

November 19 2023  
The Mercy Seat Leviticus 16

## **Leviticus 16:20-22**

**20** “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. **21** And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and **send it away into the wilderness** by the hand of a man who is in readiness. **22** The goat **shall bear all their iniquities** on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the **goat go free in the wilderness**.

I am very excited about today’s message because we are at the **crucial turning point of the book of Leviticus**. We’ve been studying the book of Leviticus for many months now, chapter to chapter. And now everything that we have been studying from **chapters 1-15** has led us up to what is called the **Day of Atonement** or **Yum Kippur**.

Remember the Israelites came out of Egypt, they were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. They are now heading into an unfamiliar territory, but **God is guiding them through this whole journey**. And one of the key ways in which He guides us was to give instructions on how to get access to God. How can you get into the presence of God? The book of Leviticus was created to give us access to a Holy and pure God. But we are sinners, so we can’t go straight into the Holy God without something to offer.

### **Teaching His people how to get into the presence of God:**

- Leviticus 1 - 7 was all about the Laws of the Offering (sin)
- Leviticus 8 - 10 was about the Laws of the Priests (Ministry)
- Leviticus 11 - 15 was about Purity (Clean / Unclean) Holiness

**Leviticus 1 - 7 (This is my favorite)** was all about the different types of sacrifices or offerings unto the Lord. Now remember, the other nations, like the Canaanites were sacrificing children to the god of Molech. So the Lord says “NO” and gave instructions on the types of animals as offerings. *God is sees the heart of your giving and not what you give.*

### **Different Types of Animal Sacrifices or Offerings:**

**1 Bull 2 Goat 3 Sheep 4 Turtledove 5 Pigeon** (Very cheap) And this is what I love about God, is that He allows you to give based upon your financial giving. If your wealthy, then give the bull, but if your poor then offer the pigeon. What I love about God is that whatever you gave as long as you gave from your heart, God was pleased. Remember, “*God loves a cheerful giver*” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Two Types of Offering I want to quickly review with you.

**Burnt Offering:** A burnt offering was the complete destruction of the animal (except for the hide or skin) in an effort to renew the relationship between Holy God and sinful man. “*God thank you for what you have done for us.*”

[Show image of **alter** of Burnt offering]

So in this tabernacle, a very large tent also called **God's dwelling place**, you have an **alter**. Think of this place as a very large BBQ grill. Where you can grill an entire cow from head to tail. It was massive.

**Sin Offering:** A sin offering was an animal sacrifice, made according to the laws of Moses, which provided atonement for sin.

What is “atonement?”

**Atonement:** “Covering” over sin

The idea was that when you do a sin offering unto the Lord, **God will cover over your sins** and His wrath will not be upon you, but on the animal. So there is an exchange or covering over our sins. (The people would place their hands on the head of the animal and confess their sins upon the sheep and then the sacrifice on the alter would be the “atonement.”)

So this sets the backdrop for Leviticus 16.

### **Leviticus 16:5-6**

**5** And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. **6** “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make **atonement** for himself and for his house.

Now Aaron who is the high priest is about to purify the nation of Israel. So Aaron is preparing His people for what is called “**Day of Atonement**” or “**Yum Kipper**.”

### **[Show image of the tabernacle]**

This event is only done once a year. Meaning, the High Priest can only enter into a place called Holy of Holies to make an atonement for his people by putting the blood of those animals on the mercy seat.

So what is “**Yum Kipper**?”

**Yum** = Day

**Kippur** = Covering (Covering over sin) / English “Atonement”  
or **Day of Covering**

You have to remember that in the Old Testament, **sins were covered over (Yum Kipper), but they were never removed**. That’s why you had to do the “Yum Kipper” every year because your sins were never fully removed.

And this is why we need Jesus who is the only person to fully remove the sin and not just cover over.

### **Hebrews 10:3-4**

**3** But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

**(Yum Kippur)** **4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Remember, another word for “sin” means ***missing the mark*** or ***disobedience to God’s Word***. Think of sin this way, “God does not have to teach you how to be ***jealous, or envy, or hate someone***. We do this on our own.”

Most parents have to say to their little kids, “***Don’t touch this or don’t do that***” because little kids have a tendency to do what the body wants. Without parents, we do whatever we want, right. Same goes without God, we do whatever we want. So **sin separates us from God. Sin is what divides us.**

So on “***Yum Kippur***” or “***Day of Atonement***” all of one year’s worth of sin and confession will be upon one innocent little goat.

