

SEVEN MOST IMPORTANT DIMENSIONS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT OR YOM KIPPUR

1. Why there had to be a Goat of the Sin-offering (Lev 16:10)

The goat for the sin-offering had to be slaughtered and its blood was sprinkled on the lid of atonement inside the veil of the most set-apart place. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission or forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). This is the one side of complete atonement - the forgiveness of sins on the basis of a legitimate sacrifice. When this sacrifice is offered, the promise of Jer 31:34 and Heb 8:12 and 10:17 - a promise fulfilled by Y'shua the Messiah, once and for all - comes to mind: "Their sins and their lawlessness I shall remember no more". This is the offering that causes Yahweh to "forget" about the sins of his people. What is still needed, however, is an offering to cause the people to "forget" the sins they had done before ...

2. Why there had to be a Goat for Azazel (Lev 16:15)

The word "Azazel" probably means "goat of departure" or "goat of extreme removal" and this offering is therefore a shadow of the fact that there will be a time when Yahweh will completely and utterly remove the sins of his people. This is the other side of complete atonement - the complete removal of sins, which includes both the inclination to sin, the deed of sinning and the guilt resulting from sin. This is also signified by the fact that Revelation 20 reveals that Satan, the enemy of Yahweh, the thief, murderer and destroyer (sometimes pictured as a goat) will be removed from Yahweh's people and put in the bottomless pit for 1000 years. The word for goat in Lev 16 is "sha'ar" and the meaning of this word may also be "devil" or "satyr".

3. Why it is called the Day of Atonement of "Yom Kippur" (Lev 23:27)

Atonement is a translation of the Hebrew word "kippur" which comes from the root word "kaphar". This word has the followings meanings: "to cover, to expiate, to condone, to appease, to cancel, to forgive, to extinguish the guilt, to pardon, to be merciful, to reconcile". Sin is acting against the clear covenant guidelines established by Yahweh and therefore it creates a problem as far as the continuance of this covenant is concerned. Yahweh has provided a mechanism whereby the sins and transgressions of his people could be covered, so that He may continue fulfilling His part of the covenant. The procedure described in Lev 16 was only the shadow of the true process of reconciliation that was introduced by the Messiah some 2000 years ago and will only be completed when He comes again (Col 1:20).

4. Why there has to be a Set-apart Gathering (Lev 23:27)

The word for set-apart is "qadosh" while the word for gathering is "miqrah". It is interesting to note that this last word actually comes from the root "qarah" which means "to call or to call out or to assemble". It is clear that the New Covenant word for the body of the Messiah, "ekklesia" is a direct translation of this word. The Greek word "ekklesia" comes from the same concept of calling or calling out or assembling. Yahweh has called his people out of this world to set them apart (or aside) for a specific purpose. This aspect of being called out does not only refer to the ekklesia being different from the world as far as their general lifestyle is concerned. It also refers to the fact that they are called to assemble on different occasions and for different festivals as is the case with the rest of the world. They are to be set-apart for Yahweh and should therefore keep his set-apart appointed times.

5. Why we have to Afflict our Beings (Lev 23:27)

In other parts of Scriptures it is clear that to "afflict one's being" includes undertaking a (complete) fast (see Ps 35:13; Isa 58:3-5). The idea is that one would humiliate oneself before Yahweh because of sin, repent from every known transgression, deliberately turning from evil and sinful practices. On this day we should refrain from food and drink and all other earthly or fleshly

practices that may distract from true dedication and humbleness before Yahweh. But on this day we should also be on the look-out for ways to care for the poor and the needy and the hungry (Isa 58:6-12) for this is the same attitude that our Father expressed towards us by introducing a day like Yom Kippur!

6. Why it is called a Sabbath of Rest (Lev 23:32)

It is called a Sabbath of rest (literally: "shabbat shabbaton" = "a sabbath of sabbatic observance") because the true meaning of this day reflects something of the deeper meaning of the Sabbath (as a day of final rest and also salvation). The same clause "shabbat shabbaton" is used in Exod 31:15 in connection with the weekly Sabbath. There is not enough evidence in the rest of the Scriptures to view the qualification of this Sabbath in Lev 23:32 ("from evening to evening") as an "exception" to the general rule as to how to determine the beginning and the end of any other Sabbath or feast day.

7. Why it is called a "law throughout your generations"

As each one of the other appointed times, Yom Kippur was established by the Almighty Himself for a very distinct purpose. The feast days are "memorials" of Yahweh's mighty acts throughout all of history and there is no doubt that Yom Kippur will play an important part in the final days of this age. The true meaning of this day will not only be appreciated by the Jews but by everyone who becomes part of the people of Yahweh - also in the broader sense of the word as indicated by Isa 56:3-7.