

## **Jesus In The Feasts (Part Four): Atonement**

**The Day of Atonement**

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**Given 02-Oct-25; Sermon #1840**

Have you ever noticed that human beings are a sorry lot? Yeah, I mean you. And I mean everybody else.

Many out in the world may argue this point. But they are just fooling themselves. Humans are terrible creatures.

Masses of people (it seems like this should not be), but especially people who have higher education degrees think mankind is improving. Shows you they have been spending too long in their ivory towers. They think that men, humans, are ascending to a higher species, to a higher form of life. They are evolving into something better. Even though with their degrees in various things they know, science, sociology, psychology, all these things prove that they are wrong.

The universe, we could say, cries out against them and their idea that men are good at improving. I mean, for instance, physics tells us that everything material has a strong tendency toward decline, toward disorder and decay and disintegration and death. It is called the law of entropy. To think that humanity is improving toward good flies in the face of all evidence to the contrary.

I mean, just look at people! Take off the rose-colored glasses and look at people. Humans gossip, deceive, and betray. And they steal. They commit fraud. They are always in contention with one another. They commit adultery. They commit sexual perversions. They abuse one another, even their children. They commit things like abortion and murder. There are so many acts of terrorism and war everywhere and who knows what other godless acts people do.

There is no good in these things. Those are all sins. All of those acts are sins! And I could have added many more. Especially more religious sins that

many out there do not think are sins but actually are. Like unbelief. Idolatry, coveting, blasphemy.

Here is a big one, Sabbath breaking. Just ask the Jews and the Israelites from 2,250 years ago. What about adding and subtracting from God's Word? That is a horrible sin. God says He will bring the curses down on a person who does that. And so on and so on.

All of these are sins. Men, women, children they commit these type of things all the time. I mean, when you start thinking about all the sins and all the people you cannot help but come to the conclusion that humans are moral cesspools. They are steeped in a world of sin, piling on sin after sin, becoming more evil every day, hour by hour. And it does not stop, even among Christians.

Oh, they found a very convenient way to keep on sinning. Just by saying, "Oh, God will forgive me for it. I've accepted Jesus Christ. And I'm saved. And I can sin." That is really what it comes down to, once saved, always saved.

Let us go to Romans 3. I do not want you to take my word for it. We will start in verse 9. We will read down through 19 and then we will pick up 23.

**Romans 3:9-19** What then? [he is speaking of the Jews] Are we better than they? [We being, I think he is including himself with the Roman church here, mostly Gentiles] Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. [just go back and check out chapters 1 and 2] As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one." "Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit." "The poison of asps is under their lips"; "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [saying that the law testifies against them. They are not keeping it. They are all guilty.]

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

I have my own spin on this particular verse. It is just adding one word and I do not think it changes the meaning except it emphasizes it a bit. "For all have sinned and fall *far* short of the glory of God."

I mean there is no comparison whatsoever. God is pure. He is holy and righteous. He does not sin at all!

But look at mankind. What a loser! Sin from one end to the other. Isaiah says, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet he is sick. So the Bible's own words on the subject here kind of back up what I just said earlier.

Here in Romans 3 is a litany of negatives about good old Homo sapiens. None are righteous, not a one. None does good. Again, not one. All are under the penalty of sin because all have sinned and fall short of God's glory—every person. Every person is guilty before God.

Even little children! Have you ever thought about little children? Have you thought of little children? I am sure you have thought of little children. Have you ever thought of little children in terms of sin? I have.

I remember back in my wee lad days hearing Mister Armstrong. I must have been under 10, but I heard him, and it made an impression on me because I were one. I was a child, and he said, "You parents better make sure you get a hold of your children because Satan is going to get a hold of him as soon as he can" or something to that effect.

But we falsely call little children innocent. I mean, they are in their own way, but not really; in terms of sin, they are not innocent. They learn to sin. Notice the verbiage here. They *learn* to sin at a very early age.

They are little bundles of selfishness, are they not? Not immune to Satan's influence. Nor to—get this people—their parents' poor examples. Or their siblings' examples. You might remember a sermon I gave about 10 years ago (I guess it was about then) about how intelligent little children are and how their sensory perceptions are just on high and their brains are going like mad and they see everything, they experience it all, and they take it in.

