

The Day of Atonement The Obligatory Fast, Reconciliation and the Millennium

“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement [3725, *expiation, requital, restoration*]: it shall be a holy convocation to you; and **you shall afflict** [6031, *to humble, weaken oneself by fasting*] **your souls**...And you shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement [3722, *to cover over*] for you before the LORD your God” (Leviticus 23:27, 28).

Atonement is *Strong's* #3725 from #3722, *to cover*. The English word atonement means “*to be at one,*” to be “*reconciled.*” For nearly six thousand years man has been rebelling against God, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it **is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**” (Romans 8:7). Reconciliation must be preceded by humility, which leads to repentance.

The Day of the LORD and the Obligatory Fast

“The lofty looks of man **shall be humbled**, and the haughtiness [7312, *loftiness, self-exaltation*] of man shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For **the day of the LORD of Hosts** shall be upon everyone that is **proud and lofty**, and upon everyone that is **lifted up**; and he shall be brought low” (Isaiah 2:11, 12).

The Eternal God is going to destroy the food and water supplies, and then man will be forced to fast. “Sanctify you a **fast**, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry to the LORD. Alas for the day! for **the day of the LORD is at hand**, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat [400, *food*] **cut off before our eyes**...? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garner [214, *storehouses*] are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed, **because they have no pasture**; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures ... and the flame has burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also to you: **for the rivers of waters are dried up**, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness” (Joel 1:14-20).

“Therefore also now, says the LORD, **Turn you to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart**, and not your garments, and turn to the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents [5162, *a change of heart*] of the evil [*punishment*]” (Joel 2:12, 13).

Fasting that is unacceptable to God

If fasting does not lead to a change of heart, then it is unacceptable to God. "...Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact [5065, *to impel, demand*] all your labors...you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: you shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high" (Isaiah 58:4, 5).

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is an example of fasting that is useless. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You, that **I am not as other men**, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. **I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess**" (Luke 18:10-12).

The Pharisee **was self-righteous and full of pride**. His fasting was useless. The publican, on the other hand, "...would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (v. 13). The publican displayed humility. Therefore, "...this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one **that exalts himself shall be abased**; and he **that humbles himself shall be exalted**" (v. 14).

The Acceptable Fast

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To unloose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. **Then you shall call, and the LORD shall answer...**" (Isaiah 58: 6-9).

Fasting must lead to a complete change of heart. "Seek the LORD while He may be found...Let the wicked **forsake his way**, and the unrighteous man **his thoughts**: and let him return [7725, *turn around*] **to the LORD**, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways..." (Isaiah 55:6-8).

The Eternal says, "...[B]ut to this man will I look, even to him that is poor [6041, *afflicted, humble*] and of a contrite [5223, *broken*] spirit, and **trembles at My word....Hear** [8085, *to understand, to obey, give heed*] the word of the LORD, you that **tremble at His word...**" (Isaiah 66:2, 5).

The obligatory fast on the Day of Atonement pictures the humbling of those who will live through the tribulation to the coming of Jesus Christ on the Day of Atonement.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The Day of Atonement ceremony is a picture of events that take place at different times. The first is the sacrifice of the sin offering, which is a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the 14th of Abib. The blood of the sin offering was carried by the high priest from the altar into the Most Holy Place, where its blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat (fig. 1).

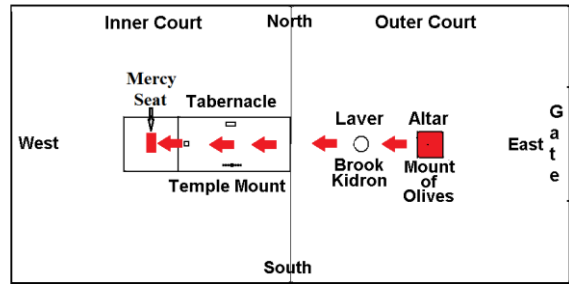


Figure 1

After Jesus’ resurrection He was seen by His disciples “...forty days...” Acts 1:3). Then, “...while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight....Then returned they to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives...” (Acts 1:3, 9, 12). On that day, “...Christ being come a high priest of good things to come...neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Most Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11, 12). Jesus fulfilled this part of the ceremony on the twenty-seventh day of the second month.

The next part of the ceremony will take place on the tenth day of the seventh month. The high priest took the blood of the sin offering from the Most Holy Place to the altar, where the offering for sin had been made (fig. 2). “And he shall go out to the altar...and make an atonement for it...And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it...” (Leviticus 16:18, 19).

