

# Fourteen-Hundred Goats

By Doug Hamilton



Imagine if you were walking down a street and happen to run into a huge herd of fourteen-hundred goats, all heading the same direction as if to a particular destination. There is no shepherd, just fourteen-hundred goats on a journey. Would it stand out to you? Would you call the local animal control? Would you take your iPhone out and start making a recording to post on Facebook? If you are like most people, you might ask yourself, “From whence have these goats come and where are they headed?” Lest I “get your goat”, let us set aside this image and begin a study of Leviticus 16.



## The Great Day of Atonement

There is a Jewish holy day which comes around every year, but as Christians, we are likely ignorant of it. The holy day for which we refer is Yom Kippur, meaning the “Day of Covering”. We of the Bible better know this event as the “*Day of Atonement*” and it is found in the Book of Leviticus. The *Day of Atonement*, i.e. *Day of Covering* (Yom Kippur), was to be celebrated by the Israelite on the date derived from Leviticus 23:27, “*On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD.*” For us of the modern calendar, this date is found near the end of our month of September of every year. It slightly varies on our modern calendar when you hear Yom Kippur mentioned today.

On that highest and holiest day of the Jews, they were to strictly obey the following commands. *Leviticus 16:29-30, "And this shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether*

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*the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; <sup>30</sup> for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD.”*

The people:

- 1) were to have no labor.
- 2) were to be humble (Leviticus 23:27; Numbers 29:7).
- 3) were to view it individually as their own personal day.

### What was the purpose of the Day of Atonement?

The reason for this was to teach Israel that their daily sacrifices were not literally handling the sin problem. They were offering all the sacrifices to keep in fellowship with God, but it still was not good enough. Their *hattath* sacrifices, the Sin and Trespass Offerings, dealt only with the known, non-practiced sins. What about all the “*sins of ignorance*”, the ones we unconsciously commit?

Did you know that you likely sin more times before God that you don’t know than you do know. Of course you did not know this because they are “sins of ignorance”, meaning you are ignorant of them. It is in the forgiveness of our *sins of ignorance* that God’s mighty and merciful power is fully demonstrated for us.

This is referred to in the Book of Hebrews as the copy and shadow principle. This was a technique used by God in His Holy word to teach us of the deeper workings of the Son Jesus Christ, the coming church and the workings thereof.

- Hebrews 8:5, “...*a copy and shadow of the heavenly things...*”
- Hebrews 9:24, “...*a mere copy of the true one...*”
- Hebrews 10:1, “...*a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things...*”

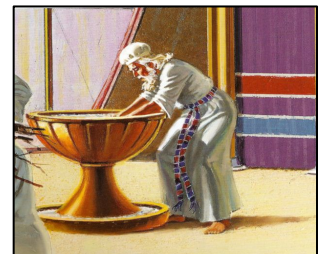
The Great Day of Atonement, the great sacrifice of the Old Testament, is a testament to the Christian dispensation of our Father’s great and awesome power through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus.

### The Preparation for the Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:4, “He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash, and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on.”

The High Priest:

- 1) Only the High Priest was involved in the functions.
- 2) All other priests would stand outside the Tabernacle Courtyard with the rest of the common people.
- 3) The High Priest must bathe in water and then put on the ordinary white garments of the ordinary priests.



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Now that he was cleansed with water and fully clothed in white, the High Priest would carry out multiple commands of this most holy sacrifice. The stages of atonement were ready to be carried out in a specific order and for the specific reasons.

## The Stages of the Atonement

### 1) The reception of the sacrifices

- Leviticus 16:3, “Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.”
- Leviticus 16:5, “And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.”

There was a bull for sin offering for the priest, a ram for a burnt offering for the priest, one ram for a burnt offering for the congregation and two he-goats for a sin offering for the congregation. Of those two goats, one was for Jehovah and the other was called *Azazel*, meaning “*for removal*”.

### 2) The presentation of the sacrifices

- Leviticus 16:6-7, “Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. <sup>7</sup> And he shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting.”

The High Priest would set them before the door of the tent of meeting. Because atonement is key in this sacrifice, the business of the sacrifice began at the house of God. Atonement of God always begins at the place of God. Even for the Christian, as the apostle spoke, “*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*” (1 Peter 4:17).

### 3) Aaron cast lots over the two goats.

Leviticus 16:8, “And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.”

Aaron rolled a couple of holy die called “lots” to determine which goat will be sacrificed and which became Azazel. The one for the Lord would have a scarlet cloth tied around the neck, for it would become the blood sacrifice. The other had a scarlet cloth tied around his horn, for he will be sent out of the camp.



### 4) Aaron kills the bullock and offers as sin offering .

Leviticus 16:11, “Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself.”

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- There was no laying on of hands. This was because Jesus, the One who became a curse for the nations (Galatians 3:13), “*sin for us*”, was the only sacrifice which truly takes away sins. He is really the functional, perfect High Priest who is doing this. This is the foreshadow of the switching of priests. Notice that the offering Aaron made was for him and his family. This should go to show that no man is to himself.