Before long these little tykes are plotting to get their own way. They may not form the words "I'm going to deceive mom, so she'll give me ice cream" or whatever, but they are plotting, they are trying to figure out how can they get for themselves what they want. Oh, if I throw a tantrum, maybe Mom will let me have this sucker. And so "aaahhhh!" they are beating their fists and heels on the floor to get the mom or the dad to give in.

So they display their beastly attitudes and throw tantrums. They lie, they steal, they beat up their playmates, all to get what they want. To be the one on top. Oh, king of the mountain, that is a great game. What does it show? Little kids play a game showing the aggression of and selfishness of wanting to be the one on top of the hill.

Now, I do not know how early God ascribes sin to children. But these early behaviors that they show are just a warm-up for their later sinful conduct that they will show as adolescents, teenagers, adults, grandparents, all the way up. These foundational years are the ones that project into the sins of adulthood. They learned them when they are still crawling around and toddling.

So we cannot be naive about people. We may laugh about seeing these things in children, but they are sinful things. And humans are all sinners. It is just the way it is. From Mother Eve and Adam we are all sinners. You go read Romans 4 and talk about the sin that Adam dragged into the world.

Sure, some sins are worse than others. Some sinners are worse than others. But every person has broken God's laws, many times. And each one lives under the penalty of death. Because that is what the Bible says, that is what Paul says in,

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death.

It is really simple. Our work, which we get paid for, is evil. The things we do, the acts that we perform—our sins—and we get the wages for those sins, which is death. No one gets a pass. No one has *earned* a pass, if you will.

And as Paul writes in this passage that we just read, keeping the law cannot balance the books. That is not a solution. Because that is not the law's purpose. He says "by the law is the knowledge of sin." It cannot justify us. There is no way doing what the law says can make up for the sins that we have committed. One of the reasons is that we keep on sinning. We never could catch up. We never could pay for all of them.

But it would not work anyway, even if someone tried. So where does that put humanity? Is humanity doomed to die? Is humanity a hopeless species, irredeemable? Just going to live far into the future and eventually exterminate itself? That is what science fiction authors always say.

Think about this. A human being cannot save or justify himself by any means. It is downright impossible. Money, land, jewels, or precious metals, or anything else that one thinks might have value, will not buy redemption. Cannot pay for all that long list of sins. Living a "good life" cannot pay for past sins either. Like we mentioned, if you even try to keep the law, it would not pay for the sins already committed.

And human life is not valuable enough to pay the redemption price even for another person, say a spouse or a child, because each person is flawed, blemished by sin, and therefore by definition utterly worthless to stand as a substitute offering to cover another person's sins. I mean, it would be like the pot and the kettle. The pot trying to save the kettle from their sins, but they are both black with sin. It would not work. They are just both sinful.

The person cannot even save himself. He certainly cannot save another. So humankind is stuck, right? We cannot save ourselves, it is finished. We just die in our sins. Since all humans are sinful, there could be no redemption, no payment for sin from within created humanity. None of us are righteous, Paul said.

Now, I have mentioned this or at least alluded to it, that redemption from sin must come through the payment of an unblemished sacrifice. We are talking sin here, being redeemed from sin, there has to be a sinless or perfect, an unflawed, an unblemished sacrifice to pay for that. Yet no human qualifies and certainly no lower form of life can pay that price. All you need to do is look up Hebrews 10:4 where the author there says it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. It is impossible. It cannot happen. Does not work. They are not valuable enough to pay for sin, human sin.

And because they are of a different kind, made of spirit, angels cannot pay for human sin. Even though now they are a higher form of life for a little while. But there is no angel that is going to give his life for mankind. Would not work. Angels and humans are different.

So the only solution, once you work all this out, is that a higher being, someone more valuable, has to make himself a man. Live as a man. Live *sinlessly* as a man. And then pay the gargantuan price for sin by giving himself as an offering for sin.

And of course the only higher Being who could do this, because as far as we know the only two higher Beings that there are, are God the Father and the Word. And thankfully the Word said, "I'll do it." The Creator God Himself voluntarily gave Himself as the offering for sin. This One we know as the Word or by His Hebrew name Yahweh or the Eternal or the great I AM, said, "I will pay the price. I will go as a man. I will live as a man. I will live sinlessly as a man and I'll give My life for them."

