

“Yom Kippur: Humble Yourself”

Leviticus 23:26-32; 16

It's easy for us to believe something that we already know was prophesied and happened. Like the walls of Jericho coming down at the blast of trumpets. Or Elijah's calling down fire from heaven and burning up an animal completely after drenching it and the wood with water. Or the virgin birth. Or the resurrection of Jesus.

But what about when Paul says Jesus will appear in the clouds and we'll disappear from the earth? Or how about this prophecy: 'millions of Jews will place their faith in Jesus when He returns to the earth.' We struggle with these future prophecies even though God has never had one prediction come wrong yet. Do we really believe these by faith?

Last week we studied the Feast of Trumpets. The Feast of Trumpets announces the 7th month has arrived, Israel's holiest month. We saw how the trumpet blasts on that day was an announcement for the people of Israel to prepare to meet together with God because on the 10th day of the 7th month, the Day of Atonement, was when God dealt with Israel's sins. The Trumpet blasts of the shofar was a call for Israel to gather together, to renew their covenant relationship with God and listen to Him speak.

From the New Testament we saw how God will gather believers to the clouds to meet Jesus in the air, with a loud trumpet blast and the archangel. When that happens it announces to the world and Israel especially, that there are 7 years left before Jesus comes on the earth to subdue Israel's enemies and save Israel.

Every spring feast and every fall feast so far has had prophetic fulfillments for the future all chronologically. In Israel's calendar there was a large gap of time between Pentecost in late spring and Trumpets, the fall,. Prophetically we are in that gap time now. How long will this time frame be until our disappearance introduces the final season of repentance for Israel's restoration? We don't know. We have to be ready just as Jesus warned us that He will come back for us at any time.

We know these feasts foreshadow future events surrounding Jesus' coming because Paul said in Col. 2:16-17

Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things to come; the reality however is found in Christ.

What does the Day of Atonement foreshadow?

Yom Kippur foreshadows Israel's return to God.

Before we can see what it will mean for future Israel, we first have to see what Yom Kippur meant historically.

There are two passages in Leviticus that deal with the Day of Atonement. Here in Lev. 23:26-32 we are given some information about that day, but only because ch. 16 has already been wholly devoted to that day. If we recall from the Feast of Trumpets, the purpose of trumpets was to warn people about this future day of judgment. Actually it isn't a feast but a spiritual fast. In Lev. 23:26-32

God told the Israelites 3 times to “deny yourselves”. Literally the phrase means to ‘afflict your souls’. What did God mean?

Called Israel to Humble Themselves Before God **(23:26-32)**

According to v.32 Israel was to ‘afflict their souls’ from the evening on the 9th day until the evening of the Day of Atonement (the Jewish day begins at sunset and ends the next sunset). Sadly, the Jewish Rabbis taught that ‘afflict your soul’ meant to refrain from eating, drinking, bathing and sex for a day. The idea behind all of these is to deprive oneself of physical things that bring you joy.

While the intent is sincere, emphasizing physical affliction’ missed the mark. God emphasized the soul – the spiritual not the physical. The word “afflict” means to force to bow down, to humble, to submit to another’s will. We see what this means clearly in Deut. 8:2-3;

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these 40 years to humble [afflict] you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would obey His commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna . . . to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

The Day of Atonement was to test your heart, to repent of sin. The days leading up to this were heart searching days to see how you had afflicted God, others and your self with your sins. To do as David prayed, “*Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Ps. 139:23-24). Then on Yom Kippur God would forgive your sins.

God called Israel to spiritually humble themselves so He could . . .

Cleanse Israel of Her Sins Nationally **(Lev. 16; 23:28)**

In Lev. 23:28 God commanded Israel to deny themselves and to do no work “*because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God.*” ‘Atone’ is what ‘kippur’ means. It means to ransom, to buy back, to reconcile. That payment or substitution takes place to pay a debt owed. So to cleanse Israel of her sins

The ransom had to be paid **(16:9, 11-19)**

On this day God accepted the substitutionary sacrifice of one goat whose blood would be sprinkled on the atonement cover of the ark of the covenant. Lev. 16 gives us all the details about how this was to happen. The chapter begins with God warning Aaron not to come into the holy of holies any old time he wants because his 2 sons Nadab and Abihu tried to do in Lev. 10 but were God killed for their insolence and lack of humility. Instead, only the High Priest was to enter the Most Holy Place, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement. He had to bath first, not wear his usual priestly robes but a simple linen garment. Before he could atone for Israel’s sins he had to make a sacrifice for himself. God is holy and you can’t approach him without shed blood. Once the high priest is cleansed he casts lots for the goats because one will be sacrificed while the other will be released into the desert. Both goats are used for atonement (v.10).

When the sacrifice was made he then takes the other goat and lays his hands on it *“and confesses over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites – all their sins – and put them on the goat’s head.”* The goat is taken away and *“carries on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man will release it in the desert.”*

The sins are removed (16:10, 20-22)

The two goats were to demonstrate the payment for sins and the removal of sins. The second goat was just as much part of the atonement: *“the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.”* This covered all Israel’s sins for one year. “Wickedness” means wrong doings, “rebellion” means deliberate disobedience and “sins” is a general reference to the sins they forgot or didn’t know they committed. This was a national atonement that lasted for one year. And every year this had to be repeated. Year after year on the one day and only

Through God’s Appointed Mediator (16:29-34)

Only the high priest could perform this sacrifice. Only the High priest could come into God’s presence to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant that covered the sins of the nation. This in itself also taught Israel that the whole system was perfectly set up to prepare Israel for the Messiah’s Coming.