### 5) Aaron entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood for His sin offering.

Leviticus 16:12-13, "And he shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring {it} inside the veil. <sup>13</sup> And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, lest he die."

- The High Priest takes two hands full of incense and a censor of coals from the altar of burnt offering, creating a smoky cloud of holy smoke. Notice how close this is to the throne of God (ark). First, we must always remember, the closer the blood to the throne, the more it stresses forgiveness. Second, it is sprinkled seven times which refers to divine completeness.
- We must remember that only one man one time a year, the High Priest, could enter into the throne room of God, the Holy of Holies. The Jewish people took this so serious that there is record of them tying a rope around the High Priest on that day. They reasoned if God struck him dead in the Holy of Holies, all feared entering in to gather the body. Nobody would even dare enter in to fetch the body.



### 6) The Killing and Offering of the Goat.

Leviticus 16:15, "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which 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, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat."

### 7) Sprinkling the mixed blood of the goat and bull on the altar of the burnt offering in the courtyard.

Leviticus 16:18, "Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides."



### 8) Aaron begins the ritual of the goat of Azazel.

Leviticus 16:2, "Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness."

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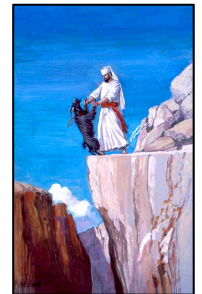
- He laid his hands on the goat. All other sacrifices are with one hand, but this has two (one for the priest and one for the people). This was symbolic of the transferal of the “sins of ignorance” from the people to the goat. This goat became Azazel, the scapegoat, for which received the sins of the people.



### 9) Sending the live goat into the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:22, “And the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”

- One man, probably not the priest. He would be unclean and would have to ceremonially cleaned after the job is complete, for the sins upon the goat was great.
- It was the hopeful expectation of the people that the scapegoat took the people sins out into the wilderness to never be seen again. If by chance the goat were to wander back into the camp later on, it sent a message that the people were so bad and against God that their sins were returning to them.
- History tells us that on a couple of occasions in the history of Israel, the people were exceptionally evil, bearing a national guilty conscience. For fear the scapegoat would bring the sins back to the camp, they hired a goat “hitman” to capture the goat miles away, then throwing it off a cliff in order to eliminate that possibility.



### 10) Aaron re-enters the Holy Place.

Leviticus 16:24, “And he shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.”

- Removing the white garments of humiliation, Aaron bathes himself in water then puts on the bright colored garments “for beauty and glory”.

### 11) Aaron offered burnt-offering of dedication.

- The first ram for the priestly family and then the ram for the whole congregation.

### 12) The fat of the sin-offerings.

- This was for the priests and for the people, being fumed upon the altar of burnt offering.

### 13) The bodies of the sin-offerings are burned “without the camp”

- The man who carries the bodies will be ceremonially unclean for a day. *Hebrews 13:11-12, For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*



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The foreshadowing sacrifice only forgave the foreshadowing sins. When the reality of Christ dying on the cross arrived, the reality of our sins was finally dealt with. Their sins were forgiven then, yet paid by Jesus who stood outside of the dimension of time. *Hebrews 10:4, For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* Through Jesus, the perfect Day of Atonement sacrifice, the for whom God is well-pleased, sin was dealt with.

## Significance to the Christian

### 1) Jesus is our High Priest

- Hebrews 2:17, Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

### 2) Jesus is our atoning sacrifice.

- Hebrews 9:11-12, But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
- Matthew 27:51, And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split,



### 3) That means we are forgiven.

- Hebrews 6:19-20, “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a {hope} both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

### 4) Stop worrying.

- Hebrews 9:14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
- Hebrews 10:19-22, “Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

### 5) Come to the throne room for your deliverance.

- Hebrews 4:15-16, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

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### Blessed Assurance #480

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine.  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.  
Angels descending bring from above Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long

### Don't Be a Scapegoat!

Don't Let other people use you as a "scapegoat", shifting their blame to you and refusing to accept their own responsibility for their actions. Adam and Eve did this. Cain did this. Hitler did this. Some of the people in your life do this. Don't play the part of the scapegoat, but point them to AZAZEL, Jesus Christ, for He is the only One for which we can shift the blame, resulting in the dealing of our sins.

What is the mystery of the fourteen-hundred goats? Fourteen-hundred years after the first Day of Atonement sacrifice, Jesus died His sinless life upon the cross. The fourteen-hundred goats of those years, who carried the sins of the people, silently showed up on Calvary, transferring their sins to the Great High Priest.



Since then, every time a soul is baptized into Christ, becoming a Christian, like Aaron's washing, as a kingdom of priests, clothed in Christ (Galatians 3:27), a scapegoat was released. Did you not hear the bleating of your scapegoat heading to the cross of Jesus? Until the end of this realm, every time a new saint comes out of the waters of baptism, a goat heads back through time to the cross of Jesus on your behalf.