

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG162 – Day of Atonement 2023

I am titling this podcast *Day of Atonement 2023*. Obviously, we are talking about the Day of Atonement, and this podcast should be released just preceding the Day of Atonement in this year. The Day of Atonement is also called Yom Kippur, or “Yom Kipper,” as some people call it. This is a tremendous celebration, part of the Fall celebration feasts and perpetual sacrifices that God has given us biblically to celebrate. I will give you a little basis for this celebration, and then we will go into what I am feeling is God’s emphasis for us in this specific year.

Now, people mistakenly call this the “Feast of Atonement.” Remember, it is not a feast. It is one day long and it is not a day that people feast on. It is actually a fast, and it is a time in Israel of real mourning and repentance and crying out to God. I have been in Israel with Shlomo Hizak celebrating the Atonement, the Yom Kippur celebration, and you are literally in synagogue for hours upon hours. The service probably begins seven hours, eight hours long, and then you have a half-hour break and then you go back for quite a bit more. And most of the reading and the tenor of it is, as I said, a time of repentance. So to call this the “Feast of Atonement” is not really accurate at all. This is a time when we look for the Lord, however, to really minister something to us of deliverance – not just in forgiveness of our sin, but also, in my mind, in the removal of iniquity and the nature of the sin.

This is a question that you get a lot from people about the Day of Atonement: “Why do we have a Day of Atonement when we have Passover? I thought Passover was about the time of the cross.” It says in the New Testament Scriptures that “Christ our Passover has been sacrificed,” and so we think of this emphasis of Passover. We go back to Egypt and the deliverance that came, or the blood that was put over the doorposts and people were saved from the judgments that were coming over Egypt by the death angel passing through; and I think that, to me, is really the distinction. When we talk about Passover, we are talking about the salvation from judgment that comes. You can say forgiveness of your sin, but it is God covering you with the blood of the Lamb that protects you from the judgment that is to come. And this is what forgiveness of sin is really about: it is a protection from the judgment. Now I think there is something really different in the Day of Atonement that applies for us today as believers, something we should be reaching for.

Okay, so let’s dive into this. We are going to start with Leviticus the twenty-third chapter and lay a foundation for the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 23, verses 26-28, “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; It shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the Lord your God.’” So we see it is a time of humbling your souls before the Lord. It is a time of presenting an offering before the Lord, which I believe is ourselves as we come before Him.

Now let’s go to Leviticus the sixteenth chapter, and we will start at verse 29. “This shall be a permanent statute for you.” This is something that we celebrate every year, as commanded, on the specific day; the tenth day of the seventh month is the day that it is celebrated. It is honored on that day, and it is a

permanent statute that we will forever, in my mind, be observing. So again, in verses 29-30, “This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

Now, maybe some feel like it's splitting hairs; I feel like there is a difference between forgiveness and covering of our sin, and being cleansed and washed of our sin. I think you can be forgiven of your sin and yet still have the nature of sin in you – which I think that believers do have that nature still in them. And I think that the significance of Atonement is that it is pointing to the fact that there is a removing of the nature of sin. In a sense, the ability to sin is removed from us; it is not just forgiveness. And I think most of even what the church teaches us is the mentality of, yes, we are forgiven by the cross of Christ. He died for us, He suffered, He bled, and we can plead the blood of Christ, or minister the blood of Christ, or believe in the blood of Christ; and by that blood we are forgiven of our sins, and now we have eternal life in God because we have been forgiven. Then our practice in church is that we come back Sunday after Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, and in many churches, every Sunday you receive Communion, the Lord's Supper; and the purpose of that is to remember the sacrifice that was made. Most people use it in applying the blood once again, and looking for forgiveness of the sins that have transpired since last Sunday. This is very true. The Catholic Church is very persistent with this, consistent with it, on having the Lord's Supper, the Communion, the Sacraments, all of the time; and usually preceding the Sacraments, it is suggested that you confess. What are you confessing? You are confessing the sins from your last time of confession. You are taking the Sacraments again, because they are needed for the forgiveness of sin.

