

Growth Hour Study

Yom Kippur Hebrews 9 Sept. 27, 2020

ENGAGE

- Yom Kippur is the Last and Highest of Holy Days in the Jewish tradition and in the Old Testament Jewish Society.
- I will be speaking about the events of that day, the sacrifices made and the meaning to the people of Israel.
- I will also be looking at the Sacrifice of Jesus and His fulfillment of that sacrifice to bring about a new Covenant.
- This day is the culmination of national days of repentance and sacrifice made to take away the sins of the people so that they might be at peace with God. It is a separation of the clean and the unclean, the redeemed and the unredeemed, the people of God and those who not covered by the sacrifice.
- In your groups discuss the following:
 - The true meaning of repentance.
 - The cost of paying for sins for the year in the Yom Kippur sacrifice.
 - And the cost of paying for all the sins of all mankind for all time.

EXAMINE

A. Features of the Old Covenant described.

1. (1-5) The Old Covenant's tabernacle and its furnishings.

Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

- The earthly sanctuary:** The tabernacle ordained by the Old Covenant was planned by God, but planned for an **earthly** service.
- For a tabernacle was prepared:** The **tabernacle** was a tent 45 feet (15 meters) long, 15 feet (5 meters) wide, and 15 feet (5 meters) high, divided into two rooms. The larger room (**the first part**) was a 15 feet (5 meters) by 30 feet (10 meters) "holy place." **Behind the second veil** was the smaller room was a 15 feet (5 meters) by 15 feet (5 meters), called **the Holiest of All**.
- The lampstand:** This setting for the lamps of the tabernacle had a middle stem and six branches stood in **the first part**. It was of an unspecified size, made of pure gold and provided the only *light* for the tabernacle ([Exodus 25:31-40](#)).

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- d. **The table:** This sat in **the first part** and was made of acacia wood covered with gold, 3 feet long, 1½ feet wide, and 2 feet 3 inches high. It held twelve loaves of **showbread**, each representing God's fellowship with the twelve tribes of Israel ([Exodus 25:23-30](#)).
- e. **The sanctuary:** This refers to **the first part**, known as the "holy place." A **veil** (a thick curtain) separated **the first part** from the **Holiest of All**, also known as the "holy of holies" ([Exodus 26:31-33](#)).
- f. **The golden altar of incense:** This was made of acacia wood covered with gold, 1½ feet (½ meter) square, and 3 feet (1 meter) high. It stood at the veil before the "holy of holies" and was used to burn incense ([Exodus 30:1-8](#)).
- g. **The ark of the covenant:** This stood inside the **Holiest of All** and was a chest made of acacia wood covered with gold, 3¾ feet long, 2¼ feet wide, and 2¼ feet high, with rings for polls along its side to carry it without touching the ark itself ([Exodus 25:10-22](#)).
- i. Inside the ark were **the golden pot that had the manna** ([Exodus 16:33](#)), **Aaron's rod that budded** ([Numbers 17:6-11](#)), and **the tablets of the covenant** ([Exodus 25:16](#)).
- The **manna** reminded Israel of God's provision and their ungratefulness.
 - **Aaron's rod** reminded Israel of their rebellion against God's authority.
 - The **tablets of the covenant** reminded Israel of their failure to keep the Ten Commandments and rest of the law.
- h. **The mercy seat:** This was the ornate "lid" for the ark of the covenant, made with the designs of cherubim upon it. The blood of sacrifice was sprinkled upon it for the forgiveness of Israel's sin on the Day of Atonement ([Exodus 25:17-22](#)).
- i. As God looked down into the ark, He saw the symbols of Israel's sin, rebellion and failure. But when the blood of sacrifice was applied to the mercy seat, the blood of sacrifice covered His sight of the sin of Israel.

2. (6-7) Priestly service in the tabernacle under the Old Covenant.

Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services*. But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for the people's sins committed in ignorance*;

- a. **The priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services:** The **priests**, as appointed, went daily into the holy place to perform priestly functions such as tending the lampstand and replacing the showbread.

