



# Finding Christ in the Tabernacle

## ATONEMENT

*“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Leviticus 17:11)*

### *Understanding The Power Of Sacrificial Blood*

Ordinances or rituals are testimonies of Christ. The word ordinance comes from the Latin ordinare, “to put in order or sequence.” Thus, sacred space (Tabernacle and Temples) are houses of order, D&C 109:8. Religious rituals are sacred rites of transition as “gestures of approach”, because they are acts or movements that worshippers make as they approach God during sacred worship, James 4:8.

Sacred rites, rituals, liturgy, sacraments or ordinances are quintessential to God’s interaction with, eternal protection of, and plan for His children.

They are driven by covenants that a) establish and reinforce His relationship with those that seek Him, b) provide a clear path to return to His presence, c) administer spiritual power and blessings (cleansing, atonement and sanctification), and d) give instruction about Him and His ways. Within “the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest”, D&C 84:20-21.

In each sacrificial offering related to atonement, the substitute’s blood is used to cleanse – providing forgiveness – and sanctify the recipients for whom the sacrifice was for, Leviticus 5:10,

Hebrews 9:22. The Lord was teaching all participants and observers that the blood is symbolic of what gives life, Leviticus 17:11, especially eternal life – to be in the presence of God. If blood symbolized the sustaining of eternal life, then the penalty of sin or the loss or absence of blood was death, Romans 6:23 – the loss of eternal life – or the separation from God, temporally and spiritually, Helaman 14:16, Moses 6:48, which would ultimately result in becoming subject to the “fallen angel”, 2 Nephi 9:8-9.

A future death was the penalty for Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, D&C 29:41, Alma 42:11-12, and their dismissal from the Garden of Eden. With their expulsion, they were able to continue to choose right from wrong, 2 Nephi 2:15-16, with the promise that a Savior would rescue them, Moses 5:6-9, 2 Nephi 9:10, if they chose God.

Because of the divine laws of holiness, truth, order and purity – godliness – were established by God and reflect who and what He is, the penalty for not being holy or pure due to sin was also established, Alma 42:22. If this law was not upheld or maintained by divine justice, Alma 42:14-16, God would cease to be God, Alma 42:13, making it impossible for anyone to escape the repercussions of their sins, Alma 42:10-12. Divine law required restitution to be made for that which was lost, Alma 41:15.

Due to sin, the loss of purity could not be restored unless an unblemished (sinless) substitute sacrificed its own blood in its death on behalf of the transgressor, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Without a blood sacrifice, there was no atonement (being one with the Lord) made or remission of sins, Hebrews 9:22.



*“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22, NIV translation)*

However, due to the mercy of God (also part of who He is), Deuteronomy 4:31, Psalm 116:5, Alma 42:22-24, and according to His plan, He accepted a substitute with no blemish – His only-begotten and beloved Son – to step in and take upon himself mankind’s sins, 2 Corinthians 5:21, to atone for them, giving all the ability to choose to be with God or not, 2 Nephi 2:26-27. It had to be an eternal sacrifice of divine proportions where the blood of the substitute was sinless, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:22, Hebrews 9:14, allowing for a divine atonement, Ephesians 1:7, to occur, Romans 5:8-11. Thus, the very Son of God would willingly sacrifice himself, John 10:17-18, taking upon Him the sins of the world, 3 Nephi 11:11, and reconcile all mankind to the Father, 2 Corinthians 5:18, 21, if they would choose him, 3 Nephi 9:14, 2 Nephi 2:27-28.

The sacrificial blood sprinkled upon the High Priest and Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant for atonement and sanctification, foreshadowed the actual divine blood sacrifice of Christ, Moses 6:62, so that they who are “called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”, Hebrews 9:11-15.

### *Making Covenants With God*

In every ordinance a covenant is made or reinforced, reminding all that the Lord remembers His covenants and will never break them, Psalms 89:34, as well as those who enter into the covenants are chosen, Deuteronomy 29:12-13, and set apart as a special

people, Deuteronomy 6:6-9, royal and holy, 1 Peter 2:9, and should likewise not forget their covenant with God.