Surely after awhile the Jews must have realized that by offering sacrifices year after year that the blood of goats and bulls was insufficient at removing sin completely. God must have something else in mind – which He did of course. The picture of the High Priest’s ministry should have prepared them to see who Jesus was and what He did for them. That ultimately there is only one way to God through His appointed Mediator and that animal sacrifices alone was insufficient to pay for one sins.

Aaron himself and every high priest after him was a sinner too. God had a better plan to deal with sin completely which is why He sent His Son Jesus, who is Israel’s Messiah. The author of Hebrews shows us quite clearly how Jesus is the High priest who is the only way to God.

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations applying until the time of the new order.” [9:6-10]

They applied because it illustrated what would come, the better sacrifice through Jesus.

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, that is not man-made, that is to say not a part of this creation. 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 having obtained eternal redemption . . . 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.” (9:11-15)

And they should have known this from passages like Isaiah 53 as well.

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows

[our' speaks of Israel in the context of Isaiah] *yet we considered Him stricken by God [punished by God] smitten by Him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all [goat offered].*

What was the punishment for those Jews who didn't 'afflict their souls' [humble themselves before God] on the Day of Atonement? *"Anyone who does not deny himself on that day will be cut off from his people. I will destroy from among His people anyone who does any work on that day."*

Jesus is the atonement for sins. He paid the price for Israel's sins – and gentiles too. But Israel as a nation has not accepted God's atonement for their sins and have yet to return to God. They have not as a nation afflicted their own souls in coming back to God. They have yet to return to God and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

So when the trumpet blasts and you and I are removed from the earth, God will . . .

Bring Affliction So Israel Will Repent

The rapture of the church announces the last 7 years of earth, also known as the time of Jacob's trouble. It is also called the Day of the Lord. Because Israel did not repent as a nation on many days of atonement, God will have a time of judgment for them, called the Great Tribulation. Once the church is gone, the man of lawlessness will pull a torn apart world together. He will make a 7 year covenant of peace with Israel, promising them a temple and sacrifices. However, this is all a ploy to kill them. In the middle of those 7 years he will break his covenant with them and turn on them and all those who refuse to take his mark – showing allegiance to him. He will be a false messiah, the antichrist (Dan. 9:27). Their refusal to listen to God and believe in the true Messiah Jesus will result in God's refining and purifying judgment on Israel. He will send on them the affliction they refused to do for themselves until they finally repent as a nation. Listen to these prophecies in the Old Testament:

Joel 2:1 *"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on My Holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the lord is coming . . . Even now return to Me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God for he is compassionate and gracious" [2:13]*

[Zech 12:10-11; 13:1] *I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on Me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child . . . On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from their sin and impurity."*

Jer. 31:31-34 tells us about this time when the new covenant will be fulfilled for Israel. The Author of Hebrews quotes these verses in Heb. 8 saying,

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Because Israel as a nation has refused to afflict their souls and repent of their sins to accept their Messiah, God is sending them a terrible future day of judgment, where they will suffer under the false messiah until they repent when Jesus returns. And they will turn to Jesus on that day. And then God will remove their sins from them. The prophetic aspect of the Day of Atonement . . .

Fulfil the Removal of Israel's Sins

In Daniel 9, Daniel hears a prophecy about God's plan to thoroughly remove Israel's sin after 70 weeks of years are complete. We know there is a long gap of time before the last week of years between when the Anointed One is cut off (9:26) and the last 7 years begins which begins with the signing of this 7 year covenant with Israel by the antichrist (v.27).

Back in v.24 Gabriel the angel who gave Daniel this message said that after these *"70 weeks of years are decreed for your people [Israel] and your holy city [Jerusalem] to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."*

While Jesus has fulfilled the sacrificed for sin goat sacrifice, he has yet to fulfil the scapegoat final removal of Israel's sins. They are still accountable to God for rejecting Jesus, but at the end of the 70th week – the tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth and defeat the antichrist and all those who oppose Him. For the Jewish remnant that survives the tribulation, they will all turn to Jesus. Listen to Paul's words:

"I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'"

Once Jesus returns to the earth and deals with Israel's sin, then the conclusion of the Yom Kippur fulfillment anticipates Israel's restoration and future blessings which we'll see next week as we study the final fall feast, Tabernacles.

On the Day of Atonement the Israelites were to have humbled themselves and accept God's sacrifice for their sins. God warned them that if they didn't they would be cut off and destroyed. That same warning applies to people today who refuse to humble themselves and accept Jesus as the One way to God. He atoned for our sins. He is the Mediator between God and man. We don't have to suffer the penalty of sin – being destroyed and cut off from God's presence forever because faith in Jesus assures us that He will remove our sins.

The reminder of the Day of Atonement judgment silently sits in the most familiar verse in all of Scripture:

For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son – to be the sacrifice for our sin – that whoever believes in Him – having humbled ourselves realizing we can't save ourselves – shall not perish – be eternally cut off from God – but will have eternal life."

The Day of Atonement challenges everyone, "Have we accepted God's provision of Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins?" If we have, we have the assurance that God has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west. And even though we still sin we must continue to humble ourselves before God and ask forgiveness for our sins. We still need to *"confess our sins [because] He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Even though we're covered by the blood, we still need to confess when we've sinned and repent. May we examine ourselves, humbling our souls to see where we've failed God, but rejoicing

in forgiveness and assurance of the ransom fully paid, looking forward to that day when all sin will be removed from our life, from Israel and ultimately from the world.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivett@rideau.net