So, this idea that we are forgiven is wonderful, and we understand that; and we understand through that forgiveness that we receive eternal life and we are accepted into the family of God. But for me, personally, it grieves me that we continue to live, and we feel like it is acceptable that we continue to live, with this nature of sin still dominating or at least existing within us, so that we continue to have a struggle with that nature and we continue to sin and fail. And so, it becomes probably a great theological question to many of, “Well, is this really true? Is there really a removal?” So I want to just go into some verses of Scripture, and you can decide for yourself. It is between you and God in your own heart of seeking Him and finding out what He is saying, and how you are to live before Him following this reality of our Passover of forgiveness and our sins being forgiven and covered by the blood and by the cross. Is there anything more? I guess that becomes the question. Is there another event that we look for? Is there something more that is available for us in our faith? I believe the answer to that is yes, and I believe that that is what is being really spoken of and ministered here in Atonement, which is different than the Passover. If it is not different, if there is not something different here, why do we need Passover and Atonement? There would be no real need for it.

When we get into Leviticus 16, then we are talking about this permanent statute, and we are talking about the fact that it shall be celebrated this way. Verses 31-34,

“It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.

Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.” And just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so he did.

I am not going to read a lot of this, but I will give you Leviticus 16. We go back up to the beginning of this chapter, because what I just read to you was the ending of the chapter. If you go back up to the beginning of Leviticus 16, and you begin in verse 1 and you go all the way through verse 28, you will see the details of how the Day of Atonement was officiated by the high priest, and what was actually transpiring. We know from what we just read that there was atonement made for the high priest himself, for all of the priests, for the tabernacle, for the altar, for the people, everything. There was an atonement aspect made for everything, because everything was polluted by the existence, the continued existence, of this sin. And that is where I think you begin to see a difference here, is recognizing that the Tabernacle was polluted by sin, the altar was polluted by sin; and therefore, it was looking for that sin to be removed so there was no longer its existence within the camp of Israel, certainly within the area of the Tabernacle and the holy service that took place.

Let’s read some of the points of how this was done. In verses 7-10, it says,

“He shall take two goats and present them before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell, and make it a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.”

We see that this is a living sacrifice. This goat is not killed. It is not used as a normal sin offering, as other sin offerings are done. It is presented alive; and we will see that it was then sent into the wilderness as the scapegoat. Why? Because the idea was to remove sin, to remove iniquity, out of the camp, out of the midst of Israel – out of their lives, out of their sacrifice, out of everything. Atonement looked, or prophetically pointed, to a time when this nature of sin and iniquity is dealt with, and it is actually removed out of our midst; and I believe it should be removed out of our hearts by this reality of Atonement. Again, it is interesting, atonement means just what it says: at-one-ment – it brings us into a oneness with God. And to be in oneness with God, He is without sin and cannot countenance the existence of sin. So, if we have been forgiven of sin, that is one thing; but to dwell with God in His Presence, we cannot enter into that Presence with sin still dwelling within us.

Verse 11: “Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself.” Again, he begins with himself. The high priest begins with himself, and he makes a sin offering for himself, for his family; he goes on and makes it for the priest and everything else. In verse 15, it says, “Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.” So we see, again, he is going through and making this sin offering in the Holy of Holies, he is making it for the Tabernacle, he is making it for the altar, he is making it for the children of Israel, for the priests – everything receives this experience of the sin offering. Verse 18 talks about the altar being cleansed.

Now, let’s go down to verses 21-22, because here is where we go beyond just the sin offering. “Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel.” Iniquity is generally thought of as sins and things that you are not necessarily aware of or

in control of. And so, I think we are dealing with the nature of sin, the human nature, the depraved nature that exists in us, which is many times the source of the sin. So there is a differentiation between just the sin that is taking place, and the fact that something is making this sin come forth in our lives. And the question is, "Is there a removal in our experience, in our walk with God, from that?" And I think, yes, it is this day of Yom Kippur. He continues, "and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness."