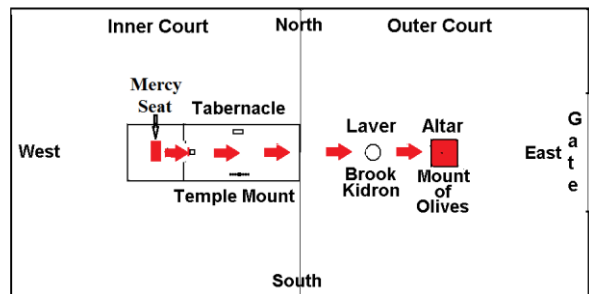


Figure 2

Jesus will fulfill this part of the ceremony when He returns on the Day of Atonement. At His return Jesus Christ will be “...clothed with a vesture **immersed in blood**: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine line, white and clean” (Revelation 19:13, 14). The “...fine linen, clean and white...is the righteousness of the saints” (v. 8). Those who were in the first resurrection will return with Him.

Jesus will return with His sacrificial blood to the Mount of Olives where He was crucified. “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst from the east to the west...You shall flee through the valley, for it will reach to Azal [682, a place near Jerusalem]....And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with You” (Zechariah 14:4, 5).

The Living Bible has for Azal, "...to the city gate." Figure 3 shows the altar split in half, and the way through it leading to the entrance of the temple. The symbolism that is presented by this scenario is that the people are going through the altar, where their sins are covered by Jesus' blood.

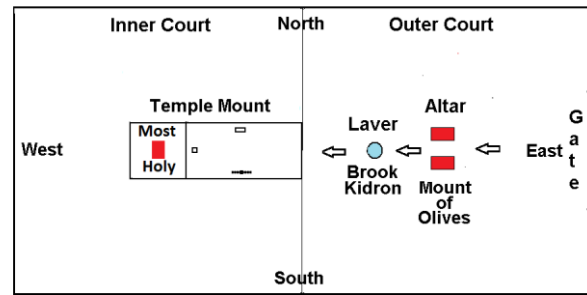


Figure 3

The people are "...a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues....These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb....**They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore...**" (Revelation 7:9, 14, 16). These are they who will have been humbled, and have repented, and their sins have been atoned for by Jesus' blood.

The flight through the valley from the east to the west goes through the Brook Kidron, which is represented by the bronze laver, which was filled with water for washing (Exodus 30:18-21). Washing the hands and the feet symbolizes baptism. The hands represent our works and the feet the way in which we walk. "LORD, who shall abide in Your tabernacle? who shall dwell in Your holy hill? He that **walks uprightly**, and **works righteousness**, and speaks the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:1, 2).

From the water the path leads to the door of the tabernacle/temple, a.k.a. the Mountain of the LORD, as Mount Sinai was called, where the covenant was given. There the people will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "And a new heart also will I give you, and a **new spirit will I put within you**: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put My spirit within you**, and cause you to **walk** in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26, 27).

"And many nations shall come, and say, **Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob**; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2).

The One Thousand-Year Reign of Christ and the Saints

There were two goats used in the Day of Atonement ceremony. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot **for the LORD**, and the other lot for Azazel [5799, *departure, removal, separation*]" (Leviticus 16:8). The lot for the LORD was offered "...for a sin offering" (v. 9). The goat used for the sin offering represented **the LORD Jesus Christ**.

The second goat **was not an offering for sin**. The second goat had the sins of Israel placed upon

its head, and it was taken by "...the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities to a land **not inhabited**..." (vv. 21, 22).

The fulfillment of this is on the Day of Atonement, when Jesus returns. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the Devil, and Satan, and bound him **a thousand years**, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive [4105, *lead astray, cause to wander*] the nations no more, till the **thousand years should be fulfilled**..." (Revelation 20:1-3).

Each individual is responsible for his own sins, but Satan bears the responsibility of leading man astray through his lies and deceptions. He will be removed "to a land not inhabited" for one thousand years. During that same one thousand-year period the saints will be ruling with Jesus Christ.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them....Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him **a thousand years**" (Revelation 20:4, 6).

Conclusion: The Day of Atonement pictures the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. During that time Satan will be bound, and will be unable to lead man astray. Man will be reconciled back to His Creator, and will learn to walk within the boundaries of God's law. This will lead to peace. "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war anymore**. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; **and none shall make them afraid**: for the mouth of the LORD of Hosts has spoken it" (Micah 4:3, 4).