That is exactly what happened. Let us go a few pages forward to the book of Philippians and we will read chapter 2, verses 5 through 8. We all know this scripture.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus [He had this same mind, the same attitude from eternity.], who, being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God [He did not think that it was something that He should hold onto with all His might. But instead, it says], made

Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant [boy, he is awfully nice by calling us just servants instead of slugs or worms or anything worse], and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

So Jesus, well not Jesus, the Word, decided that the sacrifices were worth it. That He would divest Himself of His glory and come as Himself but as a baby. A man. A servant. A lower lifeform, a restricted material being, and He would humble Himself. He would put Himself under those restraints of flesh and He would communicate and act with others among humanity who, all of them, were bad influences. All sinful. All trying to bring Him down.

And of course this also put Him, in one sense, under the dominion of Satan the Devil who rules on this earth. The ruler of this world, He calls him in John. And He would have to live under those conditions for years and years. We know it was 33½. Always tempted to sin. Always surrounded by sinners. And He would have to maintain His righteousness through all that and then give Himself at the end of all that to death for all those who were trying so hard to bring Him down. I mean, just look at the scene in front of Pilate. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" said His own people.

Let us go back to the book of Romans, chapter 5. This time verses 6 through 11.

**Romans 5:6-11** For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

So Paul says here that despite our being moral cesspools and without strength, and terrible creatures full of sin, the one who became Jesus Christ decided to give it all for us so that we can be reconciled to God by paying the price for our sins. And He did this, as we will see, silently, as a sheep goes to the slaughter. He did not contend or anything like that. He did not cry out. He did not do those things to get sympathy. He just did His job. And did it well, did it perfectly.

And you know what? It was all for us. The supreme act of love; to give Himself for His creation.

Now this is Part Four of my series of "Jesus in the Feasts." And you know, I posited that while these holy days have prophetic implications in terms of showing the major steps in God's plan, I do not think that that is the primary purpose of these days.

I think their primary purpose is to point us to Christ. Every one of these holy days point us to take a more focused look at our Savior in one of His roles or offices so that we can get a better understanding of who He is and what He requires of us.

Just as Christ is our Passover and our bread of life and our firstfruit and our divine King, in Atonement, He is our atonement. He is our atoning sacrifice. He is our payment for sin and so much more.

Now this is a solemn feast day. It is the most solemn day of the year and it is because of the fact that Christ is our atoning sacrifice. That our God died—for us. We made Him die. That should crush us. It should humble us that He had to go to that extent to redeem His people.

So it is a day that we humble ourselves and we afflict ourselves by not eating, not drinking. And we do this because of what was required to clear us of our guilt. The awesome price that had to be paid for our justification. That is, the lifeblood of our very Creator.

It also reminds us each year of how much we owe Him. You know, when somebody does something that grand, that momentous, it puts us under

obligation. We cannot just say "Oh thanks" and walk away. It requires us to do something in response. And because He gave His life for us, it means that our lives are His. He paid the price for us down to the very penny, if you will. We are wholly and completely His. And so because of that, we are obligated to serve Him forever and with all of our being.

And on this day one of the things I think we are supposed to think about is that this awesome price has been paid for us, this awesome gift that we have of being cleared of our sins, done for us and we know this. But we also have to realize, especially on this day, how frequently we fail Him. He has *never* failed us. But we fail Him all the time, every time we sin. Every time we fail to do His will it is showing that we still need that sacrifice to put on the mind of Christ, to have the opportunity to put on that mind of Christ, and to grow and overcome so that we can be fully in His image.

Now let us go back to the book of Leviticus where we see what we must do on this day. Back to Leviticus 23, the section on the Day of Atonement begins in verse 26.

**Leviticus 23:26-32** And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Also the tenth day of this seventh month [today] shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. For any person who is not afflicted of soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbath."

It has always intrigued me a little bit that in this command to keep this day, the passage contains such a passing mention of the concept of atonement. More emphasis seems to be going to afflicting our souls and doing no work. Now that is very important actually because this is our response to what has

been done for us. So that we, because of our atonement, afflict our souls and we do no work.