Covenantal ordinances of sacrificing the firstlings of their flocks were first given to Adam and Eve after their departure from Eden, Moses 5:4-5. Why were they commanded to offer this sacrifice? An angel explained, “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth”, Moses 5:7. All ordinances from the past to the



present testify of the Savior and his redemption of mankind, Moses 6:63.

In addition, as Adam demonstrated his faith and obedience, he received other ordinances including baptism and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, Moses 6:64-65. Each in its own way helping Adam and Eve to understand, look forward to, and prepare for the rescue that will occur millenia later.

As Moses was taught, Moses 6:59-60, the water, blood and spirit experienced by all born into this world are symbolic of the second or spiritual rebirth noted by Christ to Nicodemus, John 3:3-5, where one must “be born of the water”, symbolic of baptism, and “of the Spirit”, receiving the baptism of fire, D&C 20:41, 2 Nephi 31:13, 3 Nephi 12:1-2, and finally sanctified by

*“That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.” (Moses 6:59-60)*

Christ’s blood through his atonement, Moroni 10:33. The imagery is further amplified through the process the ancient High Priest would go through regarding sacrificial offerings.

Similar to Adam, Enoch, Noah and others, Abram was commanded to build altars to offer sacrifices to the Lord, Abraham 2:17-18, Genesis 12:7-8, 13:4, once he had received the priesthood, D&C 84:14-15, Abraham 1:2-4, 2:9-11, Genesis 14:18-20, and made covenants, Genesis 17:2-8. As a result of those covenants, his name was changed to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah, Genesis 17:5, 17:15 – also an indication of a significant, life-changing covenant with God.

As a token or sign of the everlasting covenant of his promised eternal posterity, Abraham was commanded to be circumcised, Genesis 17:10-13, with all male children of his covenantal lineage to also be circumcised at eight days old from then on, Exodus 34:19, Luke 2:23. Sarah’s token was manifested through the miraculous conception and birth of Isaac, Genesis 17:19, 21:2, which also foreshadowed the future way the Messiah would come into the world, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, Matthew 1:18, 23. In these covenants blood is an essential component for both Abraham and Sarah. The tokens of the everlasting covenant manifested in the flesh of Abraham and Sarah signaled to all Hebrews that through their loins would the Abrahamic Covenant be fulfilled. This covenant is further amplified and foreshadowed regarding the sealing



covenants of a couple and their posterity for the eternities in these last days in the House of the Lord, D&C 132:19-20.

## *Understanding The Eternal Sacrifice Of The Father And The Son*

As Abraham continued to offer sacrifices, the Lord needed to further teach and prepare him for an unwavering faith and to consecrate everything to the Lord, Genesis 22:2, as he sought for his calling and election to be made sure, D&C 132:29, 37, 2 Peter 1:10. The scriptures refer to this as the “test” (see other Bible translations of Genesis 22:1), D&C 136:31. Because Isaac was the sign of the covenant and first-born of Sarah and Abraham, the Lord claimed him as His, Exodus 13:2, Moses 5:5. As first-born, Isaac received the same priesthood given to his father, Abraham 1:3, the “right of the firstborn”, which was first bestowed to Adam.

The Hebrew Akedah refers to the binding of Isaac and his potential sacrifice by Abraham as a test from God, Genesis 22:1. As directed by the Lord, Abraham was to take his only son, his most-beloved firstborn, Isaac, Genesis 22:2, to the top of Mount Moriah, Genesis 22:3, and offer him as a burnt offering. A burnt offering was a voluntary sacrifice of a male animal without blemish which is completely consumed by fire, Leviticus 1:1-17. It symbolized total consecration, devotion

and surrender to God because unlike other sacrifices the entire animal was consumed by fire leaving nothing for the offerer, Leviticus 1:9.

