Lesson 22 - The Day of Atonement



According to the Sanctuary model, God's show and tell, the daily services concluded every year on the Day of Atonement. This was, and still is, the most solemn feast day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. It represented the culmination of the plan of redemption, pointing to the time when sin would be totally eradicated and everlasting righteousness would be ushered in.

The Day of Atonement therefore pointed to the consummation of the ages. It was the only time of the year God required His people to keep a solemn day of fasting and prayer. No strong drink was allowed to be consumed and the women were required to remove all their jewelry. This feast day pointed to the moment in time when the great controversy between Christ and Satan would finally be brought to an end.

Besides the vindication of the saints in the Pre-Advent Judgment (Lesson 21), the purpose of the Day of Atonement is to vindicate God's holy and righteous name and eradicate the sin problem. When the Day of Atonement is accomplished in reality, Satan and his angels, along with all who have refused the gift of salvation in Christ, will be destroyed forever. God will then create a new heaven and a new earth for the saints.

In this study, we will examine the significance of the two goats in the main ceremony that took place on the Day of Atonement. These two goats - one representing Christ and the other Lucifer - pointed to the end of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. This controversy began in heaven when Lucifer rebelled against God and became Satan (see Revelation 12:7-9).

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 endtime event when the whole universe will again be At-One-Ment with God.

2. What did the high priest cleanse on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 16:30

This cleansing of God's people prefigured the Pre-Advent

Judgment when Christ, our great and faithful High Priest, will vindicate the saints from all the accusations Satan has been making against them. We studied this in Lesson 21.

3. What else did the high priest cleanse on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 16:33

Besides the saints, God’s sanctuary will also be cleansed or vindicated on the Day of Atonement. How can heaven need cleansing? Has the blood of Christ defiled heaven? No, on the contrary God’s sanctuary will be cleansed of all the blame1 that has been heaped against God for the sin problem. When this is accomplished one pulse of harmony will exist and the whole universe will again be At-One-Ment.

4. What will the saints sing at this time? Revelation 15:3

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1 There are three aspects of sin, which need to be resolved before God can bring an end to the sin problem: (1) Guilt, (2) Punishment, and (3) Responsibility. Romans 5:10, 11 (KJV) clearly indicates that on the cross, “we were reconciled to God,… through out Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” This completed, historical fact reconciled sinful men to a holy God, thus resolving items (1) and (2) above. However the cross did not settle item (3). The Day of Atonement, which represents the culmination of the plan of salvation, addresses item (3) regarding who is responsible for the sin problem.

Since God is sovereign (nothing happens in the universe without His permission), and since He has allowed sin to continue on earth to this present day, He must assume the blame for what happens in His kingdom. This has been true ever since Adam ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Adam did not deny what he had done, nor did he take the blame. Rather, he passed the blame to Eve and ultimately to God (“the woman whom You gave to be with me…”). Eve in turn blamed the serpent, implying “the serpent that You created…” (Genesis 3:12, 13). God did not then ask the serpent, because He knew that Satan blamed Him, too. See Question 16 of this lesson (including the related note and footnote) for other examples of the blame for sin that God has assumed since the Fall.

In fact, God continues to assume the blame for sin even today. People contend that if God is a God of love, why does He allow all the pain and suffering that we see in the world, especially of innocent victims? Sometimes this leads to people questioning whether God even exists!

Why then, has God permitted sin to fester all these years? It was the only way to show the universe the reality of sin. When iniquity was found in Lucifer (see Questions 14 and 15), the principle of self-love was introduced as a viable alternative to God's government, which is based upon agape love. (We studied the love of God in Lesson 2). So convincing was Lucifer's argument that he actually convinced one-third of heaven's angels

When all that the Day of Atonement pointed to is fulfilled, all doubt about God and the way He has dealt with the sin problem will be removed. Then, and then only, will we see things clearly. As the apostle Paul stated to the Corinthian believers, "Now we see in part" (1 Corinthians 13:12), but in heaven we shall see God as He truly is, a God of love, mercy and justice.

5. What were the believers required to do on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 16:29; 23:27-32

These two requirements represent the negative and positive demands of the gospel - Not I, but Christ. To afflict the soul (Leviticus 23:27) means to deny self ("Not I"). It is saying with Christ, "I can of Myself do nothing" (John 5:30), that the works we do may be God's (John 14:10). It is admitting that in us nothing good dwells (Romans 7:18). It is acknowledging that despite our faith, we are sinners in need of a Savior (1 John 1:8). This is the negative requirement of the gospel (Luke 9:23). Doing no work (Leviticus 23:28) was referred to as a sabbath of rest (Leviticus 23:32). The sabbath of rest signifies that the believers are resting entirely in the Lord of the Sabbath ("But Christ"), Jesus Christ, for salvation (see Hebrews 4:3, 4). In the Pre-Advent Judgment, Christ can only vindicate those who meet these two requirements.

