

**Subject:** *Christ and the Day of Atonement*

**Scripture:** *Leviticus 16:1-10*

Now it seems like we celebrate a lot of special days. It used to be Mother's Day and Father's Day, but now we have Grandparents Day and a lot of others.

The most holy day in the year for every Jew was the Day of Atonement. This day is still observed in October as "Yom Kippur," meaning "Day of Atonement." This was recognized and celebrated by Jews all over the world last Wednesday, October 9. What makes this day special to Jews and Christians?

### **1. A SPECIAL PLACE: the Holy of Holies**

This was a place reserved for God. It was a perfect cube (15 by 15 by 15 feet). There were a few things in that small room—the Ark of the Covenant which contained the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets, the mercy seat or lid which sat on top of the ark and two cherubim facing each other with their wings stretched out toward one another and their faces looking down on the mercy seat. This was the place where atonement was made for sin.

### **2. A SPECIAL PERSON: the high priest**

No one but the high priest could enter the holy of holies. Nadab and Abihu had offered strange fire (Lev. 10) to God. This was an offering unauthorized by God. Now the Lord warned Moses that the holy of holies was off limits to everyone except Aaron, the high priest, and he could only enter once a year. God warned against unauthorized people entering an unauthorized place at an unauthorized time.

#### **A. The high priest was alone (vs. 17)**

No one else could assist him. Jesus accomplished the work of redemption by Himself.

**Hebrews 1:3** *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

#### **B. The high priest was properly clothed (vs. 4)**

He was to wear the special linen holy garments.

#### **C. The high priest was clean (vs. 4)**

Aaron washed so he could be pure and minister in God's holy presence.

#### **D. The high priest made a sin offering for himself (vs. 6)**

Aaron was a sinner like all the people, so he made atonement for himself and his family.

**Hebrews 7:26-27** <sup>26</sup> *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;* <sup>27</sup> *Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*

### **3. A SPECIAL PLAN: offering incense and blood**

#### A. Incense represents the presence and glory of God

First and foremost, atonement was made for the glory of God.

**John 17:1** *Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

On the cross, Jesus was crucified, but God was glorified. Man calls it crucifixion, but God calls it glorification because He was glorified when Jesus made a sacrifice for sins.

#### B. Blood represents death (the penalty of sin)

**Leviticus 17:11** *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

The blood was shed and then sprinkled seven times on the mercy seat. This was in preparation for the atonement he would make for the sins of all the people.

**Hebrews 9:22** *without shedding of blood is no remission (forgiveness).*

In modern day observance of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) there is no mention of blood. It is a religious day, but it has lost its focus and meaning. There is no atonement without the shedding of blood.

### **4. A SPECIAL PROVISION: the sin offering and the scapegoat**

#### A. The sacrificial goat (vs. 8-9)

This goat was killed as the sin offering and it was killed “for the Lord” (vs. 8-9).

#### B. The scapegoat (vs. 8, 20-22)

This goat was to carry all their sins far away. The high priest laid his hands on the scapegoat and symbolically laid the sins of the people there.

### **5. A SPECIAL PURPOSE: to make atonement for sin (verse 17)**

The word “atonement” is found 16 times in this chapter. The word “all” is found 9 times. Aaron made atonement for all the sins of all the people. Other sacrifices provided atonement only for unintentional sins, but this sacrifice atoned for all sins. We have a progression in the Bible we might call the scarlet thread of redemption. In Abel and Abraham we see a lamb for a man. In the Passover, we see a lamb for a family. Here in the Day of Atonement, we see a lamb for a nation. But in Christ we see a Lamb for the whole world.

### **6. A SPECIAL PICTURE: Christ's work of salvation**

#### A. It pictures how Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for us

**Hebrews 9:11-12** *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

**Hebrews 9:24-26** *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

B. It pictures how Christ removed our sins far from us

**Psalms 103:12** *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

The OT sacrifices never took away sins, but they only covered sin until Jesus died. The word “atonement” means “covering.”

**Hebrews 10:4** *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

**John 1:29** *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

C. It pictures the sinner’s response in salvation (vs. 29-31)

This was to be a Sabbath of rest and repentance. What a picture of our salvation. Christ did everything for us. All we must do is trust in His perfect sacrifice and turn from our sins.