Now this may be a false impression, but we just get two mentions of the name of this day, that it is the Day of Atonement and a brief explanation to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. And that is it for the idea of atonement within this passage. So I think at this point we need to define some terms and get a little depth to our understanding of what atonement is.

So what is atonement? We will take the English word first. It is in a secular manner reparation for a wrong or an injury. And theologically, it is reparation or expiation for sin. Now, reparation and expiation and atonement have to do with paying for a wrongdoing. So to atone or to make expiation is to make amends. Or reparation by paying something.

In other words, it is to give or to do something to make up or pay for personal, group, or national wrongdoing. So we have, like in the United States, the descendants of former slaves calling for reparations for their great grandparents and work that they did when this nation had slaves. The same usually happens after a war. The defeated peoples usually want reparations for all the pounding on their soil or their towns and cities. So it is a payment for a wrong that was done to them.

Now theologically, atonement is the sacrificial act of paying a price sufficient to cover humanity's sins. And what that does is once that it is paid it allows for the reconciliation of God and man. They can come together in agreement because there is no sin, no dispute separating them, and they can come together and be unified from that time forth.

Now the concept of atonement is closely related to another theological term that we toss around now and again, and that is redemption. Redemption deals with buying back or clearing debt or guilt through a payment.

So both atonement and redemption have to do with making some sort of a payment, either through an act or some sort of an offering, a valuable thing, so that you can clear the decks of all the sin or all the wrong that has been done. And basically, to use another example, it clears the table so that you can start anew, start fresh.

Now the Hebrew word (go from English to Hebrew here) is *kapar*, and it means basically the same thing: to atone or expiate by offering an innocent substitute. Now the Hebrew definition adds that because we are talking about a definition brought out of the Bible. So it is to atone or expiate by offering an innocent substitute. All the atonements that are done in the Bible use this formula. An atonement is made by offering usually an animal that is unblemished, and by its blood being spilled it pays for or makes amends for the particular sin or wrongdoing.

The result of this, of offering an innocent substitute, is cleansing or forgiveness of sin with the object being the reconciling of two parties, one of which had been offended by the wrongdoing that had happened. In the Bible the one who is offended is God. He is the offended party. He is the wronged party. And since God in His holiness cannot abide sin, well, there must be an atonement made to make this reconciliation of two parties possible.

Now this happens by His gracious acceptance of the substitute sacrifice. I do not have this in my notes here, but it is always going to happen when we do it this certain way. He must still accept it, and He does this graciously on our behalf. It is His gracious acceptance of the substitute sacrifice that actually causes the reconciliation. But as we sang in one of these songs, His mercy is always in His acts and so He acts mercifully and accepts the sacrifice. And because of that, because of His gracious acceptance of the sacrifice, God and man, now cleansed of sin, can have a relationship. And they could be one. They can be united and go forward with one voice and in one way of acting, which is righteousness.

Now our Savior, of course, Jesus Christ, is that perfect innocent substitute that is given for the payment of our sins.

We are going to go to Leviticus 16. We are going to go to several passages through here. I do not want to dwell on the details of this very extensively because we have done it so often, but I do want to bring out a few details that are pertinent for today. Of course, all of this could be pertinent for today because this is the offering on the Day of Atonement, but we are just going to look at a few particular things.

Let us start in verse 3.

**Leviticus 16:3-10** "Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with the linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the [Azazel we will say, the goat of complete removal]. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the [Azazel] shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and let it go as the [Azazel or as the goat of removal] into the wilderness."

Let us drop down to verse 15. This is kind of backing up and filling in some of the details.

**Leviticus 16:15-16** "Then He shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

Now drop down to verse 20.

**Leviticus 16:20-22** "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall

bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions concerning all their sins [Notice the three alls in a row, all the iniquity, all their transgressions, all their sins], putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness."

Let us drop then down to verse 29.

**Leviticus 16:29-31** "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who sojourns among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. [There is another all there.] It is a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever."

Like I said, I want to point out a few particular things here. One of the things I especially want to emphasize is that in verse 5, God calls the two goats together a singular sin offering. They both deal with atoning for, in this case, all of Israel's sins, and in the spiritual sense or its spiritual application, all of spiritual Israel's sins.

