



Erev Yom Kippur 5786

Part 1

October 1, 2025

L'Shana Tovah Mishpacha! In the wilderness, ADONAI gave instructions to Aaron regarding the Holy of Holies. The initial instruction was: *2 Adonai said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holiest Place behind the curtain —before the atonement cover which is on the Ark—so that he would not die. For I will be appearing in the cloud over the atonement cover".* (Leviticus 16:2 TLV). In other words, Aaron, don't wander about unless you know exactly what you are doing. Then ADONAI gave precise instructions as to when to enter and how to carry out the *Yom Kippur* service (Leviticus 16:3-34). The main point of the instructions was that Aaron was not to enter the Holy of Holies except on one day each year, the 10th of *Tishrei*, the Day of Atonement for the nation of Israel. The people were commanded to afflict themselves on this day (Leviticus 16:29; 23:27). ADONAI didn't elaborate, and the rabbis interpreted this as meaning they should fast on *Yom Kippur*, which they continue to do, and we do. The primary sacrifices to be offered were a bull, which Aaron was to offer as a sin sacrifice for himself and his family, and a goat for the sins of the people. Their blood was to be sprinkled on the atonement cover of the *Aron HaBrit*, the Ark of the Covenant. A second goat designated for *Azazel* was not killed but was led into the wilderness. There has been speculation over the centuries about what the word *azazel* symbolizes. Some say it was a fallen angel, and others say it refers to *HaSatan*, while some refer to it as a scapegoat because it was something blamed for others' faults. *Young's Literal Translation* of the Bible calls it "goat of departure," which is in line with Strong's Concordance, where the Hebrew word *azazel* means "entire removal." It was the goat that was to be removed, sent away.

The goat to be sacrificed for the sins of the people was called *Sa'ir l'ADONAI*, "the goat for ADONAI." We can clearly observe the spiritual foreshadowing of Yeshua in the goat used for the sin offering, and the goat for *Azazel* also seems to symbolize Yeshua. The High Priest was to lay his hands on the head of the goat for *Azazel*, confessing all the sins of Israel over it, and then have the goat taken out into the wilderness and left there. There is nothing in the *Torah* that states the goat must die there; Israel was only told: *22 The goat will carry all their iniquities by itself into a solitary land, and he (a priest) is to leave the goat in the wilderness.* (Leviticus 16:22 TLV).

Yom Kippur, as observed during the Tabernacle and Temple eras, remains mysterious in certain aspects. What were the activities of this day to accomplish? We know they provided atonement, but atonement for what? To obtain precise answers, we need to examine the service details more closely. Alfred Edersheim, a 19th-century Jewish Christian theologian, wrote a book titled *The Temple*, which offers a detailed account of everything that happened. He obtained his information from the *Mishnah*, Maimonides' writings, and other ancient sources. It is probably the best source available for understanding ADONAI's purpose regarding *Yom Kippur*.

The High Priest was the central figure, and the success of *Yom Kippur* depended directly on him, so he had to be adequately prepared. To prepare for this critical task, he left his

home a week early and stayed in the side rooms of the Temple. During this week, he practiced everything he would do on that day. Some of the older priests with years of *Yom Kippur* experience likely mentored him to ensure he could perform each step flawlessly, as he would be involved in every detail that occurred on that day.

But the bull and goat sacrifices of *Yom Kippur* were not the only ones offered. All the regular sacrifices also had to be made, including the burnt offerings and drink offerings for both the morning and evening services. And, if *Yom Kippur* occurred on a weekly *Shabbat*, those additional sacrifices would also be included.

The High Priest was a very busy man. He wore his golden garments for the morning and evening sacrifices but changed into a plain white linen garment when carrying out his *Yom Kippur* responsibilities. To transition from golden garments to white garments, he would bathe and change behind a screen that was visible to all the worshippers. On *Yom Kippur*, he washed his entire body five times and his hands and feet ten times. When making the *Yom Kippur* sacrifices, he pronounced ADONAI's name, represented by the Hebrew consonants יהוה *YHVH*, a total of ten times. The people listened, and every time that "The Name" was spoken, they would prostrate themselves and say: *Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam Va'ed*; "Blessed be the Name; the glory of His kingdom is forever and ever."