Though not specified in the Bible, it is believed that Abraham (similar to the Levitical High Priest) laid his hands on Isaac's head to place all sins on him to make atonement, Leviticus 1:4, and bound him, Genesis 22:9. Similar to all sacred animal sacrifices, Isaac's own blood would be used as an atonement for Abraham and his clan. As Abraham prepared to "slay" Isaac for the sacrifice, by ritually outstretching his hand with a sacrificial knife, Genesis 22:10, an "angel of the Lord" commands him to stop due to his willingness to sacrifice all for the Lord, Genesis 22:11-12. The Lord provided a ram – a substitute sacrifice, Genesis 22:8 – caught in a thicket, Genesis 22:13-14, and Isaac was redeemed by the lamb of God, John 1:29.

This event teaches much about the Father and the Savior as well as the significance of animal sacrifices. Lehi's Jacob taught the offering up of Isaac by Abraham to God was "a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son", Jacob 4:5. It is rich in symbolism on several levels:

- The sacrificial offering was to be made on mount Moriah (temple symbolism) and a short distance from where Golgotha would be the place of the Savior's future sacrifice, Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, John 19:17.

- Isaac had faith in his father and shared his faith in God, that the Lord had mandated the sacrifice and if he was to die, the Lord could raise him from the dead, Hebrews 11:17-19, foreshadowing the Savior's actual resurrection, Matthew 28:5-6
- According to Jewish midrashim and traditions, Isaac was an adult, fully aware of what was to happen to him and went freely to be sacrificed. He begged Abraham to bind him lest he struggle in fear and invalidate the sacrifice. Jesus went freely as a lamb to the slaughter, Isaiah 53:7, and willingly accepted the "cup" given to him, John 18:11, Matthew 26:30, Luke 22:42, D&C 19:16-19.
- Without a substitute (the ram), Heavenly Father actually offered up His Son for all mankind, Romans 8:32.
- Isaac carried the wood for his own sacrifice, Genesis 22:6, and Jesus carried his own cross for his sacrifice, John 19:17.
- The rescuing, substitutional ram caught in a thicket by his horns, Genesis 22:13, may remind us of the crown of thorns placed on the Savior's head, Matthew 27:28, Mark 15:17, John 19:2, that identified him as the sacrifice.
- The journey to Moriah was three days, Genesis 22:4, paralleling the three days Christ's body laid in the

tomb, Helaman 14:20, while his spirit went to the Spirit World, 1 Peter 3:18-20, D&C 138:16, to preach the gospel to the dead.

## *Israel's Sacrificial Ordinances Revealed The Messiah's Mission*

Beyond the sanctification rites of ordination for the priests, there are five types of sacrificial offerings that the children of Israel made in the Tabernacle courtyard, Leviticus 1-7. They included burnt, meal/grain, peace/fellowship, sin and guilt/trespass offerings which addressed atonement, worship, gratitude and fellowship, Numbers 18:9. Blood-related sacrifices included cattle, sheep, goats and

doves/pigeons – considered clean domesticated animals – and non-blood offerings included grain, oil, flour and wine. Three of the sacrifice offerings – burnt, meal/grain, peace/fellowship – were voluntary while two – sin and guilt/trespass – were mandatory.

Several of the sacrificial ordinances addressed spiritual and physical corruption – intentional, Leviticus 5:1-13, 6:1-7, and unintentional sin, Leviticus 4:1-12, 20, as well as bodily degradation from disease, abnormalities, disruptive conditions or defectiveness and coming in contact with such, Leviticus 15:2-3. All conditions, spiritual and physical, ultimately led to death – spiritual and physical separation from God, 2 Nephi 9:6-10, Helaman 14:16-18. Subsequently,



*“Praise ye the Lord.  
Praise God in His  
sanctuary: Praise him in  
the firmament of his  
power...Let every thing  
that hath breath praise  
the Lord. Praise ye the  
Lord,” (Psalm 150:1-6)*

the Messiah's resurrection and atonement – dealing with the eternal physical and spiritual condition of man – were foreshadowed by these sacrificial ordinances, Hebrews 9:15.

Six general acts occurred in the sacrificial offerings at the Tabernacle. While the first three actions pertained to the worshipper/offerer, actions four and five were for the priests only and depending on the offering, the sixth action could be priests only or priests and offerers or priests and their families.