Jesus' atoning sacrifice can and will eventually cover the whole world, apply to the whole world. But right now, it applies only to those whom He has called and who have accepted that sacrifice for them. All these others are not released from their sins yet because they have not accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So right now, that sacrifice only applies to Israel's sins. Under the New Covenant spiritual Israel's sins.

The blood of the first goat symbolizes the shedding of blood to pay for sins. That is the redemption price that has to be paid. But think about it. Just because there is a payment for sin does not mean that the sins suddenly

disappear. The sins are there, they have just been paid for. They have been redeemed, the price for the penalty has been shunted aside because the right price has been paid.

But there is still the sins, they need to be removed. They need to be gotten out of the way. They need to be taken away, and this is where the second goat comes in. The second goat symbolizes those sins being borne away, gotten rid of, removed as far as east is from the west as Psalm 103:12 says.

Both parts, both goats, if you will, are necessary parts of the sacrifice. And because both parts are necessary to the sacrifice, it had to be shown in two goats. One goat could not do it because the one goat is slain. How could that slain goat carry the sins into the wilderness? It is impossible, so it had to be another goat just like it. So like it that lots had to be thrown, if you will, to tell which goat would do which part. It did not matter. That is the reason why they they cast lots. It was just to differentiate which goat would die and which goat would be led away into the wilderness.

So, we have these two goats and they make a complete singular sacrifice for sin. That is what it says in verse 5. "He shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering." It is just a sin offering in two parts.

Let us note in verse 30 that it specifically designates that it is the high priest in particular, often called Aaron throughout chapter 16, who makes the atonement for us. He is the one that does the atoning. I do not know if you have ever noticed this before, but Aaron, the high priest, is incredibly active on this day. I mean, if he was an old high priest, he must have been just tongue dragging on the ground by the end of this day because he had so much to do. He had at least four animals to kill, a bull, a ram, a kid of the goats, and the other one he sends out to the wilderness.

But I mean, he was doing all that work himself. You go read back through there and you find that he does all the work. There is no talk about anybody else doing it for him, he does it all. It even says in the one place, no other priest should be with you there, in the Holy Place. No one else goes into the Holy of Holies. It is just you.

So the high priest Aaron does everything, does all the work of atoning for the people, and you can see the obvious symbolic significance of this. At least I hope you can because Aaron is a type of Christ and Christ does all the work to make atonement happen. And He does not care how much work it takes, He is going to do it to make sure that all of our sins are atoned for.

And this is why there is such a strict command not to work on the Day of Atonement. It is impressing on us that our Savior does this atoning work *Himself*. Alone. Without our help. All we do basically is accept and receive it. Because we can do nothing in our own atonement except have faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And this is not even to mention all the other sacrifices that also represent Him on this day. He is the bull. He is the ram. And all the other sacrifices that were done throughout this whole period of time. They all represent Him in one way or another. So all through this chapter we see Christ in His various types as the one who makes atonement possible.

Let us go to Isaiah 52. We are going to go to the end of Isaiah 52 and read into Isaiah 53. We will start in verse 13 of chapter 52 and we will read all the way through chapter 53.

**Isaiah 52:13-16** Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled [by the way, just in case you do not know, all of this is a prophecy of Jesus Christ, every word in here] and be very high. [That is kind of shorting it a bit. I mean, He is the highest, not just very high, He is the highest.] Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations [or startle them]. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

**Isaiah 53:1-12** Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they have made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased [or satisfied] the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When you make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This prophecy of the Suffering Servant, or the Sin-Bearing Servant as the New King James has it in my Bible, is an obvious prophecy of Jesus Christ offering Himself as our atoning sacrifice, shedding His innocent blood to pay for the sins of all those who come to believe in Him and then bearing them away. This passage, this 12, 13, 14, 15 verses here, links Leviticus 16 with the Gospels, and with Romans 3 and Romans 5, and the book of Hebrews and lot of other places in the New Testament. And they and others all testify that Jesus is our sacrifice for sin. The one who gave Himself so that we can be clean.

