

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 16:1-5

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we are going to read Leviticus Chapter 16, and today we will read verses 1-5.

This chapter is about the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. The previous 15 chapters are all preparations for this chapter. We know that God is a merciful and compassionate God. He is so willing to forgive and pardon those who have sinned and are sitting in the shadow of death. However, God is also a righteous and holy God, and by no means will He acquit the guilty. The wages of sin is death. So, in God's plan, when the fullness of time had come, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, would come to bear the punishment for sin.

John 19:34 records what Jesus did for us on the cross: "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." John recorded this so clearly to tell us that the blood flowed out to cleanse our sins; the water also flowed out to provide us with life, giving us the power to break free from the dominion and bondage of sin. Only in this way can sin truly be removed.

The Day of Atonement in the Old Testament is a foreshadowing of Christ's redemption; it points to Christ but is not equivalent to Christ. Christ's redemption means that Christ fully paid the price for sin and also gave people the power to break free from the dominion of sin. Only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, accomplished redemption, and only then can our sins be removed. The bulls and goats offered on the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament could not take away people's sins; they only temporarily covered people's sins. Therefore, in the Old Testament, the word "redemption" or "redeem" was not used, but "atonement" was used. In fact, translating "atonement" as "redemption" in Chinese is not a very good translation; it would be better translated as "covering sins."

This point is made very clear in Hebrews 10:1-5: "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in the sacrifices, there are reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.'" Because the blood of bulls and goats cannot remove sins, only Jesus Christ, who became flesh and shed His blood on the cross, could accomplish redemption.

Every preparation, every action, and every ordinance of the Day of Atonement points to Christ and foreshadows Christ. However, Christ is richer and deeper than these foreshadows. Therefore, when we read about the complicated rituals of the Day of Atonement, we should not feel bothered but should ask ourselves if we have experienced the grace of Jesus Christ's redemption in these details. Not only that, but we must also recognize that what Christ has done for us is far more, higher, and deeper than these rituals.

Paul truly understood and experienced the salvation of Christ, so he offered this praise to God. In Romans 8:38-39, he said, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I hope that through the description of the Day of Atonement, we can have a renewed understanding and appreciation of the grace of Jesus Christ's redemption.

Verses 1-2: "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."

It is very special that at the beginning, it mentions what is recorded in Leviticus 10:1-3, where Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, on the first day of their service, carelessly entered the Holy Place and offered profane fire. God did not tolerate that; immediately, fire came out from the Lord and consumed them. Through this event, God instructed Moses to tell Aaron not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil. We know that in the tabernacle, there was the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, separated by a veil. Entering inside the veil means entering the Most Holy Place. In the Most Holy Place, there was one object—the Ark of the Covenant, but the Bible here does not mention the Ark; instead, it speaks of the mercy seat. The Hebrew word for "mercy seat" literally means "cover."

Exodus 25:17-18 says, "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat." The cover of the Ark was made of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide, exactly matching the dimensions of the Ark. And two cherubim of hammered gold were to be placed at the two ends of the cover.

The cherubim represent God's glory, and inside the Ark were the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The pure gold cover covered the Ark, exactly concealing the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were meant to convict people of sin, but now they were covered by the mercy seat of pure gold. This is God's special grace, and therefore this cover is called the mercy seat. The mercy seat of God must also meet the requirements of God's glory, for the two cherubim faced each other and looked down toward the mercy seat. The atonement of the Day of Atonement comes from the covering of the mercy seat, meaning that sin is temporarily covered.

God told Moses to instruct Aaron that he could not come before the mercy seat at any time, lest he die. Aaron's two sons were consumed by God's fire as a warning because God Himself would appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. When the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, God led them by a pillar of cloud by day and

a pillar of fire by night. When the Israelites stopped and camped, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire would rest over the tabernacle, and God would appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. This is the place where God revealed Himself.

God is a holy and righteous God, and unclean people who come before Him carelessly will be immediately struck down. This is why, after Aaron's two sons were burned up in chapter 10, God immediately tells Moses and Aaron about the uncleanness related to food, childbirth, leprosy, and bodily discharges. The Bible uses five chapters, from chapters 11 to 15, to explain how people should remove uncleanness. Only when a person is cleansed can they come before the holy God. Aaron, the high priest, was the same. He too was human and had to remove uncleanness before he could come before God.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is a good reminder for saints who have served in the church for many years. Sometimes, after serving for a long time and often being praised by other believers, we unconsciously begin to think of ourselves as superior and gradually become careless in matters of service. We must recognize that we are all sinners, and it is entirely by the grace of Jesus Christ's redemption that we are able to serve the holy and glorious God. Without grace, we are nothing. Moses' words to Aaron are also a reminder to us. In every service, we must first cleanse ourselves before touching matters of service, lest we bring upon ourselves spiritual death.

