

"YOU SHALL BE MY PEOPLE"

The Sacrifices

Lesson 7

November 29

"I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God" (Exo 29:45). The tabernacle was the center of life with the LORD, but how could an unholy people dwell with a holy God? _____.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make _____ for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life." (Lev 17:11)

In **Leviticus 17**, God warned Israel about killing an ox or a lamb or a goat outside the camp, telling them to bring their sacrifices "to the _____, to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting" (17:5).

Throughout **Leviticus 1-7**, the LORD outlined five sacrificial "offerings" (literally, *something that is brought* _____) that could be presented on his altar, based on the needs of the people: burnt offerings (**Lev 1**), grain offerings (**Lev 2**), peace offerings (**Lev 3**), sin offerings (**4:1-5:13**), and guilt offerings (**5:14-6:7**). Beyond those five, the LORD also established an "appointed time" for continual sacrifices (**Num 28:1-2**): every day, two lambs (**Num 28:3-8**); every Sabbath, two lambs (**28:9-10**). Bulls, rams, lambs, and goats sacrificed on the first day of every month (**28:11-15**), each day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (**28:16-25**), the Feast of Weeks (**28:26-31**), the Feast of Trumpets (**29:1-6**), and the Feast of Booths (**29:12-38**). But the centerpiece of it all was the annual _____ of Atonement (**29:7-11**).

Once a year, on the 10th day of the 7th month, the high priest of Israel would enter the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle "to make atonement." **Leviticus 16** provides all sorts of instructions:

- **16:1-4**: how the high priest was to come into the Most Holy Place, wearing the holy garments.
- **16:6**: offering a bull as a sacrifice for his own sins.
- **16:5-10**: bringing two goats to the tabernacle; sacrificing one for the people's sins and sending the other into the wilderness as a "scapegoat."

The high priest would lay both his hands on this goat's head, confessing all the sins of the people of Israel.

"And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall _____ all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness." (**16:21-22**)

What did it all mean? What was happening?

"For on this day shall atonement be made for you to _____ you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins." (**16:30**)

Every year, at "appointed times," 113 bulls, 37 rams, 19 goats, and 1,093 lambs were sacrificed. Over the span of 1,500 years, that's 169,500 bulls, 55,500 rams, 28,500 goats, and 1,639,500 lambs. Why? So that an unholy people could dwell with a holy God. Sin is serious, costly, and someone has to pay for it.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no _____ of sins. (**Heb 9:22**)

For Class & Family Discussion:

- We read about many, many, many animals being sacrificed in the Old Testament. Let's think about what the LORD said in **Leviticus 17:11**: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life." Why all those animal sacrifices?
- Whenever he described the sacrifices the people were to offer, the LORD would repeatedly emphasize that the animals offered were to be "without blemish" (example: **Leviticus 1:10**). What did that mean? Why do you think it even mattered?
- In **Leviticus 1**, when he talked about burnt offerings, the LORD said that the one bringing the sacrifice should "lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering" as it was killed (**1:4**). Why? Why would the LORD want the offerer to do such a thing?
- After creating such a beautiful, valuable sanctuary, why would the LORD ever want the priests to "throw the blood against the sides of the altar" (**Lev 1:5**)?
- By making all of these sacrificial offerings, what were the people of God acknowledging?
- So what does all of this have to do with the way John the Baptist introduced Jesus in **John 1:29**? Rereading **Leviticus 16:21-22** followed by **Isaiah 53:4** might be helpful here...
- **Hebrews 9** is all about how we today should think about what was going on at that tabernacle with all those sacrifices. What do we need to see now? What is the news we need to understand?
- Finally, let's think carefully about what the apostle Paul teaches us in **Romans 12:1-2**. How does this relate to everything we've learned about all those sacrifices?