

The Greatest Story (Part 6):

The Great Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16

Memory Verse: Ephesians 1:7

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

The Bible is the greatest story. It is one comprehensive story beginning with the creation and fall of humanity and ending with the redemption of mankind through the atonement of Jesus Christ. So far we have seen how mankind is unable to save themselves from their sinfulness, but in his grace, God has a plan to save them through his covenant promises and his covenant people. We are a part of his story of redemption... but only through blood.

Last week we saw how it is through the blood of the passover lamb that the people of Israel were spared the destroyer's blow, and we saw how the blood of sacrifices and the substitutionary death of animals was enough to keep the Israelites in covenant with God for a time. There is something about the life blood that God accepts as a substitution for sin. Instead of executing his wrath on us, he was content to execute his wrath on unblemished perfect animals.

This presented a problem though. You see, there were too many sins. Too many sins and not enough animals. Too many sins and not enough priests. And all of these sacrifices meant that it was too easy for the priests to become lazy and unfocused in their duties.

In *Leviticus chapters 8-9* we see very specific rules were given to the priests in order to give the sacrifices. They were told to use specific items, in specific ways. All of this specificity was to show that God meant business. That the priests were to be set apart. That the tabernacle was meant to be set apart. That the sacrifice was to be Holy and set apart. If any of these very specific rules weren't followed then it had very serious consequences. In *verses 10:1-2* we see that Aaron's sons offered unauthorized fire before the Lord and the Lord killed them. Seems harsh right? But it's simple. The sacrifice must be done perfectly according to God's plan or it doesn't count and there must be death to satisfy God's wrath. Playing around with the Holiness of God is not smart and Aaron's children were simply playing around instead of taking it serious.

And here we see a serious problem with animal sacrifices. The sacrifice doesn't just need to be unblemished. The priest has to be unblemished too. And as fallible humans we are rarely unblemished.

Even after all that God has done for us we still find it very difficult to take God's holiness serious. We still play with sin, we still refuse to repent, we still cheapen his grace, and we still refuse to be committed to him in worship. All of this should incur the wrath of God. The same wrath that consumed Aaron's sons is aimed at us if we refuse to take his holiness serious. And because of this... we are not good priests.

Listen, I'm not a good priest either. I think some people think that if they place their trust in a pastor to deliver to them the word of God then that makes them holy before God. The problem is this... I'm not righteous enough to be your priest. I'm not righteousness enough to offer the sacrifice to God on your behalf. Just this morning I yelled at my kids, fought with my wife, said a curse word under my breath, and drove 10 miles over the speed limit to get here. If you are counting on my righteousness to intercede on your behalf... you are in serious trouble. Nope... we need something else.

This morning I want you to see that God not only had a plan for a perfect sacrifice... but also for a perfect priest. This morning I want you to see that... **No One Needs Atonement More Than Me, No One Can Give Atonement Other Than Christ**

Turn with this morning over to *Leviticus 16:29-34*. And let's read about the great day of atonement.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

So, we see here that... **The Price of Sin Is Temporarily Satisfied Through The Day of Atonement**. God saw that it was too risky for unclean priests to be offering sacrifices all of the time. So God said... let's have one day for sacrifices where the priest would only have to enter the Holy of Holies one time. This means that the priest didn't have to be perfect and unblemished all the time... just once a year. One day, one priest, one sacrifice... for all the sins of the people.

Look at verses *Lev. 16:4, 6*. The priest had to have the right water, the right clothes, and they had to have their very own personal sacrifice (the Bull) to make them cleansed of their sins. An intercessory priest temporarily cleansed.

Then, and only then would he be ready to offer the sacrifice. And as we've seen in the passover, the animal had to be spotless. A perfect unblemished goat. A substitutionary sacrifice temporarily accepted.

Then, there was another goat that was led into the wilderness and set free. This represented the forgiveness of the people's sins as the goat carried them away. The scape goat was let loose to take the sins of the people away for one year.

A priest temporarily clean, a sacrifice temporarily accepted, and sins temporarily forgiven. You see the problem though right? It was temporary!