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b. **But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year:** The **second part** – sometimes known as the “holy of holies” – was entered only **once a year** by the high priest **alone**, on the Day of Atonement.

c. **The high priest went alone once a year, not without blood:** His entrance into the **second part** was not for fellowship, but only for atonement. The atoning **blood** was first for his own sins and then for the sins of his people.

i. Access into the *Holiest of All* was thus severely restricted. Even when someone could enter, it wasn't for real fellowship with God.

ii. The ancient Jewish Rabbis wrote of how the high priest did not prolong his prayer in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, because it might make the people think he had been killed. When he came out he threw a party for all his friends, because he had emerged safely from the presence of God.

d. **The people's sins committed in ignorance:** Sins of **ignorance** were the specific aim of the Day of Atonement. It was assumed that *known* sin would be taken care of through the regular sin offerings and the daily sacrifices.

i. In this respect, Jesus' work is far greater than the work done on the Day of Atonement. Jesus' work on the cross is sufficient to atone for both the sins we do in ignorance and sins that we know.

3. (8-10) The Holy Spirit gives understanding regarding the priestly service under the Old Covenant.

The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience; concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

a. **The way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing:** The old had to pass away before God's new way could be revealed.

b. **It was symbolic for the present time:** **Symbolic** is the ancient Greek word *parabole*. The tabernacle itself and all that the Old Covenant represented were suggestive of deeper truths, *parables* of the New Covenant.

c. **Cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience:** The priestly service under the Old Covenant could not make the priests offering those sacrifices perfect and clean in **regard to the conscience**.

i. If the cleansing is incomplete for the priest, how much more for the person on whose behalf the priest worked!

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c. **Fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation:** The weakness of the priestly service under the Old Covenant was its inability to address the need for inner transformation in man. Therefore it was only **imposed until the time of reformation**.

B. Features of the New Covenant described.

1. (11) The superior sanctuary of the New Covenant.

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

a. **The greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands:** Jesus, as our High Priest, ministers in a superior sanctuary – the very throne room of God. This is obviously a place greater than anything human **hands** could make.

2. (12-15) The superior sacrifice of the New Covenant.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

a. **The blood of goats and calves:** Animal sacrifice was sufficient for a temporary covering of sin, but only a perfect sacrifice could obtain **eternal redemption**.

i. Jesus' sacrifice was superior in that it was *perfect, voluntary, rational, and motivated by love*.

b. **With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all:** At the tabernacle, the sacrifice was made outside the veil, at the altar; but the atoning blood was brought into the most holy place, which represent the throne of God. In the same pattern Jesus had to die *here*, outside heaven and among sinful men, but the payment his death made had to be satisfied in heaven itself.

i. **He entered the Most Holy Place:** The High Priest entered once a year, going through the veil and back again, letting the veil fall behind him as he left – the barrier remained. Jesus tore the veil, and stays *in* the most holy place, heaven itself, welcoming us in. This is what makes Christianity all about *access*, not *barriers*.

ii. **With His own blood:** "Blood in Scripture always includes the two thoughts of a death suffered and a life offered." (Thomas)

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iii. “The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to earth to make a reconciliation by the holiness of his life, or by the earnestness of his teaching, but by his death.” (Spurgeon)

iv. “The Lord Jesus did not bring before God the sufferings of others or the merits of others, but his own life and death.” (Spurgeon)

c. **For if the blood of bulls and goats... sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ:** If these imperfect sacrifices were received as sufficient by Israel, then they should much more regard the ultimate sufficiency of the perfect sacrifice.

i. The **ashes of a heifer** refer to the remains of a burnt offering that was preserved. The ashes were sprinkled in the laver of washing to provide water suitable for ceremonial cleansing ([Numbers 19:1-10](#)).

ii. This was a shadow, fulfilled and done away with when Jesus offered a perfect cleansing. Therefore there is no value in “holy water” used by the Roman Catholic Church.

iii. Reportedly, there is a search for a “red heifer” that can be sacrificed, and its ashes used as part or a restoration of priestly functions for a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

d. **How much more shall the blood of Christ... cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** The sacrifice of Jesus is sufficient to even restore our damaged **conscience**.

i. Our **conscience** is a wonderful tool from God. But it isn't perfect. Our conscience can be *seared* ([1 Timothy 4:2](#)). Our conscience can be *defiled* ([Titus 1:15](#)). Our conscience can be *evil* ([Hebrews 10:22](#)).

e. **Cleanse your conscience from dead works:** The idea behind **dead works** is probably of sin in general, in the sense of “works that bring death.” But it must also speak to the vain continuation of Old Covenant sacrifice, which is certainly a **dead work** – and the very type of thing these discouraged Jewish Christians were tempted to go back to.