The picture here, when we look at it very clearly, is that not only is there a sin offering, which is for the forgiveness of sin and the cleansing of the sin that has been committed already, past tense, from all of these areas; but then we go into another phase where all of this then is actually removed from the camp. It is gone out of the camp. Theoretically, there is no more sin, there is no more ability to sin in the camp. So we are talking about something clearly different.

Now, let's go into some other Scriptures that talk to us about this. I am going to start with Hebrews the ninth chapter. I would encourage you to read from about verse 18 through verse 28. Verses 18-20 say, "Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood," which is just what we are seeing. "For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.'" Then he sprinkled everything and sanctified everything at the beginning of its construction and implementation in the wilderness.

We jump down to verses 27-28, talking about Christ who suffered for us. It says, "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."

I think in this Scripture we see that not only did Christ come and manifest Himself to you in a revelation of the forgiveness of sin, but He also is going to appear to us a second time. Now you could say this is the second coming; okay, great, but I would not wait for the second coming for this to happen. We realize that He is coming again, He is manifesting again for us in our lives for salvation without reference to sin. In other words, He is not coming to forgive sin, He is coming for a different purpose; and I believe that purpose is to transform us into His image. "While beholding Him, we are changed from glory to glory into His likeness." He wants us to be in His likeness. He does not just want to keep coming back and coming back and visiting us to forgive sin, so that every time we go to church or every time we appear before Him, the first thing He has to do is forgive our sin. No, He is going to appear to do a different work in us and in our lives. And I believe it is without reference to sin, and it is for those who eagerly await something of His Presence and manifestation in a new light.

We will go to Second Corinthians 5, let's check that out. Again, I would encourage you to read from about verse 14 down through verse 17. Let me jump in here at verses 15-17: "He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

So we have to, in all honesty, ask ourselves. I know we are believers who received the salvation experience, and we recognize that that was given to us by His suffering on the cross, and His blood and His suffering forgives us of our sin. But he also says that if you are in Christ, you are a new creature; the old things pass away. Now, have the old things passed away from you? Has the old Adamic nature passed away out of your life and you no longer struggle with sin, you no longer struggle with iniquity? Is that an experience you have had? I don't know that for the most part people even believe that the experience exists. But according to this, if any man is in Christ, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. I want to be a new creature. I do not want to live as a human who has a nature of sin that continues to exist in me so that I am constantly fighting with sin and constantly needing to come back for further forgiveness, time after time after time, for the sin I am committing and the failure I find in my life. It says that the old thing is to pass away, and the new thing is to have come for us. But I think we have to believe in it and exercise and seek God with all of our heart to walk in it. And now, at this time of Yom Kippur, I believe it is a time to do that. It says it is a time when we humble ourselves. I think we should humble ourselves and reach for a level of experience that we have not yet received, which is this new creature that is freed from the conditionings and the nature of the past.

In John the third chapter, start at verse 1 and read down through verse 13. This is talking about the story of Nicodemus who comes to Jesus at night and begins to talk to Him. In verse 3, Yeshua answers and says to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now, I know we use that term "born again," but I think we have tossed it around in a way that has lost the meaning of what Christ was really talking about here. Let's look at some of the detail of what He is saying about a born-again experience.

Verses 4-5: "Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'" I think that is what we are believing for in this day, is to enter into the kingdom of God. Verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The flesh is flesh; that is all there is to it. The flesh has a flesh nature, and it will always have a flesh nature, unless it is transformed and born again. "And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." I have said this many times, I think this is where we kind of miss it in the age we are in. We call this the Church Age; this is not the Church Age, this is the Age of Spirit. This age was launched on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on the one hundred twenty on the Day of Pentecost, and they began to be the witnesses to all of the earth; and it is through that witness that they were to make disciples of all peoples. And so, the terminology can seem like splitting hairs, but I think there are grand canyons of difference in the meaning that can be used in these words. You can say, "Well, I am born of the Spirit." Are you really born of the Spirit, so that you are freed from the flesh? Because according to this, and according to what we read in other places, like in Romans, the spirit is at war against the flesh, and the flesh is at war against the spirit; and these two things are in contention against each other. Why? Because the spirit is laboring that we be born of the Spirit.

