herod there was neither Shechinah nor ark--all was empty; and the high-priest rested his censer on a large stone, called the 'foundation-stone.' He now most carefully emptied the incense into his hand, and threw it on the coals of the censer, as far from himself as possible, and so waited till the smoke had filled the Most Holy Place. Then, retreating backwards, he prayed outside the veil as follows: 'May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that neither this day nor during this year any captivity come upon us. Yet, if captivity befall us this day or this year, let it be to a place where the law is cultivated. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that want come not upon us, either this day or this year. But if want visit us this day or this year, let it be due to the liberality of our charitable deeds. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that this year may be a year of cheapness, of fullness, of intercourse and trade; a year with abundance of rain, of sunshine, and of dew; one in which Thy people Israel shall not require assistance one from another. And listen not to the prayers of those who are about to set out on a journey. ² And as to Thy people Israel, may no enemy exalt himself against them. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that the houses of the men of Saron may not become their graves.' ³ The high-priest was not to prolong this prayer, lest his protracted absence might fill the people with fears for his safety.

The Sprinkling of the Blood

While the incense was offering in the Most Holy Place the people withdrew from proximity to it,

² Who might pray against the fall of rain. It must be remembered that the autumn rains, on which the fruitfulness of the land depended, were just due.

³ This on account of the situation of that valley, which was threatened either by sudden floods or by dangerous landslips.

and worshipped in silence. At last the people saw the high-priest emerging from the sanctuary, and they knew that the service had been accepted. Rapidly he took from the attendant, who had kept it stirring, the blood of the bullock. Once more he entered into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled with his finger once upwards, towards where the mercy-seat had been, and seven times downwards, counting as he did so : 'Once' (upwards), 'once and once' (downwards), 'once and twice' and so on to 'once and seven times,' always repeating the word 'once,' which referred to the upwards sprinkling, so as to prevent any mistake. Coming out from the Most Holy Place, the high-priest now deposited the bowl with the blood before the veil.

Then he killed the goat set apart for Jehovah, and, entering the Most Holy Place a third time, sprinkled as before, once upwards and seven times downwards, and again deposited the bowl with the blood of the goat on a second golden stand before the veil. Taking up the bowl with the bullock's blood, he next sprinkled once upwards and seven times downwards towards the veil, outside the Most Holy Place, and then did the same with the blood of the goat. Finally, pouring the blood of the bullock into the bowl which contained that of the goat, and again the mixture of the two into that which had held the blood of the bullock, so as thoroughly to commingle the two, he sprinkled each of the horns of the altar of incense, and then, making a clear place on the altar, seven times the top of the altar of incense. Thus he had sprinkled forty-three times with the expiatory blood, taking care that his own dress should never be spotted with the sin-laden blood. What was left of the blood the high-priest poured out on the west side of the base of the altar of burnt-offering.

The Cleansing Completed

By these expiatory sprinklings the high-priest had cleansed the sanctuary in all its parts from the defilement of the priesthood and the worshippers. The Most Holy Place, the veil, the Holy Place, the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering were now clean alike, so far as the priesthood and as the people were concerned; and in their relationship to the sanctuary both priests and worshippers were atoned for.

So far as the law could give it, there was now again free access for all; or, to put it otherwise, the continuance of typical sacrificial communion with God was once more restored and secured. Had it not been for these services, it would have become impossible for priests and people to offer sacrifices, and so to obtain the forgiveness of sins, or to have fellowship with God. But the consciences were not yet free from a sense of personal guilt and sin. That remained to be done through the 'scapegoat.' All this seems clearly implied in the distinctions made in 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.'