So “***Yum Kippur***” was a day in which people would reflect about their life and God. There was a deep soul searching, was there any sin in my life. ***How can I get my heart right with God?***

Out of the whole year, if you were to give only one confession to the priest, then what would it be? Because on “Yum Kippur” the priest would take the sins of Israel to the **mercy seat of God**.

So here comes the High Priests he puts on the required garments or clothing that represented purity, bringing with him the sins of Israel.

### **Leviticus 16:6-10**

6 “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. 7 Then he shall take the **two goats** and set them before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 8 And Aaron shall **cast lots** over the two goats, **one lot for the Lord** and the **other lot for Azazel**. 9 And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and use it as a **sin offering**, 10 but the goat on which the lot fell for **Azazel** shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to **Azazel**.

### **Leviticus 16:20-22**

20 “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. 21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it **all the iniquities of the people** of Israel, and **all their transgressions, all their sins**. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and **send it away into the wilderness** by the hand of a man who is in readiness. 22 The goat **shall bear all their iniquities** on itself to a remote area, and he **shall let the goat go free in the wilderness**.

**Iniquities**: gross immorality, injustice, wickedness, rebellion, wrongdoings. **Transgressions**: Breaking the Mosaic laws, the moral laws. **Sins**: disobedience to God’s commands

So you have two goats. “Cast Lots” it’s like a Holy Dice. [ On one side of the lot, it is “**For the Lord**” while the other one says, “**For Azazel**.”]

[ Give illustration of the Holy Dice: Two boards with names, one that says, “**For the Lord**” and the other “**For Azazel**”]

Hebrew Word: Azazel (Pronounced az-aw-zale’)

Aramaic Word “Az” means “goat.”

Hebrew Word: Azel is a verb which means “**to go away**”

Azazel means a “**goat that is going away**” or a “**going away goat**” to an uninhabitable place, like a desert.

**Azazel in English** means **Scapegoat**; entire removal (Meaning: One that is made to bear the blame of others. “Carrying the sin of Israel”)

Give an illustration with two people from our church.

- Cast lots (two boards: **For the Lord, and For Azazel**)
- Throw or cast with either one of the name (let say, “For the Lord”), then this person is the “**Sin offering**”: In a sin offering, the live animal was brought to the altar, This goat was slaughtered for the sins of the people and its blood on the mercy seat.
- **For Azazel, “The going away goat”**: After the cleansing, the live goat was brought to the high priest. Laying his hands on the scapegoat, the high priest was to “confess over it all the iniquities – all the transgressions - all the sins – and put them on the goat’s head. [Have everyone in the audience pick or choose one confession (out of the whole year) to make your confession onto the goat.] Now this one person (church member) to carry all the sins, transgressions, and all the iniquities.
- He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness” (vv. 21-22). For Christians, this is a foreshadowing of Christ.

So here is this **innocent goat that has taken upon all the transgressions, all the iniquities, and all the sins of the entire nation of Israel to be sent far away and never to return.**

## **2 Corinthians 5:21**

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Our sins were laid on Jesus – He bore our sins just as the scapegoat (Azazel) bore the sins of the Israelites.

What is interesting is that once all the sins was put on the scapegoat, this innocent goat was **considered unclean (that's why the goat had to go away). In essence, the goat was cast out or a "rebel."**

The same happened to Jesus. He was a **"cast out,"** a **"rebel"** and that's why **He was crucified outside of the city**, bearing all the sins of the world upon His shoulders, just like Azazel.

## **Isaiah 53:12** New Living Translation

I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

As I studied through this text, I had a question: **"What if the goat returns?"** Slap yourself in the forehead! (From tabernacle to temple)

1. Some scholars (very few) think that to prevent the "scapegoat" from returning, they would throw the goat over a cliff to make sure the goat doesn't return.
2. When the Israelites took over Jerusalem, they built a temple and they continued on with "Yom Kippur." So what they did with the scapegoat was to take to the wilderness or desert and from there, they would have many shelter stops to watch and see the goat

moving far away from the temple. And once the goat got away far enough, it would send the message to the previous stop and tell them that the goat is gone and hasn't returned. Then that would continue on all the way back to the temple and the High Priest would hear about it and all Israel would celebrate and say, "***Our sins is forgiven by God. We know longer see sin. Our sin is gone.***"

### **Leviticus 16:14-16**

**14** And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the **mercy seat** on the east side, and in front of the **mercy seat** he shall sprinkle some of the **blood with his finger seven times**. **15** "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the **mercy seat** and in front of the **mercy seat**. **16** Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

So the priests takes the blood of the sacrifices and goes to inside of the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood seven times on the mercy seat. **What is this mercy seat and why is it called a "mercy seat?" Why do you sprinkle blood on the mercy seat seven times?**

First, let's begin with the meaning of the mercy seat:

### **Exodus 33:17-19**

**17** And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know



you by name.” 18 Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” 19 And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be **gracious to whom I will be gracious**, and will **show mercy on whom I will show mercy**.”

