

METZORA - LEVITICUS

- Leper -

ACHAREI MOT - LEVITICUS

- After the Death -

KEDOSHIM - LEVITICUS

- Holy ones -

Dan Stolebarger - Holy Ground Explorations
Chapters 14-20

INTRODUCTION



KEDOSHIM

14 - METZORA

- The purification process for tzara'at looks as if it symbolizes "rebirth" through sacrifice, somewhat similar to the Yom Kippur and Red Heifer rituals.
- Yeshua taught that we need a spiritual rebirth in order to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3).
- Note how the purification process of the metzora foreshadowed spiritual "rebirth" by water and by the blood (John 3:5; 19:34; Heb. 9:19).

The love of God is so great that He reached out and touched us - becoming a "leper" for us - and even chose to die "in exile" upon the cross to eternally purify us from our sins... Yeshua surely meets us more than "half-way," since He "emptied Himself" (κενω) of His heavenly glory and power in order to willingly bear our sickness, shame, and even death itself on our behalf...

May His Name forever be praised!

15

- The portion concludes with laws regarding tzara'at detected in a house (and its purification or demolition, as determined by the priests), and laws regarding "bodily discharges" (zuvim) which required purification through immersion in a mikveh and the offering of sacrifices for atonement.

16 - ACHAREI MOT

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year, marked by fasting and penitential prayers.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered *profane fire* before the Lord, and died; ² and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

- On this most solemn day, Aaron was commanded to immerse himself in a mikveh and to dress in all-white linen. He then was instructed to slaughter a bull as a personal sin offering. Aaron then brought some *ketoret* (incense) to burn within the Holy of Holies before returning to sprinkle the blood of the sin offering seven times before the Ark of the Covenant (i.e., the *kapporet* or "Mercy Seat"). Aaron repeated this procedure using the blood of one of two goats that was selected (by lot) to be slaughtered as a sin offering on behalf of the people. After this, Aaron took more of the sacrificial blood and purified the Altar of Incense and the other furnishings of the Tabernacle. Later, the fat of these sacrifices was burned on the Copper Altar in the courtyard, though the hide and the flesh were to be entirely burned *outside* the camp.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

- After purifying the Tabernacle, Aaron went to the gate of the courtyard and laid both hands upon the head of the other goat (designated "for Azazel," a name for the accusing angel) while confessing all of the sins and transgressions of the people. This "scapegoat" was not slaughtered, however, but was driven away into the wilderness, carrying "all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." Finally, Aaron returned to the Tent, washed and changed his clothes, and offered two burnt offerings - one for himself and one for the people - to complete the purification process. This elaborate ritual was ordained to be a decree for Israel, and the day of Yom Kippur was to be observed every year as a time of "affliction and mourning" for all the people.

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7 He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it *as* a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

20 "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. 21 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, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 The goat [d]shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.



This week's Torah portion focuses on the solemn time of Yom Kippur (the "Day of Atonement"), which included the mysterious rite of the *se'ir mishtale'ach* - the "sent goat." During a special ceremony, Aaron selected two male goats over which lots were to be drawn. Both goats were to be unblemished, sound, and as much alike as possible. On one lot was inscribed "for the LORD" and on the other was inscribed "for Azazel". After the lot was selected, the goat designated "for the LORD" was to be slaughtered as sin offering for the people, whereas the other goat was marked with a red band around its horns and left at the gate of the Tabernacle courtyard. Later in the service, Aaron would confess the sins of the community of Israel over this goat, which would then be "sent to Azazel" in the desert (Lev. 16:5-10; 21-22).

16

¹¹ "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. ¹² Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring *it* inside the veil. ¹³ And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* on the Testimony, lest he die. ¹⁴ He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

He sprinkled the blood of his sin offering before the kapporet ("Mercy Seat") of the Ark.



