

# THE WHOLE STORY

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From Genesis to Revelation

## Leviticus 16

### ***Introduction:***

Leviticus 16 is a perfect passage to study in preparation for Good Friday (*PS, That's this week!*). One of the many important reasons for Christians to study the Old Testament is so we develop a clearer picture for what Christ accomplished in his life, death and resurrection. Chapter 16 begins by alluding to a tragedy in the tabernacle (from chapter 10). Two priests, sons of Aaron, died because they were careless in the way they worshipped God. Passages like this are a sobering reminder of what our sin, our dirtiness, our impurity, and even just our carelessness cost us apart from Christ.

The Day of Atonement became one of the most important days in the Israelite calendar, which was already full of celebrations and religious observances. As long as the Israelites performed this ritual, they could be assured that their sins were taken away and their standing before God was secure.

This day, however, was more of a somber occasion than a celebration - it brought to the forefront the sinfulness of the people and their separation from God. The care the priest had to show in preparing for and fulfilling this ritual was a response to the holiness they experienced living so close to the presence, power, and glory of God in the wilderness.

### ***This Week's Main Focus:***

***Jesus' sacrifice on the cross made permanent and perfect atonement for our sins.***

For readers today, this passage usually raises two questions: 1) why couldn't God "just forgive?" and 2) why did all those animals have to die? Almost every ancient religion knew that offense against a higher-being demanded blood. Other religions used practices like child sacrifice, cutting themselves, and other blood-related rituals to appease their gods. God, in establishing the religious observances with Israel, affirmed the reverence those other cultures showed, but provided a specific means of atonement. Animals and their lives mattered to God and therefore represented a meaningful response to their offenses against God. At the end of the day, it was just a precursor to the real cure for our sin.

The better question is: why was God willing to send his own Son to die for us? Notice how many times this chapter uses the word "forever." Humankind is perpetually in need of atonement and cleansing. It took something momentous and powerful, like the God of the universe dying on behalf of his creatures, to reconcile God to sinful man. Studying Leviticus shows how costly our sin is. Seeing Jesus on the Cross should make us hate sin forever.

### ***Sermon Response Question:***

1) What were Pastor JD's 6 points from the sermon this weekend? Which one did you most need to learn or be reminded of?

**Bible Study Questions:**

**Read Leviticus 16:1-34**

2) List as many details about the Day of Atonement ritual as you can. Which detail is the most *surprising* to you? Why? Which detail is most *significant* to you? Why?

3) There are three different pictures in Leviticus 16 by which atonement is made for sin. What were they? Why was there more than one?

4) Why did Aaron make atonement for himself before making atonement for the people?

5) Why were there two, different goat sacrifices? What did each represent?

6) Why did God use these different sacrificial rituals with his people Israel?

7) If someone asked you why God could not “just forgive” our sins, what would you say?

**Group Application Questions:**

8) How does a better understanding of Leviticus 16 make you want to change how you pray?

**Prayer:**

Pray Galatians 5:1-2

- God, we praise you for justifying us through the death of your son Jesus.
- We confess that we were far from you by choice and lived in hostility toward you.
- Thank you for granting us access by faith to come to you in all times, circumstances and season.
- God we ask that you would bring many people would come to Easter services that do not normally attend church and that they would trust in Jesus for salvation.