

Leviticus 16:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

Analysis

And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

This verse falls within the section on **Day of Atonement**. The most sacred day in Israel's calendar, when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all Israel's sins.

The central theme of Leviticus is God's holiness and the call for His people to be holy. The Hebrew word *qadosh* (קָדוֹשׁ) means 'set apart' or 'sacred,' emphasizing both separation from sin and consecration to God's purposes. The Hebrew word *kaphar* (כָּפַר) means 'to cover' or 'to make atonement.' The sacrificial system provided temporary covering for sin, pointing forward to Christ's perfect, once-for-all sacrifice. The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. The five main offerings (burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt) addressed different aspects of relationship with God, all fulfilled in Christ's comprehensive sacrifice.

The access to God's presence that Leviticus carefully regulated is now freely available through Christ's blood, tearing the veil and opening the way to God.

Historical Context

The most sacred day in Israel's calendar, when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all Israel's sins. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) described in chapter 16 became Israel's most sacred day. Only on this annual day could the high priest enter the Holy of Holies, making atonement for the entire nation. This ceremony, still observed in Judaism, found ultimate fulfillment in Christ's entrance into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:11-12). Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. Ancient texts like the Code of Hammurabi show that law codes were common in the ancient Near East, but biblical law uniquely grounded ethics in God's character rather than merely social convention.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's holiness, as revealed in this verse, shape your understanding of worship, obedience, and daily living?
2. In what ways does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ's atoning sacrifice and the seriousness of sin?
3. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּכְפֹּר׃ אֶת מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת
And he shall make an atonement H853 sanctuary for the holy H853
H3722 H4720 H6944
אֶל הַלְל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
for the tabernacle H168 of the congregation H4150 and for the altar H4196
H853

וַיַּכְפֹּר׃ וְעַל הַכֹּהֲנִים כָּל וְעַל
And he shall make an atonement H5921 for the priests H5921 H3605
H3722 H3548

וְעַל הַקֹּהֵל וַיַּכְפֹּר׃
and for all the people H5971 of the congregation H6951 And he shall make an atonement H3722

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 16:16 (Holy): And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Leviticus 16:6 (Sacrifice): And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Leviticus 16:24 (Holy): And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.