

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

Leviticus 16: 25–34

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Leviticus chapter 16. We will read verses 25–34 today.

The sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were primarily for atonement, with both the sin offering and the burnt offering presented to address sin. What's particularly noteworthy is that halfway through the offerings, the high priest Aaron had to remove his garments, wash his body, and then put his garments back on before continuing his service. Initially, Aaron served wearing linen garments, which prefigures Christ in His incarnation, serving humanity as the Son of Man. After living a perfect and complete life, He was crucified on the cross for human sin, paying the price for sin and resolving the problem of sin. He even went down to Hades in the role of the scapegoat, imputing sin to Azazel.

In other words, after addressing the negative issue brought by sin, Aaron was to wash his body and put on the glorious and beautiful robe of the high priest to continue with the second half of the service. This prefigures Christ, who, after His death and resurrection, ascended and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, continuing His heavenly ministry. This is foreshadowed by Aaron offering the burnt offering for himself. Aaron also had to offer a burnt offering for the people, signifying to New Testament believers that, having received grace and salvation, we should present our bodies as a living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service.

Verse 25: “The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.”

In the first half of offering the sin offering, only the handling of the blood was specified. The blood had to be brought into the Most Holy Place, sprinkled seven

times on the mercy seat, and then taken to the outer court of the tabernacle to be sprinkled seven times on the altar. Through this sprinkling of blood, the holy, righteous, and glorious requirements of God were met, and the human conscience was cleansed, completely dealing with the negative effects of iniquities and transgressions. Now, after the burnt offering is completed, attention turns back to the remaining parts of the sin offering. This confirms that the burnt offering is indeed part of atonement, and it also serves as the foundation for the remaining parts of the sin offering.

The burnt offering is the sacrifice that makes a person acceptable to God. Based on this acceptance, the high priest Aaron was to offer the fat of the sin offering animals, burning it on the altar of the burnt offering. The fat of the bull was for Aaron and his household, while the fat of the goat was for the people of Israel. When the sin offering animals were slaughtered, their fat—the richness and beauty of the animal—was removed first. When Jesus was fulfilling His ministry on earth, outwardly He appeared as a mere man, a carpenter from Nazareth, yet within, He was the Son of God, full of divine richness and glory. This is what the fat of the sacrificial animals represents. Aaron was to burn this fat on the altar of the burnt offering, testifying to the divine richness and glory inherent in Christ.

Verse 26: “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.”

Here we see the meticulous details of the law: the high priest Aaron lays his hands on the head of the scapegoat, placing all the sins of the Israelites upon it. Afterward, Aaron must remove his garments, wash his body, and then put on the priestly robes again. Likewise, the person who leads the scapegoat into the wilderness, to Azazel, also must wash his clothes and body before reentering the camp, as he has come into contact with the scapegoat. This shows that in the Day of Atonement sacrifices, God considers every individual involved. Therefore, He specifically issued purification regulations so that the one who escorted the scapegoat could also re-enter the camp, the realm of God’s presence.

Verse 27: "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."

As for the bull and goat of the sin offering, their blood was brought into the Most Holy Place for atonement, and their fat was burned on the altar of the burnt offering, pleasing to God; yet their bodies remained unhandled. According to the regulations for the sin offering in Leviticus 4:1-21, if the blood was brought into the sanctuary, then the entire sin offering animal had to be taken outside the camp and burned in the place where the ashes of the burnt offering were disposed of. Following these established rules, Aaron instructed someone to take the bull and goat outside the camp, where both animals—their hides, flesh, and waste—were completely burned. The sin offering sacrifices are a foreshadowing of Christ, who was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem on Golgotha.

Hebrews 13:11-13 states, "For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach." This passage clearly tells us that the sin offering sacrifices are a foreshadowing of Christ; and that He would use His own blood to sanctify those who believe in Him, willingly suffering outside the city gate—being crucified on the cross. As those who have received the blessings of salvation, we not only have our sins forgiven and are set apart in our lives, but "we must also go outside the camp, to Him, bearing His reproach."

Dear brothers and sisters, the salvation of Jesus Christ is for us, and after receiving this grace and being saved, we are called to become disciples of Jesus Christ, following in His footsteps. When Jesus fulfilled His ministry on earth, He set His face firmly toward Jerusalem. He also told His disciples in Matthew 10:38, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." For those who are willing to follow in Jesus' footsteps, He has given a wonderful promise. In

Matthew 10:40, He says, "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

We are all messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, sent by Him to go into all the world. Those who receive us are, in turn, receiving Christ—and, indeed, receiving the Father. What an honorable calling this is! But Jesus' promise doesn't end there; He goes on to say in Matthew 10:42, "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward." When we go outside the camp to join Him, we may face trials, but amid these trials, we find God's promised provision. And those who supply our needs will surely receive God's reward. What a promise this is!

Verse 28: "Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp."

