

Feasts of the Lord



Tonight: September 19, 2018

The Day of Atonement

Fundamental Principles in all the Hebrew Scriptures regarding Sacrifices

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

Hebrews 9:22

²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Leviticus 23:26-32

The Day of Atonement

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹ For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³² It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”

Leviticus 16 is the main text for understanding the Day of Atonement.

Summary of Leviticus 16 (the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar)

It followed these steps:

- the high priest washed and dressed;
- he sacrificed a bull as a sin offering for himself;
- he entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the Ark with blood
- he took two goats and by lot chose one to be the scapegoat (Azazel), the other to be a sin offering;
- he sacrificed one goat as a sin offering;
- he entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the Ark with the blood;
- he went out to the outer part of the tabernacle of meeting and sprinkled the blood;
- he went out into the courtyard of the tabernacle and sprinkled the main altar with blood;
- he confessed the sins of the Israelites as he laid his hands on the scapegoat's head;
- he sent the scapegoat into the wilderness;
- the scapegoat gone, the high priest changed into his regular garments and washed; and,
- he offered burnt offerings for himself and for the people.

- The most important aspects of the ceremony were the high priest's entry into the most holy place with the blood of the sin offerings and the dispatch of the scapegoat into the wilderness. These actions were said to atone for the sins of repentant Israelites.
- All the preparation, care and attention to detail were meant to address the problem: A sinful people were offensive to a holy God, which cannot be ignored or wished away; it must be dealt with. Overlooking sin is not possible; it would jeopardize God's purity and character.
- The sacrifice was offered to pay the penalty for the people; and, the sins of the people were symbolically carried away. The scapegoat never returned and likely died in the wilderness. Psalm 103:11-12 says that God is so loving that for those who trust in Him, He removes our sin and transgression as far as the east is from the west. The scapegoat highlights theologically man's need for expiation, the removal of guilt and impurity.
- The Day of Atonement both propitiated and expiated God's covenant people, the sacrificial goat paying the price of death in place of God's people and the scapegoat removing the tarnishing effects of sin.

Definitions

- Expiation is the removal of guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of atonement.
- Propitiation has to do with the object of the expiation. “Pro” means “for”, so propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us.
- Expiation is the act that results in the change of God’s disposition towards us. It is what Christ did on the cross, and the result of Christ’s work of expiation is propitiation – God’s anger is turned away and we are restored into fellowship with God.
- Through propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favour with God.
- Both expiation and propitiation are involved in atonement.

Summary of the Day of Atonement

- The Levitical sacrificial system was based on a daily calendar with regular sacrifices and rituals by means of which an Israelite could experience a relationship with God. However, no one could enter the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place) and expect to live since God's absolute holiness and glory would consume him immediately.
- So how, then, could one come before the very Throne of God?
- Only through an appointed representative, a mediator, who came bearing the blood of atonement on behalf of the sins of the people. And this on only one appointed day, the Day of Atonement.
- **Jesus has fulfilled this Day of Atonement feast, as High Priest and as Mediator and as offering of atonement, which gives us access to God.**
- On the evening of May 27, 2018, Josh preached through Hebrews 6:9-20, providing a description of the mercy seat, which is key to understanding how we have access to God, as well as considering specifically how the veil of the tabernacle / temple was torn in two at the time of Christ's death upon the cross, providing access to the Holy of Holies and relationship to God, through Christ.

Main Point of the Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement pictures man's need for redemption through a substitutionary sacrifice that would one day be ultimately fulfilled in the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

- The Day of Atonement was a temporary, partial solution until the fullness of time had come. The Day of Atonement was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. The high priest, the slaughtered goat and the scapegoat were shadows to point to the ultimate Day of Atonement when Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for us on the cross. Jesus is the Great High Priest who offered on behalf of His people the perfect once for all sacrifice, the Slaughtered Lamb whose blood was poured to pay the penalty of death and the Scapegoat who died outside the city taking away the sin of the world (Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10; 13:12). Jesus the perfect, spotless and precious Lamb, who knew no sin, God made to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

NEW TESTAMENT (INTERPRETING THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES)

- **Hebrews 1:1-3**

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Different and Better Priest(hood)

Hebrews 7:23-28

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his **priesthood permanently**, because he continues forever.

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners**, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ **He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.** ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Different and Better Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:6-14

⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but **into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.** ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

Redemption Through the Blood of Christ (Heb 9:11-14)

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² **he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.** ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Fulfillment!

When?

Hebrews 9:23-28

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ **For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.** ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places **every year** with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared **once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ **so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Difference between the prophetic pictures of Passover and the Day of Atonement

Both Passover and the Day of Atonement involve the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). Those who voluntarily have recognized Jesus as our Passover Lamb and have accepted His blood atonement for their sins are exempt from God's wrath, nor are they separated from Him after death. However, there remains a day of reckoning when those, who have not bowed the knee to Jesus willingly, will face judgment. The Day of Atonement, as a fall feast, points to this time of judgment for those outside of Christ, but for those in Christ, Jesus has fulfilled it all by his once for all sacrifice.

A Once For All Sacrifice (continued)

Hebrews 10:3-4 and 11-14

³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Application of the Day of Atonement: The Full Assurance of Faith

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.** ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and **all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

Application: Appreciation, gratitude, and thankfulness as well as awe and reverence

Hebrews 12:25-29

²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”

27 This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Return to Hebrews 1:1-3 and 1:10-12

- **Hebrews 1:1-3**

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Hebrews 1:10-12

10 And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;

11 they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment,
12 like a robe you will roll them up,
like a garment they will be changed.
But you are the same,
and your years will have no end.”

Summary

- The Day of Atonement was the climax of the Old Testament sacrificial system displaying the holiness of God and the depth of humanity's sin. Everything about this day indicated that it was a day of utmost importance. The high priest had unique rituals and special dress with carefully detailed preparation. The whole community abstained from work to reflect on the importance of this day.
- The primary “take home” of the Day of Atonement is that **Jesus' fulfillment of this Day of Atonement feast, as High Priest and as Mediator and as acceptable offering of atonement, gives us access to God.**
- We see in the Day of Atonement that Jesus is both the high priest and the sacrifice on the altar, both the lamb that pours out its blood and the scapegoat that carries the sin of the people far away from the camp. He lived a perfect life to offer the perfect death, and by His stripes we are healed, forgiven and made clean. He tore down the dividing wall to give us intimate access to the Father and achieved for us redemption, reconciliation, and restoration.

Final Encouragement / Exhortation

- And yet, we can also approach this feast with the knowledge that for those outside of Christ, with no High Priest, no Mediator, no acceptable Sacrifice, there is no peace with God and no access to the loving, saving presence of God. Thus, it is also a solemn day and fearful day. The Trumpets have sounded, the alarm has gone off for us, and we must take to heart that we live in the midst of a lost and dying world that needs the Saviour – and we need to be about the work of making Him known before He returns.
- Be prepared to go outside the camp, sharing Christ's humiliation (Hebrews 13:13–14):

¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

Remaining Feast: Feast of Tabernacles (September 24, 2018) – next Wed. Sept 26

Feast of Tabernacles: the most joyous of all the feasts. It is a celebration of the presence and glory of God, dwelling among His people.

- It is the historical backdrop for John chapters 7, 8, 9
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.