The Miracle of the Red Strip

This miracle concerns the crimson strip or cloth tied to the Azazel goat. A portion of this red cloth was also removed from the goat and tied to the Temple door. Each year the red cloth on the Temple door turned white as if to signify the atonement of another Yom Kippur was acceptable to the Lord. This annual event happened until 30 CE when the cloth then remained crimson each year to the time of the Temple's destruction. This undoubtedly caused much stir and consternation among the Jews. This traditional practice is linked to Israel confessing its sins and ceremonially placing this nation's sin upon the Azazel goat. The sin was then removed by this goat's death. Sin was represented by the red color of the cloth (the color of blood). But the cloth remained crimson that is, Israel's sins were not being pardoned and "made white."

As God told Israel through Isaiah the prophet:

"Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [crimson], they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [white] wool" (Isaiah 1:18).



The clear indication is that the whole community had lost the Lord's attention in relation to something that occurred in 30 CE. The yearly atonement achieved through the typical Yom Kippur observance was not being realized as expected. Atonement apparently was to be gained in some other way. Who or what would provide the atonement for another year?

The Jews came to believe that if the crimson thread turned white, that God approved of the Day of Atonement rituals and that Israel could be assured that God forgave their sins. But after 30 CE, the crimson thread never turned white again for 40 years, till the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of all Temple rituals!

What did the Jewish nation do in 30 CE to merit such a change at Yom Kippur? By some accounts, on April 5, 30 CE (i.e., on the 14th of Nisan, the day of the Passover sacrifice) the Messiah, Yeshua, was cut off from Israel, himself put to death as a sacrifice for sin. To this event there is a transference of the atonement now no longer achieved through the two goats as offered at Yom Kippur. Like an innocent Passover lamb, the Messiah was put to death though no fault was found in Him! But unlike Temple sacrifices or the Yom Kippur events (as detailed above) where sin is only covered over for a time, the Messianic sacrifice comes with the promise of forgiveness of sins through grace given by God to those who accept a personal relationship with Messiah.

18 - KEDOSHIM

21 And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the Lord.

22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination.

²⁴ 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. ²⁵ For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. ²⁶ You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you ²⁷ (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled), ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you.

19

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God *am* holy.

³ 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I *am* the Lord your God.

⁴ 'Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves [*a*]molded gods: I *am* the Lord your God.

⁹ 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the Lord your God.

- "You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy." The portion then proceeds to list more commandments regarding practical ethics than any other portion of the Torah, thereby directly connecting holiness with obedience to God's moral truth.

19

15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. **16** You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I *am* the Lord.

17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. **18** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord.

19

³⁰ 'You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I *am* the Lord.

³¹ 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I *am* the Lord your God.

³² 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the Lord.

³³ 'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. ³⁴ The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as [h]one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the Lord your God.

20

22 'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. **23** And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. **24** But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I *am* the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples.

22 'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. **23** And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. **24** But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I *am* the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples. **25** You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. **26** And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

27 'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood *shall be* upon them.' "

COUNTING THE OMER



COUNTING THE OMER

As the holiday of Shavuot became associated with the giving of the Torah, and not only with a celebration of agricultural bounty, the omer period began to symbolize the thematic link between Passover and Shavuot.

While Passover celebrates the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, Shavuot marks the culmination of the process of liberation, when the Jews became an autonomous community with their own laws and standards. **Counting up to Shavuot reminds us of this process of moving from a slave mentality to a more liberated one.**

COUNTING THE OMER

With the mitzvah of counting the 49 days, known as Sefirat Ha'Omer, the Torah invites us on a journey into the human psyche, into the soul. There are seven basic emotions that make up the spectrum of human experience. At the root of all forms of enslavement, is a distortion of these emotions. Each of the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot is dedicated to examining and refining one of them.

The seven emotional attributes are:

Chesed — Loving-kindness (W1-7)

Gevurah — Justice and discipline (W8-14)

Tiferet — Harmony, compassion (W15-21)

Netzach — Endurance (W22-28)

Hod — Humility (W29-35)

Yesod — Bonding (W36-42)

Malchut — Sovereignty, leadership (W43-49)