Lesson: Leviticus 16:1-16; Time of Action: 1445 B.C.; Place of Action: Mount Sinai

Golden Text: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat” (Leviticus 16:2).

I. INTRODUCTION. For many living in ancient Israel, the only relief from the drudgery of everyday life was provided by the occasional festivals that were scheduled throughout the year. All the festivals except one were times of feasting. The Day of Atonement was an annual time set aside for fasting. This was the day when all Israel sought divine forgiveness from their sins and the sins of the nation. The Day of Atonement in Hebrew is Yom Kippur. “Yom” means “day” in Hebrew and “Kippur” comes from a root word that means “to atone.” Yom Kippur is usually expressed in English as “Day of Atonement” and is observed by Jews on the tenth day of Tishri, the seventh month on the Hebrew religious calendar (see Leviticus 16:29-30) which correlates to our months of September-October. According to Jewish tradition, God writes each person’s fate for the coming year into a book, the Book of Life, on Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the seventh month and waits until Yom Kippur to “seal” the verdict. The
nine days leading up to the Day of Atonement beginning with Rosh Hashanah are called the Days of Awe. During this time, a Jew tries to change his or her behavior and seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God and against other human beings. The evening and day of Yom Kippur are set aside for public and private prayers and confessions of guilt. At the end of Yom Kippur, the repentant Jew hopes that they have been forgiven by God. This week’s lesson focuses on God’s instructions for the ceremonies the high priest was to perform to make atonement for Israel’s sins.

II. BACKGROUND FOR THE LESSON. The context of this week’s lesson deals with the deaths of Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu (see Leviticus 10:1-2; 16:1). The LORD set them on fire because they “offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not to do” (see Leviticus 10:1). The term “strange fire” refers to “unauthorized fire.” The fire on the altar of burnt offering was never to go out (see Leviticus 6:12-13) implying that it was holy. Although we are not told exactly what they did, it’s possible that Nadab and Abihu brought coals of fire to the altar from another source, making the sacrifice unholy. Whatever they did that God didn’t allow, abused their office as priests in a flagrant act of disrespect to God. Our lesson begins not long after that. Although our text revolves around Aaron’s part in the Day of Atonement, whoever the high priest was in the future would be expected to perform the same ceremonies as Aaron was commanded to do.
III. PREPARING AARON FOR SERVICE (Leviticus 16:1-4)

A. God speaks to Moses after the death of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 16:1-2).

1. (vs. 1). Our first verse says “And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died…” Here we are given the date of the law concerning the Day of Atonement: it was “after the death of the two sons of Aaron.” God killed them with fire when they burned unauthorized fire to the LORD after He told them not to (Leviticus 10:1). The deaths of Nadab and Abihu, was a warning to the priests not to approach God irreverently, but with reverence and godly fear. Therefore, God gives directions here on how to properly approach Him. Now after their deaths, God spoke to “Moses” again.

2. (vs. 2). This verse says “And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.” First God told “Moses” to warn “Aaron” not to come “into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark” whenever he wanted to or he would “die.” The phrase “not at all times” means whenever the high priest wanted to. God’s reason for
making this stipulation was because the “holiest place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark” was where God Himself would “appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.” Because of God’s holy presence, this was “the most holy place” in the tabernacle, so entrance before Him could not be done irreverently.

B. Aaron’s entrance into the holy place (Leviticus 16:3-4).

1. (vs. 3). This verse says “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.” Although God had not instituted the Day of Atonement at this point (see Leviticus 23:27-28), He was preparing “Aaron” for the time when He would establish that day when all of Israel’s sins would be covered by the actions of the people and the high priest. God began by saying to Moses “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place.” God was now authorizing “Aaron” to enter the “Holy place” or the “Holy of Holies” where the Ark of the Covenant was. But before he could do this, he had to bring with him “a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering” into the tabernacle court where sacrificial offerings were made. The “sin offering” was to cleanse “Aaron” and his family of their sins (see verse 16). The “burnt offering” was offered as an act of total submission and consecration since the entire offering was to be burned on the altar (see Leviticus 1:8-9). “Aaron” was to offer a “bullock” or a bull as a “sin offering” and a “ram” as a “burnt offering” for himself and his family, before offering a goat for the people (see
verse 5). By contrast, Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the eternal new covenant, was without sin and therefore offered sacrifice for His people only (see Hebrews 7:26-27).