Those who carried the bull and the goat outside the camp to be burned were also required to wash their clothes and their bodies with water to cleanse themselves of the impurities and defilement incurred in handling the sin offering sacrifices. Only after they had completed this cleansing could they enter the camp, the realm of God's presence, which must be maintained in holiness. This serves as a reminder for us that every Sunday, when we come to God's house to worship and praise with our fellow believers, we are living within the camp. Each of us needs to bathe and change our clothes, through confession and prayer, washing away all our impurities. This is how God can receive true worship from us. The following verses, from 29 to 34, serve as the conclusion to this chapter on the Day of Atonement sacrifices.

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."

The 10th day of the 7th month in the Jewish calendar is the Day of Atonement. On this day each year, every person living within the camp, whether a native or a

foreign resident, must afflict their souls. For the Israelites at that time, this meant fasting, praying, and repenting. Although New Testament believers are not required to observe the fasting regulations, we must similarly grieve and repent for the sins we have committed. On this day, no work should be done; this is to be an everlasting ordinance for the Israelites.

Verse 30-31: “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.”

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest must offer a sin offering for the people of Israel, so that they may be cleansed before the Lord and be freed from all their sins. This day is to be observed by the Israelites as a Sabbath, during which no work is to be done, and they must afflict their souls, mourning and repenting for their sins; this is to be an everlasting ordinance for Israel. We know that after Israel was restored in 1948, it was surrounded by Arab nations that initially sought to destroy it. Yet on the Day of Atonement, God commanded the Israelites to observe the Sabbath, doing no work, and this remains their eternal ordinance.

This seemingly gave the neighboring Arab nations of Israel the perfect opportunity to attack. The famous Yom Kippur War occurred on the Day of Atonement in 1973. At that time, Egypt and Syria joined forces to launch a war on that day; one from the south and the other from the north, attempting to quickly annihilate Israel while the Israelites were engaged in reading Scripture and praying for the Day of Atonement. Initially, the Israelites were indeed caught off guard, allowing the Syrian tank divisions to advance southward, stopping just five miles from Jerusalem. The reason for their halt was that the tank units were moving too quickly, and the supply trucks for their fuel could not keep up, forcing the tank divisions to stop.

By that time, it was already evening, and a new day in Israel begins at dusk, meaning the Day of Atonement had ended. The Israeli Air Force quickly flew low along the Jordan River and, in a short amount of time, destroyed all the Syrian tank units.

From that moment on, the tide of battle began to turn. The Israelites, keeping God's covenant, received His protection, ensuring that Jerusalem was not attacked.

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;"

On the Day of Atonement, all sacrifices must be performed by the high priest personally. After Aaron's death, one of his sons will be anointed to succeed Aaron as the high priest. On ordinary days, the priests take turns performing sacrifices, but on this particular day, only the high priest may serve. He is to wear holy garments made of fine linen, carry incense, and bring the blood of the sacrificial animals into the Most Holy Place to make atonement for the people before the Lord God.

Verse 33-34: "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."

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest is to make atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, and the altar, as well as for the priests and the people. Once a year, through the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, the priesthood responsible for offering sacrifices on behalf of the Israelites, as well as the altar, the tabernacle, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place, are all cleansed and sanctified. This practice is to become an everlasting ordinance for the people of Israel. God instructed Moses, and Aaron followed all of Moses' commands in accordance with what God had said.

Dear brothers and sisters, after reading the regulations for the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, we see that God's regulations are indeed meticulous; Israel must fully comply to remove the accumulated impurities among them. Hebrews 9:6-7 provides a good summary of the sacrifices offered by the Israelites: "Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins." This indicates that after the tabernacle was completed, the priests could perform their duties in the outer court and enter the Holy Place, which is the first layer of the tabernacle. Verse 7 states, "But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins." This speaks of how the high priest may enter the second part of the tabernacle, which is the Holy of Holies, only once a year, bringing the blood of the offering to atone for himself and the sins of the people. This was the regulation for the Israelites: the high priest had to enter the Holy of Holies once a year to offer a sin offering for himself, for the people, and for the places where they served.

Then, Hebrews 9:9 points out the shortcomings of the Old Testament sacrifices: "It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience." Although the Old Testament priesthood and the Israelites fully complied with the regulations for the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, they still could not attain perfection in their conscience. This is because the Old Testament was merely a shadow; the reality only came with the New Testament through Jesus Christ, who is the true and actual fulfillment.

This is explained in Hebrews 9:11-12: "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, and 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." Jesus Christ, on the cross, has once and for all completed the work of atonement.

In the New Testament, the saints are blessed because they can approach the throne of grace with confidence, as stated in Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Because of Jesus Christ's death on the cross, the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two from top to bottom. Today, every child of God can confidently enter the Most Holy Place, approach the throne of grace, receive God's mercy, find His grace, and receive timely help.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through our reading of the Old Testament regulations for the Day of Atonement, we truly recognize how blessed the saints in the New Testament are. We can come before the Father at any time through the precious blood of Jesus Christ and receive help in our time of need. On the other hand, having enjoyed such great salvation, we should heed the command of Jesus Christ, going outside the camp to suffer with Him. For Christ has promised that those who suffer with Him today will also be glorified with Him on that day. Grant us spiritual wisdom to truly understand what is important and what is precious, and may we be willing to offer ourselves on the altar. Help us to become messengers of the Gospel, bringing this good news to everyone in need. Bless my daily life and the church I belong to, I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.