

# ***The Sanctuary***

## ***The Day of Atonement***

Lesson #6 for November 9, 2013

Scriptures: Leviticus 16; 23:26-32; Deuteronomy 19:16-21; Matthew 18:23-35; Isaiah 6:1-6.

1. The purpose of this lesson is to understand the ceremonies of the great Day of Atonement that took place in the sanctuary and later the temple as described in the Old Testament.
2. We need to focus particularly on the role of the high priest during this ceremony but also on what was required of the people and, most important of all, focus on what this teaches us about Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. We are living in the antitypical day of atonement—the time of the pre-advent judgment.
3. The Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur* (Leviticus 16) was certainly the most important day in the year of the Old Testament sanctuary. Notice that the description is placed in the middle of the book of Leviticus which is in the middle of the five books of Moses. It is a kind of Sabbath of Sabbaths; (Leviticus 16:31) no one was to work or eat during that day. The focus was to be on the sanctuary and especially on the work of the high priest.
4. We need to recognize that the regular daily sacrifices that went on all through the year were also carried out on that day. But, there were also special sacrifices for the priest and his family; and then, those two special goats which we will focus on representing Christ and Satan. Thus, in type, we see that the sins of the people which had been transferred to the sanctuary all through the year were on this special day carried out of the sanctuary by the high priest and placed on the head of the scapegoat. Thus, in type, the sins of the people were eliminated from the camp of Israel as the goat was taken away. Read Leviticus 16:16,20. Whereas during the year, the sacrifices which were daily offered represented sins being transferred from the people to the sanctuary, things were distinctly different on the Day of Atonement. Notice that there was no laying on of hands for the goat of the Lord suggesting it's blood was not a carrier of sin. In effect, that goat was not to defile the sanctuary further but to cleanse it. By the end of this special day, not only the entire camp but also the sanctuary itself were to be completely clean and free from sin.
5. Read Leviticus 23:27-32. In the light of Leviticus 16, these verses teach us that salvation **involves more than just forgiveness of sin**. Understood in the wider context of the great controversy, the questions about God's government and His character must be answered, and the truth must be made clear. Satan's accusations must be corrected; and ultimately, Satan must be eliminated from the universe.
6. It is important for us to notice that while the daily offerings focused on people's sins and transferring those sins to the tabernacle, the most sacred and holy ceremony of the whole year talked about cleansing the sanctuary. This cleansing was to be a symbol for correcting the misunderstandings and misrepresentations that Satan has made against the government of God so that, ultimately, every trace of sin is removed and the original cause of sin is recognized and eliminated from the universe.
7. Notice that on the Day of Atonement, almost every detail was carried out by the high priest himself. Read Exodus 20:18-20. The people felt a desperate need for someone to stand between themselves and God. Is that why they needed a high priest? And just as the entire congregation was supposed to be focusing on the work of the high priest on that day, our focus needs to be on the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. We need to clearly understand what is happening in the judgment scene in heaven. We need to know exactly who is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10) and who it is that corrects all the

errors that have been perpetrated not only telling us but also demonstrating that truth through His life and death on this earth. (Romans 8:34; Daniel 7:9-10; Zechariah 3:1-5)

8. Read Leviticus 16:16-20. In the typical services of ancient Israel, the sins were piled up in the sanctuary all year long. Clearly, that was not the ultimate goal in God's plan.

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.5

9. In these ancient sanctuary ceremonies, we see the plan of salvation laid out in very concrete terms. In our day when we are more accustomed to thinking in terms of ideas, we need to ask ourselves questions like: 1) Can sins actually be transferred like that? 2) How are sins eliminated from our lives? 3) What can we do in this antitypical day of atonement to prepare ourselves for what Christ is now doing in the heavenly sanctuary? Many clichés are used to describe this process. 4) What does it mean to “lean on Christ's merits”? Roman Catholics believe that “saints” have done more good things than bad things; so, they have excess “merits,” and those can be transferred to others who need more merits.
10. Read Leviticus 16:20-22. Who or what was Azazel? In the symbolism of the sanctuary, this goat was taken to be responsible for the sins which had caused all the trouble in the past year. This goat was not killed. Its blood was not shed anywhere in the camp; but, in type, it was made responsible for all the sins of the people and then led far away from the camp to die. In reality, of course, this symbolizes Lucifer himself.
11. Some of our critics have tried to claim that Seventh-day Adventists believe that Satan is somehow making atonement for our sins. How can we answer such an accusation? Shouldn't the originator of sin be correctly identified as being ultimately responsible? Read Deuteronomy 19:16-21. If a person maliciously accused another person and it was found out that his accusation was totally false, then the punishment that the accuser was hoping would fall on the one accused, fell on the accuser. A biblical example of how this took place in actual fact was when Haman made the gallows for Mordecai and ended up being hanged on those gallows himself! (Esther 7:9-10) Justice in the days of ancient Israel meant “an eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth,” etc. Satan will receive the punishment he wishes to place on God.
12. And where does that leave us? Read Exodus 19:8; 24:3,7; Jeremiah 31:31-34; and Hebrews 10:16-18. What is implied by the fact that God says He will not remember our sins any longer?

Thus in the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day the great truths relative to Christ's death and ministration, and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 358.

13. Read Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:27-32. What were the children of Israel supposed to do on this special Day of Atonement? This was the only day of the year in which they were asked not to do any work as well as not to eat any food—from sundown on the ninth day until sundown on the tenth day. In passing, it is interesting to note that this is another clear demonstration of how the ancient Jews identified a single day.
14. Does Leviticus 23:29-30 tell us that God took this day very seriously? What does that tell

us about how we should be living our lives in this antitypical day of atonement? It was a life-and-death matter.

