

The Day of Atonement

Key Verse: “He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” —Leviticus 16:16

Selected Scripture: Leviticus 16:11-19

describes the actual sequence of steps Aaron had to follow in applying blood on the mercy seat to effect atonement for sin.—vss. 6-15

Our Key Verse affirms that after the application of the blood of the goat, which was treated in the same manner as the blood of the bullock, the sin offering was completed. The nation of Israel was typically cleansed from their past sins and restored to their relationship

FOLLOWING THE DEATH of Nadab and Abihu for offering “before the LORD” in violation of what God had commanded, specific instructions were given to Moses concerning how carefully and reverentially Aaron should approach the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. Otherwise, he, too, would die for failing to obey God’s commands.—Lev. 16:1,2

Following this, God gave instructions as to how Aaron should carry out the observance of Israel’s Day of Atonement. This included bringing a bullock as a sin offering as well as two goats and one ram to complete the offering of atonement. (vss. 3-5) A series of detailed procedures

with God for the ensuing year.

Although there are many details connected with the historical account of the Day of Atonement, it is evident that this ceremony which was required by the Law of Moses to be observed on an annual basis no longer is performed. “Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt. 5:18) There is presently no Jewish high priest performing the rituals described earlier in this lesson because those ceremonies were typical of something much greater. Were such not the case, they would not have ceased.

After our Lord left the heavenly realm, he became a human being. As a perfect man, he became the antitypical bullock at the age of thirty. He laid down his life in sacrifice for the purpose of redeeming mankind, offering himself to eradicate sin. As recorded by Paul, our Lord explained, quoting from Psalm 40, that God had no pleasure in the various offerings of animals for sin, and that these typical sacrifices were set aside in order that Christ might be established as the real sacrifice for sins.—Heb. 10:4-9

On the basis of this, Christ gave his life as a “ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:6) His consecrated followers—body members—have their sins covered through the merit of his precious blood. Thus, they are accepted by God and counted as the antitypical Lord’s goat class. These now have an opportunity to share in the offering that ultimately will eradicate sin.

What a great privilege will follow for those faithful in following the Master’s example. All such will receive a heavenly reward and will be intimately associated with Christ in blessing mankind. “They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:6 ■