

## **Chapter 16 – Purification-Propitiation Day**

summary in v30: the day when “atonement is made to make you clean”

NB: the context of the unclean laws in chapters 11-15, where all people become liable to uncleanness...

- food, death, sex, disease can all infect us
- uncleanness makes someone unfit to enter sanctuary
- inevitably, people are going to become unclean and pollute the sanctuary (e.g. v1 remembers the context of the death of Aaron’s sons in 10:1-2)

Of course, the reality is that God’s house is being polluted all the time not just by ritual uncleanness, but by sinners entering it with dirty hearts. The main point of the Day of Atonement is to ‘clean up’ God’s house. It’s an annual spiritual ‘spring clean’. Therefore the DofA makes possible God’s continued presence amongst his people. From the other side, it makes it possible for priests to enter the presence of Yahweh.

It starts with a basic precaution in v2 you mustn’t enter at any time behind curtain (cf. “don’t go up on the mountain” in Exodus 19:21-22). This is where the presence of the LORD rests and is too holy to enter.

So, what happens on the Day of Atonement?

### **The offerings:**

1. bull as purification offering for High Priest and his house
2. male goat as purification offering for the people
3. live male goat into the wilderness
4. ram as ascension offering for High Priest (and his house)
5. ram as ascension offering for the people

### **The order:**

1. High priest brings his own two animals (bull and ram)
2. He washes and get dressed
3. Three animals are brought from the congregation (two male goats and a ram);
4. Lots are cast to decide which job each of the two goats gets
5. The bull is offered as purification offering for the high priest and his house
6. The High Priest is covered by incense cloud, and applies the blood in Holy of Holies (NB: called the Holy Place in this chapter)
7. A first male goat is offered as a purification offering for the people
8. Blood is applied in the Holy of Holies - which atones for the Holy of Holies (given the uncleanness, transgression and sin of the people);
9. Atonement is made for the Holy Place (called "tent of meeting" in this chapter)
10. Atonement is made for the (most likely: bronze) altar - both cleansing and consecrating it
11. The second male goat is sent into the wilderness with the people's iniquities, transgressions, and sins
12. The High Priest takes off his linen garments and leaves them in the Holy Place (called the tent of meeting in this chapter). (John 20)
13. He washes and dresses

14. He offers the two ram ascension offerings, one for himself (and his house) and one for the people
15. The fat of the purification offering is sent up in smoke
16. The man who sent out the 2nd male goat is let back into the camp once the High Priest has washed his clothes, and he has washed himself
17. The remains of the two purification offering animals (i.e. not blood, not fat) are taken outside the camp and burnt.
18. The man who does 17. is let back into the camp once he's washed his clothes and himself.

*This way atonement is made for:*

- High Priest (corresponding to the Holy of Holies, which is called the Holy Place in this chapter)
- Priests (corresponding to the Holy Place, which is called "tent of meeting" in this chapter)
- Israel (corresponding to the "altar" - assume bronze altar)

### **NT applications**

1. The centrality of the cross. Keep going back to Christ's finished, perfect, high priestly work as the basis of our entry into the presence of God. Study the book of Hebrews!
2. Our need to regularly turn in confession and repentance. Our work of 'cleaning up and confessing' must be done regularly.
3. As we rejoice in grace and Christ's work, let's not forget the seriousness of sin and the sheer difficulty of atonement. Only God can do it!
4. Think on sin as pollution - how it infects and contaminates the things of God and God's people. Our sin is toxic to God.