f. **To serve the living God:** The believer is cleansed, conscience and all, not to live unto himself but **to serve the living God**. The ancient Greek word translated **serve** here is *latreuo*, which speaks of religious or ceremonial, priestly service.

i. “And, dear friends, do keep in mind that you are henceforth to ‘serve the living God.’ You that are acquainted with the Greek will find that the kind of service here mentioned is not that which the slave or servant renders to his master, but a worshipful service such as priests render unto God. We that have been purged by Christ are to render to God the worship of a royal priesthood. It is ours to present prayers, thanksgivings, and sacrifice; it is ours to offer the incense of intercession; it is ours to light the lamp of testimony and furnish the table of shewbread.” (Spurgeon)

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g. **He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death:** Jesus' work as a Mediator is fundamentally accomplished at His **death**. His heavenly work of mediation looks back to that perfect sacrifice.

h. **For the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant:** Jesus' payment on the cross accomplished **redemption** for those under the **first covenant**. Every sacrifice for sin made in faith under the Mosaic command was an IOU paid in full at the cross.

3. (16-22) The necessity of Jesus' death.

For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

a. **For a testament is in force after men are dead:** A **testament** (in the sense of a "last will and testament") only takes effect when the person who made the testament dies. Therefore Jesus had to die for the testament – the covenant – to take effect.

i. "The same word in the Greek is used for 'covenant' and 'testament,' and although the double use is difficult, there seems to be no doubt that in verse 15 the word means 'covenant,' and in verses 16 and 17 'testament,' and then in verse 18 'covenant' again." (Thomas)

ii. "If there be a question about whether a man is alive or not, you cannot administer to his estate, but when you have certain evidence that the testator has died then the will stands. So is it with the blessed gospel: if Jesus did not die, then the gospel is null and void." (Spurgeon)

b. **Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood:** Clearly, death was necessary to the Old Covenant. Virtually every part of the sacrificial system under the Law of Moses was touched by **blood** in some way or another.

c. **Without shedding of blood there is no remission:** This is a foundational principle of God's dealings with men. Modern people think that sin is remitted (forgiven) by *time*, by *our good works*, by our *decent lives*, or by simply *death*. But there is **no** forgiveness without the shedding of blood, and there is no *perfect* forgiveness without a *perfect* sacrifice.

i. The shedding of Jesus' blood is God's *answer* to man's problem of sin. In his sermon *The Blood-Shedding*, Spurgeon began by showing us three fools. The first is a soldier wounded on the field of

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battle. The medic comes to the soldier, and immediately the soldier wants to know everything about the rifle and the soldier that shot him. The second fool is a ship captain, whose ship is about to go under in a terrible storm. The captain is not at the wheel of the ship, trying to guide it through the crashing waves; he is in his room studying charts, trying to determine where the storm came from. The third fool is a man who is sick and dying with sin, about to go under the waves of God's justice, yet is deeply troubled about the *origin* of evil. We should look to the *solution* more than to the problem.

4. (23-28) The perfect sanctuary receives a perfect sacrifice.

Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

a. **It was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these:** It was acceptable for the **copies of the things in the heavens** in the earthly sanctuary to be “purified” with imperfect sacrifices. But the **heavenly things themselves** could only be **purified** with a perfect offering.

i. “*Purification* implies, not only cleansing from defilement, but also *dedication* or *consecration*. All the utensils employed in the tabernacle service were thus *purified* though incapable of any moral pollution.” (Clarke)

b. **For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands... but into heaven itself:** Jesus' sacrifice was made on earth, but it is the basis for His continuing work as our mediator and High Priest in heaven. The writer to the Hebrews proclaims it: **now to appear in the presence of God for us**. It's not hard to believe that Jesus does **appear in the presence of God**. But to believe that He appears there **for us** is glorious!

c. **Not that He should offer Himself often:** Jesus' ministry **for us** continues in heaven, *but not in the sense of continuing to atone for our sin*. His ministry continues **for us** in intercession and defending us against the accuser of God's people ([Revelation 12:10](#)). But it does **not** continue in the sense that **He should offer Himself often**. His sacrifice was once-for-all, and perfectly satisfied God's holy justice.

i. This passage and principle is a direct rebuke to the Roman Catholic *practice* and *theology* of the mass. In the mass, the Roman Catholic Church desires to *repeat* – not remember, but *repeat* – the atoning sacrifice of Jesus innumerable times. This is absolutely indefensible scripturally, and *denies* the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The Scriptures make it plain: **not that He should offer Himself often**.