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."

Aaron, as the high priest, was a type of priest in his office, but he himself was still a sinful man. Therefore, he had to offer a sacrifice for himself before he could enter the Holy Place. He had to bring a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering. How were the sacrifices to be offered? The following verses will explain the details of the offering.

Verse 4: “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.”

Aaron first had to wash his body with water, and then he could put on the high priest's garments. Here it says he must put on the linen tunic and linen trousers to avoid exposing his nakedness and offending God. He must gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen turban on his head; his entire body was to be covered in linen. In the New Testament, linen represents the gentle and pure humanity of Jesus Christ. Aaron was the high priest, and he was supposed to wear the glorious and beautiful high priestly garments. If the saints still remember, the high priest's garments were extremely glorious and splendid.

In Exodus chapter 28, where the high priest's garments are made, we see, in addition to the linen tunic, trousers, sash, and turban that we just read about, there was also a blue robe. The hem of the robe was decorated with pomegranates made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, with gold bells in between the pomegranates, which made a ringing sound as he walked, very impressive. Over the robe, he would wear the ephod, which had two shoulder straps, and on these straps were two onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. On his chest, he would wear the breastplate of judgment, which had twelve stones, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Inside the breastplate were the Urim and Thummim. On his head, he wore a golden plate with the inscription “Holiness to the LORD”.

However, on the Day of Atonement, the robe, ephod, breastplate, and the golden plate on his head—these garments which manifested the high priest's glory and beauty—were all to be removed. Here, Aaron becomes a type of Jesus Christ. Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, was so glorious and beautiful, but He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. He willingly emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and lived a perfect and complete human life on earth. This is typified by the linen tunic, sash, and turban that Aaron wore.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest Aaron had to remove his glorious outer garments and only wear the linen tunic to minister. Aaron's role and attire on the Day of Atonement typified Jesus Christ. But Aaron himself was human and sinful, so he had to first offer a young bull as a sin offering for himself, and afterward, he would offer sacrifices for the people of Israel.

Verse 5: "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."

Here, it says that the high priest Aaron had to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for the congregation of Israel: two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. The sin offering is negative, removing the problem of sin, which is why goats were used. The burnt offering is positive, to be accepted by God, which is why a ram was used. In Leviticus chapter 4, we see the regulations for the sin offering. There, we learn that when the anointed priest sins, he must offer a young bull as a sin offering. So, Aaron had to offer a young bull as a sin offering for himself, and that makes sense. But if a ruler or a common person sinned, they were to offer a goat as a sin offering. However, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest had to offer two male goats as a sin offering for the people, which is very special. Tomorrow, as we read about the details of the sin offering, we will understand why two male goats were used.

Today, let's look at the Day of Atonement from the perspective of the New Testament. The Day of Atonement is a type of Christ's redemption. In the Old Testament, the high priest, once a year on the Day of Atonement, would enter behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, bringing blood to the mercy seat to make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people, and there he would meet with God. But the blood of bulls and goats could only cover sins; it could not remove them. Therefore, the high priest had to offer sacrifices every year. On the Day of Atonement, every year he had to offer a sin offering for himself and for the people.

In the New Testament, Hebrews 9:11-12 says, "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with

hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, no longer uses the blood of bulls and goats but uses His own blood. He entered the Holy of Holies once and for all and accomplished eternal redemption.

Jesus’ one sacrifice completed eternal atonement. The author of Hebrews, to ensure we understand, emphasizes again in 9:25-26, saying that Christ “not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Jesus Christ, by offering Himself once, completed the eternal work of putting away sin.

Therefore, New Testament believers are so blessed, no longer needing to offer bulls and goats every year to cover their sins. By receiving the grace of Jesus Christ’s redemption, we can have sin removed from us. But we must be careful not to neglect such a great salvation. We should slowly reflect on and savor the complete grace of Jesus Christ in our lives through the description of the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. We are so blessed to be in the New Testament. You personally put aside Your glory and honor, came to earth, and became a humble man, living a complete life. Yet You were crucified for our sins, accomplishing eternal redemption once for all. In the past, the high priest could only enter the Holy of Holies once a year, but today we can come boldly before the Father by the blood of Jesus Christ to obtain mercy and grace. This is such a great salvation. But we also ask You to help us not to treat this salvation as ordinary and thus offend the holiness and righteousness of God. Help us to experience redemption in every aspect of our lives and to be cleansed from uncleanness. Let us be set apart to please God. Bless our lives. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.