Most solemn as the services had hitherto been, the worshippers would chiefly think with awe of the high-priest going into the immediate presence of God, coming out thence alive, and securing for them by the blood the continuance of the Old Testament privileges of sacrifices and of access unto God through them. What now took place concerned them, if possible, even more nearly. Their own personal guilt and sins were now to be removed from them, and that in a symbolical rite, at one and the same time the most mysterious and the most significant of all. All this while the 'scapegoat,' with the 'scarlet-tongue,' telling of the guilt it was to bear, had stood looking eastwards, confronting the people, and waiting for the terrible load which it was to carry away 'unto a land not inhabited.' Laying both his hands on the head of this goat, the high-priest now confessed and pleaded: 'Ah, JEHOVAH! they have committed iniquity; they have transgressed; they have sinned--Thy people, the house of Israel. Oh, then, JEHOVAH! cover over (atone for), I entreat Thee, upon their iniquities, their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee--Thy people, the house of Israel. As it is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant, saying: "For on that day shall it be covered over (atoned) for you, to make you clean from all your sins before JEHOVAH ye shall be cleansed.'" And while the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of Jehovah, the high-priest turned his face towards them as he uttered the last

words, 'Ye shall be cleansed!' as if to declare to them the absolution and remission of their sins.

The Goat Sent into the Wilderness

Then a strange scene would be witnessed. The priests led the sin-burdened goat out through 'Solomon's Porch,' and, as tradition has it, through the eastern gate, which opened upon the Mount of Olives.

Here an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one, specially appointed for the purpose, took him in charge. Tradition enjoins that he should be a stranger, a non-Israelite, as if to make still more striking the type of Him who was delivered over by Israel unto the Gentiles! Scripture tells us no more of the destiny of the goat that bore upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, than that they 'shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness,' and that 'he shall let go the goat in the wilderness' (Lev 16:22). But tradition supplements this information. The distance between Jerusalem and the beginning of 'the wilderness' is computed at ninety stadia, making precisely ten intervals, each half a Sabbath-day's journey from the other. At the end of each of these intervals there was a station, occupied by one or more persons, detailed for the purpose, who offered refreshment to the man leading the goat, and then accompanied him to the next station. By this arrangement two results were secured: some trusted persons accompanied the goat all along his journey, and yet none of them walked more than a Sabbath-day's journey--that is, half a journey going and the other half returning. At last they reached the edge of the wilderness. Here they halted, viewing afar off, while the man led forward the goat, tore off half the 'scarlet-tongue,' and stuck it on a projecting cliff; then, leading the animal backwards, he pushed it over the projecting ledge of rock. There was a moment's pause, and the man, now defiled by contact with the sin-bearer, retraced his steps to the last of the ten stations, where he spent the rest of the day and the night. But the arrival of the goat in the wilderness was immediately telegraphed, by the waving of flags, from station to station, till, a few minutes after its occurrence, it was known in the Temple, and whispered from ear to ear, that

'the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.'

The Meaning of the Rite

What then was the meaning of a rite on which such momentous issue depended? Everything about it seems strange and mysterious--the lot that designated it, and that 'to Azazel'; the fact, that though the highest of all sin-offerings, it was neither sacrificed nor its blood sprinkled in the Temple; and the circumstance that it really was only part of a sacrifice--the two goats together forming one sacrifice, one of them being killed, and the other 'let go,' there being no other analogous case of the kind except at the purification of a leper, when one bird was killed and the other dipped in its blood, and let go free. Thus these two sacrifices--one in the removal of what symbolically represented indwelling sin, the other contracted guilt--agreed in requiring two animals, of whom one was killed, the other 'let go.' This is not the place to discuss the various views entertained of the import of the scapegoat. But it is destructive of one and all of the received interpretations, that the sins of the people were confessed not on the goat which was killed, but on that which was 'let go in the wilderness,' and that it was this goat--not the other--which 'bore upon him all the iniquities' of the people. So far as the conscience was concerned, this goat was the real and the only sin-offering 'for all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,' for upon it the high-priest laid the sins of the people, after he had by the blood of the bullock and of the other goat 'made an end of reconciling the Holy Place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar' (Lev 16:20). The blood sprinkled had effected this; but it had done no more, and it could do no more, for it 'could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience' (Heb 9:9). The symbolical representation of this perfecting was by the live goat, which, laden with the confessed sins of the people, carried them away into 'the wilderness' to 'a land not inhabited.' The only meaning of which this seems really capable, is that though confessed guilt was removed from the people to the head of the goat, as the symbolical substitute, yet as the goat was not killed, only sent far away, into 'a land

not inhabited,' so, under the Old Covenant, sin was not really blotted out, only put away from the people, and put aside till Christ came, not only to take upon Himself the burden of transgression, but to blot it out and to purge it away.

