

Yom Kippur

Introduction

Last week we looked at Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah is linked to Yom Kippur which follows 10 days later. The two holidays inclusively are considered “Ten Days of Penitence.” During this time, people are admonished to repent of their sins and perform good deeds.

According to Rabbinical Tradition, the good deeds were performed to earn merit to inscribe in the Book of Life.

On Yom Kippur, the person’s fate was sealed. The focus of these days is Holiness

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur was established by God in Leviticus 16 and 23.

Leviticus 23:26-32

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷ “Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. ²⁸ And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. ²⁹ For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³² It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur means “Day of Atonement” and is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. It is sometimes called “The Great Day” or even more reverentially, “The Day”. Yom Kippur was to provide an atonement (covering) for sin, for the Holy of Holies, for the Tabernacle itself, for the altar of incense in the Holy Place, for the priests (including the high priest) and for the sins committed in ignorance by the people of Israel.

Yom Kippur was ordained because of the uncleanness of Israel

Leviticus 16:16

So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Yom Kippur

The main aspect attributed to the Day of Atonement in rabbinical teach is that this is the day on which God's judgment of a nation and an individual is sealed. Ten days before was Rosh Hashanah where it was believed that God decides if a person's name is inscribed in the Book of Life. The time in between were the Ten Days of Penitence where one was given a chance to do good works.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur was to be a time of great godly sorrow, repentance and confession of sins. It is the only required day of fasting in the Bible. People were to come before God with a broken spirit and contrite heart.

Psalm 34:18

The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Yom Kippur

An important part of Yom Kippur involved the Scapegoat. After the high priest sacrificed for his own sins, he would approach two male goats that had been taken from the people. Their fates would be different. The high priest cast lots. On one was written "For the Lord" and the other "For Azazel" (scapegoat). The goat whose lot was "For the Lord" was sacrificed. The other was the scapegoat. The priest tied a red wool thread on the head of the scapegoat. The one goat was sacrificed and the other was taken 12 miles out into the wilderness where it was pushed off a cliff. This is a reminder that our sins are separated from us and will never wander back and return!

Yom Kippur

The blood of the bull was brought with coals from the altar and taken into the Holy of Holies. There he put down the fire pan between the poles of the ark of the covenant. He powdered the coals with incense that filled the room with smoke. Next he took the blood of the bull and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat. He did this seven times. He repeated the same procedure with the blood of the goat. This time he also sprinkled it upon the veil that separated the Holy of Holies. The remainder of the blood was poured on the altar of incense.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur was the one day in the year when the High Priest would go behind the veil into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it on the Mercy Seat. This offering of a innocent substitutionary sacrifice atoned for the sins of the nation. The word atonement means “to cover.” On the great Day of Atonement, the sins of the nation were covered by the blood of the sacrifice.

Jesus and Yom Kippur

Jesus fulfilled the spiritual aspects of the Day of Atonement when He went into the Heavenly Holy of Holies with His own blood. Jesus shed His blood, not just for Israel, but for the whole world though all time. His blood did what the blood of bulls and goats could never do. His blood did not just cover our sins; it took them away to be remembered no more.

Jesus and Yom Kippur

It is significant that the blood of the bull (sin offering) was mixed with the goat (scapegoat). Jesus paid for all our sin. Just as the priest laid the sins of the people on both the sin offering and the scapegoat, so our sins were laid on Jesus. Those sins were paid in full and separated from us and they are not coming back!

Jesus and Yom Kippur

The blood was placed upon the Mercy Seat and stood as a barrier between the Law and God. The earthly sacrifice could not remove sin and had to be repeated. Jesus took His blood into the Holy of Holies in heaven where it became a permanent and final removal of our sin.

Jesus and Yom Kippur

The incense was combined with coals for the sacrificial altar and incense and rose up to God as a sweet smelling sacrifice. The blood was again poured out on the Altar of Incense where again it rose up and was accepted by the Father as the payment for our sin!

Yom Kippur and the Future

Like much of prophecy, Yom Kippur has a double fulfillment. It was fulfilled by Jesus on the cross. However, it also points to His Second Coming.

Remember that Yom Kippur has to do with God's judgment on nations and individuals. We saw in Sunday School that this takes place when Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation.

Year of Jubilee

There is another piece in this puzzle. Every 50 years was the Year of Jubilee. It was the year that all land sold reverted back to the original owner as this had to do with the inheritance of the land. Also all Jewish slaves were set free.

When did all this take place... Yep on Yom Kippur. Jesus started His earth ministry in the Year of Jubilee. This fits with His message of deliverance. He came to set the captive free.

Year of Jubilee

When Jesus returns, He will come in judgment.

However, remember the “Days of Penitence” that we spoke of earlier. During the Tribulation, many will come to Jesus with broken and contrite hearts. They will be in bondage to an evil government under the antichrist. Jesus will judge the wicked, but He will also set the captives free!

So What ...

Jesus is coming back!

There are two groups of people. One is a broken and contrite people. They have seen their sin, repented, and turned to Jesus for forgiveness.

The other group has not turned to Jesus. This group will stand under the consequences of their sin.

What about you?