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The Blood of the Bull and Goat
16: 14-19

The blood of the bull and goat DIG: Why did the high priest need to slaughter a bull for his own purification? What was different about the Yom Kippur purification offering than the regular purification offerings? What was the best the Levitical cleansing could do?

REFLECT: Is there anything that has become a "holy cow" in your life? How can you get back to worshiping the "holy Messiah?" What is the difference between external and internal cleansing in your life? Do you know someone who needs to hear this?

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which underscored the singular solemnity of that most important day.



The blood of the bull (16:14): Before offering **the incense** (**to see link click Ct – Incense in the Most Holy Place**), **the high priest** had **slaughtered the bull** for **his purification offering** (see **Al – The Purification Offering: Purified by Blood**). **Its blood was handed to an assisting priest who stood near the bronze altar** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fa – Build Altar of Acacia Wood Overlaid with Bronze**) **stirring it to prevent coagulation, while the incense service was being performed (Yoma 4.3).** After the incense service, **the high priest** emerged from the Sanctuary to retrieve this **blood**. Then **he** took **it** into **the Most Holy Place**, where the cloud of incense was still billowing up.

The high priest took the blood from the one who had been stirring it. Then he entered a second time into the Most Holy Place and stood in the same spot. Then he sprinkled some of the bull's blood, one time upwards and seven times downwards. But he did not intentionally splash it upwards or downwards; he did it like one cracks a whip. And thus he counted, One, one on one, one and two, one and three and one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven." Then he went out and set down the container of blood on a golden stand [near the altar of incense] in the Sanctuary (Yoma 5.3).

He sprinkled some of the bull's blood in front of the mercy seat with his finger seven times (see the commentary on **Genesis Ae – The Number Seven**). This transporting and **sprinkling of blood** in **the Most Holy Place** was the most unique feature of **the Day of Atonements**.

First, **the high priest** was **to take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat toward the east.** The placement of **the blood** before the place of **atonement** on **the Day of Atonements** was no accident. Elsewhere with **the purification offering (4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34,** and **8:14-15) the blood** is placed at the base of **the bronze altar** in order to sanctify **it**. **The purification offerings** of **Yom Kippur** were different from the regular **purification offerings** (see **AI – The Purification Offering: Purified by Blood**) in that **they** were to make **atonement** for **the Most Holy Place (16:33)**. So **the high priest** purified **the Sanctuary**.[282]



The blood of the goat (16:15-19): Following the sprinkling of **the bull's blood**, **the high priest slaughtered the goat** designated as **a purification offering** for all **Isra'el. He** immediately took **the blood** of **the goat** into **the Most Holy Place**

and **sprinkled it** in the same way that **he** had **sprinkled the bull's blood**. **Next, he is to slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood as he did with the bull's blood, sprinkling it on the ark-cover and in front of the mercy seat.** This was **his** third entrance. **No one is to be present in the tent of meeting from the time he enters the Holy Place to make atonement until the time he comes out, having made atonement for himself, for his household and for the entire community of Isra'el.** Under both the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah **there is but one mediator between God and man (First Timothy 2:5).**

This was the only occasion in which **blood** was brought into **the Most Holy Place**, which underscored the singular solemnity of that most important day of the Jewish religious calendar. **The Mercy Seat** covered **the Ark of the Covenant** and contained **the Ten Words** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bk – The Ten Words**), **a gold jar containing manna**, and **Aaron's rod that had budded (Hebrews 9:4)**. The narrative accounts surrounding these items stress the rebellion of **the Israelites**. Therefore, the cherubim looking down upon **the mercy seat** only saw evidence of **Isra'el's** unfaithfulness. **The blood** on **the mercy seat** indicated that **Isra'el's sin** was **atoned** for by a substitutionary death, foreshadowing **the Messiah**.[283]