The Teaching of Scripture

Thus viewed, not only the text of Leviticus 16, but the language of Hebrews 9 and 10, which chiefly refer to the Day of Atonement, becomes plain. The 'blood,' both of the bullock and of the goat which the high-priest carried 'once a year' within 'the sacred veil,' was 'offered for himself (including the priesthood) and for the errors (or rather ignorance) of the people.' In the language of Leviticus 16:20, it reconciled 'the Holy Place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar,' that is, as already explained, it rendered on the part of priests and people the continuance of sacrificial worship possible. But this live scapegoat 'let go' in the wilderness, over which, in the exhaustive language of Leviticus 16:21, the high-priest had confessed and on which he had laid 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,' meant something quite different. It meant the inherent 'weakness and unprofitableness of the commandment'; it meant, that 'the law made nothing perfect, but was the bringing in of a better hope'; that in the covenant mercy of God guilt and sin were indeed removed from the people, that they were 'covered up,' and in that sense atoned for, or rather that they were both 'covered up' and removed, but that they were not really taken away and destroyed till Christ came; that they were only taken into a land not inhabited, till He should blot it out by His own blood; that the provision which the Old Testament made was only preparatory and temporary, until the 'time of the reformation'; and that hence real and true forgiveness of sins, and with it the spirit of adoption, could only be finally obtained after the death and resurrection of 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' Thus in the fullest sense it was true of the 'fathers,' that 'these all...received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' For 'the law having a shadow of the good things to come,' could not 'make the comers thereunto perfect'; nor yet was it possible 'that the blood of

bulls and of goats should take away sins.' The live goat 'let go' was every year a remover of sins which yet were never really removed in the sense of being blotted out--only deposited, as it were, and reserved till He came 'whom God hath set forth as a propitiation...because of the passing over of the former sins, in the forbearance of God' (Rom 3:25).

'And for this cause He is the mediatory of a new covenant, in order that, death having taken place for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first covenant, they which have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance' (Heb 9:15).

This is not the place for following the argument further. Once understood, many passages will recur which manifest how the Old Testament removal of sin was shown in the law itself to have been complete indeed, so far as the individual was concerned, but not really and in reference to God, till He came to Whom as the reality these types pointed, and Who 'now once at the end of the world hath been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (Heb 9:26). And thus did the types themselves prove their own inadequacy and insufficiency, showing that they had only 'a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves' (Heb 10:1). With this also agree the terms by which in the Old Testament atonement is designated as a 'covering up' by a substitute, and the mercy-seat as 'the place of covering over.'

The Term 'la-Azazel'

After this it is comparatively of secondary importance to discuss, so far as we can in these pages, the question of the meaning of the term 'la-Azazel' (Lev 16:8,10,26). Both the interpretation which makes it a designation of the goat itself (as 'scapegoat' in our Authorized Version), and that which would refer it to a certain locality in the wilderness, being, on many grounds, wholly untenable, two other views remain, one of which regards Azazel as a person, and denoting Satan; while the other would render the term by 'complete removal.' The insurmountable difficulties connected with the first of these notions lie on the surface. In reference to the second, it may be said that it not only does violence to Hebrew grammar,