1) The sacrificial animal (with no blemish) was presented to the priest at the door to the Tabernacle courtyard by the offerer, Leviticus 1:3, who stated their qualifications for sacrifice and what type of sacrifice was needed, Exodus 35:21.

2) Once accepted, the offerer laid his hands on the animal (at either the gate or north side of the Altar of Sacrifice) to consecrate it to God and transfer his, and possibly his family's, sins onto the animal with it becoming a substitute for the offerer and making atonement for him, Leviticus 1:4, symbolic of what the Savior would do in taking upon himself the sins of the world, Alma 7:11-13.

3) The offerer slaughtered the animal by cutting its throat, according to Jewish tradition (midrashim), to allow the blood to flow into a pan or cup gathered by the offerer or the priest, Leviticus 1:5. This was an act that foreshadowed Jesus's sacrifice of his life, Hebrews 9:26, and his bleeding

from every pore in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mosiah 3:7, Luke 22:23-24, D&C 19:18, as he bore everyone's sins. This left an indelible impression upon the offerer. Not only was he being required to sacrifice his very best animal, but he was being required to do the actual act of sacrifice.

4) The priest then poured out and sprinkled the blood on the Altar of Sacrifice including its horns and base, Exodus 29:12, Leviticus 1:5, 3:2, 8:15, reminding the offerer that the sacrificial blood signified the power of atonement, purification and the sealing (or ratification) of the covenant between God and him (and his posterity). In addition, blood was sprinkled in the Holy Place in front of the Veil and on the horns of the Altar of Incense for sin offerings, Leviticus 4:6-7.

5) The flesh of the animal was either completely or partially burned by the priest depending on the type of sacrifice being made. In most cases, it was only the fat, kidneys and the caul over the liver to remind the offerer of the pleasing aroma to God, Leviticus 4:31. In some offerings, the remaining parts of the animal not offered to the Lord would be cooked and shared by the participants, Leviticus 7:11-34.

6) Partaking of the sacrificial meal with the remains of the sacrifice was given for: worshippers and the priests together, Leviticus 7:11-34, in the case of the peace offering; priests and their families, Leviticus 10:14, 22:10-12; or only the priests, Leviticus 6:16, 26, 7:6, 24:9.

The priests “shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them”, Exodus 29:32-33. These sacred meals foreshadowed the sacrament ordinance.

Details of the Tabernacle’s five sacrificial offerings focused on the offerer (individuals, priests, rulers, and community) and the offence (to God and fellow man) placing emphasis on the two great commandments of loving God with all one’s heart, soul and might, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, and one’s neighbor, Leviticus 19:18 – “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”, Matthew 22:40:

**Burnt Offering** – was the voluntary sacrifice of a male animal without blemish (or bird). The offerer, at the entrance to the Tabernacle (the Holy

Place), laid his hands on the animal to consecrate it as a substitute for him and atone for his sins in seeking a renewed relationship with God, Leviticus 1:4. Its meat and bones were cut into pieces by the priests, the internal organs and legs washed, and then placed on the Altar of Sacrifice and completely consumed by fire, Leviticus 1:1-17. The priests sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the bronze altar for atonement of unfaithfulness, personal impurity, negligence or unintentional sin. It was also an expression of devotion and worship. The offering was considered a special gift to the Lord with the burning of the sacrifice being a “pleasing aroma” to God, Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, as well as the offering’s smoke signifying the substitute’s body ascending to God. Before burning the sacrifice, the “inwards and and legs shall be washed with water” and then laid on the altar, Leviticus 1:9, and the hide of the animal was given to the priest, Leviticus 7:8, for him to earn money by selling it.



