

# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: YOM KIPPUR

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever." *Leviticus 16:30-31*

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." *Leviticus 23:27-28,31-32*

"And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein." *Numbers 29:7*

The Day of Atonement symbolizes the reconciliation of God and all humanity. Both the Passover and the Day of Atonement teach us about the forgiveness of sin and our reconciliation with God through Christ's sacrifice. However, although the passover is personally and (for the time being) individually applied to Christians whom God has called in this age, Atonement carries immediate universal implications.

Moreover, the Day of Atonement pictures an essential additional step in God's salvation plan not to be found in the symbolism of the Passover. This step must take place before humanity can experience true peace on earth. All people suffer the tragic consequences of sin. But sin doesn't happen without a cause, and God makes this cause clear in the symbolism associated with the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement involves not only the forgiveness of sin; it pictures the removal of the primary cause of sin-Satan and his demons. Until God removes

the original instigator of sin, mankind will simply continue to fall back into disobedience and suffering. The Day of Atonement looks forward to the time during which Satan's deception will be removed and he will no longer be free to influence and deceive mankind (Revelation 20:1-3).

## UNDERSTANDING THE PRIESTLY SERVICE FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Leviticus chapter 16, specifies the tenth of Tishrei as the date on which the high priest shall conduct a special ceremony to purge defilement from the temple and from the people. The heart of the ritual is that the high priest shall bring a bull and two goats as a special offering. First, the bull is sacrificed to purge the temple from any defilements caused by misdeeds of the priest himself and of his household (Leviticus 16:6). Secondly, one of the goats is chosen by lot to be sacrificed to purge the temple of any similar defilement stimulated by misdeeds of the whole Israelite people (Leviticus 16:7-8). Finally, the second goat is sent away, not sacrificed, to cleanse the people themselves. The goat is marked for 'Azazel" and is sent away to wander in the wilderness (Leviticus 16:10). Before the goat is sent out, the high priest lays both his hands upon its head and confesses over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites, whatever their misdeeds, and so putting them on the head of the goat. "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited..." -Leviticus 16:20-22

The Hebrew word for scapegoat is azazel. Azazel was seen as a type of satan. The sins of the people and thus the punishment of the people were laid upon azazel the scapegoat. He would bear the sins of the people and the punishment of the people would be upon him. Azazel being sent into the wilderness is understood to be a picture of satan being cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

This ceremony can be found in Leviticus 16:7-10. Notice in verse 8, one lot is for the Lord, and the other lot is for the scapegoat. The high priest took the two lots, one marked for the Lord and the other marked for the scapegoat, and placed one upon the head of each animal, sealing their fate.

God gave this ceremony of the casting of lots during the Day of Atonement to teach us how He will judge the nations of the world prior to the Messianic age known as the Millennium. Jesus taught us about this in Matthew 25:31-46.

## FACE TO FACE

The high priest could only go into the Holy of Holies once a year (Leviticus 16:2, Hebrews 9:6-7). God issued a warning that no man could see His face and live (Exodus 33:20). But because on the Day of Atonement the priest could be in God's presence (Leviticus 16:20), another term for the Day of Atonement is "face to face".

Therefore, when the high priest stood before God on this day, he was said to be "face to face" with God. Face to face terminology was used in First Corinthians 13:9-12.

Face to face is an idiom for the Day of Atonement. It was on the Day of Atonement that the high priest had to go behind the veil of the temple. At that moment, the nation had to hold its breath because the nation's fate depended upon God's accepting the sacrifice. At that point, the high priest was "face to face with the mercy seat of God".

When the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, he saw the Lord's presence as a brilliant cloud hovering above the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:2). The word for mercy seat in Hebrew is 'kapporet'. It comes from the root word 'kaphar', which is the same word used for "atonement". The mercy seat can also be translated as the seat of atonement. The mercy seat is described in detail in Exodus 25:17-22 and 37:6-9. This is the place where Moses met and spoke with God face to face (Exodus 25:22,30:6, Numbers 7:89).

## THE GREAT SHOFAR

As mentioned in the last study on the Feast of Trumpets, when the shofar was discussed, there are three primary trumpets to the Jewish people and these three trumpets are associated with specific days in the year.

These three trumpets are:

1. "The First Trump" blown and associated with Pentecost
2. "The Last Trump" blown and associated with Rosh HaShanah, the Feast of Trumpets
3. "The Great Trump" blown and associated with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement

It is on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, when the Great Trumpet is blown. This is referred to in Isaiah 27:13 and Matthew 24:31.

The Day of Atonement was the most solemn of all the feast days. It was the day of cleansing for the nation and for the sanctuary. On this day alone, once a year, the high priest entered into the holiest of all, the Holy of Holies in the temple, within the veil of the temple, with the blood of the Lord's goat, the sin offering. Here he sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat. The blood of the sin offering on the great Day of Atonement brought about the cleansing of all sin for the priesthood, the sanctuary, and Israel as a nation (Leviticus 16:29-34).