**Question then is, where will God show His mercy and glory?**

**[Show the picture of the mercy seat]** You have a lid and the two angels on top. This whole thing is called the Ark of the Covenant.

Inside the **ark of the covenant** also known as the **Ark of the Testimony** or the **Ark of God** are three things that represent the glory of God:

1. Stone Tablets written are the Ten Commandment
2. Aaron’s staff that had budded
3. Gold jar of manna that God Himself provided for Israel

- Keep the picture of the “mercy seat” on the powerpoint -

If you notice on the top of the mercy seat are two angels. **Did you notice anything interesting?** The wings of the angel’s are covering over the mercy seat (lid) and also the **angel’s are looking down**. Isn’t that interesting. **The question is, why?**

The mercy seat is actually a “judgement” seat (***I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy***). It’s only a mercy when you make things right before God and His grace come before you. But when you don’t make things right before God, then judgment comes to us all. That’s why it’s a judgement seat.

Let me explain.

Inside the ark of covenant is the Ten Commandment. Do you remember the Ten Commandments?

1. You shall have no other gods before Me
2. You shall make no idols or you shall not bow down to any other gods.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Keep the Sabbath day Holy
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet

**Murder: 1 John 3:15** Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. and you know that murders don't have eternal life within them.

**“Adultery”: Matthew 5:28** But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Pastor Jose, but I've stolen someone's heart? Is that still stealing?  
Haha. No, but stealing someone's ideas or inventions or essays.  
Downloading the latest moves without paying.

**Covet:** Everyone at some point wanted what others have.

So basically all of us have fallen and there is a judgement upon based upon the Ten Commandments and all the Israelites have failed against God's commands, and **there is a judgment coming.**

Because all of us have failed, the angel's are looking down and judgment is upon the people, knowing that sin will come over the hearts of people. **“God does not have to teach you to be jealous.”**

That is why the “**Day of Atonement**” or “**Yum Kippur**” is done once a year. To relive the people of the sin and put all the iniquities, and all the transgressions, and all the sins upon this “**scapegoat**.”

And that is why the blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat, so that God’s grace and God’s mercy will be upon His people. Because we have made our confession, we made things right before God.

**Aren’t you glad that you don’t have to do this, once a year,** but when you have Christ in you and dwelling in your heart, that you can go to God at any time.

So the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat is basically saying, “**God, please forgive me for the sin’s of Israel. God please have mercy on us and may the wrath of God, not be upon our souls. May you give us mercy. May you be pleased with our offering.**”

**Why sprinkling of the blood seven times?** Why not 12 to represent the 12 tribes of Israel? Why only seven times?

Did you know that Jesus shed His blood seven times.

1. **The Whip:** The scourge or the whip on His back. (39 lashes: Not any kind of whip but the whip used by Romans had a wooden handle, leather strap with bone pieces and metal balls towards the end to produce the maximum pain and bleeding.)
2. **Crown of Thorns:** Roman soldiers mocked his title “King of the Jews.” Some scholars say the thorns were about few inches long.
3. Nails on the two wrists.
4. Nail on the two feet
5. And a spear on the side of Jesus

(1 Back, 2 Head, 3 Right Hand, 4 Left Hand, 5 Right feet, 6 Left feet, and the 7 Side)

Yet it was this same Jesus that looked upon the men who whipped Him with bone and metal.

- Looked upon the men who put the thorn on His head.
- Looked upon the men who put the nails in His hand and feet

Said the most profound words in all of humanity:

### **Luke 23:34** New Living Translation

Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.**” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

Remember when God said in **Exodus 33:19** “... ***I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.***” Here is Jesus giving mercy to those people who are persecuting him. All those who hated Jesus don’t deserve His grace and mercy.

Jesus is the mercy seat. And for those who believe in Jesus don’t have to wait once a year to make your confession right before Him. You don’t have to wait for “Yom Kippur,” because you can do it right now.

### **Hebrews 4:16**

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Are you in need of mercy?  
Are you in need of Grace?