Now a careful reading of especially verses 4 through 12 here, upholds what it says in Leviticus 16 about the sacrifice coming in two distinct parts, like the two goats. For instance, verse 10 tells us specifically that His life, or His soul, as it says in in the New King James, was made an offering for sin. That was the life that was extinguished when He shed His blood, when the first goat was killed as the offering for sin. While verse 7 compares Him to a lamb led to the slaughter. He was the Lamb of God, of course.

Verse 8 He says that He died for the transgressions of His people, for all Israel, for spiritual Israel. Verse 9 verifies He was sinless. He did not do any violence, He spoke no deceit. It is a poetic way to say He did not sin. He did nothing wrong. And verse 6 says that God laid on Him all our iniquities.

So that is the first goat, the first part. What about part two?

Well, verse 11 tells us that He bore the iniquities of those He will justify. They were placed upon Him to be borne away. And verse 12 repeats it saying that He not only bore the iniquities of those who you will justify, but He bore the sins of many.

So we have these two major activities contemplated in the supreme sin offering: the shedding of an innocent sacrifice's blood in death and the bearing away or removal of the sins. Jesus Christ performed both parts through shedding His blood in sacrifice and removing human sin in His death. He bore them to the grave and they are gone.

Now we have in the Gospels confirmation of this. Let us go to Matthew the first chapter where we see that this was His purpose, His mission, or at least part of His mission, to do exactly this, what was said in Leviticus 16 and also in Isaiah 53. This is told immediately to His mother and His stepdad. Let us look at this in verses 18 through 21.

**Matthew 1:18-21** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared

to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus [or Joshua, Yeshua], for He will save His people from their sins."

And the angel here basically gives you the definition of the name Joshua or Jesus—Savior. But he adds on that the salvation—notice this—right away, from the very beginning, He was not to save them as a nation. That was not His reason for coming that time. He was coming to save them from their sins. He was coming for a spiritual reason. To be the sacrifice for sins, not to be the conquering king that would take the nation back to the throne of David and ruling themselves. It was never part of the mission. Not the first time.

Let us go to John 1:29. I am coming here just to these two places to show that early on in His life and here, early on in His ministry, actually just before it began, it is basically told what He was going to do. And we just need to pick up this one verse.

**John 1:29** The next day, John saw Jesus coming before him and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Bang! Jesus is off. He starts rounding up disciples and His ministry goes into high gear. That is what He had come to do. He had come to be the Lamb of God, to save His people from their sins. And of course there were other things too, like show an example, put all this teaching in the Bible so that we can have that to lean on once we are called so that we can be like Him, as well as other things. But this was at the top of the list that He came as a sacrifice for sin.

Let us go to one more where He admits what He is doing. Let us go to chapter 10 and the Good Shepherd section. We will read verses 11, 15, 17, and 18.

**John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

**John 10:15** "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."

**John 10:17-18** "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. [He is volunteering.] I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

So that was His Father's will that He come as the Good Shepherd to lay down His life for the sheep and therefore fulfilling His assignment to be the Lamb of God. To be the Savior. To be the atoning sacrifice for His people.

Let us go back to the book of Matthew. We are going to start in verse 45 and we will read down through 53.

**Matthew 27:45-53** Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those who stood there when they heard that said, "This man is calling for Elijah!" Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave it to Him to drink. The rest said, "Let Him alone; Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

So Jesus' cry, "Why have You forsaken Me?" is the clearest indication of the time when the sins of the world were placed upon Him. Remember that was something that the high priest had to do in Leviticus 16. He placed his hands on the head of the live goat and he transferred all the sins of Israel to the goat

to be borne away. All the sins, all the iniquities, all the transgressions of Israel were placed on the live goat's head.

You know, God would never forsake His Son—His beloved Son—except for the fact that He was at this point the most repulsive being in the universe with the evil of all human sin, every human sin, on Him. The weight of that must have been terrible for Jesus. To suddenly have to face the guilt of all humanity, all that sin placed upon Him. And it was equally horrible for the Father to see His Son bearing all of those sins.

Isaiah 59:2 says that our sin separates us from God and that is exactly what happened here. *Our, our* sins, not Jesus' sins. It was our sins that caused the Father to forsake His Son there on the cross. And Jesus, it was the first time that He had been apart from His Father forever in that sense. Because He said His Father was always with Him. But not this time. Not when He was forsaken for all the evils of mankind's sins.

