



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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The Day of Atonement: Then and Now

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the Jewish year. On that day Jewish people around the world ask God for forgiveness of their sins. It is a day of complete fasting. No food or water. A day spent in the synagogue, standing much of the time. On that day Jewish people beseech the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to write them in the Book of Life. **My people hope and pray that God will forgive them of their sins, that He will be merciful, that He will pardon.**

Yom Kippur does not begin the High Holy Days. The High Holy Days begin with the blowing of the shofar on Yom Teruah, the Festival of Trumpets (also and more commonly known as Rosh Hashanah). At the blowing of the shofar a ten day period begins for Jewish people leading to the Day of Atonement. **The ten days are known as the Days of Awe, or the Days of Repentance. It is during this season that religious Jewish people come to God earnestly asking for forgiveness.** They are days set aside to approach their fellow man and make restitution. To confess wrongdoings. It is a period of spiritual reflection and personal purification. A time to get ready for judgment.

The rabbis tell the story (rabbinical Jewish legend) that when the shofar is blown on the Festival of Trumpets, God opens books in heaven to judge the Jewish people. For ten days He judges. At the end of the Day of Atonement, God closes the books and two are left. The Book of Life and the Book of Death. In those books God has written the names of all Jewish people. Who will live, and who will die. Who will have a good year, and who will have strife. **At the end of the Day of Atonement,**



ment, according to the rabbis, judgment is pronounced.

So, for ten days between Trumpets and Atonement, religious Jewish people plead with God to write their names in the Book of Life. **When the trumpet is sounded, judgment begins. When the Day of Atonement is over, judgment is sealed.**

Yom Kippur is celebrated today much differently than it was during biblical times. Then there was the Tabernacle and Temple. Today there is the synagogue. Then the sacrificial system was being practiced. Today there is no sacrifice. Then the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies. Today there is no High Priest for the Jewish community. **Then and now.**

In Leviticus 16 we read about how the Day of Atonement was celebrated during biblical times. During the Temple period (prior to the Temple they used the Tabernacle) the Jewish community sojourned to Jerusalem bringing their animals for sacrifice. Jerusalem was crowded. People and animals were everywhere. The priests

were gathered at the Temple to receive the sacrifices from the people and take them to be sacrificed upon the altar. **The High Priest was in charge and the one who ultimately entered the Holy of Holies. The innermost place. The Most Holy Place.** The place where the Presence of God, the Holy one of Israel, dwelled. He could only enter on Yom Kippur. **That one day.**

But before he entered the Most Holy Place he was given instructions ... "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat." Leviticus 16:3-8

In the Most Holy Place he was given instructions ... "He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it." Leviticus 16:15

After he went into the Most Holy place he was given final instructions ... "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness

and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert." Leviticus 16:20-22

After a full day of sacrifice, all of the shed blood, people bringing their animals to the Lord, God commanded the High Priest to take that one live goat. After all of the commotion and stench of that day, God told the High Priest to lay his hands on the head of one solitary live goat. After all was said and done everything rested on that one live goat. The sins of the Israelites were placed on the head of the goat and the goat was sent into the wilderness to carry on itself the sins of the Jewish people.

The Talmud (ancient rabbinical commentary on the scriptures) discusses numerous remarkable phenomena that occurred in the Temple during the Yom Kippur service. More specifically, the Talmud states that there was a strip of scarlet-dyed wool tied to the head of the scapegoat which would turn white in the presence of the large crowd gathered at the Temple on the Day of Atonement. The Jewish people perceived this miraculous transformation as a heavenly sign that their sins were forgiven.

The Talmud relates, however, that 40 years before the destruction of the second Temple the scarlet colored strip of wool did not turn white. The text of the Talmud states, "The Rabbis taught that forty years prior to the destruction of the Temple the lot did not come up in the [high priest's] right hand nor did the tongue of scarlet wool become white ..." Tractate Yoma 39b

Forty years before the Temple was destroyed the scarlet thread, according to the rabbis, ceased to turn white. Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, Jesus died on the cross for the sins of Israel. He died and took the place of the scapegoat.



The scapegoat is a picture of God's salvation. Thousands of years before Messiah Jesus came, God, through the scapegoat, gave us a yearly visual of what Jesus came to do. We read in Isaiah 53, "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." Isaiah 53:6

If you were to ask a Jewish person leaving the synagogue today if they knew that their name had been written in the Book of Life their answer would be, "No one knows, we only hope". Jewish people today who do not know Messiah Jesus hope for forgiveness. They hope for pardon. They hope that God will be merciful to them on the Day of Atonement. They fervently pray, but they do not know. The Apostle Paul states, "For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes." Romans 10:2-4

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Jesus came that we might know we have eternal life. We are working diligently to help our people hear the Good News. We are working so that the Jewish community might understand that Messiah has come. We are working so that they might receive the gift of salvation and know that they are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Israel Tour 2011

I am excited to announce that we are planning our first tour to Israel in May of next year. The dates are May 7th-19th. Israel Independence Day will fall during our time there. I have been to Israel twice before on mission trips. I am often asked to lead tours. I believe now is the time and am truly excited.

Co-leading the tour with me will be Jim Reimann who has been to Israel 21 times and is the author of the revised edition of Oswald Chambers "My Utmost for His Highest" and Lettie Cowman's "Streams in the Desert". He is not only a best selling author but an accomplished Bible teacher.

We will have an Israeli tour guide and both Jim and I will be bringing teaching daily on Israel and the Jewish roots of our faith. More information will be coming soon. Mark your calendars!

Thank You!

Thank you for loving the Jewish people. Thank you for praying. Thank you for standing with us to bring Jesus back to the Jewish community.

Your prayers and financial support make what we do possible.

In the service of the King,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
Light of Messiah Ministries