



BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT



*"But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things which were to come, and has passed through a greater and more perfect tent (heaven), He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."
Hebrews 9:11-12*

THE DAY OF THE ATONEMENT (YOM KIPPUR)

The Jewish feasts in the Old Testament pointed to specific facets of Christ's ministry. The first three: The Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Firstfruits all pertained to Christ's First Coming. The Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles related to Christ's Second Coming.

What is the Day of Atonement?

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the 6th feast of the Lord and is considered the most solemn day of worship. This day is called "The Sabbath of Sabbaths".

Yom Kippur is celebrated on the 10th day of the Hebrew month of Tishri (September or October). The observances of the Day of Atonement are recorded in **Leviticus 16:8-34**;

Yom Kippur was the only time of the year when the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies, in the innermost chamber of the Tabernacle, to make atonement for the sins of all Israel. 'Atonement' plainly means "covering". The purpose of this sacrifice was to bring reconciliation between man and God by covering the sins of the people.

The ten days between the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) and Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) are days of repentance and preparation known as days of awe, when Jews express remorse for their sins through praying and fasting.

What are the ceremonial highlights on the Day of Atonement?

The actual work of atonement falls into three main areas:

a. that which pertains to Aaron the High Priest and his household,

Aaron, first of all, offered a bullock as a Sin offering for himself and his own house and thus made atonement for his own household (**Leviticus 16:3-4**).

Aaron was to take the blood of the bullock and enter within the veil of the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle blood seven times on the Mercy seat. All of this was done amidst the cloud of incense from the golden censer (**vs.11-14**). In this way, Aaron made atonement for his own sins and the sins of his household.

b. that which pertains to the nation, After the Sin offering for himself and his household, Aaron presented two goats before the Lord. He was to cast lots to determine which goat would be sacrificed for the sin offering and which goat would be released into the wilderness (**vs. 5, 7-10**). The blood of the sin offering, for the whole nation of Israel, would be sprinkled on the Mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The goat that was released was known as the scapegoat (escape goat). The High Priest would confess all sins, transgressions, and uncleanness of the nation of Israel by placing both his hands over the head of the scapegoat as an act of transferring the sins of Israel to the goat. Then the scapegoat was released into the wilderness far away, to an uninhabited land.

c. and that which pertains to the Sanctuary. After making atonement for himself/his household and for the nation of Israel, Aaron would make atonement for the sanctuary and all its furnishings by sprinkling the blood of atonement seven times on all the furniture in the Tabernacle

What is the significance of this feast?

The LORD promised on the Day of Atonement to cleanse His people from all of their sins. This is the day of national forgiveness. The whole nation of Israel is set free from the wrath of God. It is this distinguishing feature that made this Day unique. *"For on this Day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the LORD"* (**Leviticus 16:30**).

The Jews associated the Day of Atonement with the Day of Judgment. The high priest's actions represented the cleansing of the sanctuary—the wiping out of sin and the final salvation of the redeemed Israel.

The book of Hebrews explains the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement as a pattern of the atoning work of Christ. Jesus is our high priest, and His blood shed on Calvary is seen as symbolized in the blood of bulls and goats. As the high priest of the Old Testament entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of his sacrificial victim, so Jesus entered heaven itself to appear before the Father on behalf of His people (**Hebrews 9:11-12**)

What is the prophetic fulfilment of this feast?

The Day of Atonement provides prophetic insight regarding the **physical second coming of the Messiah, the restoration of national Israel, and the final judgment of all**.

- The Day of Atonement may just be the day of the Second Coming - when Jesus will physically return to earth! The entire ten days from the first day of the Feast of Trumpets through the Day of Atonement are known as *Days of Repentance or Days of Awe*.

These days are possibly a picture of the Rapture (Feast of Trumpets), the Tribulation (days in between), and the Second Coming of Christ (Day of Atonement).

Hebrews 9: 26-28, *"...But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."*

The Bible clearly states Jesus will return immediately after the Great Tribulation. **Mark 13:24-26**, *"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."*

- Also, the Day of Atonement prophetically points to the Messiah's future work with the nation of Israel. When the Messiah comes to establish His throne, Israel will look on Him (Jesus) whom they pierced, and repent (**Zechariah 12:10**). The nation's sin will be dealt with, and the Lord will remember their sin no more (**Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34**). This will be the prophetic fulfilment of Israel's Day of Atonement as a nation that comes face to face in repentance with their Messiah at the end (**Daniel 9:24**).

- Also, the Day of Atonement points towards the future judgment of all Believers as well as non-Believers. The Judgement Day came upon Lord Jesus as He carried the sins of the whole world by being the sin offering. He became the perfect fulfilment for the atonement of sins of humanity, which no animal sacrifice could substitute. All those who believe in Jesus and His sacrifice, have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life (**Revelation 13:8**). The scriptures clearly warn that on the Day of Judgement to come, anyone's name not found in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (**Revelation 20:15**). Moreover, all Believers will stand before the Throne of Judgement to give account for their lives.

2 Corinthians 5:10, *"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"*

How do we interpret this feast in the light of the New Testament?

The Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest who made the reconciliation for the Church, the New Testament Priestly Body (**1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:6; 5:9-10**). Lord Jesus Christ is both Priest and Sacrifice in His two natures. In His Divine nature, He is the Priest; in His human nature, He is the sacrifice.

Thus Christ (the High Priest) offered Himself (the Sacrifice) for us (**Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 8:1-4; 9:11-15**).