The *Yom Kippur* service started with the High Priest placing his hands on the head of the bull and confessing his own sins and those of his household. While making that confession, he repeated the name of ADONAI three times. Next, the two goats were chosen. It was essential that they were the same size, shape, and color to convey the idea that together they formed parts of the same sacrifice. With the two goats facing the High Priest and their backs to the worshippers, he placed both hands into a large vase containing two lots. One of them bore the word *la'YHVH*, meaning "for ADONAI," while the other had *la'Azazel*, "for Azazel." Before removing the lots from the urn, he prayed and spoke the name of ADONAI, and the people worshipped again. Holding the lots just as they were withdrawn, he placed his hands on the goats' heads, with his right hand on the goat in front of his right side and his left hand on the goat facing that hand. It was considered good fortune if the lot for ADONAI, the goat to be slain, fell in the right hand because the right hand was believed to symbolize favor, strength, and divine authority. The other goat, the goat for *Azazel* was then turned around and made to face the worshippers, and the High Priest tied a tongue-shaped piece of scarlet cloth to its horn.

The High Priest now returned to the bull, which was standing near the altar. He placed his hands on its head and again confessed his sins, along with those of his household, and this time also the sins of the priesthood—those of all the priests. In making this confession, the name of ADONAI was spoken three more times, and the people worshipped again. Next, the High Priest slaughtered the bull, collected its blood, and handed the container to a priest to stir to prevent coagulation. It needed to be liquid to be sprinkled.

The High Priest then filled his censer with coals from the Altar of Burnt Offering. In *Parasha Acharei Mot*, which contains Leviticus 16, we also find the account of Aaron's two sons offering unholy fire at the Tent of Meeting. The fire Aaron offered that day was "holy fire," as opposed to the fire *Nadav* and *Avihu* offered, which was taken from a household, "kitchen fire." With a bowl of frankincense in his left hand and the censer of coals in his right, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and offered incense. After the smoke filled the room, he backed out and, standing outside the curtain, he prayed for a year of blessing.

Returning to the area of the altar, he took the blood bowl from the priest who had been stirring it and once again entered the Holy of Holies. He sprinkled the blood of the bull on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant eight times; once upward and seven times downward. Returning to the altar, the High Priest slaughtered the goat for ADONAI. Taking its blood, he entered the Holy of Holies a third time and sprinkled it eight times on the Ark—once upward and seven times downward. That amounted to a total of sixteen sprinklings on the Ark of the Covenant, eight from the bull and eight from the goat. The blood of the goat for ADONAI was additionally sprinkled in the Holy Place in front of the curtain of the Holy of Holies and on the Altar of Golden Incense. This brought the sprinklings of blood to a total of forty-three, sixteen times in the Holy of Holies and twenty-seven in the Holy Place. The level of detail was extensive, and it is worth noting that after each of these different events, the High Priest would retreat behind the curtain, bathe himself, and put on fresh linen garments. This is just some of what he did: entered the Holy of Holies three times, spoke ADONAI's name ten times, sprinkled blood forty-three times, and made fifteen washings! What does it all signify? These numbers must have some meaning. So much detail. But we're not finished.

The High Priest now turned his attention to the goat for *Azazel*, which had been quietly standing facing the worshippers. Placing both his hands on the goat's head, he made this confession: "Ah, ADONAI; they have committed iniquity; they have transgressed; they have sinned- Your people, the house of Israel. Oh, then, ADONAI, cover over, I entreat You, upon their iniquities, their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before You- Your people, the house of Israel. As it is written in the *Torah* of Moses, your servant, saying: 'For on that day shall it be covered over for you, to make you clean from all your sins before ADONAI, you shall be cleansed.'" ADONAI's name in this confession were the last three times His name was spoken. The worshippers prostrated themselves during this confession. As the High Priest said the last four words, "you shall be cleansed," he raised his head and looked toward heaven. The High Priest of Israel only dared to speak ADONAI's name on that one day.