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d. **He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world:** If the sacrifice of Jesus were not *perfect*, then it would have to be *continual* and *constant* – even **since the foundation of the world**. Imperfect sacrifices must be repeated continually but a perfect sacrifice can be made once for all time, and genuinely **put away sin** (not just *cover* sin, as with sacrifice under the Old Covenant). The message is clear: **He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

i. This principle of sacrifice explains why the suffering of hell *must* be eternal for those who reject the atoning work of Jesus. They are in hell to pay the penalty of their sin, but as imperfect beings they are unable to make a perfect payment. If the payment is not perfect, then it has to be *continual* and *constant* – indeed, for all eternity. A soul could be released from hell the moment its debt of sin was completely paid – which is another way of saying *never*.

e. **And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many:** Just as certainly as we **die once** and then face **judgment**, so Jesus only had to die **once** (not repeatedly, not continually) to **bear** our sins.

i. It is not the intention of the writer to the Hebrews to discuss the issue of reincarnation. That is a side issue; he simply brings up the obvious point, **it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment**. Just as that is obvious, so it is plain that **Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many**. For the writer to the Hebrews, the truth that **it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment** is an indisputable principle.

ii. “A man dies once, and after that everything is fixed and settled, and he answers for his doings at the judgment. One life, one death – then everything is weighed, and the result declared: ‘after this the judgment.’ So Christ comes, and dies once; and after this, for him also the result of what he has done, namely, the salvation of those who look for him. He dies once, and then reaps the fixed result, according to the analogy of the human race, of which he became a member and representative.” (Spurgeon)

iii. Though it was not really the point of the writer to the Hebrews to discuss reincarnation, he certainly and completely *denies* it here. We do not die and live and die and live, facing an eternal reckoning some number of lives down the road. This life is it, and then we face judgment. This means that *there are no second chances beyond the grave*. Now is the time to choose for Jesus Christ, because when we **die** we simply face **the judgment**.

iv. It is important to note that the principle of **it is appointed for men to die once** is not an *absolute principle*. There are some unique, remarkable exceptions. Enoch ([Genesis 5:24](#)) and Elijah ([2 Kings 2:11](#)) never *died once*. Several people in the Bible were raised from the dead ([1 Kings 17:22](#), [2 Kings 13:20-21](#), [Matthew 9:25](#), [John 11:43-44](#), [Acts 20:9-11](#)), and therefore *died twice*. Those taken in the rapture ([1 Thessalonians 4:17](#)) will never *die once*. Yet these remarkable, unique exceptions do not deny the principle of **it is appointed for men to die once**; they are *exceptions that prove the rule*.

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f. **He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation:** The focus of Jesus' first coming was to deal with the sin problem through His atoning sacrifice. But now, having dealt with the sin problem perfectly, He comes again **apart from sin** – for the **salvation** (in the sense of *rescue*) of His people.

i. **To those who eagerly wait for Him:** It is *assumed* that all believers will **eagerly wait for Him**. It's a sad case that this assumption doesn't always play out as true.

ii. "It ought to be a daily disappointment when our Lord does not come; instead of being, as I fear it is, a kind of foregone conclusion that he will not come just yet." (Spurgeon)

QUESTIONS

- In what ways did the tabernacle aid worship?
- How do we worship God today?
- Without looking, what was in the outer tabernacle?
- Without looking, what is behind the veil?
- Do we ourselves think of God as "living"? What does that mean to us?
- What are the implications of God being "living," do we think?
- How does this image of Christ as a mediator affect our understanding of ourselves? How does it affect our understanding of God?
- Does our own culture have a purity system, do we think? How would we describe it – that is, what things do we think of as "pure"?
- What makes people and things "pure"? What things are "impure," and what makes people and things "impure"?
- How do our present-day ideas of purity and impurity seem to affect the way we understand this text?
- How do our present-day ideas of purity and impurity affect the way we think about our own relationship with Jesus Christ, or with "the living God"?
- What do you think Repentance means? Why is it necessary before forgiveness can be given?