

Parashat Acharei Mot

פרשת אחרי מות

Shabbat Nisan 12, 5771, April 16, 2011

MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of God

<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

5

Focus on God's Character

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 16:1-18:30

הפטרה: Ezekiel 22:1-19

הברית: Luke 14-15

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-34

10

In Parashat Acharei Mot, (*Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-18:30*) God requires the Kohen Hagadol (High Priest) to cast lots on two goats, one will be for making atonement, and the other will be used for what the NASB calls the “scapegoat.” In *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:8*, it says “goral echad lashem ve’goral echad la’azazel” meaning “one is for God and one is for azazel.” The word “azazel” appears to be the juxtaposition of two Hebrew words “אז” and “אזל” where “az” means a “female-goat” and “azel” means “to go, to go away, or to go about.” This “going away goat” was a part of the ritual of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and symbolized the entire removal of sin and guilt from both the people and the sacred things. The goat was to be driven into a desert place carrying the sin on its back. The purpose was to symbolically remove sin to a land that is not inhabited in the wilderness and there the goat would die (*Vayikra / Leviticus 16:20-22*).

15

20

ויקרא 16:5-10

5 בַּמִּים אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשָׁם: וּמֵאֵת עֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
יִקַּח שְׁנֵי־שְׂעִירֵי עִזִּים לְחַטָּאת וְאֵיל אֶחָד לְעֹלָה:
6 וְהִקְרִיב אֶהְרֵן אֶת־פֶּר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ וּכְפָר בְּעֵדוּ
7 וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ: וְלָקַח אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים וְהֶעֱמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי
8 יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְנָתַן אֶהְרֵן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים
9 גֹּרָלוֹת גּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לַיהוָה וְגּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לְעֹזָאוֹל: וְהִקְרִיב
אֶהְרֵן אֶת־הַשְּׂעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לַיהוָה וַעֲשֶׂהוּ
10 חַטָּאת: וְהַשְּׂעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לְעֹזָאוֹל
יַעֲמִדְהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לְעֹזָאוֹל
11 הַמִּדְבָּרָה: וְהִקְרִיב אֶהְרֵן אֶת־פֶּר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ

25

Have you ever heard the phrase “the road less traveled?” In many ways the road of faith is just that. How many times have we chosen sin over the way of

Vayikra / Leviticus 16:5-10

16:5 ‘He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. 16:6 ‘Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. 16:7 ‘He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 16:8 ‘Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. 16:9 ‘Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell, and make it a sin offering. 16:10 ‘But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. (NASB)

faith according to the Bible? The most important thing thought is that if we do sin God has provided a way for salvation and the forgiveness of sins. The Yom Kippur ritual provides for us an account of corporate confession of sin and then atonement before God. As a community and body of believers it is important to humbly draw near to the Lord in repentance and prayer. Throughout the Bible this is shown to be an important aspect of a healthy congregation (body of believers). In sefer *Nehemiah*, we also find an account of corporate confession to restore a relationship with the Lord. The confession of the people occurs within a context that is focused upon the character and work of God; He is Gracious, Slow to anger, and Compassionate.

נחמיה 9:17

17 הוֹדוּ וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עֲרֹפֹם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ; וַיִּמָּאֲנוּ לִשְׁמֹעַ וְלֹא־זָכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּהֶם וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עֲרֹפֹם וַיִּתְּנוּ־רֹאשׁ לְשׁוֹב לְעַבְדְּתָם בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהִים סְלִיחוֹת תַּנּוּן וּרְחוּם אַרְךָ־אֲפַיִם וּרְבִי־חֶסֶד וְלֹא עֹבְרֹתָם; אַף כִּי־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֲגָל מִסַּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֶה

Nehemiah 9:17
 9:17 ‘They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them. (NASB)

In the context of the Hebrew Scriptures, the corporate confession focuses upon God, what He has done, and who He is. Having this kind of confession, repentance can be a process that leads to joy. Without this kind of confession repentance can simply become a process of spiritual and mental agony, but when our focus is on the Lord, confession allows our joy and peace of heart with God to be renewed. The text in *Nehemiah 9:17* opens with וַיִּמָּאֲנוּ meaning “but they refused ...” indicating that there was a need for repentance. God in His holiness and love provided for His people. The people however were arrogant, stubborn, disobedient, rebellious, and blasphemous, they failed to follow, obey, and love. Though *Nehemiah 9:17* speaks of their sins, the focus comes back to the character of God. These Scriptures illustrates for us in the Yom Kippur ritual and the people’s confession in Nehemiah’s time that forgiveness of sins does not lie in our exhaustive iteration of our sin. It is important to be honest about the ways we have fallen short before the Lord but our hope is in the great compassion of God. Even in the face of rebellion, the Lord is faithful to instruct, provide, and deliver His beloved people. The core of these truths are found in *Nehemiah 9:33* “*You have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong.*” The people acknowledged that their exile into Babylon was well deserved and the consequence of a sustained disobedience. Nevertheless, God’s character is gracious and merciful. They confess their sins and appeal to God for forgiveness because they understand the truth about who God is and that He “Keeps His covenant of love” (*Nehemiah 9:32*).

How important is the confession of sin before God? The apostle John said in his epistle *1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NASB)* Our obedience to God does not just accomplish His work in our lives, it also testifies

70 to others about His power and His faithfulness. As we understand the truth about
God, His character and the word that He has performed, we can live life more
abundantly in a restored joy, hope, and peace with God. The Lord God is so
merciful, and compassionate that He sent His only begotten son Yeshua, the
living Word of God, to live life as a man, and to lay his life down as payment for
our sins. So it is by faith in Yeshua that we have hope and forgiveness and a
restored relationship with our Lord. God has again provided and cared for us in
75 His son Yeshua. Praise the Lord how He specializes in strengthening His people
to finish the good works to which He calls them (*Ephesians 2:10*). Praise the
Lord for his compassion, mercy, love, and for a restored relationship in peace of
heart and life. Praise the Lord for His forgiveness is powerful, joyous, and
everlasting. Halleluia Praise the Lord!

80

What to pray: *Ask the Lord for an honest heart, and to remain focused upon His
character and the work that He has completed in Yeshua the Messiah.*

85

90

95

100

105

110

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

115