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT CEREMONIES

As we look at the ceremony itself, we will be able to see how it points to the Messiah Himself. In addition, we will be able to see how it relates to the believers in the Lord Jesus:

### **1. The golden censer**

The priest used a golden censer (Leviticus 16:1-2,12-14, Hebrews 9:4) The censer is mentioned in Leviticus 16:12, Numbers 16:46, First Kings 7:50-51, Second Chronicles 4:19,22 and Hebrews 9:4.

The incense of the golden censer represents the prayers of Bible believers (Psalm 141:2, Luke 1:5-11, and Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4).

Aaron the high priest typifies the ministry of mediator and intercessor. Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1) and Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 12:24). He lives to make intercession for us (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:22-27).

### **2. Allowed to enter behind the veil only once a year**

He went within the veil once a year (Leviticus 16:2, Hebrews 9:2,7).

By the death of Jesus, we are free to enter into the veil every day (Matthew 27:50-51, 2 Corinthians 3:14, Hebrews 4:16, 6:13-19, 10:19-22).

### **3. He washed himself in water (Leviticus 16:4,24).**

For Aaron, this meant he must be absolutely clean in order to make atonement on behalf of the people of Israel. For believers in Christ, it means we are to be washed by the water of the Word of God as we approach God as well for the removal of sin from our lives (John 3:1-5,15, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26-27, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 10:22). For Jesus, it meant that He was absolutely clean and without sin when He made the atonement of sacrificing His body on the cross.

### **4. He put on holy linen garments (Leviticus 16:4,23).**

The priestly clothing is also mentioned in Exodus 28:1-4. In verse 3 they are for glory and beauty. The linen garments speak of the sinless humanity of the Lord and His righteousness. These linen garments were stained with blood while the priest offered the sacrifices. After the sacrifices were complete, the garments were taken off and new garments were put on again (Leviticus 16:23-24). Isaiah 1:18 speaks of the blood-stained garments and the new garments that were put

on afterwards. The white linen garments are clothes of righteousness (Job 29:14, Psalm 132:9, Isaiah 61:10 and Revelation 3:5,19:7-8).

### **5. The atonement blood atoned for all sin**

At the moment the atonement was made on the Day of Atonement, those being atoned for were sinless and blameless before God. The congregation of believers in the Lord Jesus is being presented before God without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27) because of the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19).

### **6. The bodies of the animals were outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27).**

The bodies of the sin offering, both the bullock and the goat, were taken outside the camp where they were burned. Jesus was crucified outside the camp or gates of Jerusalem (John 19:17-20 and Hebrews 13:10-13).

### **7. Many sacrifices were offered (Leviticus 16:1-6,25-27).**

Our bodies are to be a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1, 1 Peter 2:5). We are to offer up a sacrifice of praise to God (Leviticus 7:12, Psalm 34:1, 50:14,23, 69:30-31, 107:22, 116:17 and Hebrews 13:15-16).

Jesus is the sacrifice of God for us who believe on Him (Hebrews 9:26-28, 10:1-10).

### **8. The year of Jubilee was the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 25:9-11).**

This was a year and day of liberty. Jesus came to preach this liberty at His first coming (Isaiah 61:1-3, Luke 4:17-21). From Adam, it has been almost 6,000 years and 120 Jubilees. The number 120 points to the end of the age of the flesh and the reign of the life of the spirit (Genesis 6:3). The ultimate fulfillment of the year of Jubilee will take place at the second coming of the Lord. The earth will be redeemed and come into full and complete rest from the curse brought upon it by Adam's sin. Complete restoration of man's lost inheritance will take place. God's people will be totally set free -- set at liberty, from all sin, sickness and disease, death, and the curse. Satan, the source of all these things, will be bound and true rest will be realized. The tabernacle of God will be with men and He will

dwell with them (Revelation 21:1-4). So, the year of Jubilee and the day of Atonement speak of the fullness of the redemptive plan of God for man.

God divinely placed the Day of Atonement before the Feast of Tabernacles, which is called "The Season of Our Joy." The children of Israel and all believers in the Lord Jesus could only rejoice once they were redeemed and their sins forgiven.

In Joel 2:15-16 we read..."Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet."

Jesus spoke of this same event in Matthew 24:27-31. In Matthew 24:31, the trumpet that is being blown is called by Jesus the great trumpet. This is the trumpet that is blown on the Day of Atonement. This trumpet will usher the return of Christ to rule as Messiah ben David, the King, during the Messianic age.

The Day of Atonement serves as a vital preparatory step in anticipation of the next milestone in God's glorious Holy Day plan, beautifully depicted by the Feast of Tabernacles.