

Jewish Spiritual Life

PEACE THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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Yom Kippur – The Atonement Today By George Gruen

Foremost in the lives of people today is the longing for true peace and happiness. Conditions about us certainly can frustrate efforts to find some semblance real peace in living, in our families or personal lives. The fear of infidelity on the part of one's spouse and the increase in crime can bring so much uncertainty, anguish, and loneliness. Men and woman, young people and those of all ages, long for a place of rest in what can be a weary life. In spite of what you might experience today, I know there is a place of rest. There is a place of peace, a place of joy. There is purpose for us in this life, and there is a plan whereby we can experience true satisfaction. These treasures of life come not by human effort or accomplishment. They are not attained by some code of morals or human behavior. No, not by our striving, but through the love, plan and provision of the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yes, the God of Israel loves you and me, and He has revealed to us his will for our lives. God has communicated with us through his record of the past, present, and future in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, the Bible. How thankful I am to God today that I have the Bible. I can read its pages and in it find the plan of God whereby I can have peace...to the extent that I trust and obey God and his word. The problems of life are understood, the sins of life are cleansed, and God's joy and peace become living testimonies of his love and the truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures. All that God has for your life and mine comes through an initial act of obedience to Him, when we find that relationship that can be ours through the Messiah of Israel. Let us consider what the Messiah has done for us to make possible in our lives the forgiveness of sin, peace, joy, guidance and victory which are promised to the believing heart. The identity of the Messiah cannot be missed by any honest, seeking heart. The identity of the Messiah is made known to us through the Jewish Holy Scriptures.

The Messiah of Israel, as foretold in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, would be sent to earth by the God of Abraham to provide for us the atonement. Jewish people know about the atonement, for it is considered on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), but there are those who do not know what the atonement really is according to what the God of Israel has said to us in His Holy Scriptures. Tradition is known, and current religious thought is passed on through those who sincerely believe that what they teach is right. However, we must know what God says and what the Bible teaches, for this is God's commandment for our Jewish people and for all people today. We can never have a right relationship with God unless the atonement is a reality in our lives.

Atonement comes from the Hebrew word which means "to cover," to cover sin, to release the sinner from guilt and God's punishment of sin. God's atonement is the payment of the penalty, the penalty due us because we have sinned. In the Holy Scriptures the payment for sin involved the shed blood of specified animal sacrifice in accordance with the instructions which God gave to our Hebrew people through Moses. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement given in the

law through Moses, was the annual day of cleansing for the sins of the nation of Israel. The great Day of Atonement, recorded for us in the third book of Moses, Leviticus, Chapter 16, was observed on the tenth day of the seventh month (in the Jewish calendar). On the tenth day of the seventh month the Jewish high priest sacrificed a bullock - the animal God specified - as a sin offering for himself and the Jewish priests. He brought the blood of the slain bullock and sprinkled it on the mercy seat in the Jewish Tabernacle and later in time in the Temple. By this act of obedience to God's command, atonement was made for the High Priest's sins and the sins of the priests. In similar matter, a goat was taken, slain and its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat to make an atonement for the people of Israel. Within the ark, which was in the Tabernacle, was found the ten commandments which God gave as a basic teaching of the law. When God looked down from Heaven he saw this tablet of stone upon which were engraved the ten commandments. Men and woman have disobeyed God's commandments. To disobey God is to sin. But then Aaron brought the blood and sprinkled it on the top of this mercy seat, God saw the covering of the blood of atonement which was done in obedience to His command. Then, God did not see the broken law and our sins, but He saw the covenant of the Blood the Atonement, and God forgave the sins of the people. It would be best for you to read these Bible verses in their entirety on this vital matter, and I hope you will do so in your Jewish Holy Scriptures. If you do not have a Bible, I will E-mail to you, or send a printed copy, of Leviticus chapter 16.

The atonement is the blood covering for people's guilt and sins. Not only was the sin covering made on the great Day of Atonement once a year, but also daily sacrifices were made by Jewish people for daily cleansing when they sinned during the year.

But what about today...the day in which we live? Where is the Blood of Atonement according to the God of Israel's instructions? We are going to find, as we look into God's Word, that God has indeed provided the atonement for us today.

Do you know what it is to be forgiven of all sin by the Eternal God of Israel? Have you experienced cleansing from guilt and freedom from punishment for the things you've done in this life against God? I do, and I thank God for it. Through all the problems and trials of life which we all experience - we all have sickness and difficulties and there are needs, but through them all there is peace, because as Bible-believers we know God and have His joy and assurance in our lives that all is right with Him. Some day, maybe very soon, we are going to see God and spend eternity in Heaven where the Scripture says there will be no more sin, no more tears, no more death, no fear nor sorrow nor sickness. The Bible says for the person who does not accept the plan of God for our lives, there is bondage and the fear of death. Because the unbeliever knows not where he's going when he dies. I know there are people who say they don't care what happens when they die, and they joke about Hell and Heaven. But that does not minimize the reality that there is a real place God calls Heaven, and there is a real place God calls Hell. God says that people whose sins have been forgiven here according to the directions in His Holy Scriptures are going to Heaven. Those who know not the forgiveness of sin according to the Holy Scriptures are going to Hell when they die. That's what the Bible clearly teaches. The God of Israel warns us of the wrath to come, He warns us to get right with Him now while there is yet time. If you are not a Bible believer, I urge you to sincerely seek God, to know the atonement and cleansing from sin.

