



# The Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:8–34; 23:26–32; Numbers 29:7–11

The Most Solemn Ceremony of the Year

# Fall Feasts

- Feast of Trumpets — 1st day 7th month (Ethanim — 1 Kings 8:2; September-October)
- Day of Atonement — 10th day 7th month
- Feast of Tabernacles — 15th day 7th month



# Outline Day of Atonement Services (Lev 16)

- After officiating at the regular morning service in his high-priestly robes, the high priest bathes and changes into the holy linen garments of a common priest.
- The high priest presents the bullock before the Lord, laying his hands on its head.
- He presents the two goats and casts lots to determine which shall be for Jehovah and which shall be for Azazel.
- The high priest kills the bullock and preserves its blood.

- He takes the censer and incense into the most holy place and arranges incense on the burning coals in the censer that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat.
- He returns to the court for the blood of the bullock which he takes into the most holy place and sprinkles it on and before the mercy seat seven times.
- The high priest returns to the court, kills the Lord's goat, and enters the most holy place, sprinkling its blood as he did the bullock's blood.
- After sprinkling the blood, he returns to the holy place and makes atonement for the holy things.

- The high priest then returns to the court and makes atonement for the altar, sprinkling it with the blood of both the bullock and the goat seven times, placing the blood on the horns of the altar.
- The high priest confesses the sins of Israel over head of the live goat and sends it into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man.
- After these services, the high priest washes himself, puts his high-priestly robes back on, and offers the fat of the sin offering, the burnt offering for himself and the people, the burnt offering for the day, and the kid of the sin offering for the day. (See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 1, page 706.)
- The result of this service was one of cleansing. “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (Leviticus 16:30). (Allen Stump, *The Foundation of Our Faith*, p. 48)

The Hebrew word for atonement (*kaphar*), literally means to cover. While our sins are covered by the blood, they must also be removed from not only the record books of heaven but from our lives as well! The atonement of forgiveness made at the cross, as important as it is, is not the full and final atonement that must be made for the total restoration of man so that he can be in the presence of a holy God. (Ibid., p. 49)

The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered **daily** in the holy place, while **once a year** the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary. (*GC 418.1*)



Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain. . . . The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest **into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil**, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. **By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.** (Ibid.)

The offering for sin was a most solemn, sacred offering, and was placed upon the altar with impressive ceremony, and **every detail was explained by the priest to the people**, that they might understand that the Son of God was to be made an offering for their sins. This is the central truth of the plan of salvation, and it should be often repeated in the hearing of both believers and unbelievers. (*ST* August 28, 1893, par. 8)

On the Day of Atonement—the day of final and complete atonement for all sins confessed and forgiven during the year (Lev. 16:16, 19; Heb. 10:1–3)—the blood of the Lord’s goat symbolically removed these sins from the sanctuary, making “atonement” for it also. It too was now free from sin (Lev. 16:17, 20). (*GC* 418.1.)

In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but **the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest**, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: “God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation.” Leviticus 10:17. **Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary. (GC 418.1)**

Such was the work that went on, day by day, throughout the year. The sins of Israel were thus transferred to the sanctuary, and a special work became necessary for their removal. God commanded that an **atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments**. “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.” **An atonement was also to be made for the altar**, to “cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” Leviticus 16:16, 19. (*GC 418.2*)

At any time during the year when a sinner presented his offering and confessed over it his sins, an “**atonement**” was made for him. He was “forgiven” (chs. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7). His sin was symbolically transferred to the sanctuary by the ministration of the blood of the offering and the burning of its altar portions—in some cases by the priest eating a portion of it. Nevertheless, full atonement for his sin had not been made. Though his sin was forgiven he must continue in the way of obedience. Should he fail to do so and neglect to “afflict” his soul upon the Day of Atonement (ch. 23:27–29), all of his erstwhile forgiven sins would return upon him and he must die (Eze. 18:24; 33:13). His only safety lay in enduring to “the end.” Then, and only then, could he expect to be “saved” (Matt. 24:13).