6. What were presented before the Lord on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 16:7

(Revelation 12:4a, 9b) to pledge their allegiance to him in lieu of God.

Not even angels had the foreknowledge of God to imagine the insidious effects that sin would have when put into practice. Had God destroyed Lucifer in heaven without allowing his theory to produce its malignant fruit, all creation would have thereafter served God out of fear instead of love. Perhaps they would be the next ones to be blotted out if they made one (supposedly) minor mistake?

As you can see, if God did not vindicate His name on this issue, sin could never be eradicated. There would always be doubts in the minds of created beings in the universe. Therefore, on the Day of Atonement, the

Lord's goat (pointing to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross) bore the guilt and punishment for sin. The scapegoat (representing Lucifer-turned- Satan), bore the responsibility for sin. Technically speaking, Satan takes the (blame for) sins of repentant sinners, who are part of the first resurrection. See Lesson 24: Question 20 for additional comments. We will see in Lesson 24 (especially Questions 13-21) how the events during and after the millennium further fulfill these sanctuary rituals.

As we shall see, "goats" in the Bible represent sin. According to the directions given by God, both goats had to be spotless or without blemish.

7. By casting lots, whom did these two goats represent? Leviticus 16:8

The goat selected for the Lord represented Jesus Christ. He was sinless, but on the cross, He bore the guilt and punishment of the sins of the world. The second goat (scapegoat) represented Lucifer. He was created sinless until he chose to sin (see Ezekiel 28:15). Ultimately Satan is to blame for the sin problem.

8. Whom do you think the sheep and the goats represent in this passage? Matthew 25:31-34, 41

(Sheep):

(Goats):

The sheep represent believers and the goats, unbelievers. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus said that the fire, which will consume and destroy unbelievers, was not prepared for them, but "for the devil and his angels."

9. What did God do to the entire human race in Jesus Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:19

At the cross the whole human race was reconciled to God (see Romans 5:10). Therefore, there is no excuse for anyone to be lost. Those who will be lost are those who have deliberately, persistently and ultimately rejected the gift of salvation in Christ.

10. In order to save mankind from sin, what did God make Christ to be? 2 Corinthians 5:21a

11. In exchange, what did God make mankind to be in Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:21b

Since all mankind is born in a state of sin, the only way we can stand righteous before God is by faith in Christ. In Him all

humanity was made righteous, and this is the good news of the gospel, made effective by faith alone.

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

Christ our Substitute is who the Lord's goat represented on the Day of Atonement. Therefore, all who are resting in Christ for their salvation (symbolized by their Sabbath-keeping) and are denying themselves of their own self-righteousness (signified by afflicting the soul, see Philippians 3:7-9) will be vindicated on the solemn Day of Atonement. This is the good news of the Pre-Advent Judgment, which we studied in Lesson 21.

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



THE HUMAN RACE

It is finished.

When Jesus cried out on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30), He was declaring to the world that the entire human race was fully redeemed. This is God’s supreme gift to mankind. All who have accepted this salvation by faith and are sanctified by that sacrifice stand perfect forever in Christ.

14. According to this text, who is the originator of the sin problem? Ezekiel 28:14, 15

How could a perfect being commit sin? This is a mystery that our finite minds cannot comprehend and is why the Bible alludes to Satan’s fall as “the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Only when we go to heaven will our eyes be opened and will we fully understand how sin could enter a perfect world.

15. According to this passage what was Lucifer’s heart problem? Isaiah 14:12-14

Lucifer's heart problem was self. When He decided to exalt himself and take the place of God, he brought about his own downfall. At the core of every sin is the principle of self which completely contradicts God's agape love that "does not seek its own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). It is this principle of self with which Satan infected the human race at the Fall and which makes us sinners.

16. For what bad thing does God assume the blame in this text? Isaiah 45:7

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We discussed in Footnote 1 of this lesson how nothing happens in the universe without God's permission. This also explains verses such as "the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Exodus 10:20, 27, 11:10)2 and "the evil spirit from God came upon Saul" (1 Samuel 16:23, 18:10, 19:9). God is not causing these events to occur, but He has permitted them. This is why God assumes the blame for all the bad things that have happened (and are happening) in this world. But on the Day of Atonement, the blame will be put on Satan, the one who is really responsible for the sin problem. Thus, the scapegoat represents Satan, the one who truly deserves the blame.

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

On the great Day of Atonement, 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 present on that final Day of Atonement!

18. How will sin and sinners be eradicated on the Day of Atonement? Revelation 20:9

When the lake of fire has consumed all that belongs to the sin problem, only then will this universe be At-One-Ment with God. May you be a part of that vast multitude that will share the privileges of the saved.

My Response to Lesson 22

• The sanctuary services ended with the Day of Atonement. It represented the consummation, the closing events of the plan of salvation. This will bring to an end the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Do you see the significance of this doctrine?

Response: _____

2In other verses, Pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart: "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart" (1 Samuel 6:6)?