*“Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed! Such is the ‘sacrifice unto the Lord...of a broken heart and contrite spirit’ (D&C 59:8)” (Neal A. Maxwell, “Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness”, April 1995 General Conference)*



None of the offering was to be eaten. Burnt offerings were offered at all times, days and Jewish holidays:

- Every morning and evening, Exodus 29:38-42, Numbers 28:2.
- Each Sabbath, Numbers 28:9-10.
- Beginning of each month and/or new moon, Numbers 28:11-15.
- At Passover, Numbers 28:19.
- With the new grain/firstfruits offering at the Feast of Weeks, Numbers 28:27.
- At the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah, Numbers 29:1-2.
- On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

**Meal/Grain Offering** – was a voluntary, non-blood sacrifice that could include flour, oil, baked unleavened cakes, harvest firstfruits, grain, wine and frankincense that was presented to the

priest, Leviticus 2:1-10. It could be presented in three different forms: uncooked flour ingredients, Leviticus 2:1-2; unleavened cakes, Leviticus 2:4; and green ears of grain, dried over fire and then beaten to remove the grain and referred to as the Firstfruits offering, Leviticus 2:14. The priest would take a portion and burn it on the altar and use the remaining amount for a meal, Leviticus 2:1-16, 6:14-23. This expressed gratitude and thanksgiving recognizing the Lord's favor, though unmerited by the offerer. The offering in Hebrew meant gift. The fine flour in its grain form had to be crushed, ground and sifted up to 13 times reminding one of Christ's scourging, Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 27:26-30 and crucifixion, Matthew 27:33-50.

The Meal offering, combined with the other offerings, could be emblematic

of an Aaronic-Priesthood-administered sacrament meal introduced by the Savior at Passover, John 6:51-56, Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20.

**Peace/Fellowship Offering** – was a voluntary sacrifice of the best unblemished animal, male or female, from the offerer’s herd, as well as various grain and bread offerings. The offerer laid his hands on the animal to consecrate it, Leviticus 3:2. It was an expression and vow of thanksgiving and fellowship regarding the Lord and the participants. Portions of the sacrifice became a shared meal between the offerers and the priests, Leviticus 7:11-34, 3:1-17. After the sacrifice, the offerer took the breast and waved it before the Lord, Leviticus 7:30, for a wave offering and gave it to the priests. The right shoulder of the sacrifice was swung in a vertical motion (up and down), Leviticus 7:34, as a heave offering and given to the priests.

Unlike the Burnt offering, the priests were to cut out the fat around the internal organs, excise the kidneys and caul over the liver, and the fat near the loins, and burn it on the altar, Leviticus 3:3-5. In addition to the sprinkling of blood by the priest on the altar, the fat and organs were also waved over the altar and then burned as a special gift to God with the aroma being pleasing “to the Lord”, Leviticus 3:3-5. The Peace offering was reflective of God in His desire for peace for His covenant children, Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 26:12,



Numbers 6:26, and emblematic of what the Savior would do, Luke 1:78-79, 2:14.

**Sin Offering** – was a mandatory offering for unintentional sins to cleanse the individual, priest, ruler or community, with the blood applied to the altar's horns, Leviticus 4:1-8, 6:24-30. The sacrifice for the priest and elders (Levitical priests representing the congregation) was a bull, Leviticus 4:3, 13-15, indicating the seriousness of their transgressions versus for a ruler it was a he-goat, Leviticus 4:22-23, and individual was a female goat, lamb, two turtledoves/pigeons, or a tenth of an ephah of flour, Leviticus 4:28-32, 5:11, depending on their economic circumstance. Similar to the Burnt and Peace offerings, the offerer, depending on whose sins were being transferred to the animal, laid his hands on the animal's head, confessed his sins and transferred them to the substituting animal, Leviticus 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33.

The animal's fat, kidneys and liver caul were burned upon the Altar of Sacrifice, Leviticus 4:9-10. The priest sprinkled the blood seven times before the veil of the Holy of Holies, Leviticus 4:6, 17, as well as dobed the golden horns of the Altar of Incense with blood, Leviticus 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34, signifying prayer for pardoning of one's sins before God. The remaining blood was poured on the base of the Altar of Sacrifice in the courtyard, Leviticus 4:7, 18. It symbolized the efficacy of Christ's blood for all mankind, Hebrews 9:13-14, and his role as intercessor, Hebrews 7:25.