Backing out of **the Most Holy Place**, **the high priest** then took the remaining **blood** of **the bull from the stand in which he had left it** and **sprinkled it seven** times on **the inner veil** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fq – The Inner Veil of the Sanctuary: That is Christ, His Body**) and then did the same with **the blood** of **the goat before ADONAI and make atonement for it.** Then **he** mixed **the blood** of **the blood** of **the bull** and **the goat** together and **put** the combined **bloods** on **all the four horns of the golden altar** (see **Exodus Fp – Altar of Incense in the Sanctuary: Christ, Our Advocate with the Father**) that stood before **the inner veil to make atonement for it. He is to put some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, thus purifying it and setting it apart from the impurity of the people of Isra'el (16:18-19).**

Having finished inside the Sanctuary, **the high priest** came out to **the bronze altar** and performed similar rites to cleanse and consecrate **it**. **The remainder of the blood was poured out at the base of the bronze altar in the courtyard** (see **Exodus Ex – The Courtyard and Gate of the Tabernacle**). This made **the bronze altar** fit for use, so **the Israelites** could confidently draw near to **the**

LORD with **their sacrifices** throughout the coming year.[284]

The blood rituals were **purification** gestures. We have seen **the seven-fold sprinkling** performed in connection with **the purification** rite of **the purification offering** (see **Al – The Purification Offering: Purified by Blood**), and in conjunction with **the leper's purification** (see **Ci – The Concluding Purification Ceremony**). Therefore, we are to understand **the seven-fold sprinklings** as accomplishing **purifications** from **the impurity** (and **sin**) of **the priesthood** and **the people**. **The blood** covered (**atoned** for) **the impurity**. This is made explicit in **16:16**, a passage which ties together the concepts of **sin**, **impurity**, **purification**, and **atonement**. **He will make atonement for the Holy Place because of the impurity of the people of Isra'el and because of their transgressions – all their sins; and he is to do the same for the tent of meeting which is there with them right in the middle of their impurity.**

In Leviticus there was a cleansing, but not enough cleansing. The writer to the **Hebrews** reminded **them** that under **the Levitical priesthood** the best **they** could hope for was a limited holiness (Hebrew: *kedushah*), **for the blood of goats and bulls** could never really accomplish deep internal cleansing. **The Tabernacle was a symbol for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered there were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper (Hebrews 9:9).**

In addition, there was an extraordinary form of ritual cleansing Moshe was given a regulation that became an increasingly significant part of **Isra'el's** worship experience. **Numbers 19** describes the ceremony a perfect **red cow** (Hebrew: *parah adumah*), which had **never been yoked**, was **slaughtered outside the camp of Isra'el** (see the commentary on **Numbers Da – The Red Heifer**). After **sprinkling its blood seven times** in front of the Tabernacle, **the animal** was consumed by fire and its **ashes** stored for mixing with water. This water of cleansing (Hebrew: *me niddah*) containing those **ashes** was applied to those who had been defiled as a result of coming near or touching a dead body. **The high priest** was no exception; **he** was **sprinkled** with the purifying waters twice during the week immediately preceding **Yom Kippur** (see the commentary on **Exodus Go – The Day of Atonement**), just in case he unknowingly became ceremonially defiled.

Oddly enough, this is the only sacrifice where **God** commands that the **ashes** of the burnt animal be kept. And this was for a unique purpose as **the red cow** was the

key sacrifice for **purifying the priesthood** and their sacred utensils from **sin** and **impurity**. As the Passover lamb was essential to bring **the Israelites** into covenant relationship with **YHVH**, **the red cow** was that which kept **them** cleansed in **their** service to **God**.

After the destruction of the Temple and its **bronze altar** in 70 AD, the water for these washings could no longer be made. According to **the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**), the last priest to kill a **red cow** was **the high priest** Ishmael ben Phabi ten years before the destruction of Jerusalem. And twelve chapters of **the Oral Law** (an entire tractate called *Parah*) are devoted to this ritual!

The Samaritans, who viewed Jerusalem's Temple indifferently, continued slaying red heifers until the fourteenth century, using those ashes for generations afterwards. Maimonides (a twelfth century scholar) believed that **the red cow** ritual would be resumed with the coming of **the Messiah**.

