

Yom Kippur

The Feast of Atonement

10/9/2011

Beginning this past Friday evening and all day yesterday was Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur, or the Feast of Atonement, was to be celebrated of the 10th day of Tishri. It was and is the single most important of the seven feasts outlined in Lev. 23 for the Jewish people. It is one the order of magnitude of our Christmas, only much more serious and somber. Lives literally depended on what was to be accomplished during “The Days of Awe.”

“On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls...” Lev 23:27

The 10 days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Atonement are called, “The Days of Awe.” During these 10 days Jews literally seek the face of God and forgiveness for their sins. Yom Kippur is the climax of 10 days of repentance. What was begun with the Feast of Trumpets is about to be sealed with the Feast of Atonement.

This act of final atonement is recorded for us in great details in Leviticus 16. In the days before Christ, you literally had to pay for your own sins. The culmination of this time of repentance was when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holy and make sacrifices for the entire nation before the Lord.

Before the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, a blood sacrifice was required in that place. Orthodox Jews to this day

want to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem in order to reinstate “blood sacrifices”

When their Temple lay in Ruins, one rabbi-taking a biblical text total out of context – changed the religious course of the Jews for the next 2,000 years – even to this day.

“Rabbi Yohanan said, “Be not grieved, we have another atonement as effective as this, it is acts of loving-kindness...” later prayer and fasting were added to good deeds as the way to obtain acceptance before God.

For the Jews, these 10 days are a time to do everything in your power to get right with God by repenting of your sins through: intensive prayer, fasting, good works and other liturgical deeds. It is their chance to earn salvation for another year.

“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” Amos 4:12

Jewish tradition stated that 3 books are opened in heaven on the Feast of Trumpets:

1. The book of life for the righteous

If a man is considered righteous, his name is written in the Book of Life for the coming year.

2. The book of life for the unrighteous

If a man is considered unrighteous, he will not survive the coming year.

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” Ps 69:28

3. The book of life for those in-between

If a man is neither righteous or unrighteous, judgment is delayed from the Feast of Trumpets to the Feast of Atonement.

Atonement in light of the New Testament

“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

Luke 24:27

1. The great Priest – Jesus Christ our mediator

Moses brother Aaron was the high priest, He was the one chosen to be the mediator, chosen to stand between God and the Israelites. Even though this was without doubt, a high and honorable position, Aaron was allowed to go into the Most Holy place, Only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

The Most Holy Place was located behind the thick veil in the tabernacle. And it was in this room that the Ark of The Covenant was kept. And on top of the ark of the covenant made of Gold was the Atonement cover with 2 angels on top with their wings folded down bowing towards the center of the cove. And above that center was a cloud in which dwelt the presence of God.

Only Aaron the High Priest could enter here, and He only once a year. Can you imagine how Aaron must have felt as he slowly walked through the Holy place (passed the table of showbread, passed the golden lamb stand, and finally passed the altar of incense) and then with head bowed low He walked passed the thick veil, And Now He was in the Most Holy Place, The Holy of Holies, And he turned and there right above the ark of the covenant was the very glory of God.

Jewish Tradition tells us that they sewed bells into the bottom hem of the High Priests robe. And they also tied a rope around his ankle. So that whenever the High Priest walked around in the Holy of Holies, they would hear the bells, If the bells stopped ringing, that would mean something had happened to the High Priest. And

no one dared to enter the Holy of Holies to see what happened, so the rope was used, to pull out the High Priest.

The God of Israel, Our God is a Holy God, and man, even if he is the High Priest, could not simply crawl out of bed , and walk out of his tent and walk into the presence of God. There certain things that the High Priest was required to do, before he was allowed access to the Holy of Holies, if he came in without meeting the standard set by God, he would be met with the same fate as Nadab and Abihu (Aarons sons). (see Lev 10:1-3)

Aaron had to bathe himself and he had to put on sacred garments. The High Priest had to be spotless in dress. And because Aaron was not without sin, he first had to make atonement for his own sins and for the sin of his household by sacrificing a bull.

Only when Aaron, the high Priest had made himself ready, could he take the blood of the sacrificed animal into the presence of God, to make atonement for the people.

Every year the High Priest bore the heavy burden of being the mediator between God and His people. Every year he would offer the same sacrifices. And every year the responsibility was all his, he had to do it alone. No one was allowed to be with him or help him as he carried out this vital task.

What a tremendous weight, what a colossal burden, the High Priest carried and after each year he knew that in 365 days he would have to do it again. So painstaking and trying was his work that after it was over the Jews would gather around him with sympathy and congratulations that he was brought through it safely.

“But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.”

Hebrews 9:11

“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” Hebrews 9:15

2. The Great Pardon – Jesus Christ our Redeemer

Aaron brought the 2 goats to the entrance of the tent of meeting. And there the fate of each goat was determined. One goat was to be sacrificed and the other goat was to be the scapegoat.

Israel’s sin demanded an offering, it required the payment of a price, and the sacrificial blade came down upon, the innocent goat’s throat, killing the animal, it’s blood pouring out into a bowl.

It wasn’t enough, However for the goat simply to be sacrificed, it wasn’t enough merely for it’s blood to flow. For the blood to accomplish it’s purpose of atonement, it had to be carried into the HH by the HP, it needed to be carried into the presence of God.

The 1st goat symbolized the payment for sin.
The 2nd goat symbolized the results of the atonement.

Then Aaron placed his hands on the head of 2nd goat, the scapegoat, and confessed the wickedness, the sin and rebellion of the people. Then the goat was sent away, out into the desert, carrying with Him the sins of the people. God had forgiven, and God had forgotten the sins of the people. (as FAR As East...)

“Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” Is 55:7

“I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth.” Job 19:25

3. The Great Possibility – Jesus Christ our Hope

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

- The Day of Atonement points to the return of Jesus Christ to this earth and the people who will be saved out of the tribulation.

Aaron was physically washed spotless and dressed to perfection.
Christ was spotless in character

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Cor 5:21

Aaron entered the earthly tabernacle,
Christ entered the heavenly tabernacle.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” Heb 1:3

Aaron entered behind the veil
Christ ripped opened the veil

“At that moment (Christ’s death) the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split.” Matt 27:51

Aaron offered for his own sins
Christ offered only for our sin

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom 5:8

Aaron entered once a year

Christ entered once for all

“The death he died, he died to sin **once for all**; but the life he lives, he lives to God.” Romans 6:10

Aaron offered for the whole nation of Israel
Christ offered for the whole world.

“For God so **loved the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Aaron offered many sacrifices
Christ offered one sacrifice

“and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”” 1 Cor 11:24

Aaron offered blood of animals
Christ offered His own blood

“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.” Hebrews 9:12