but implies that the goat which was to be for 'complete removal' was not even to be sacrificed, but actually 'let go!' Besides, what in that case could be the object of the first goat which was killed, and whose blood was sprinkled in the Most Holy Place? We may here at once state, that the later Jewish practice of pushing the goat over a rocky precipice was undoubtedly an innovation, in no wise sanctioned by the law of Moses, and not even introduced at the time the Septuagint translation was made, as its rendering of Leviticus 16:26 shows. The law simply ordained that the goat, once arrived in 'the land not inhabited,' was to be 'let go' free, and the Jewish ordinance of having it pushed over the rocks is signally characteristic of the Rabbinical perversion of its spiritual type. The word Azazel, which only occurs in Leviticus 16, is by universal consent derived from a root which means 'wholly to put aside,' or, 'wholly to go away.' Whether, therefore, we render 'la-Azazel' by 'for him who is wholly put aside,' that is, the sin-bearing Christ, or 'for being wholly separated,' or 'put wholly aside or away,' the truth is still the same, as pointing through the temporary and provisional removal of sin by the goat 'let go' in 'the land not inhabited,' to the final, real, and complete removal of sin by the Lord Jesus Christ, as we read it in Isaiah 53:6: 'Jehovah hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him.'

The Carcasses Burnt 'Outside the City'

While the scapegoat was being led into the wilderness, the high-priest proceeded to cut up the bullock and the goat with whose blood he had previously 'made atonement,' put the 'inwards' in a vessel which he committed to an attendant, and sent the carcasses to be burnt 'outside the city,' in the place where the Temple ashes were usually deposited. Then, according to tradition, the high-priest, still wearing the linen garments, went into the 'Court of the Women,' and read the passages of Scripture bearing on the Day of Atonement, viz. Leviticus 16; 23:27-32; also repeating by heart Numbers 29:7-11.

A series of prayers accompanied this reading of the Scriptures. The most interesting of these supplications may be thus summed up:--
Confession of sin with prayer for forgiveness,

closing with the words, 'Praise be to Thee, O Lord, Who in Thy mercy forgives the sins of Thy people Israel'; prayer for the permanence of the Temple, and that the Divine Majesty might shine in it, closing with--'Praise be to Thee, O Lord, Who inhabits Zion'; prayer for the establishment and safety of Israel, and the continuance of a king among them, closing--'Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, Who hast chosen Israel'; prayer for the priesthood, that all their doings, but especially their sacred services, might be acceptable unto God, and He be gracious unto them, closing with--'Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, Who hast sanctified the priesthood'; and, finally (in the language of Maimonides), prayers, entreaties, hymns, and petitions of the high-priest's own, closing with the words: 'Give help, O Lord, to Thy people Israel, for Thy people needeth help; thanks be unto Thee, O Lord, Who hears prayer.'

The High Priest in Golden Garments

These prayers ended, the high-priest washed his hands and feet, put off his 'linen,' and put on his 'golden vestments,' and once more washed hands and feet before proceeding to the next ministry. He now appeared again before the people as the Lord's anointed in the golden garments of the bride-chamber. Before he offered the festive burnt-offerings of the day, he sacrificed 'one kid of the goats for a sin-offering' (Num 29:16), probably with special reference to these festive services, which, like everything else, required atoning blood for their acceptance. The flesh of this sin-offering was eaten at night by the priests within the sanctuary. Next, he sacrificed the burnt-offerings for the people and that for himself (one ram, Lev 16:3), and finally burned the 'inwards' of the expiatory offerings, whose blood had formerly been sprinkled in the Most Holy Place. This, properly speaking, finished the services of the day. But the high-priest had yet to offer the ordinary evening sacrifice, after which he washed his hands and his feet, once more put off his 'golden' and put on his 'linen garments,' and again washed his hands and feet. This before entering the Most Holy

Place a fourth time on that day,⁴ to fetch from it the censer and incense-dish which he had left there.

On his return he washed once more hands and feet, put off his linen garments, which were never to be used again, put on his golden vestments, washed hands and feet, burnt the evening incense on the golden altar, lit the lamps on the candlestick for the night, washed his hands and feet, put on his ordinary layman's dress, and was escorted by the people in procession to his own house in Jerusalem. The evening closed with a feast.

