



Rev. Luke's Weekly Blog

July 17, 2025



SIN TAKEN AWAY

Leviticus 16

In Leviticus 16, God instructs Moses on the rituals for the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), a day on which Israel's sins were atoned for. The chapter outlines the high priest's duties, which included offering sacrifices and performing the ritual of the scapegoat.

Two goats were selected: one to be sacrificed as a sin offering, and the other to serve as the scapegoat. The high priest would cast lots to determine which goat would be offered to the Lord and which would be the scapegoat.

The scapegoat was presented alive before the Lord. The high priest would lay both hands on the head, confessing over it all the sins of the Israelites, transferring them onto the goat. The goat was then sent into the wilderness, carrying the sins of the people to a remote place. This dual action – sacrifice and removal – addressed both the penalty of sin (through the death of the first goat) and the removal of sin's presence (through the scapegoat's banishment).

The scapegoat embodies the idea of sin being taken away, removed from the community, and cast into a place of desolation. The ritual speaks of God's provision for dealing with sin comprehensively – its guilt is atoned for, and its presence is removed, allowing the people to stand clean before God. This provision, however, was limited, as Hebrews 10:4 notes: ***It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.***

Jesus Christ fulfills the role of the scapegoat in a way that transcends the temporary and limited atonement provided by the Levitical system. Jesus Christ is the ultimate sin-bearer, who not only atones for humanity's sin through His sacrificial death but also removes it entirely, fulfilling the symbolic act of the scapegoat.

In John 1:29, John the Baptist explicitly connects Jesus to this imagery when he declares, ***Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*** The phrase ***takes away*** echoes the scapegoat's function of carrying sin away from the community, pointing to Jesus as the one who removes sin's guilt and power.

Colossians 2:13-14 declares that God ***forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*** The phrase ***taken it away*** again recalls the scapegoat's role, as Jesus removes the legal and moral guilt of sin through His cross.



ONE-FOR-ALL ATONEMENT Continued

The imagery of the scapegoat's banishment into the wilderness also resonates with Jesus' experience. The wilderness, in biblical imagery, often represents a place of desolation and separation from God's presence. When Jesus was crucified, He was taken outside the city, to a place of rejection and desolation: ***Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood*** (Hebrews 13:12).

The fulfillment of the scapegoat in Jesus Christ is not only about the removal of sin but also about the restoration of the relationship with God. The Day of Atonement allowed Israel to approach God's presence through the cleansing of the sanctuary and the removal of sin. Similarly, Jesus' work as the scapegoat grants us direct access to God. Hebrews 10:19-22 invites us to ***enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body.***

The Day of Atonement categorically foreshadows Christ's redemptive work, revealing Him as both the sacrificial offering and the scapegoat. The slain goat's blood satisfied God's justice (propitiation), while the banished scapegoat carried away sin's guilt (expiation); yet these were only shadows of the true atonement found in Jesus Christ.

In His death, Jesus absorbed God's wrath (Romans 3:25) as the perfect propitiation, and in His resurrection, He removed sin's power and defilement (John 1:29) as the ultimate expiation. Unlike the temporary rituals of the Old Covenant, Christ's once-for-all sacrifice fully reconciles us to God, cancelling our debt (Colossians 2:14) and granting us access to His presence.

In Jesus Christ, we see the complete fulfillment of atonement – sin's penalty paid, and its power broken. In Him we stand cleansed, forgiven, and restored to God forever.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Raise God for the complete and eternal atonement we have in Christ.
2. Ask God to help you walk in the freedom of knowing our sins are not just covered but taken away forever.
3. Pray that you may be able to live as someone truly set free, not returning to sin but walking in holiness.

Soli Deo Gloria – to God alone be the glory!

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