**Guilt/Trespass Offering** – was a mandatory offering (depending who

the sin offended and the wealth of the offerer, it could range from a ram to flour) for sins requiring restitution or reparation for violating rights, often involving payment of damages, Leviticus 6:1-7, 7:1-5. The word trespass in Hebrew means guilt. Though the sin offering addressed sins against God, the guilt/trespass offering addressed the actual act against one's self, neighbor/man or God.

Whereas a sin offering dealt with the nature of the sin, a guilt/trespass offering emphasized the acts of sin. The guilt/trespass sin against self covers three areas: 1) concealing truth, Leviticus 5:1; 2) touching something contaminated (such as a dead animal or person, or an unclean [leper] person or one with a discharge from his/her body), Leviticus 5:2-3; and 3) careless talk of perhaps breaking a vow, Leviticus 5:4. Confession to the priest was essential for all these sins, Leviticus 5:5. Next, within this offering were the sins against God, which fell into two types: 1) a person unknowingly using things dedicated to God, such as tithes, Leviticus 27:30, Deuteronomy 14:22, firstfruits, Exodus 34:26, or firstborn cattle or sheep, Deuteronomy 15:19, which impacted both the priests and Tabernacle, Leviticus 5:15; and 2) one could know the commandment but be unaware of breaking it, Leviticus 5:17. Finally, sins against man/neighbor fell into five areas, Leviticus 6:2-3, including: 1) distrustfulness; dishonesty between partners or in fellowship; 3) taking from a fellowman by violence (robbery); 4) deception (deceiving one's neighbor); and 5) denial of one's property.

Similar to the sin offering, the guilt/trespas offering required the offerer present his animal to the priest, lay hands on it confessing his sins and transfer them to the substitute, and then slaughter the animal. The fat, kidneys and liver caul were burnt on the Altar of Sacrifice, Leviticus 7:3-4, and blood sprinkled on the bronze Altar and not the horns of the Altar of Incense. If the offense was against man, restitution needed to occur first before a sacrifice could be made, Leviticus 5:14-16, 6:1-7. The guilt/trespas offering was teaching the children of Israel of what ultimately would occur with the Messiah, Isaiah 53:10, Matthew 20:28.

### *The Lamb Of God And Passover*

After departing Egypt, the Passover lamb sacrifice was moved from the homes of Israel to the door of the Tabernacle, Deuteronomy 16:2-6. The unblemished Paschal lambs that were sacrificed were considered a peace offering, rather than any of the other major sacrifices, that saved the children of Israel from judgment. The lamb was to be consumed by the families who sacrificed it. No bones were to be

broken in the lamb. Its blood was sprinkled on the Altar of Sacrifice. The imagery of the innocent, young lambs being sacrificed for God's covenant children reminds us of the Savior and his unblemished, perfect life saving all mankind with his sacrificed blood, and his bones unbroken on the cross (though most crucified victims' bones were broken to hasten their death) fulfilling Isaiah's description, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," Isaiah 53:7.

### *The Day of Atonement Was A Type Of The Eternal Atonement*

All unintentional or intentional sin for Israel was addressed once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), Leviticus 16:30, 21. The "Day" as Israel referred to it was when only the High Priest (Aaron or one of his sons), Leviticus 16:3, could perform the atoning sacrifices and enter the Holy of Holies. When ordained, the High Priest received a special anointing, Leviticus 8:10-12 – different from the Levitical

“ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”  
(Isaiah 53:4-6)



priests – that set him apart and sanctified him for this special duty. The term Messiah, the anointed one, was derived from Aaron’s priestly status.

The Day of Atonement was a sacred sabbath, Leviticus 16:29-31. To prepare for this “Day”, all of Israel was commanded to “afflict” themselves, which meant to fast and humble themselves, Leviticus 23:27-29, for “Ten Days of Repentance” (or Ten Days of Awe) between the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) and Yom Kippur. For that “Day”, the High Priest removed his normal “golden” priestly robes, bathed and put on the holy, white linen robes, Leviticus 16:4, 24, to perform the sacred sacrifices.

