

Commentary on Hebrews

Review

The Day of Atonement

THE NECESSITY OF BLOOD FOR ATONEMENT

Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. And that 'ACCORDING TO THE LAW' of Moses."

- I. **Those Sacrifices Were Necessary for Forgiveness, but Not the Source of Their Forgiveness**
 - A. In the same way "*baptism now saves us*" (1 Peter 3:21).
 - B. We are not saved by a tub of water – but cannot be saved without it.
 - C. It is at the baptistery that we come into contact with the blood of Christ that cleanses our sins. We get into Christ and are united with Him... Romans 6:3, 5; Ephesians 1:7
 - D. In the same way the Hebrew, through his sacrifices, came into contact with the blood of Christ.
 - E. It was not the shedding of the animals blood that granted forgiveness.

THE AWARENESS OF FORGIVENESS UNDER THE LAW

- I. **The Hebrews Knew They Were Forgiven, and Enjoyed it as We Do** (Leviticus 1:4; 4:20, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, etc.)
 - A. Even before the Law. "*Abraham believed God, and was justified by his faith*" (Genesis 15:6).
 - B. Psalm 51 – a Psalm of repentance and assured forgiveness
 - C. All this Psalm is praise for forgiveness (Psalm 103).
 1. **Psalms 103:10 NIV** ...he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
 2. **Psalms 103:12 NIV** ...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he **removed our transgressions** from us.
 - D. **Micah 7:19 NIV** You will again have compassion on us; you will **tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.** (Micah 7:18-20).
 - E. As will be seen at the end of this study on the Day of Atonement – Israel knew its sins were placed on the head of the Goat for *Azazel* (scape goat – the goat of removal) and sent "out of the camp" – Leviticus 16:22

Continuation

The Day of Atonement

- II. **The Time of the Year Was Significant**
 - A. The "*tenth day of the seventh month*" (Leviticus 16:29).
 - B. Ten in Hebrew numerals means completion.
 1. Ten pre-flood patriarchs, ten righteous men could have saved Sodom, ten plagues in Egypt, Ten Commandments, etc.

2. Symbolizes God’s complete work of redemption in Christ who is foreshadowed by the Day of Atonement.
- C. Seven is symbol for God’s activity.
 1. Number 7 and its multiples appear over 600 times.
 2. Even the Sabbath implies God’s salvation in symbol.

PREPARATIONS FOR DAY OF ATONEMENT

- I. **Preparations of/by the People** – They are expected to spend the day in solemn convocation – all assemble at Tent.
 - A. The day is called a “Sabbath – sabbathon” (day of solemn rest) – or a “high sabbath,” by rabbis (Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:26-32).
 - B. No work or servile labor of any kind is to be done.
 - C. They must “deny themselves” or “afflict themselves” in mourning over their sins of the year.
 1. The affliction expressed itself in solemn fasting – See Psalm 35:13
 2. They were to show other visible signs of sorrow for sin – showing repentance
 3. In individual and public show of humiliation for sins
 - D. Each Israelite was expected to see himself and himself alone in the sacrificial reparation of that day
 1. If he failed to enter into the spirit or tenor of the day's activities, he would be cut off from the people – and quite obviously from God – Leviticus 23:26-32
 2. If he did not afflict himself he would lose his fellowship with Israel and with God – verse 29
 3. If he violated the command to forego all labor on that day, the punishment would be the same – verse 30
 - E. This was a day of holy convocation according to Leviticus 23:27.
- II. **Preparation of/by The High Priest**
 - A. He alone functions that day, *“No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out...”* (Leviticus 16:17).
 1. No series of sacrifices so clearly foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ than these on this day
 - a. And no priestly ministry so beautifully pictures the unique work of Christ as our great High Priest
 - b. Since Christ would have no help from man in making atonement, then Aaron, His shadow priest, could have no help from man
 - c. No one else was allowed in the tabernacle until Aaron was done *“having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.”* – verse 17
 2. All other priests take their place with the rest of the people that day.
 - a. The other priests, who on other occasions served continually in the Holy Place, must on this day leave all the ceremonies to Aaron

- b. They must take their place with all other sinners for whom atonement is made
 - 3. Atonement must be made for all without any distinction. Aaron made atonement for himself and the priests – Hebrews 5:3; 7:27; 9:25
 - B. The High Priest could officiate only after certain elaborate ceremonial preparations
 - 1. First he must bath in water – total washing (Lev. 16:4).
 - a. The Hebrew word for *bathe* is not the ordinary ceremonial washing for daily cleansing of the priests
 - b. Rather the same washing required for the consecration of priests and for cleansing of lepers
 - c. Thus the High Priest who draws nearest to God must be wholly clean and pure of body
 - i. Symbolic of the essential spiritual purity of anyone who draws near to God
 - ii. More directly symbolic of the moral purity of Christ, the antitypical High Priest
 - 2. Then he must take off his normal robes for “glory, beauty and holiness” and put on garments of regular priest.
 - a. He must lay aside his bright colored "garments for glory and beauty" – Exodus 28 :2-3 – the normal robes of his ministrations
 - i. These are the "garments to sanctify him" - Exodus 28:3
 - ii. They were made of linen cloth in colors of gold, blue, purple and scarlet Exodus 28:5 – For in this way, he functions among men and his dignity is unsurpassed and his clothes draw attention to the glory of his office of mediator between God and man. – verse 2 "holy garments"
 - b. Now he dresses himself with pure unadorned white linen coat, breeches, girdle and mitre (turban). But, in the presence of God, he stands stripped of all honor and his true status is portrayed in the simplicity of his dress.
 - i. As the Christ "unclothed" or emptied Himself of all external expressions of His Deity
 - ii. And "clothed" himself with the garments of lowly, ordinary priest in the work of God
 - c. Aaron normally wears a girdle of gold, blue, purple and scarlet - but on this day even his girdle was pure white linen
 - i. White is symbolic of purity – of Christ is understood
 - ii. Unadorned stands for humiliation for sin
 - d. He wears the High Priest's turban of white with the golden crown on top with the inscription: "Holy to Jehovah" Exodus 28:36