And thankfully, Jesus carried them for just a short time. I do not know how long it was between the time He made that cry and the time He died, but it does not seem like it was very long, just maybe a few minutes.

I do not know that a man with that much sin on him in such a weakened state could stay alive for very long with that burden of sin. I do not know. But it was just a short time later that it says that He yielded up His spirit.

And the creation responded. Their God, the creation's God, had just died. And the inanimate earth rocked. The veil of the Temple was torn top to bottom to show that access to God had been opened by the death of the Savior. That sinless perfect Lamb of God had done the job. Had done the work that would open up the way for us to come right into the Holy of Holies. Reconciled to God, justified, and have a relationship with Him.

This is why we mourn on this day. This is why we are humbled on this day, and we afflict our souls because of this momentous act that was done for us long before we were even born. Long before we ever thought of having a relationship with God, God was already putting things into place so that that

could happen. This is why we are supposed to be humble on this day. Because we understand where we are in this relationship and how little we have done and how much we have been given.

Let us go to the book of Hebrews and just look at the theology of this very briefly in chapter 9, verses 11 through 15. I am going to go over three passages here and it covers a lot of the same territory but it comes at it from slightly different angles so we can get a full picture.

**Hebrews 9:11-15** But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

This is telling us here that He did all of this for us. He came down as the greatest Priest of all to make sure that all of these things were done. He lived without sin, and He gave His life to purge us, to purge our consciences of guilt, to help us in every way so that we, the called, may receive the promises of the eternal inheritance that God has offered to us.

Let us go down to verse 24. We will read through the end of the chapter.

**Hebrews 9:24-28** For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us [That is His job now as Mediator and as High Priest to appear before God in our behalf, right in the Holy of Holies.]; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of another—[Now, it is only once a year, but year by year

by year by year, he had to go in and do this. So He does not have to do this often, it says.] He would then have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world [He would have to suffer every year if He were a human priest.]; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men once to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. [Remember that at the end of Isaiah 53.] To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin for salvation.

This is the ultimate salvation of the firstfruits when He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is not for sin that He is coming the second time, but to rule.

Now let us go on to chapter 10, starting in verse 11.

**Hebrews 10:11-17** And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies were made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified [being made holy]. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

It just took one and then all of those other offerings became unnecessary. Because the one perfect sacrifice was made. So the author makes sure we understand here that His sacrifice is redeeming, a payment for cleansing or clearing sin, forgiving it, and also bearing it away or putting away or removing sin.

And this all makes it possible for us to come to God, come before God and have a relationship.

Let us see this much simplified in I Peter. Peter takes this one step further at least in terms of our responsibility, our obligation.

**I Peter 2:24-25** Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

You see what Peter does here? Peter states the cause and the effect of Christ's sacrifice, very simply. Jesus bore our sins because encumbered and crushed by them, we could not live righteously. There was no way possible that we would be able to live a life that would please God.

So by taking those sins away, He gives us the opportunity to live godly lives *now*. Our sins kept us cut off from our Shepherd. And by accepting His awesome sacrifice for our sins, now we have returned to Him.

It is a glorious, joyous reunion that we have been called to be under Christ in this age. Why is this so important? So He could shepherd us, so that He could guide and oversee our lives because frankly, coming from the cesspool of sin, we need a Shepherd.

Let us conclude in Hebrews 13, just a few pages back, starting in verse 20. There is a benediction here for all of us.

**Hebrews 13:20-21** Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead [after He had made that terrific sacrifice], that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant [which we have made], make you complete [or perfect or mature] in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

I shake my head at the Christian churches of this world. Because many of them preach that accepting Christ is all it takes. But accepting Christ is

nowhere near the end of the story. In fact, it is just the beginning of the story. There is so much more to Christianity than merely accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, as our sin offering. As I said, it is just the starting point.

So we, humbled by what has been done for us, must now step forward. We are obligated as slaves of righteousness, as Paul put it, to do the work alongside Jesus Christ, toward our spiritual maturity, toward our perfection, toward doing God's will, and putting on the mind of Christ.

Our great High Priest and Shepherd, who has given His all, has already done so much and given so much.

He is the one, if we stay faithful to Him, who will ensure that our journey ends with our entry and glorification in the Kingdom of God.