2. (vs. 4). This verse says “He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.” Now God gives instructions for how Aaron, the high priest was to dress before doing this service. God said that “He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired. These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.” Aaron, the high priest was not to be dressed up in his rich garments that were designed for only him (see Leviticus 8:6-9). Neither was he to put on the ephod, with the precious stones in it, but only the “linen” clothes which he wore like the common priests (see Leviticus 8:13). Although this was not the full dress for the high priest, God still said that “these are holy garments” because they had been consecrated and set aside for God’s use. Since these garments were “holy,” God also said “therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.” This means that the high priest had to “wash” himself completely. This was different from the washing that the high priest did when serving at the altar in the outer court of the tabernacle. At that time, the high priest only had to wash his hands and feet with “water” from the holy laver or basin (see Exodus 30:18-21). But before he could go behind the vail (see verse 2) into the holy of holies,
in the very presence of God, Aaron had to “wash” or bathe his whole body before he put on the holy garments per God’s instructions. Being dressed in thinner and lighter clothing compared to what he normally wore, would help Aaron in expediting the work or service of that day all of which he handled himself. Likewise, Jesus Christ, our high priest, made atonement for sin not in the robes of His own glory, but wearing the linen garments of our humanity (see Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:17-20).

IV. PREPARING THE SCAPEGOAT (Leviticus 16:5-10)

A. The sacrifices for atonement (Leviticus 16:5-6).

1. (vs. 5). This verse says “And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.” Once Aaron had prepared himself according to the LORD’s instructions (see verse 4), the people were to bring to him on behalf of “the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.” The “two young goats” would be offered as sacrifices for sin, and the “ram” offered as “a burnt offering” sacrifice.

2. (vs. 6). This verse says “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.” The
word “atonement” describes the act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. But before “Aaron” offered these animal sacrifices, he first had to sacrifice the bull for his own sins and for his family (see verse 3). God declared that “Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.” Here lies a major difference between Aaron’s priestly ministry and Jesus’. Even though “Aaron” was the high priest, he still sinned and his office didn’t protect him from that. So before he could offer sacrifices as “an atonement” for the people’s sins, he had to atone for his own sins. In contrast, Jesus, who is our Great High Priest didn’t have to offer a sacrifice for Himself because He was sinless (see II Corinthians 5:20-21). But He offered Himself as a sacrifice for all who believe (see Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). Aaron would make these sacrifices over and over again, but Jesus offered Himself only once which was sufficient to remove the sins of everyone who believes in Him (see John 1:29; Hebrews 7:27; 9:26).

B. Aaron commanded to cast lots (Leviticus 16:7-8).

1. (vs. 7). This verse says “And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” After the “two goats” were brought to Aaron, he was to take them “and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” Presenting the “two goats...before the LORD” meant that they belonged to Him.
2. (vs. 8). This verse says “And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” The words “cast lots” refers to a way in the Old Testament that the LORD sometimes helped people understand His will. Of course, today we don’t need to “cast lots” to try to determine God’s will because we have the Holy Spirit and God’s completed Word, the Bible to direct us and reveal His will. Casting “lots” was also a way of making decisions in Bible times similar to drawing straws or casting a pair of dice to determine what course or direction to follow. The sailors on Jonah’s ship also “cast lots” to determine who had brought God’s wrath upon their ship (see Jonah 1:7). But in this case, God would be helping “Aaron” know what His will was for the “two goats.” What would be done with these animals would be God’s decision, not Aaron’s. “Aaron” was to “cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” At this point, “Aaron” was not aware which one of the “goats” would be for the LORD and which one would serve the purpose of “the scapegoat.”

C. The reason for casting lots for the goats (Leviticus 16:9-10).

1. (vs. 9). This verse says “And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.” Once “Aaron” cast lots, he was instructed to “bring the goat upon which the LORD’s lot
fell, and offer him for a sin offering.” The LORD’s “goat” was to be sacrificed as “a sin offering” for the people (see verse 5).

2. (vs. 10). This verse says “But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.” The “lot” that “fell” on the other “goat” became “the scapegoat” and was not to be sacrificed. Instead, God said that it “shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.” Sending the “scapegoat into the wilderness” symbolized that it was taking the people’s sins away with it. One of these goats had to be slain as a sign that God’s justice for sin had been satisfied; the other had to be sent away as a sign of the remission or dismissing of sin by the mercy of God.