*(SDA BC)*

Having purified **the most holy** and thus completed his ministry there, Aaron was to do the same for the “tabernacle of the congregation,” that is, for **the holy place** (v. 16). Then he was to “go out unto the altar,” that is, the **altar of burnt offering**. Here he was to take some of the blood of the bullock and of the goat, and with it purify the altar from all “the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (v. 19). (*SDA BC*)

Of the **altar of incense** this is said: Aaron “shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements” (Ex. 30:10). Of the **altar of burnt offerings** this is said: “He shall go out [of the sanctuary] unto the altar that is before the Lord ...; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (Lev. 16:18, 19; cf. v. 20). (*SDA BC*)



Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministrations. On the Day of Atonement two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, “one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” Verse 8. **The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people.** And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil and **sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.** The blood was also to be sprinkled **upon the altar of incense** that was before the veil. (*GC 419.1*)

Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. (*GC 420*)

On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the **scapegoat**, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people. (*GC 420.1*)

Some have mistakenly concluded that if the sins of Israel are finally placed on Satan, he must have some part in the atonement. This is a great error. Satan has no part whatever in the vicarious atonement; the saints are in no way indebted to him; his bearing of sin is in no way related to salvation; his work is evil and only evil. (M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, p. 195; 2006 edition)

As the Lamb of God, Christ bore the sin of the world. (John 3:16.) All the accumulated sins of men were placed upon Him. He is “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 4:10).  
(Ibid.)

As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so **Christ will place all these sins upon Satan**, the originator and instigator of sin. The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away “unto a land not inhabited” (Leviticus 16:22); so **Satan, bearing the guilt** of all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit, will be for a thousand years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked. (*GC 485.3*)

No Christian wishes to sin. He abhors it. But Satan tempts him. A thousand times the man resists, and a thousand times Satan comes back. At last the man yields; he sins. But he soon repents; he asks forgiveness. The sin has been recorded in heaven.

Now forgiveness is placed against it. The man is happy. He is forgiven. He has placed his sin upon the great Sin Bearer, who willingly takes it upon Himself, pays the penalty, and suffers the punishment due the sinner. Then comes the final judgment. The sin is

blotted out. The man's record is clear. But what about

Satan's part in causing him to fall? Has that been atoned for? It has not. Satan must pay for it himself with his life. (M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*,

p. 193; 2006 edition)

There is a great work to be done, and every effort possible must be made to reveal Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour, **Christ as the Sin Bearer**, Christ as the bright and morning Star . . . (*6T* 20)



Azazel is a symbol of the devil. When the whole work had been completed in type, the guilt was laid upon him.

We use the word “bear” to describe Azazel’s part. He was to “bear” the guilt into the wilderness. We say too, “Christ bore our sins.” The words are used accurately. But the connotation we place on each is different. (Leslie Hardinge, *Shadows of His Sacrifice: Studies in the Sanctuary*, pp. 72, 73)

Unless he is careful, the superficial reader may think that we Adventists make Azazel our sin-bearer. But that is silly! Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Azazel never died in the ritual!

“The wages of sin is death.” Azazel did not die.

(Ibid.)

In the wilderness he was to adumbrate [represent] Satan during the millennium. For a thousand years Satan will be in a land not inhabited. The universe will look down and say, “Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?” (Isaiah 14:16). (Ibid.)

The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, “within the veil” which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which **Christ entered at His ascension**. It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. **So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers.**

Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. (*GC 420.3*)

For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the **first apartment** of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, **secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record.** As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before

Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. **This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended.** At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary. (*GC* 421.2)

It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement **who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf**, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby. (*GC 430.2*)

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by **the removal, or blotting out**, of the sins which are there recorded. (*GC* 421.3)

But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation — a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12. (*GC* 421.3)



It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as a mediator, the **scapegoat** typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. (*GC 422.2*)

When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners. (*GC 422.2*)

In the service of the earthly sanctuary, which, as we have seen, is a figure of the service in the heavenly, when the high priest on the Day of Atonement entered the most holy place, **the ministration in the first apartment ceased**. God commanded: “There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he comes out.” Leviticus 16:17. So when Christ entered the holy of holies to perform the closing work of the atonement, **He ceased His ministration in the first apartment.** (*GC 428.3*)

But when the ministration in the first apartment ended, the ministration in the second apartment began. When in the typical service the high priest left the holy on the Day of Atonement, he went in before God to present the blood of the sin offering in behalf of all Israel who truly repented of their sins. So Christ had only completed one part of His work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work, **and He still pleaded His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners. (GC 428.3)**

In the typical service, when the high priest entered the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us. (*GC 430.3*)

The passing of the time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trial to those who still held the advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above. **Some renounced their faith** in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods and ascribed to human or satanic agencies the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit which had attended the advent movement. (*GC 431.3*)

**Another class firmly held** that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and watched and prayed to know the will of God they saw that their great High Priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and, following Him by faith, they were led to see also the closing work of the church. They had a clearer understanding of the first and second angels' messages, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the solemn warning of the third angel of Revelation 14. (*GC 431.3*)