

The Sanctuary –Day of Atonement Service & (The Two Goats)

ST Series 28

DOA – (Leviticus 16)

High Priest's Preparation

The week prior the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest spent in prayer and meditation and also rehearsing the ritual for the Day of Atonement, so that no mistake would be made in any of the ceremonies. Once the nation had its capital at Jerusalem under King David's reign, the high priest moved from his house in Jerusalem to the temple precincts one week before the tenth day.

The Service

Fifteen sacrificial animals were needed for the DOA, prepared the prior day. Before dawn on the morning of the DOA the high priest once more examined the victims to ensure that they were flawless, "without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph.5:27). These animals were divided into two categories:

The perfection of Jesus, the Sacrifice provided by God to take away the sins of the world, was thus emphasized. Since the Saviour's death accomplished a number of objectives, several sacrifices were needed to illustrate them.

The high priest himself performed all the ceremonies of the Day, including the morning and evening services. (cf. Lev 16:3,4; Num 29:11). These regular daily rituals, like familiar arms embracing the unique rites of the Day, taught the worshipers that there was no time when God would not grant them forgiveness, including on the Day of Atonement.

On the following page we will find a diagram of the services on this most important Day in Israel, when the Tabernacle was to be cleansed and the children of Israel's sins "blotted out".

Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Each of the high priest's acts illustrated some aspect of Christ's ministry. The validated high priest slew Yahweh's goat as the sin-offering for God's covenant people and caught its blood in golden bowl.

Question: There is no record he laid hands upon its head or confessed any sins on it? Why?

With the remaining blood, the high priest moved back to (vs.18, 19) the court and made atonement for the altar of burnt-offering by smearing blood on its four horns, and "seven times" sprinkling its four sides.

By his acts the high priest had covered with the special combined blood, "of the bull and the goat," every location in the Sanctuary, in the holy place and court, at which there existed a blood record of confessed and forgiven sins.

Israel's chief minister had now reached a very important point in the proceedings of "the Day." The Scriptures declare that he had made "an end of reconciling the holy place, and the Tabernacle . . . and the altar" (Lev 16:20, 33), and had completed the "cleansing" of the Sanctuary from the "uncleanness of the children of Israel," that is, from "the sins of the entire Jewish people, accumulated during the year just ended. Thus, symbolically the high priest had removed the records of every confessed and forgiven sin. Nothing now stood against God's elect, they were "cleansed."

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:33, 34). Eternal Spirit, teach us to treasure His sacrifice

Azazel's Goat

This mysterious rite in connection with Azazel's goat is unique to the Hebrew ritual of the Day of Atonement. When the goats had been first selected by Divine lot, one had been designated "For Yahweh," and the other "For Azazel." Since Yahweh is a personal name for the Deity, many Bible students consider that Azazel must also be a personal name, but for a being who stands in apposition to God.

Another reason to identify Azazel with the devil was the defilement which the goat which represented him caused to the one who conducted him to the wilderness (Lev 16:26). Sin-offerings did not defile, they cleansed (Lev 17:11). Azazel's living goat, laden with Israel's guilt, therefore could not be a sin-offering, for without the shedding of its blood it could bring about no remission of sin. Azazel's goat played a role after, and only after, Israel's guilt had been removed from the Tabernacle and the people of Israel by the blood of Yahweh's goat.

The Leviticus 16:9,10 Challenge

The punctuation of the King James Version has occasionally given rise to the notion that Azazel's goat performed a part in this "atonement" (Lev 16:10). But may I translate this passage literally? It seems clear that it is written in the form of a parallel construction (a,b,a,b)

Lord's goat (dead) -- Aaron shall cause-to-be-near the goat upon which came the lot for Yahweh,
and he shall-make-it-to-be- a-sin-offering. (vs.9)

Azazel's goat (alive) -- But the goat on which came the lot for Azazel, He shall-make to-stand- alive
before the face of Yahweh. (vs.10)

Lord's goat (dead) -- So as to [LXX] make-atonement with him;

Azazel's goat (alive) -- and to let him go for Azazel into the wilderness.

Remember, atonement requires shedding of blood and substitutionary death for cleansing. But Azazel's goat was not slain, and consequently supplied no blood. No atonement could possibly be made through him. The rites connected with Azazel's goat point to occurrences in the experience of the devil.

Innermost Veil Removed

The veil into the most holy place was now removed by priestly hands, and a new one hung up in its place (Shekalim 8:5; Yoma 5:1, "one curtain;" cf. 3SP 166-167). A symbol of the flesh of Jesus (Heb 10:20), this pristine veil made by the women of Israel evokes glimpses of the incarnation, and access to the throne through the Saviour. By this concluding ceremony the high priest restored the "cleansed" Sanctuary "to its rightful state" (Dan 8:14, RSV). and signaled the beginning of a new annual cycle of the festivals and services of redemption. Every fiftieth year, at this point in the ritual, the commencement of the privileges of the Jubilee were proclaimed by priestly trumpeters (Lev 25:9).

The final act of the high priest on this Day of Atonement was to come forth from the holy precincts arrayed in his gorgeous robes and golden crown, to bless God's joyous people (Num 6:22-27).

On the hem of his blue robe hung golden bells, and as he moved the worshipers rejoiced to hear "the joyful sound" of their golden tongues declaring that Israel's emancipation had been accomplished (Ps. 89:15; EW 280). "When the atonement was completed, the high priest came again among the people (Lev 16:24); so too Christ shall return, "for those who look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28)

Conclusion

Though more could be said about this important "Day" in the typology, we need to understand that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the final act on that day, just as it is in the reality.

We also need to remember that Jehovah's Judgments are invariably 'investigative, as we will see in some case studies in the book of Genesis, beginning with the entrance of sin in the garden. This will be more our focus in the book of Daniel, especially the second half.

As we know from other Scriptures, the 'sealing' is also part of the judgment, which is primarily focused on end-time judgment when the antitypical DOA closes in heaven and the "seal of God" will be placed upon the righteous, while "the mark of the beast" upon all who have rejected the Saviour.

"We are now living in the antitypical Day of Atonement. The great and solemn closing work is going forward in the Sanctuary above. Every man is required to afflict his soul before God; every heart is required to be in harmony to the divine will" (RH 12 Aug 1884). And when our great High Priest, having completed His mediation in His heavenly Sanctuary during this eschatological Day of Atonement which began in 1844, returns for His saints (Ps 50:5), He will pronounce on them His "never ending blessing" (EW 286). "Then [will commence] the jubilee, when the land should rest" (EW286).