Note: At this point it’s best to describe what happens to the second goat or the “scapegoat.” After the high priest finished purifying the holy things, he placed his hands on the goat’s head, confessing Israel’s sins over it. Then he was to send it away into the wilderness with someone who was specially chosen to take it. This symbolized the removal of Israel’s sins from God’s sight (see Leviticus 16:20-22). Therefore, the Day of Atonement beautifully demonstrated the grace of God toward His people, not only cleansing them through shed blood, but also removing sin from His sight. But as striking as this symbolism is, it was imperfect and temporary for it awaited the complete, perfect and final
attonement made by Jesus Christ. The fact that this ceremony had to be repeated every year proved that the blood of bulls and goats couldn’t take away sins (see Hebrews 10:1-4) but only covered them. These actions by the high priest only postponed God’s judgment, a judgment that eventually fell upon Jesus and ended the annual sacrifices (see Hebrews 10:11-14). These yearly sacrifices have now been replaced by the single, one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice makes the believer holy and takes away all sins (see Hebrew 9:23-28; 10:14). The Old Testament shows us that atonement for sin calls for a sacrifice; a life given for our life. The guilty party must come in God’s prescribed way, trusting God to accept the substitute that He Himself has ordained and to extend the promised forgiveness. The New Testament shows us that the sacrificial practices ordained in the Old Testament were instructive: they foreshadowed the death of Jesus on Calvary and prepared us to understand the meaning of His death. Jesus died as the Lamb of God, as our substitute, and it is on the basis of His shed blood that God offers full and free forgiveness to all who accept Him by faith.

V. ATONEMENT FOR THE HIGH PRIEST (Leviticus16:11-14)

A. The sin offering killed (Leviticus 16:11). This verse says “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin
offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself.”

What was basically summarized in verses 6-10, is here described in more detail. After washing his body and putting on the special linen clothes, God said that “Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house” (see verse 6). Before the high priest could make “atonement” for the people, he had to make sure his own sins and those of his family were covered. The word “atonement” is the English word used to translate the Hebrew words which mean “cover, coverings, or to cover.”

Note: The Levitical sacrifices “covered” the sins of Israel until, and in anticipation of the cross, but did not “take away” (see Psalms 32:1; 85:2; Romans 4:7; Hebrews 10:4) their sins. Those sins committed in the Old Testament times were only covered by the Levitical sacrifices and God’s righteousness was never vindicated until the cross when Jesus was “set forth to be a propitiation” (see Romans 3:25). The word “propitiation” in the New Testament expresses the same concept as the word “atonement” (see Romans 3:25; Hebrew 2:17; I John 2:2; 4:10). “Aaron” would make the “atonement” for himself and his family when he “shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself.” This was the priest’s personal “sin offering.”

B. The incense offered (Leviticus 16:12-13).

1. (vs. 12). This verse goes on to say “And he (the priest) shall take a censer full of burning coals of
fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail.” After killing the bullock which was Aaron’s sin offering, he was to do two things. First, he was told to “take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD.” A “censer” was a fire pan with a long handle. It was usually made of bronze or copper and sometimes gold (see Exodus 27:3; II Chronicles 4:22). Here the priest used it to take “burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD.” The “coals” were not what we know as coal today. They may have been charcoal, but were most likely burning wood that had not been extinguished. The high priest took these “coals” from the “altar before the LORD” meaning the “altar” of burnt offerings that was “before” or outside of the Holy of Holies where the LORD’s presence abided. Second, the high priest would also take his “hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail.” This “sweet incense beaten small” refers to “incense” that was finely ground. “Incense” was a sweet smelling mixture of gums (a sticky substance taken from trees or plants) and spices made to be burned, especially in religious services. The high priest was to take the “burning coals of fire” and the “sweet incense” and bring them “within the vail” meaning behind the curtain that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies. Therefore, he would be taking these items into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was. **Note:** “Incense” symbolized the prayers of the Hebrew people which were considered to be a pleasant aroma offered to God (see Psalms 141:2). For Israel’s worship, God had specified the “incense” to be a mixture of the
spices stacte, and onycha, and galbanum along with frankincense (see Exodus 30: 34). According to the Law, only priests descended from Aaron could offer “incense” (see Leviticus 2:2; II Chronicles 26:16-21). This “incense” was considered to be holy. The Law also prohibited anyone from using this “incense” for personal purposes, nor could any other mixture be used in its place (see Exodus 30:37-38). Apparently, some wealthy individuals were tempted to make their own private supply for personal use. Doing either of these things would be regarded as sin. Daily, in the morning and evening, the high priest was commanded to burn “incense” on the altar of “incense” located in front of the vail or curtain that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies (see Exodus 30:1-8; Hebrews 9:2-3). But only on the Day of Atonement was the high priest to carry the “incense” along with the hot “coals” into the Holy of Holies.

