



A YEAR
with
GOD
Daily Devotional

DAY 49



A PUBLICATION OF GOD'S THRESHING PLACE
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DAY FORTY-EIGHT

Leviticus 14 - 15

The Ceremony of the Two Birds

Someone has been healed of leprosy. They have been outside the camp, separated from family and worship and community, wearing torn clothes and calling out “unclean, unclean” whenever someone came near. And now the disease is gone. The skin is clear. They are ready to come home.

But they cannot simply walk back in. Healing alone is not enough. There is a ceremony. And it is one of the strangest and most beautiful rituals in all of Leviticus.

God does not just heal. He restores. The healing addresses the body. The ceremony addresses the community, the identity, the belonging. Being made well and being brought back in are two different movements - and God designs a ritual for both. He is thorough in His mercy.

The priest goes outside the camp to examine the healed person - the priest comes to them, not the other way around. Two live, clean birds are brought. Cedar wood. Scarlet yarn. Hyssop. One bird is killed over fresh water in a clay pot. The living bird is dipped in the

blood of the dead bird - in the blood mixed with the fresh water - along with the cedar wood and scarlet yarn and hyssop. And then the living bird is released into the open field.

One bird dies. One bird flies free. The person who was unclean is sprinkled seven times with the blood-and-water mixture. And they are pronounced clean.

- Two birds. One death. One freedom. One carries the blood of death. The other carries it into the open sky and is gone. The picture is so precise it is almost unbearable.

Death applied to the living so that the living can go free. That is not just a Levitical ritual. That is the shape of the gospel. The bird released into the open field with the blood of the other on its wings is every person who has been pronounced clean by a death they did not die. You are the bird that flew. Someone else's blood made you free.

The restored person then washes their clothes, shaves all their hair, bathes in water, and waits outside their tent for seven days. On the seventh day they shave again. On the eighth day they bring offerings - two male lambs, a ewe lamb, fine flour with oil, a log of oil. The priest takes some of the blood from the guilt offering and puts it on the right earlobe, the right thumb, the right big toe of the one being cleansed.

Ear, thumb, big toe. What they hear. What they do. Where they walk. The whole body consecrated, point by point, to a new way of living. Not just declared clean but actively rededicated. The restoration is total.

When God restores you, He does not restore you to a neutral state. He consecrates you for something. The ear that was shaped by shame is reclaimed for His voice. The hand that was withdrawn in isolation is reclaimed for His service. The feet that stood outside the camp are reclaimed to walk in it. Restoration is always forward. You do not go back to who you were before. You are consecrated to what you are becoming.

Chapter 15 addresses bodily discharges - chronic and acute, male and female, natural and pathological. It is intimate and clinical in a way that feels unexpected in a sacred text. But the point is consistent: the body matters to God. What happens in the body has implications for how you approach the holy.

And the provision is consistent too: washing with water, waiting until evening, and then you are clean. The uncleanness is temporary. The water is always available. The path back is always described. God never diagnoses uncleanness without providing a way back from it.

*“You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them
unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness
for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.”*

- Leviticus 15:31

My dwelling place, which is among them. That is the reason for everything in chapters 11 through 15. Not arbitrary rules. Not ceremonial performance. The God who lives in the middle of the camp requires the camp to take His presence seriously. The laws of clean and unclean are the practical outworking of the reality that Israel is not camping alone.

You are not living alone either. The Spirit of God lives in you - which means every part of your life is a dwelling place. Not just Sunday morning. Not just the moments of prayer. The whole of your life is the tent He has chosen to inhabit. Live like it. Speak this over yourself today:

*I am the bird that flew free on another's blood.
My ear, my hand, my foot - all of me reclaimed.
God does not just heal. He restores and then consecrates.
I am not going back to who I was. I am going forward.*

TOMORROW - Day 49 Leviticus 16-18

The most sacred day in Israel's year is coming. The Day of Atonement. One priest. One Holy of Holies. Two goats. And a ritual that casts the sin of the entire nation into the wilderness.

Come back tomorrow.

Day 48 of 365

DAY FORTY-NINE

Leviticus 16 - 18

The Scapegoat and the Most Holy Place

Once a year. One day. One man. One room. This is the rhythm of the most sacred moment in Israel's calendar - Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Everything in Leviticus has been building toward this. All the daily offerings, the weekly Sabbaths, the monthly new moons - they were maintenance. This is the annual deep clean. The day the whole nation's sin is dealt with at the root.

