

# SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

## WEEK 30

### God ordains the Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:1-34



## DAY 1

*The high priest prepared carefully • Leviticus 16:1-5*

### READ

Leviticus 16:1-5

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Leviticus 16:1-5

The instructions for this special day came right after Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, died for offering incense in the wrong way (16:1). This was a reminder to Aaron that coming into God's presence on the Day of Atonement was very serious, because God Himself would appear over the lid of atonement (16:2). So Aaron first had to wash himself, illustrating that only the pure in heart can see God (Matt 5:8). Then he dressed in plain linen clothes instead of in his fancy high priestly clothes. This is because the Day of Atonement was a day to be humbled over sin. The high priest came into the tabernacle humbly, in purity, and carefully, and in this same way every believer is to come to God in prayer (Ecc 5:1-2). If we wish to draw near to God, we must purify our hearts, grieve over our sin, and humble ourselves (Jas 4:8-10). This is especially true for those who lead God's people, because one must be holy in order to be useful to God (2 Tim 2:21).

### ASK

1. Why did the high priest wash himself?  
*He washed himself to show that only people who are pure and clean can see God.*
2. Why did the high priest have to be careful about coming into the Holy of Holies?  
*Because God Himself would appear over the lid of atonement (16:2).*
3. How must we approach God?  
*By purifying our hearts, grieving over our sin, and humbling ourselves (Jas 4:8-10).*

### DISCUSS

1. Discuss the type of attitude that we must have when we come before God.
2. Talk about the need for parents to model humility and brokenness over sin to their children.

## DAY 2

The high priest offered sin offerings for atonement • Leviticus 16:6–19

### READ

Leviticus 16:6–19

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Leviticus 16:6–19

The high priest then presented several sin offerings, a bull for himself and his family (16:6), and two goats for all the people (16:7). First, the high priest slaughtered the bull (16:11), and by repeating “for himself” three times, the verse emphasizes how important it was for the high priest to have **atonement**: he needed his sins paid for and washed away by the blood of a substitute sacrifice. Then he brought its blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood on the lid of atonement (16:14). Only blood can redeem sinners from the condemnation they deserve for breaking God’s law (1 Pet 1:18–19). Sprinkling the blood seven times illustrated complete purification of the high priest and of the Holy of Holies. After this, the high priest went out and did the same thing again, but this time with one of the goats as a sin offering for the people (16:15). On his way out of the tabernacle, he also atoned for the Holy Place and the bronze altar (16:16–19). As the high priest performed these offerings, he pictured the great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

### ASK

1. Why were the bull and goats called sin offerings?  
*Because the high priest offered them in order to pay for sins and to wash sins away.*
2. Why did the high priest offer a bull for himself and his family?  
*The high priest and his family needed to have their sins atoned for by the blood of a substitute sacrifice.*
3. What did he do with the blood of the sin offerings?  
*He sprinkled the blood from each offering seven times on the lid of atonement in the Holy of Holies.*

### DISCUSS

1. Define “atonement”.
2. Discuss why the high priest had to continually atone for sins year after year.

## DAY 3

The high priest sent a goat away and offered burnt offerings • Leviticus 16:20–24

### READ

Leviticus 16:20–24

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Leviticus 16:20–24

After these offerings were finished, the priest then took the second goat and sent it away (16:10). He put both hands on the goat, signifying the greatness of the confession and atonement (16:21). Normally only one hand was placed on an offering to picture the transfer of sin. In fact, the verse uses three separate terms for sin (also in Ps 51:2–3), showing that all of Israel’s sins, known or unknown, defiant or unintentional—all their

sins were being sent away on this goat. While the first goat was killed as payment for sins, the second goat was sent into the wilderness to show that after sins are paid for and confessed they are taken far away. After the sin offerings, the high priest washed and then changed back into his high priestly robes (16:23–24). Then he offered two burnt offerings, one ram for himself and another ram for all of Israel. These burnt offerings represented renewed dedication to the LORD. They had to come after the sin offerings, because sin must be paid for before a person can present himself to God (Rom 12:1).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**ASK** 

1. What did the high priest do with the second goat?  
*He put both hands on it, confessed all of Israel's sins, and sent it far away into the wilderness.*
2. Why did the high priest put both of his hands on the goat?  
*To signify the greatness of the confession and atonement (16:21). Normally only one hand was placed on an offering to picture the transfer of sin.*
3. What did the second goat show?  
*The second goat showed that after sins are paid for and confessed (Prov 28:13), they are taken far away.*

**DISCUSS** 

1. Read Psalm 103:12 and discuss how far away God removes our sin.
2. Talk about why sin must be paid for before a person can present himself before God.