The Mishnah

If this ending of the Day of Atonement seems incongruous, the Mishnah records (Taan. iv. 8) something yet more strange in connection with the day itself. It is said that on the afternoon of the 15th of Ab, when the collection of wood for the sanctuary was completed, and on that of the Day of Atonement, the maidens of Jerusalem went in white garments, specially lent them for the purpose, so that rich and poor might be on an equality, into the vineyards close to the city, where they danced and sung.

'Around in circle gay, the Hebrew maidens see;
From them our happy youths their partners choose.
Remember! Beauty soon its charm must lose--
And seek to win a maid of fair degree.

The Day of Atonement in the Modern Synagogue

We will not here undertake the melancholy task of describing what the modern synagogue has made the Day of Atonement, nor how it observes the occasion--chiefly in view of their gloomy thoughts, that on that day man's fate for the year, if not his life or death, is finally fixed. But even the Mishnah already contains similar perverted notions of how the day should be kept, and what may be expected from its right observance (Mish. Yoma, viii). Rigorous rest and rigorous fasting are enjoined from sundown of one day to the appearance of the first stars on the next. Neither

⁴ Hebrews 9:7 states that the high-priest went 'once in every year,' that is, on one day in every year, not on one occasion during that day.

food nor drink of any kind may be tasted; a man may not even wash, nor anoint himself, nor put on his sandals. Only woolen socks are to be used--the only exception is, where there is fear of serpents or scorpions.

The sole exception made is in favor of the sick and of children, who are only bound to the full fast--girls at the age of twelve years and one day, and boys at that of thirteen years and one day, though it is recommended to train them earlier to it. Kings and brides within thirty days of their wedding are allowed to wash their faces; the use of a towel which has been dipped the previous day in water is also conceded.

In return for all this 'affliction' Israel may expect that death along with the Day of Atonement will finally blot out all sins! That is all--the Day of Atonement and our own death! Such are Israel's highest hopes of expiation! It is unspeakably saddening to follow this subject further through the minutiae of rabbinical ingenuity--how much exactly the Day of Atonement will do for a man; what proportion of his sins it will remit, and what merely suspend; how much is left over for after-chastisements, and how much for final extinction at death. The law knows nothing of such miserable petty misrepresentations of the free pardon of God. In the expiatory sacrifices of the Day of Atonement every kind of transgression, trespass, and sin is to be removed from the people of God.

For high-handed, purposed sins, the law provided no sacrifice (Heb 10:26), and it is even doubtful whether they are included in the declaration Leviticus 16:21, wide as it is. Thank God, we know that 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin,' without exception.

Yet annually anew, and each time confessedly only provisionally, not really and finally, till the gracious promise (Jer 31:34) should be fulfilled: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' Accordingly it is very marked, how in the prophetic, or it may be symbolical, description of Ezekiel's Temple (Eze 40-46) all mention of the Day of Atonement is omitted; for Christ has come 'an high-priest of good things to come,' and 'entered in once into the Holy Place,' 'to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (Heb 9:11,12,26).

Quiz - Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

Respond to the questions as required.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the questions, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the file. Enter your responses in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your response, we will send you the next lesson in the series.

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Questions on The Temple, Lesson 16

1. Which priest officiated on the Day of Atonement?

Answer:

2. At what time of the Jewish calendar year did the Day of Atonement take place?

Answer:

3. In what chapters of the Bible are there details about the procedures to be followed on the Day of Atonement?

Answer:

4. How many different kinds of offering were offered on the Day of Atonement?

Answer:

5. What precaution was taken to be sure that there was someone to officiate on the Day of Atonement, in case the High Priest died or became unable to carry out his duties?

Answer:

6. How many fires were built on the Altar of Burnt Offering, for the Day of Atonement?

Answer:

7. The goat which was chosen to sent forth out of the camp was called the _____.

Answer:

8. The Shechinah Glory and the Ark of the Covenant were in the Holy of Holies in Herod's Temple.
[True/False]

Answer:

9. How many times did the High Priest enter the Holy of Holies?

Answer:

10. Where were the carcasses of the sacrificed bullock and goat taken to be burnt?

Answer:

End of Quiz