And the weight of what Aaron must do on this day is almost unbearable. He cannot simply walk in. He must bathe in water, dress in simple linen - not the ornate priestly garments but plain white linen, the colour of purity, nothing decorative, nothing impressive. He must offer a bull for his own sin before he can offer anything for the people. Even the high priest cannot approach the presence of God on his own merits. He needs blood too.

No one enters the Most Holy Place on their own righteousness. Not the high priest. Not Moses. Not the most faithful servant God has ever had. The only one who walked into the holy place of heaven without blood was the One whose blood He was bringing for the rest of us. Everyone else goes in covered.

Two goats are brought. Lots are cast. One goat is designated for the Lord - it will be sacrificed. One goat is designated for Azazel - it will be sent away into the wilderness. They are the two sides of atonement: the penalty paid and the sin removed.

Aaron kills the first goat. He takes the blood inside the veil, behind the curtain, into the Most Holy Place where no one goes except this man on this day. He dips his finger in the blood and sprinkles it on the atonement cover and before the atonement cover seven times. He comes back out. He atones for the Holy Place itself, for the Tabernacle, for the altar - because the holiness of God's dwelling has been contaminated by the sin of the people who live near it.

- Even the building needed atonement. The presence of sinful people in proximity to holy space leaves a residue that requires cleansing. This is how serious sin is. This is how holy God is.

And then the second goat. Aaron lays both hands on the head of the live goat. Not one hand, the gesture of offering - both hands, the gesture of full transference. He confesses over it all the iniquities of the Israelites, all their transgressions, all their sins. He puts them on the goat's head. And the goat is sent into the wilderness by the hand of someone appointed for the task - it carries all the sin far away, into an uninhabited land.

*“The goat will carry all their iniquities
to a remote place;”
- **Leviticus 16:22***

All their iniquities. Carried away. As far as the east is from the west. The Psalmist will write that exact phrase and scholars have always connected it to this moment - the goat walking into the wilderness with the weight of an entire nation's sins on its head, until it disappears over the horizon and is seen no more.

The scapegoat is one of the most vivid pictures of what Jesus became on the cross. He became sin who knew no sin. Our iniquities were laid on Him - with both hands, with full transference - and He carried them away. Not into a wilderness. Into death itself. And they did not come back with Him when He rose. The resurrection is an empty tomb and an empty account. The sin is gone.

The day ends with Aaron coming out, removing the linen garments, bathing again, putting on his regular priestly clothes, and offering burnt offerings for himself and the people. A complete day. A total reset. The year's sin addressed. The people restored. God's dwelling place cleansed. One day a year, in one room no one else could enter, all of it taken care of.

Hebrews says that Jesus entered the Most Holy Place once for all - not year after year with blood that is not His own, but with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The high priest came out of the Most Holy Place and came back next year. Jesus entered once and sat down. The work is complete. No annual return. No next year's atonement. Finished.

Finished. Not pending. Not provisional. Not requiring annual renewal. The atonement Jesus made is eternal because the life He offered is eternal. You do not need another Day of Atonement. You need only to live in the one that was accomplished.

Chapters 17 and 18 extend holiness from the altar into the bloodstream and the bedroom. Blood must not be eaten - the life is in the blood, and life belongs to God. The blood that atones is the blood that is consecrated to Him. You do not consume what makes atonement. You offer it.

Chapter 18 lists the sexual relationships that are forbidden - incest, adultery, the sexual exploitation of children, practices associated with the surrounding nations. And God frames it this way: do not do what they do in Egypt. Do not do what they do in Canaan. I am bringing you out of those patterns into something different. You are to be a people defined by my holiness, not by the surrounding culture's habits.

The call to sexual holiness has always been set inside the frame of identity. You are not like Egypt. You are not like Canaan. You belong to Me. The boundaries are not punishments. They are the shape of a people set apart - the contours of a life that reflects who their God is. When God says "do not" in these chapters, He is saying: you are worth more than this. Your body is worth more than this.

***Your covenant is worth more than this. Speak this over
yourself today:***

The atonement is finished. Not pending.

My sin has been carried away and not returned.

I live in the once-for-all.

I am not Egypt. I am not Canaan. I belong to Him.

TOMORROW - Day 50 Leviticus 19-20

*God is about to give Israel the command that Jesus will call the
second greatest: love your neighbour as yourself. It appears in
the middle of Leviticus. Come back tomorrow.*

Day 49 of 365

AFRICAN PRAISE



Filled with joyful songs, uplifting praise and inspiring moments of worship, African praise showcases the unique ways African cultures honors and glorify the creator. Let the drums resound, let every voice be lifted and let every heart rejoice in the goodness of God.

*"Praise Him with tambourine and dancing;
praise Him with strings and pipe" — Psalm 46:10*

SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS

6:45AM

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