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the Temple was miraculously rent from top to bottom by God Himself (**Matthew 27:51-52**). This signified that the way into God's Presence was now open to all who believe in God through Christ.

Believers can come to God through the veil of Christ's Flesh and Blood (**Hebrews 10:19-22**). The rending of the veil of the Temple was connected with the rending of the veil of Christ's Flesh, Christ's Temple (**John 2:18-22**).

All Believers have the privilege in prayer to enter "*into the Holiest of All*" by the Blood of Jesus, the new and the living way (**Hebrews 6:17-20; 10:19-22**) – i.e., living in the presence of God. All Believers have access into the Presence of God by the Spirit (**Ephesians 2:11-18**) and in this way enter within the veil – into the Most holy presence of God.

However, there is a fullness in this experience that the Church has yet to enter into and this is typified in the Day of Atonement. The atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is the highlight of the Day of Atonement. The Power in the Blood of Jesus is astounding!

- The power of the atoning Blood is not limited to redemption alone as in the Passover (**Romans 5:9**). But we read, "*Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate*" (**Hebrews 13:12**).

Sanctification is a second work of grace by which the inbred nature of sin is removed from our lives, making us pure and holy within. **1 John 1:7**, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*"

- The Blood of Jesus avails for our healing. We read in **Isaiah 53:5** that "*with his stripes we are healed.*" Apostle Peter also mentions in **1 Peter 2:24**, "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*".

- The Blood of Jesus provides us access into God's presence in prayer. "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,...Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*" (**Hebrews 10:19,22**).

Jesus is our High Priest today, making intercession before the Father for us with His Blood.

- The Blood of Jesus has the Power over the trials and temptations of Satan. **Revelation 12:11**, "*And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.*"

Why blood is required for salvation?

In the Garden of Eden, the blood of animals was shed when God slew animals to clothe Adam and Eve after they disobeyed God. The word atonement means “a covering.” The only way their sin could be covered was by the shedding of blood.

So from the beginning, God instituted innocent animal sacrifices to cover for the sins of human. Also, it says in **Leviticus 17:11**: *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”*

In the Old Testament, the blood of bulls and goats only covered the people’s sin. The author of Hebrews also argues that since *“it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins”* (**Hebrews 10:4**), a better sacrifice is required (**Hebrews 9:23**).

Only the blood of Christ was able to atone for the sins of mankind because His Blood alone was sinless. (**Hebrews 9:25-26**). *“And without shedding of blood is no remission”* **Hebrews 9:22**). It was necessary for Christ to die in our stead in order to satisfy divine justice and to pardon the sinner. The Blood was in the mind of God as the perfect way to display the supreme cost and infinite value of our salvation!

Isaiah 1:18, *“Come now, and let us reason together,”* Says the LORD, *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”*

“The penalty for SIN demanded payment. What we COULD NOT do for ourselves, CHRIST did for us!”

Why the Day of Atonement is linked to judgement? Who will be judged in future?

The Day of Atonement was a very serious Jewish practice. Any Jew that did not take part in the ceremony was to be cut off from the people.

It was a day of heart searching, and a day of judgment. This day was to be kept solemn, just like the Sabbath. (**Leviticus 23:27-30**)

The Bible frequently affirms the fact that there will be a great Final Judgement of Believers and Unbelievers. They will stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ in resurrected bodies and hear His proclamation of their eternal destiny.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*

Lord Jesus Christ will be the Judge. In **2 Timothy 4:1**, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ who is to judge the living and the dead". (Also, **Acts 10:42**, **Matthew 25:31-33**)

- All Unbelievers will stand before Christ for judgement, for this judgement includes *"the dead, great and small"* (**Revelation 20:12**) and Paul says that *"on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed," "he will render to every man according to his works..."* (**Romans 2:5-7**).

This judgement of Unbelievers will include degrees of punishment for what they had done.

- All Believers also would stand before the Judgement Seat of God and each of us shall give account of himself to God (**Romans 14:10,12**).

2 Corinthians 5:10, *"For we must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad"*. The judgement of Believers is to bestow various degrees of rewards and not punishment.

Thus the Day of Judgement can be portrayed as one in which Believers are rewarded and Unbelievers are punished for eternity

As a Believer, once we die, we immediately go to Heaven, so what is the requirement of this Final Judgement?

Final judgement is not for God to find out the conditions of our hearts and pattern of conduct of our lives, for He already knows that in every detail.

Rather, the purpose is to display publicly, before all humanity, that the God who is worshipped is a Just and a Holy God: His holiness and righteousness on one hand and His grace and mercy on the other hand!

Final judgement is also to show that God will be entirely just in His judgement and no one will be able to complain against Him on that day as *"God shows no partiality"* and the whole world will be held accountable to God Almighty (**1 Peter 1:17**, **Romans 2:11**, **Colossians 3:25**, **Romans 3:19**).

**The GOD who is worshipped
is both JUST & HOLY**

What are the practical applications for my life by studying this feast?

Hebrews 10:19-25, *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

1. Pray boldly and continually.
2. Obey God and reject evil continually.
3. Have an attitude to serve in love and good works.
4. Belong in the family of God.
5. Be an encourager and hopeful in all circumstances

Book references:

The Seven feasts of Israel - Zola Levitt

The Feasts of the Lord - Kevin Howard & Marvin Rosenthal

The Feasts of Israel - Kevin J Conner

If you have any further questions, please email us at info@bethelag.in or walk into the church office for any counselling regarding this issue.

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