A priest then took the goat into the wilderness. He left the Temple through the Eastern Gate and crossed a bridge from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives. But the wilderness wasn't just over that hill. By our measure, it was over seven miles away, which brought about a problem with a "Sabbath day journey," when *Yom Kippur* was also a Sabbath. The distance that could be walked on a Sabbath was about 2/3 of a mile. To address this, ten evenly spaced stations were set up between the Temple and the wilderness, with several men stationed at each one, having food and water. This implemented a special procedure known as *eruv techumin*, which works by establishing a new, symbolic "dwelling place" before *Shabbat* to extend the permitted travel distance on *Shabbat* beyond the standard 2,000 cubits. In other words, each of these stations became your "symbolic" home. By placing food for two meals at the 2,000-cubit limit of the city's boundary, a person creates a new "residence," allowing him to walk an additional 2,000 cubits from that food's location. Of course, the food and water had to be placed there before *Shabbat*. As the priest with the goat reached each station, he was offered food and water and then accompanied by the men to the next station, where he was offered refreshment again. Each of the men accompanying him would walk one-half a Sabbath day journey, about 1/3 mile, and then return one-half a Sabbath day journey to their original station, where they would spend the night, and return to Jerusalem after the Sabbath was over. The priest and the goat walked the last one-third mile alone, with his previous companions watching from a distance. When he reached the cliff at the wilderness's edge, the priest tore off half of the scarlet tongue of cloth and placed

it on a rock. Then he pushed the goat off the cliff. There were other men stationed along the way down from the high cliff, watching the goat as it fell to its death. The *Talmud* relates that the crimson cloth on the rock would turn white when the goat died, signifying that Israel's sins had been forgiven. This message was then relayed back to the High Priest at the Temple by the men waving flags, where he was waiting for G-d's answer before proceeding with the service. The time needed for a priest to make this trip to the wilderness with the Scapegoat would have been between 2 ½ and 3 hours, with the High Priest patiently waiting for ADONAI's answer before proceeding.

What you just heard describes a *Yom Kippur* service that took place hundreds of years before Yeshua came to earth, but was recorded in the *Talmud* some years after His time. There is another account in the *Talmud* about some of the events related to *Yom Kippur* after Yeshua's death. The account from a later time tells us that, in addition, a part of a crimson cord was nailed to the Temple door while the people waited, hoping it would turn white. This is important, and I'll tell you why tomorrow.

What can we make of all of this? There are many possible parallels, but I'll name two. We can see the Levitical High Priest who entered the Holy of Holies in the earthly Temple to sprinkle blood, a foreshadowing of Yeshua, the High Priest after the order of *Malchitzedek*, who entered the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Tabernacle and sprinkled His own blood (Hebrews 9:11-12; 24). We see another parallel in the goat for Azazel, which stood facing the worshippers while the other sacrifices were being offered. Consider these verses: *1 Then Pilate took Yeshua and had Him scourged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and dressed Him in a purple robe. 3 They kept coming up to Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and slapping Him over and over. 4 Pilate came out again. He said to them, "Look, I'm bringing Him out to you, to let you know that I find no case against Him." 5 So Yeshua came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. "Behold, the Man!" Pilate said to them.* (John 19:1-5 TLV). Just as the goat had stood before the sinners in the Temple on that *Yom Kippur*, Yeshua stood before those whom he would soon redeem. The goat for Azazel had the sins of the people confessed over it, and Yeshua would soon take the sins of every person upon himself. Consider that picture. The Jews looked upon a sinless goat and upon a sinless man, both of which were used by ADONAI to take away sin. Pilate said, "Behold the man!" "Look at the man," he said! By saying this, he was trying to release Yeshua, but the crowd kept shouting for His death: *15 They shouted back, "Take Him away! Take Him away! Execute Him!" Pilate said to them, "Should I execute your king?" The ruling kohanim answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" 16 Finally, Pilate handed Yeshua over to be crucified* (John 19:15-16 TLV). By saying "we have no king but Caesar," the chief Priests, including Caiphas the High Priest, metaphorically placed their hands on Yeshua's head, thereby placing their own sins upon Him and sending Him out to His death.