Five animals were used for this special service, an unblemished young bull, two unblemished rams and two unblemished “he-goats”, Leviticus 16:1-5. The bull was for a sin offering on behalf of the High Priest and his family, Leviticus 16:11, with one of the rams also being sacrificed as a burnt offering on their behalf – both were considered atonement for sin. The other ram burnt sacrifice and goats sin offerings were for the children of Israel.

The ram “burnt” offering’s blood atonement rite – sprinkling blood on various Tabernacle vessels – only went as far as the bronze Altar of Sacrifice, Leviticus 1:5, 15, in the courtyard. It was considered a gift to the Lord and symbolized comprehensive atonement and complete dedication to Him. However, the bullock “sin” offerings’

blood atonement for the High Priest and his family was to purify them as well as all Tabernacle vessels that were sprinkled with the blood. It was applied inside the Holy Place to the Veil and the gold Altar of Incense, Leviticus 16:14, seven times – symbolizing completeness, divine perfection and sanctity – as well as sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant’s Mercy Seat and in front of it, seven times, with the remaining blood brought out of the Tabernacle and poured on the horns and base of the Altar of Sacrifice, Leviticus 16:18. No man was to be with the High Priest while he was in the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, Leviticus 16:17. The ram burnt offering was the last animal sacrificed and required the High Priest to change his clothing back to his “golden” robes to do the ordinance, Leviticus 16:24.

As the High Priest entered the Holy Place to make atonement by sprinkling the sin offering’s blood, he was to take a censer “full of burning coals” from the Altar of Sacrifice and burn incense in it in the Holy of Holies to create a cloud cover for the Mercy Seat, Leviticus 16:12-13, to protect himself from dying in front of the Lord.

On behalf of all the children of Israel, the High Priest would take the two goats in front of the Holy Place entrance and cast lots, Leviticus 16:7-8, for one to represent Yahweh and the other to represent Azazel, referred to as the scapegoat. The goat for the Lord was a sin offering and thus had the sins of the people placed on it before it was



sacrificed and its blood used for atonement to sanctify the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, Leviticus 16:15-16. The High Priest also laid his hands on the head of the goat for Azazel, placing all of Israel's sin on it, as well. It was led away into the wilderness and released, Leviticus 16:21-22. Over the next few centuries according to the Mishnah (the first written record of Jewish oral traditions), the High Priest adopted a practice of tying a red ribbon on the scapegoat to further identify it. The designated person (most likely a Levite priest) who led the scapegoat into the wilderness was supposed to bathe, as well as wash his clothes, before returning to the Israelite camp so that no corruption was brought back to the community, Leviticus 16:26.

In some Jewish traditions and reinforced by the early Christian church fathers, Azazel was considered the great fallen angel, Satan, Isaiah 14:12-15. The symbolism of the two goats is further amplified by the story of Abel and Cain which may be a similitude of the contrasting approaches to mankind, Abraham 3:27-28, and the subsequent roles of the Savior – to save us – and Satan – to accuse us – with the latter eventually being cast into outer darkness or the “wilderness” with the sins of the world carried with him and his followers, D&C 76:43-45.

The Day of Atonement prepared Israel for the Messiah through the High Priest, the animals that were sacrificed, their

blood, and the cleansing and sanctification of sacred space for his presence. As the Savior shared with his disciples, “Behold, I say unto you that the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel; therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfill the law; therefore it hath an end,” 3 Nephi 15:4-5.

## *Summary*

The Tabernacle ordinances of atonement were firmly placed in the minds and hearts of the Lord’s covenant children. They taught all what the atonement was and foreshadowed the “One” who would do it. Due to mankind’s first parents being ushered out the Garden’s sacred space, God provided a plan to reunite all to Him through His Son. The Tabernacle, priests and sacrificial animals provided the shadows and types of what would ultimately save us all. As foreign and disturbing as the sacrificial rituals may seem, they deepen our understanding and love for what the Savior would have to do – the cost that would have to be paid and the magnitude of the love that would be manifested in our rescue.