Verses 7-8: "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Now look at it: do we see these qualities in the life of Christians, that they are like the Spirit in the fact that the wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound, but you do not know where it is going, where it is coming from, or going to? I think most people are pretty easy to nail down exactly the way they live their lives and what they think and who they are, and all that. That does not seem to me like it is being led by the Spirit after being born of the Spirit. Because He says,

“So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” We have these qualities of the Spirit within us, which means it is not following the logical progression of the flesh, or the steps of the flesh, or acting like the flesh; because the flesh is locked down to Newtonian physics, and it lives in a material world and acts within that world. And the Spirit and those who are born of it do not live bound to that type of existence. They are able to flow and be led and move in the Spirit.

So Nicodemus goes on with his confusion, and the Lord keeps speaking to him, down to verse 13; and I encourage you to read it. Now we are going to go to Romans the sixth chapter. And again, I know I am giving you a wide range of verses to read, because already this is coming to our time limit and we should finish up here. But I think all of these verses are very important, and you will miss some of the depth of what we are talking about here unless you go back and read all of these.

Romans 6, read verses 1 through 13. I will go to verses 3-4: “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” This is the purpose of baptism – we are to be walking in the newness of life. What is the newness of life? Well, when Christ came forth from the dead, He lived and walked in resurrection life; and it is obvious, from reading the Scriptures, that things really, really changed for Yeshua after the Resurrection. He walked through walls, He did many things that He had not done before. He was in a newness of life. He was no longer living solely in a human body that was bound by the things of the flesh and the natural world around Him. He had transcended into something new. And the Scriptures keep talking about this new thing: “If any man is in Christ, He is a new creature.” It says, “If we have been raised with Him, then we should walk as He walked in newness of life.” Verse 5: “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” We are to walk in this age in the likeness of His resurrection.

I think we see that with the disciples after the Day of Pentecost. They walked in a level of Spirit that transcended being bound to this fleshly life. That is what Paul is alluding to when he says, “Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, we do not know Him that way any longer.” We know Him after the newness of the resurrection. Verses 6-8 say, “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him.” This is not talking about the forgiveness of sin; this is talking about that the old self, the old nature, was crucified with Him, “in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.” Okay, now either we take this verse 6 at face value, and it is saying what it means, and it means what it says, or not. You can find some way to explain it away. Personally, I don’t want to explain it away, because I want the experience of it. “Knowing this,” that the “old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body,” our human physical “body of sin” – talking about that nature, that it comes along with the flesh body – “might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” Now, we can apply this to “after you die, you’ll live with Him.” No. I think we can live with Him now. He said, “Where I am, there will My servant be also.” So I think there is something here for us. And I just want to encourage us, I want to challenge us. I encourage you to keep reading these verses I am in; go all the way down to verse 13 and see what it is saying here.

I am going to read very quickly a couple more, beginning with Ephesians the fourth chapter, verses 22-24. “That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Pretty strong language there of what we should be after our salvation experience, and in to the experiences that follow our salvation experience. This is why we are baptized, because these things follow the baptism in water, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And these are things that we, as believers, should walk in.

Colossians 3, verses 9-10. "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices" – see, to get rid of evil and sin, you have to lay aside the old self, "and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

I want this so bad, Lord! I believe that we can reach in, right now, today, and we can appropriate the reality of a Day of Atonement, of the day of Yom Kippur, and we can put on the new self. Yes, we need to be forgiven of our sin; but likewise, we need to put on the new self that walks in newness of life, and is being renewed to a true knowledge to the image of the One who created him.

One last Scripture, Romans 12:1-2, and I will just read it very quickly: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

There is a process where we transcend through the good, the acceptable, and the perfect, into a renewal of our mind which transforms us into His likeness and His image. I believe this is the purpose of the Day of Atonement, and I believe that with all of our hearts we can appropriate it and see an experience of this for us today.

Amen.