It would have to be repeated again every year. Every year the priest would have to be cleansed. Every year the goat would have to be killed. Every year the goat would have to be loosed to take away their sins. This ritual would have to be repeated every single year. And all of this... year after year... only managed to magnify one simple fact... our sin never ends, and is never ultimately paid for. **The Day of Atonement was a temporary joy dismissed by the reality that it was a temporary salvation.** It was kind of like Christmas. It's great when it gets here and we tear open our presents and celebrate with family and enjoy some time off from our jobs... but then it's over. The tree is packed up... and we have 11 months 30 days of waiting for the next Christmas. The great day of Atonement was a great joy... but it always left something missing. **No One Needs Atonement More Than Me, No One Can Give Atonement Other Than Christ**

And so... we see that **The Payment for Sin Is Permanently Appeared in the Atonement of Jesus.** God saw the temporary nature of the sacrifice of animals and said... something more permanent must take place. No matter how good the day of atonement was... it wasn't good enough. And so God sent his son as the one true sacrifice. And as the one true priest.

You see... Jesus is the perfect high priest fully cleansed; without sin. Look at **He 4:14**. You see... Jesus is our high priest. Also, look at **1 John 3:5** Jesus was our perfect high priest without sin. Jesus would never need to be cleansed again. Jesus never needed to be cleansed in the first place. He has always been perfect and always will be. He is only always righteous, good,... perfect.

But Jesus wasn't just the perfect priest to offer the sacrifice... he was also the perfect sacrifice that never would need renewed. Jesus is the permanent sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world forever. Look at **He. 9:12** Because of his perfect sacrifice... he has secured eternal redemption. ETERNAL REDEMPTION. Because Jesus himself was perfectly God and 100% Man he was the perfect high priest. Because Jesus was God and Man he was the perfect sacrifice. There would never need to be another.

But not only that... Jesus was the scapegoat in which our sins were permanently forgiven. On him all of our sins were laid and he carried them as far as the east is from the west. **1 Peter 2:24** says that he has bore our sin in his body. **Ps 103:12** tells us that he has removed our transgressions as far as the east is from the west.

Do you see.... the day that Christ was crucified on that cross was the Great Day of Atonement. He offered as the priest, himself as the sacrifice, to forever forgive our sins. And this brings us to our memory verse for the week. **Ephesians 1:7** tells us that Jesus was our

substitution and in him we are redeemed, and forgiven forever more. **The atonement of Christ means that our sins no longer need to be remembered but that they were permanently removed.**

No One Needs Atonement More Than Me, No One Can Give Atonement Other Than Christ

Application (Resolution, You)

We worship him for his grace and love – it is because of his love that we love him.... We have seen his glory and felt his grace... and it causes us to magnify his name throughout the world.

Because of his atonement... we seek righteousness and repent of our sins. We don't want to mock his atonement by continuing to sin. Instead, we honor his atonement by living according to his will.

And, today we fast and we pray for his atonement to shine through our lives. Briefly let's discuss how we worship and honor God through the act of fasting. First, fasting is for God. It is a way of showing love and worship to him. We are sacrificing our wants and needs in food as an act of worship and dependence on him. Secondly, fasting is for us. It is a way to reflect and meditate on God's desires for our lives. You see... ultimately fasting is replacing something of value to you in this world with something of spiritual value. Instead of depending on food... we depend on him in prayer. Instead of depending on this world we depend on him in the word. Instead of trying to live by our own strength we meditate on him for his strength.

And I want you to understand this... fasting isn't absolutely necessary. You aren't a sinner if you don't fast. However, the Bible makes it abundantly clear... there are some things we will not see without fasting. If we desire God to move in our church, our lives, our families, our jobs, our community, and our city... then fasting is something we should do... and do often. It's not a necessary sacrifice, but a noble sacrifice

Conclusion

This morning we are going to celebrate as we fast through singing and through prayer. This morning as we fast and sing and fast and pray we thank God for his atonement through Jesus Christ. **No One Needs Atonement More Than Me, No One Can Give Atonement Other Than Christ**