The problem is that this, like so many of **Isra'el's** rituals, dealt with the externals of religion. The sometimes elaborate and impressive procedures could not touch the inner defilement that prevented fellowship with **the Holy One of Isra'el**.[285]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise and thank **You** from an overflowing heart for **Your** gracious gift of salvation. **For if by the one man's transgression, death reigned through the one, how much more shall those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Messiah Yeshua. (Romans 5:17)**. Also, what a wonderful promise of indwelling by **the Holy Ruach**. **And if the Ruach of the One who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Ruach who dwells in you (Romans 8:11).***

***Father**, I want to live my life in grateful worship of **Your** great gift that cleanses internally! Heaven will last for all eternity and now I have the opportunity to give back my life to **You** as a love gift. I delight in living for **You** now and in gifting **You** by bearing great amounts of fruit for **You**! **Yeshua** said: **I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing (John 15:5).** I love **You**! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection! Amen*

Speaking to the unbelievers in the Messianic congregation the writer says: **The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of red [cow] sprinkled on those who are ceremonially clean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean (Hebrews 9:13).** Some of the **Hebrews** in the Diaspora continued to look to **the blood of bulls and goats** as a means of gaining a right relationship with **ADONAI**. But that **sprinkling** only achieved the purifying of the flesh, not the cleansing of the conscience.

There is considerable excitement about **the red cow** in **Isra'el** today. There is an organization called the Temple Institute that is dedicated to establishing the Third Temple. Its long term aims are to build the third Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount, on the site currently occupied by the Islamic Dome of Rock and reinstate the **Levitical sacrifices**. Members of the Temple Institute have been working on this for decades.

In order to carry out this project, the Temple Institute has joined forces with an experienced Israeli cattle rancher who is an expert in the science of animal husbandry, under the halakhic supervision and guidance of the rabbis of the Temple Institute. The cattle rancher is utilizing the technique of implanting the frozen embryos of the Red Angus cattle, which originally come from North America and Israeli domestic cattle. The end result of this program will be the introduction of the Red Angus breed into **Isra'el**. But before we get too carried away, we need to realize that even if the Temple Institute can produce a perfect **red cow**, it would still only produce an external cleansing!

While many seem to be caught up in the recent commotion, a question is posed to those of us, **Jews** and **Gentiles**, who believe in **Yeshua Messiah**. What does all this mean to us? On the one hand, I am sure many believers are also excited that things keep moving closer to the end of the present age. As we see some of these events of the Scriptures come into focus, we realize anew that **Mashiach** is coming! Yet, I believe we miss an important point if we feel the need for a **red cow** in order to be cleansed before **God**. In fact, such excitement about **the red cow** seems to imply that **Yeshua** is not **the Messiah** and that **the Jews** must have the cleansing of **their sins** through **the sacrifices** of the rebuilt Temple. The New Covenant scriptures remind us of the opposite truth; namely, that **Jesus Himself** fulfilled the ministry of **the red cow** in **His** first coming to Jerusalem. Significantly, the writer to the **Hebrews** states: **Then how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Holy Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may**

serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). The blood of **Jesus** does exactly what the blood of **the red cow** could not do – it **cleanses the conscience**.

Indeed, the death of **Yeshua Messiah** is a beautiful fulfillment of the symbolism associated with **the red cow**. **He** was sinless and without defects. Like **the red cow**, **Yeshua's** death took place outside the camp. The ongoing effect of **His** sacrifice, similar to **the ashes** of the **cow**, cleanses **His** people for priestly service. As interesting as all the recent events are, it seems Messianic believers, whether they be Jew or Gentile, have even a better reason to be excited. Instead of getting caught up in the "holy **cow**", I hope we are more caught up in the "holy **Messiah**"! Are you ready for **His** return? Are you fulfilling your calling as a priest cleansed to serve **the Living God**?