2. (vs. 13). This verse goes on to say “And he (the high priest) shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” When Aaron, the high priest went into the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies), he was to “put the incense upon the fire before the LORD.” In other words, the high priest was to take “the incense” and place it on “the fire” that was in the censer he held, and take it behind the curtain or vail into the Holy of Holies. He did this so that the “cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony.” The smoke from “the incense” served as a
screen between “the mercy seat” and the high priest, probably to prevent the high priest from seeing God’s divine presence (see Exodus 33:20). It may also have been used to turn away God’s wrath (see Numbers 16:46-50). This means that the “cloud” of smoke made by placing “the incense” over the burning coals in the censer would fill the Holy of Holies and “cover the mercy seat” that was on “the testimony.” The “mercy seat” was the cover of the Ark of the Covenant which was the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle (see Exodus 25:10-12). It contained “the testimony” meaning the tables of the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 25:16, 21: 31:18). The tablets of the Ten Commandments are called “the testimony” because they would be God’s “testimony” against Israel if they were ever disobedient. The Ark of the Covenant was a wooden chest covered in gold inside and out. The cover of the ark was called the “mercy seat” (see Exodus 25:21) and was made of pure gold (see Exodus 25:17). On both ends of the “mercy seat” were two golden cherubim facing each other with their wings stretched out (see Exodus 25:18-20). The LORD said that He would commune with Israel between the cherubim (see Exodus 25:22) making this the most hallowed and sacred place in the tabernacle. We must remember that what the high priest is doing here is taking place behind the veil in the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. It was important for the smoke to cover the “mercy seat” so that the high priest would “die not” or to prevent him from dying. The purpose of the “cloud” of smoke from “the incense” was to shield the high priest, in this case Aaron, from the awesome presence of God on the “mercy seat,” since no human can see God and live (see Exodus 33:20; John
C. The blood sprinkled on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14). This verse continues to say “And he (Aaron, the high priest) shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.” After offering the incense in the Holy of Holies (the Most Holy Place), Aaron, went back to the tabernacle courtyard to the altar of sacrifice where he had sacrificed “the bullock” as a sin offering for himself. Then he was to go back into the Holy of Holies taking some of “the blood” from “the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward.” The word “eastward” refers to the front of “the mercy seat.” Aaron sprinkled “the mercy seat” with “blood” on the Day of Atonement. The ark contained the two stone tablets of the law inscribed by the finger of God Himself, representing the eternal moral law of God (see Deuteronomy 10:1-5). Since all humans have violated this law, the righteousness of God demands death (see Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23). God provided the only means of atonement for His chosen people and for their reconciliation to Him—the atoning “blood” on the ark’s cover, “the mercy seat.” That “mercy seat” covered with “blood” was the meeting point of the holy God with His unholy people. It symbolized the heavenly sanctuary where Christ has entered with His own “blood” (see Hebrews 9:11-12), which is sufficient for all the sins of His people, past, present, and future (see Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 9:15). Then the high priest was to “sprinkle of the blood
with his finger seven times...before the mercy seat.” In other words, he was to use “his finger” to “sprinkle” some of “the blood” on the ground in front of the “mercy seat.”

Note: Since this day was the only time in the year when the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, it was also the only time that “blood” was sprinkled there (see Hebrews 9:6-7). At all other times when a sin offering was made, “the blood” of the sacrifice was sprinkled in front of the curtain or veil (see Leviticus 4:6, 17). However, on the Day of Atonement, “the blood” of the sacrifice was brought into direct contact with God’s presence, “the mercy seat.” This would atone for the sins of the high priest, which was not necessary for Christ who is the sinless and perfect High Priest (see Hebrews 7:26-28).