In Old Testament times the atonement was given by God to cover the sins of the people through the blood of the animal sacrifice. Today, the atonement is to take away sin completely through the sacrifice of Messiah. What did God foretell in the Jewish Holy Scriptures concerning the matter of atonement today? In the third book of Moses, Leviticus, in the Holy Scriptures, chapter 5, beginning with verse 5, we read about the atonement: "It shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing." God's Holy Scripture makes it very clear that we must confess our sin to God, not to another person. We must admit to Almighty God that we are sinners. Many people have done good works and can be good and moral, but every person still has sinned according to the Word of God. It says in the Holy Scriptures book of Ecclesiastes: "There is not a just [good] man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not" - chapter 7, verse 20.

Again in the book of Leviticus regarding the atonement it says, after we have confessed our sin to God, "He shall confess that he has sinned in that thing," and then in verse six: "And he shall bring his trespass offering onto the LORD for his sin which he has sinned,...a lamb or a kid of the goat for a sin offering, and the priest [the Jewish priest] shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin." How is a person to have the atonement? By doing good, no. By not committing the act of sin again, no. By trying to pay some money at a place of worship, no. He was to offer the animal sacrifice by bringing it to the Jewish priest at the Tabernacle or the Temple. Then it goes on to say: "He [the Jewish priest] shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar, it is a sin offering." The animal was slain, its blood was shed for man's sin to be forgiven: "has sinned and shall be forgiven." The promise of God to forgive sin, if man would acknowledge and obey God's word and plan.

But what about today? In the New Covenant book of Hebrews, chapter 9, beginning with verse 11, we read: "But Messiah, being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building neither by the blood of goats...[animals], but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats...sprinkling the unclean sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of the Messiah who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God. And for this cause He is the mediator of the new covenant...that by means of his own death for the redemption of the transgressions [sins] that were under the first testament, they which were called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance [Heaven]." Verse 22: "...things by law are purged with blood [animal sacrifice], and without the shedding of blood is no remission" [forgiveness of sin]. Verse 25: "Nor yet that he shall offer for himself often as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others, that is of the animal. For then he must have often suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once...he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and as it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment, so Messiah was once offered to bear the sin of many, and to them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Messiah, in His death, offered himself as the blood of atonement so that our sins can be forgiven. Many people today do not know true peace from God, for they do not trust the Holy Scriptures as our Jewish people did in the past and know not the atonement provided for us by the Messiah.

We need to get back to God and His Word and plan for our lives. We need the atonement which God has given to us. If we are not true to the word of the God of Israel, if we do not trust Him, we will walk through this life without His peace, plan, guidance and direction. When death comes, the unbeliever will face judgment for his sins and an eternity of suffering away from the presence of God. I'm thankful as a Jewish bible believer that my assurance of the future is anchored in the promises of God and in Messiah. The future is not a question, not an unknown, but a positive reality obtained now by trusting God's plan for life and eternity. Our faith is anchored in the Holy Scriptures and not on what other people say or do concerning the Bible. God will give you His peace if you will keep your faith true to Him and to His Word.

In the New Covenant book of Hebrews, we read concerning Messiah who provided the blood of atonement for us: Hebrews chapter 9, verse 12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us." When I sin, I pray to God and ask him to cleanse me with the blood of atonement provided for me by the Messiah. Who is the Messiah? An honest study of the Scriptures will clearly show that Jesus is our Jewish Messiah. He came from God to provide for us the Blood of Atonement so that people might know cleansing from all sin and have peace with God. This is not another religion. It is Bible Judaism. It is the faith which the God of Israel expects of us.

Do you have the blood of atonement today? Can you honestly say you know, beyond any doubt, that your sins are forgiven by the God of Abraham, and you know you are going to spend eternity in Heaven? And not only Heaven someday, but the love, guidance and direction from God now, today! God says the atonement is a complete cleansing of all our sins of the past. We are secure in His plan, we are free from the guilt of our sins. Do you know this freedom? Do you know what it is to have a clean conscience and a pure heart before the Almighty God, the God of Israel? It's possible for us as we put our faith in Messiah Jesus, who died for us that our sins might be forgiven. It says in the New Testament in first Peter chapter 1, verses 18 and on "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, [we can't buy our way into Heaven]...But with the precious blood of the Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained from the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him to believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." Where is your trust today? I hope it is in the Word of God, God himself and Messiah Jesus who provided forgiveness of sin for us by the offering of Himself to take the judgment due us for our sins against God.