What did *Yom Kippur* in the days before Yeshua accomplish? It's hard to know. Everything about it was mysterious, and there are more questions than answers. The mysterious *Azazel* goat, which carried the sins of the people, was not sacrificed, and its blood was not sprinkled in the Temple. The mystery also lies in the fact that Azazel was only part of a sacrifice, with the two goats comprising the whole. One was killed and one was let go. We read in the Book of Leviticus that ADONAI instructed Israel to release the goat into the wilderness. It was the leadership of Israel that decided to kill it. But neither did the bull and goat, which were sacrificed, provide permanent atonement. Their purpose was to cleanse the

Temple, the priesthood, and the people so that ADONAI's system could continue for another year when it would be done again. Their sins were only covered, and had to be covered again every year. Here is additional mystery: the atonement for the sins confessed upon the goat for Azazel did not do away with them either, but took them to another place: 10 *"But the goat upon which the lot for the scapegoat fell is to be presented alive before Adonai, to make atonement upon it, by sending it away as the scapegoat into the wilderness"* (Leviticus 16:10 TLV). The Priests were not told to kill the goat for Azazel, but to send it into the wilderness. What this tells us is that the guilt of the people, including that of the High Priest, which was transferred to the head of the Scapegoat, their symbolic substitute, was only meant to be taken to another place. The goat was not to be killed, but sent far away into the wilderness, an uninhabited land. Under the First Covenant made at Sinai, sin was not blotted out but only put away, far away, covered up, but not removed. The writer of Hebrews confirms this: 3 *"But in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins year after year— 4 for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:3-4 TLV). This was a foreshadowing of what was to come through Yeshua: permanently blotted out sin.

All these aspects of *Yom Kippur* under the First Covenant are fascinating, and through some of them, we see parallels with Yeshua, who was to come. But, with all this information, what is our main question? I believe it's this: "How did Yeshua's death pay the sin price for us?" We know Yeshua as the Lamb of G-d Who takes away the sins of the world, and He is. But that is only one part of the picture. We also see Him as the *asham*, the guilt offering described in Isaiah 53: 10 *"Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering,"* (**Hebrew: *asham***).. (Isaiah 53:10a TLV). As our *asham*, Yeshua represented the guilt offering of the goat whose blood was sprinkled on the atonement cover of the Ark. And He was also the sin offering symbolized by the living goat, even though it was neither sacrificed nor had its blood been sprinkled in the Holy of Holies. All these events together give us a somewhat clear picture of how Yeshua paid the price for our sins, but not a perfect one, due to our limited understanding. But it is a beautiful picture, a picture of One with a love so great that He would give up His life for us. ADONAI's and Yeshua's love for us is much more than we can comprehend. And there is much more that we do not understand, but the day is coming when we will understand. Today we know in part as *Sha'ul* said: 12 *"Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known"* (1Corinthians 13:12b TLV).

The ancient *Yom Kippur* service, along with the morning and evening services, would have taken up most of the day to complete. Many of the details, such as some of the High Priest's washings and clothing changes, some of the incense, and many of the details regarding the Scapegoat, are not found in Scripture but added by the *kohanim*. However, the Scriptural details are a foreshadowing of Yeshua as both the sacrificed goat and the goat for Azazel. The length and detailed nature of the service, including the animal sacrifices and the High Priest's fearful entrance into the Holy of Holies, demonstrated that sin demanded a costly price. By contrast, ADONAI's sacrifice of His Son Yeshua, who underwent agony in His human flesh, shows the length to which a loving G-d will go for those whom He loves. Once Yeshua's sacrifice was made, the sinner can achieve complete and permanent atonement by accepting His sacrifice as a payment for their sins, and by submitting themselves to Him as Savior and King. If he is sincere, rather than taking most of a day, this can be done by a sinner in a matter of seconds. The ease of receiving permanent atonement under the New Covenant does not diminish its importance. The New Covenant is the only redeeming covenant of ADONAI currently in effect, and the only way to access it is through Yeshua's

shed blood. It, and only it, can provide atonement, which is complete, and not year by year. There is no atonement in the annual modern observance of *Yom Kippur*, a practice that continues to be observed each year, with the belief that sins are forgiven for another year. Yeshua is the only way. Pray that this year, many of ADONAI's chosen will discover that truth. *Tzom Kal!* Have an easy fast!