VI. ATONEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE (Leviticus 16:15-16)

A. The sin offering presented (Leviticus 16:15). This verse says “Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.” After the high priest has sacrificed the bullock to cover or atone for his own sins, he was to “kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people.” The “goat of the sin offering, that is for the people” according to verse 5, was one of two goats that the
high priest was to set aside for a “sin offering” for the people’s sin. He was to bring both of them to the door of the tabernacle casting lots upon them “one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat” (see Leviticus 16:8). The “goat” on which the LORD’s lot fell was to be sacrificed as a “sin offering, that is for the people” and the other “goat” called the scapegoat, was to be sent into the wilderness (see verse 10). Then the high priest was to “bring his (the goat’s) blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.” In other words, after the high priest killed the “goat” that was set aside for the people’s sin, he was to take the goat’s “blood” and do the same thing with it that he did with the “blood” of the bullock in verse 14. That meant he had to go into the Holy of Holies again and sprinkle the “blood” from the “goat” over “the mercy seat” and on the ground in front of “the mercy seat.”

B. The tabernacle cleansed (Leviticus 16:16). Our final verse says “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.” Not only was the sacrificed goat offered as a sin offering for the people, it also was offered to “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.” The people were so sinful that even the divine “holy place” or the Holy of
Holies had been polluted. Therefore, it needed to be cleansed as well, and this was done in verse 15. The object of the sacrificial ritual was not only for the people, but for the tabernacle itself, which was defiled by the people’s sins. The earthly “tabernacle” or sanctuary was a representation of the heavenly sanctuary (see Hebrews 9:23). The phrase “transgressions in all their sins” probably refers to all the “sins” the people committed unintentionally or unknowingly. But it should be noted that there was no atonement for sins committed intentionally or purposely in defiance of the LORD. That person was to be cut off from his people (see Numbers 15:27-31). Just as the Holy of Holies had to be cleansed due to the people’s sins, so did the “tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” The “tabernacle” refers to everything inside of it as well as those things in the outer chamber that included the lampstand, table of showbread, and the altar of incense. The entire “tabernacle” needed to be cleansed because it “remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” This means that the “tabernacle” was erected among the people as they continued in their wickedness. The phrase the “tabernacle of the congregation...remaineth among them” literally means “which camps among them.” It speaks of something that’s not permanent. In other words, God’s presence was only temporary in this arrangement. His “tabernacle” or tent dwelling looked forward to His dwelling among His people through Jesus’ incarnation (see John 1:14). Today, God has sent His Spirit upon His new covenant people, the church (see Acts chapter 2), and His Spirit indwells believers,
making them the temples of God (see I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). His final dwelling with His people will occur in the new heavens and the new earth (see Revelation 21:1-4).

**Note:** *This should remind us that like Israel, when we sin we contaminate everything that we come in contact with. Our sins make our actions, our relationships, our organizations and our possessions imperfect. Even our spiritual relationships and places of worship are tainted by our sins. Unlike Israel, we don’t have a Day of Atonement to cleanse everything we tarnish when we are in sin. However, we must constantly claim the cleansing blood of Jesus shed as a sacrifice for our sins (see I John 1:9). Only as we do that can we enjoy His presence in our lives.*

**VII. Conclusion.** Leviticus 16:29 mandates the establishment of the holy Day of Atonement for Israel’s sins on the 10th day of the 7th month. The Law calls it a Sabbath and a day upon which the Jews must afflict their soul which means “to fast.” Leviticus 23:27 prohibits any work on the Day of Atonement and that it is a strict day of rest. In addition to the prohibitions given in Scripture, five additional prohibitions are traditionally observed, according to the Mishnah, the Jewish oral tradition. These traditions are as follows: no eating and drinking, no wearing of leather shoes, no bathing or washing, no use of perfumes or lotions, and no marital relations. But for the Christian, Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled the Day of Atonement’s rituals. Whereas the high priest had to offer a sacrifice for his own
sins, Jesus was perfect, sinless, and undefiled. The high priest offered a sacrifice yearly; Jesus offered Himself on the cross once for all. When the Father sees the believer, He sees Jesus’ righteousness. The high priest represented the people before God. Jesus, our High Priest, stands before God as our Advocate, interceding for us, and because of Him, we enjoy direct access to God, the Father.

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