

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT



We have discovered that the Sanctuary was God's visual aid, His "show and tell," revealing the total plan of salvation through Christ. The daily services of the Sanctuary ended every year with the Day of

Atonement. This was, and still is, the most solemn feast day in the Jewish calendar. It represented the culmination of the plan of redemption. It points to the time when sin would be totally eradicated from the universe and when everlasting righteousness would be ushered in.

The Day of Atonement pointed to the final day of judgment, the consummation of the ages, when all that the Sanctuary and its services pointed to would be fulfilled. It was the only time of the year God required His people to keep as a solemn day of fasting and prayer.

In this study we will examine the significance of this Day of Atonement, what is required of God's people, and the meaning of the main ceremony that took place on this feast day. This ceremony, which centered around the two goats, pointed to the end of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. This is the controversy which began in heaven when Lucifer rebelled against God and became Satan.

HIS WORD SAYS

1. When did the Day of Atonement take place in the Jewish calendar? Leviticus 23:27

The word Atonement is a combination of three separate words joined together, AT-ONE-MENT. Its meaning is synonymous with the word "reconcile." This solemn feast day pointed to the end-time when the righteous will once again be AT-ONE- with God. At that time everlasting peace will be ushered in. This day occurred only once a year in the Jewish calendar.

WHAT IS SAID ABOUT THE ATONEMENT

“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.” Leviticus 17:11

As you study, be thinking about the Life Quest questions.

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

2. What did the high priest do for God’s people on the Day of Atonement?

Leviticus 16:29-32

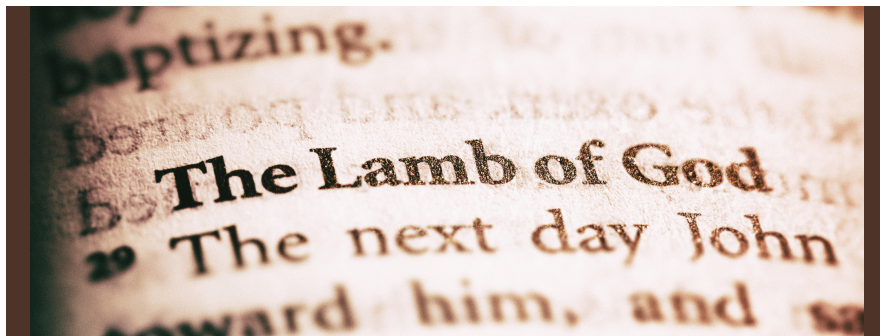
This cleansing prefigured the Investigative Judgment when Christ, our great High Priest, vindicates the saints from all their sins and the accusations Satan has been making against them; presenting us perfect before His Father. The reason that this is a time of judgement is because not all who come to Christ remain loyal to Him. Those who backslide into sin without repentance will ultimately pay for their own sins. During this time of Atonement Jesus determines who kept their faith in Him, and who fell away. And so this cleansing work is also a work of judgement.

3. Besides God’s people, what else was cleansed on the Day of Atonement?

Leviticus 16:33

4. Why did the sanctuary need cleansing? Leviticus 4:13-18 & Leviticus 16:16

Each day of the year sin offerings were made to cover the transgressions of the people. When these offerings were made the sinner was to place their hand upon the sacrificial animal; this represented a transfer of sin from the person to the sacrifice. Once the animal was slain, the blood was taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled before the veil, showing a transfer of sin from the animal to the Sanctuary. Then, once a year, on the day of atonement, these sins which had been transferred in type to the Sanctuary were cleansed from the sanctuary and moved onto the scapegoat.



5. What does Hebrews 9:22-23 tell us must also happen in the Heavenly Sanctuary?

Just as the earthly sanctuary required cleansing from the sins of the people, the heavenly sanctuary requires the same purification. Jesus shed His blood as an offering for sin. In doing this He took our sins upon Himself and transferred them to the Heavenly Sanctuary. Since 1844 we have been living in the time of the true day of atonement, now Jesus is at work judging each case and cleansing our sin from the Heavenly Sanctuary.

6. When, finally, the sin problem is brought to an end and everlasting righteousness is ushered in, what will the saints declare in song? Revelation 15:3

Satan has hurled endless accusations at God to discredit Him before all creation. The plan of redemption secondarily acts to vindicate God's justice and love. Just as we are on trial for our decisions, God is on trial before the unfallen universe who are watching how He is dealing with rebellion and sin. Our redemption and reconciliation with heaven, and Satan's failed attempt to discredit God's wisdom, will forever stand to prove that God's ways are just and true.

7. What two things were the people of God required to do on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 23:32.

The Day of Atonement was required to be kept as a solemn day of Sabbath rest in order to remind God's people that only those who were resting in Christ's righteousness — i.e., justified by faith alone — would experience the ultimate rest God is offering to mankind. (see Hebrews 4:8-11). It was also a time of deep humility and prayer.



8. What two animals were used on the Day of Atonement to cleanse God's sanctuary and His people? Leviticus 16:7

These two goats symbolized the ultimate issue in the great controversy: the battle between Christ and Satan.

9. By casting lots, who did these two goats represent? Leviticus 16:8-10

The goat selected for the Lord represented Jesus Christ, who bore on the cross the guilt and punishment of the sins of the world. The second goat represented Satan, who must ultimately take the blame for the sin problem he has created. That is why this goat is called the "scapegoat" or the "goat of removal." He is led into the wilderness to perish.

10. How many were reconciled to God through the redeeming work of Christ?
2 Corinthians 5:19

At the cross the whole human race was reconciled to God. Provision has been made to redeem us all. Therefore, there is no excuse for anyone to be lost. Those who will ultimately be lost, will be lost because they have deliberately and willfully refused and rejected the free gift of salvation in Christ.

11. In order to save mankind from sin, what did God make Christ to be and what did God make us to be in Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:21

12. How many of us have gone astray and on whom did God lay our iniquity? Isaiah 53:6

This is what the Lord's goat represented on the Day of Atonement: Christ our sin bearer. Therefore, all who are resting in Christ's righteousness for their salvation, and by faith claiming victory over sin through Christ, will be vindicated in the solemn Day of Atonement. This is the good news of the Investigative Judgment.

13. How perfect or complete was Christ's sacrifice for our sins on the cross?
Hebrews 10:12-14

When Jesus cried out at the cross "it is finished," He declared He had lived a perfect life and made a perfect sacrifice; sufficient to save all who come to Him. The promise of salvation was then guaranteed.

14. When did David say he will praise God with uprightness of heart? Psalms 119:7

On the great Day of Atonement, in that final Judgment, God will be vindicated. All the blame He has assumed since the Fall will now be placed on the real culprit, Satan. Only then will God be able to eradicate sin and usher in everlasting righteousness. May you be found to be on God's side in that final Day of Atonement.



Since 1844 we have been living in what the Bible calls "God's judgement hour." This was the time that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary began and the message went forth that "the hour of His judgement is come" (Rev 14:7).



LIFE QUEST:

Have you thoughtfully reviewed these Questions?

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

YOUR TURN

Check the statements that most closely reflect your response to this study.

I now understand that the day of Atonement tells of Christ's final work of removing all sin forever.

I thank Jesus for the sacrifice He has made for me.

I believe that by coming to Christ and repenting I will be at one with Him and saved for eternity.

Other _____