

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Text: Leviticus 23:26-32

Introduction:

1. The feasts commanded by God were physical observances that had mental and emotional benefits.
2. Of course, they also taught important spiritual lessons.
3. The Spring Feasts included Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, and the Feast of Pentecost.
4. Though not actual feasts, the Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee were also important events in the history of God's people.
5. The Autumn Feasts began with the Feast of Trumpets – Rosh Hashana – celebrating the New Year.
6. Ten days later, it was followed by the Day of Atonement...

I. Instruction for the Feast (Leviticus 23:26-32)

- A. The Day of Atonement took place on the tenth day of the seventh month.
- B. While the Feast of Trumpets was a celebration of the New Year, it also began a period of 10 days of remembrance leading up to the Day of Atonement.
 1. Sins of the previous year would be remembered.
 2. Many would seek to right previous wrongs.
 3. Others would do good deeds to have their names written in God's "Book of Life" on the Day of Atonement.
- C. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was the most solemn holy day in the year for the children of Israel.
 1. It was a day of remembrance of sin (Hebrews 10:1-3).
 2. It was a day of affliction over sin (Leviticus 23:27, 29).
 3. It was a day of sacrifice for sin (Numbers 29:7-11).
 4. It was a day of fasting for sin (Isaiah 58:3-5; Zechariah 7:1-7).
- D. Ultimately, it was a day of cleansing from sin (Leviticus 16:29-30)!

II. Procedure of the Feast (Leviticus 16)

- A. The High Priest would bathe himself, then, dressed in the priestly garments, he would offer sacrifice for himself and his household (vs. 1-6).
- B. He would present two goats and cast lots over them (vs. 7-8).
 1. One goat would be the offering for sin.
 2. The other would be the scapegoat.
- C. The goat chosen for the sin offering would be sacrificed (vs. 9).
- D. The scapegoat would be released into the wilderness (vs. 10).

Bible Feasts

- E. The High Priest would take coals from the altar, place incense on it, and bring it within the vail before the Mercy Seat (vs. 11-13).
- F. He would sprinkle blood from the sacrifice upon the Mercy Seat seven times – first from the bullock, then from the goat (vs. 14-15).
- G. Thus, he would make atonement for himself and the people (vs. 16-19).
- H. Following this, he would place his hands on the head of the scapegoat, confess the sins of the people, and release it into the wilderness (vs. 20-22).

III. The Message of the Feast (Hebrews 9 – 10)

- A. This feast clearly foreshadowed the atoning work of Jesus for the sins of the world.
- B. The actions and sacrifices of the priests could not take away sin (9:6-10; 10:1-4).
- C. Jesus became both the true High Priest and the perfect sacrifice for sin (9:11-14).
- D. He instituted the New Testament to make salvation available to all (9:15-17).
- E. He rent the vail and entered into the true Holy Place to intercede for sinners (9:24-28; cf. Mark 15:38).
- F. By the sacrifice of Jesus, sins are forgiven (10:11-13)!
- G. When those sins are forgiven, they are carried away – to be remembered no more (10:16-18).