**DAY 4***The Day of Atonement was a very special day • Leviticus 16:29–34***READ** 

Leviticus 16:29–34

**EXPLAIN** **The truth of Leviticus 16:29–34**

The people were to observe the Day of Atonement once a year (16:13). They were to “afflict” themselves, which refers to **fasting**, or not eating all day. They were also not to do any work (16:29). The day was a Sabbath for Israel (16:29). Fasting is fitting for a national day of confession. It is a sign of repentance, showing that even the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement are meaningless for a person who refuses to repent (Isa 1:11–17). When they humbled themselves, they would be cleansed on this day from all their sins (16:30, 34). Normally, sin offerings could not be made for such rebellious sins, but on this day every sin could be paid for and removed far away through confession, repentance, and a substitute sacrifice. Believers no longer offer these sacrifices, because this sacrifice has been completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. But they still confess and repent, motivated by the promise that when they confess, God is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all sin (1 John 1:9).

**ASK** 

1. How often was the Day of Atonement to be celebrated?  
*Once a year.*
2. What did the people do on this day?  
*They fasted and did not do any work.*
3. How does Jesus fulfill the Day of Atonement?  
*He is the sin offering who died for sin and the sin offering who removes sin far away. He is also the high priest who brings His own blood to God and represents all who believe in Him. Through Him we have forgiveness and entrance into God's presence.*

**DISCUSS** 

1. Talk about why believers no longer celebrate the Day of Atonement.
2. Read 1 John 1:9 and confess any known sin to God.

## DAY 5

Jesus fulfills the Day of Atonement •  
Hebrews 9:11–15

### READ

Hebrews 9:1–28

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Hebrews 9:11–15

Jesus Christ fulfills the Day of Atonement. He entered the true tabernacle, the more perfect and uncreated tabernacle (9:11). In other words, He entered heaven itself (9:24). He is also the sin offering, whose own blood purchased eternal redemption (9:12). As the blood of the sin offering purified the tabernacle and the people, so the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from sin (9:14). Also, He was crucified outside of Jerusalem, like the goat sent away into the wilderness. Next, He is the burnt offering, because His death sets people apart to serve the living God (9:14). Yet Jesus surpasses the sin and guilt offerings, since His offering was complete and final. Finally, He is the High Priest, who enters the Most Holy Place and presents the offering (9:11). As the High Priest, He is also the mediator between God and man (9:15). Yet He is greater than the high priests of Israel, because He is eternal and sinless, and He purifies and intercedes by His own authority. So through Jesus we have confidence that when we confess our sins, we will be completely forgiven (1 John 1:9).

### ASK

1. How does Jesus fulfill the tabernacle?  
*Jesus entered heaven, the true tabernacle.*
2. How does Jesus fulfill the sin offering?  
*Jesus died as the sin offering. By His death, the debt of sin is paid and the stain of sin is washed away. Also, He was crucified outside Jerusalem, like the goat sent away into the wilderness.*
3. How does Jesus fulfill the burnt offering?  
*Jesus died so that those He died for would become dedicated to God.*
4. How does Jesus fulfill the role of the High Priest?  
*Jesus is the one who entered the tabernacle and presented the offering, and He is the mediator.*

### DISCUSS

1. Discuss why we can have confidence that when we confess our sins we will be completely forgiven.
2. Discuss the right response to what Jesus has done (Heb 10:19–25).

## NEXT WEEK

### God requires holy living

Leviticus 19:1–37