15. One other important point to notice is that Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in a once-saved-always-saved theology. We do not believe that forgiveness or justification is the only part of salvation. There must come a time on the antitypical day of atonement—the time of the pre-advent judgment—when all these issues are brought up and a final decision is made with the whole universe looking on about who should be saved and who should be lost and why. Just as the ancient Israelites were to focus their attention on the activities of the high priest on that day, we need to be focusing on the life and death of Jesus in our day and what He is doing in the heavenly sanctuary.
16. Read Isaiah 6:1-7. Was Isaiah in the temple? Or, was that just a vision? What was Isaiah's response when he was faced—at least in vision—with the presence of God? During this time of the pre-advent judgment, are we faced with the presence of God? Do we need a “live coal” from the altar to purify our lips and our thoughts? **Isaiah was told that his guilt was gone and his sins were forgiven.** (Isaiah 6:7) And just as Isaiah was emboldened to preach the truth to a nation which was not ready to listen, following that experience we should recognize the fact that we are no longer condemned. (Romans 8:1) As acquitted sinners who understand the plan of salvation and the truths about Satan and God, we should go forth as God's best ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) Are we daily making friends for God? Are we living our lives as if we are friends of God?
17. When everything comes down to the end—the final judgment day—what will be the result?

Now the event takes place foreshadowed in the last solemn service of the Day of Atonement. When the ministration in the holy of holies had been completed, and the sins of Israel had been removed from the sanctuary by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, then the scapegoat was presented alive before the Lord; and in the presence of the congregation the High Priest confessed over him “all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.” Leviticus 16:21. In like manner, when the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed, then in the presence of God and heavenly angels and the hosts of the redeemed the sins of God's people will be placed upon Satan; he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 658.
18. Is every sinful act or thought that we commit a result of Satan's temptations? Ultimately, he was the originator of sin and evil; but, what about James 1:13-15?
19. As Christians, we have looked to the book of Hebrews to help us understand the sanctuary services described in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Do you think you understand what Christ is doing now in the heavenly sanctuary? Ellen White has suggested that what Jesus is doing now in the heavenly sanctuary is as important as what He did during His ministry on this earth. Could that be true? What do you think Jesus is doing now which measures up in important to what He did while He was on this earth? In light of Daniel 7:9-10 and Zechariah 3:1-5, isn't it clear that God is clarifying: 1) Who is responsible for all the great controversy mess; 2) Who is making false accusations against God's people; and 3) Where the ultimate responsibility lies?
20. How does it make you feel to recognize that you are living in the antitypical day of atonement? Does it scare you to think that as we speak, the records of all the righteous are being reviewed in heaven?

21. Let us summarize what took place on the Day of Atonement.

A. Remember that the daily offerings continued. (Numbers 29:11)

B. Read Leviticus 16:3-19 which describes the events connected with the Lord's goat. Notice several very important points which made this goat a symbol very different from the animals that were sacrificed during the year. (1) This goat had sin-free blood. There were no hands laid on its head and no sins confessed over it. (Leviticus 16:9,15) Thus, it should be clear that the purpose of the blood of this goat was not to defile the sanctuary but to cleanse it. (2) The ceremonies of this day revealed an outward movement and not an inward movement. Sins were being taken away from the sanctuary and not taken into the sanctuary. (Leviticus 16:15-18) (3) This was a most solemn day of judgment for the people of Israel. They were to humble themselves, to avoid work, not to eat, and to avoid virtually all their normal activities. And those who did not were to be cut off. (Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:27-32) Notice that in Leviticus 16 the whole process was going beyond forgiveness. There was no mention of forgiveness at all in that chapter. All of these activities focused on the final conclusion to the sin problem and not to the individual forgiveness for sins. (4) It focused on cleansing. (Leviticus 16:30; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3) Christ and the Father in the heavenly sanctuary have opened up the government of God to the eyes of the onlooking universe. Just as the entire congregation was supposed to be watching the high priest, God will make His final judgments with the full cooperation and agreement of the universe. The entire universe will be watching the final events of this earth's history!

What should the Day of Atonement have accomplished?

1. Finally, the truth is irrefutably proven that Satan has always been the father of lies and is ultimately responsible for sin. (John 8:44; Leviticus 16:5-10,20-23) There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Azazel goat or scapegoat was a symbol for Satan and not for Christ. Leviticus 16:8 identifies the first goat as the goat for *Yahweh* but the other goat as the goat for Azazel. Clearly, these goats were intended to be in opposition to each other. Thus, Satan has opposed God.

2. The Azazel ritual takes place after everything else is completed. (Leviticus 16:20) This refers to the final disposition of sin by the elimination of all those responsible.

3. Azazel's goat was not slain, and no blood was dealt with. It was a non-sacrificial event. It had nothing to do with a sacrifice for sin. Instead, the goat was led far away from the camp to die. (Leviticus 16:20-22)

4. The Azazel goat acted like a "garbage truck" or "tote goat," taking the moral garbage from the camp of Israel, and taking it far away.

5. Azazel was clearly one of the "goat demons." (Leviticus 17:7; Isaiah 13:21; 34:14)

6. The final result is spelled out in Revelation 20. Satan and all his associates will choose by themselves to reject God and will end up in the lake of fire.

7. As the accuser of the brethren and the principal author of sin, Satan is made responsible for all of his actions and is ultimately destroyed.

22. So, what should be our duties and our responsibilities in this time of the great day of atonement? Does it make any sense for us to go on sinning, recognizing that sin is deadly?

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