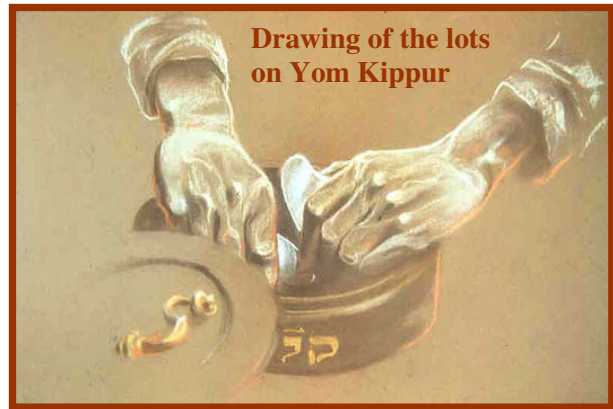


Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is Tishri 10, the holiest day on the Hebrew calendar. It is the day the high priest takes the blood of a goat and enters into the Holy Of Holies to put the blood on the Mercy Seat. This blood was for the atonement of Israel's sins. This had to be done each year. Leviticus 23:26-32 "The LORD said to Moses, "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people. I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day. You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath." NIV

On Yom Kippur, two goats were presented to the high priest. He would draw lots to see which goat would be for the sin offering and which goat would be the scapegoat. Leviticus 16:7-10 "He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented



alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness." NKJV The goat that was chosen for the sin offering was slaughtered and its blood would be taken by the High Priest into the holy of holies to make atonement for the sins of Israel. The goat chosen by lot to be the scapegoat had a crimson chord that was made out of wool tied around his horns then the High Priest would lay his hands

on the head of the scapegoat and confess all the sins of Israel. The scapegoat was then led away into the wilderness carrying the sins of Israel far from Jerusalem. Jewish tradition tells in addition to the piece that was tied to the scapegoat, a similar length was tied to the entrance of the Temple where all could behold it, high up like a banner. When the scapegoat reached its destination in the wilderness the scarlet chord at the Temple

entrance miraculously turned white signaling that God had indeed forgiven their sins fulfilling the scripture in Isaiah 1:18 "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." NIV

Because the temple was destroyed on the ninth of Av 70 A.D., today Yom Kippur is commemorated differently in the Jewish community. It is a day of fasting according to Leviticus 23:29. Jews fast for twenty-six hours and during that time they do not eat or drink anything and many attend synagogue services. During Yom Kippur five prayer services are held: On the eve of Yom Kippur; the morning prayer; a service which includes a detailed account of the Yom Kippur Temple Service; a service which includes the reading of the Book of Jonah; and the "closing of the gates" service at sunset. a prayer of confession of sins is prayed ten times during the five services of Yom Kippur, and Psalms are read.

This day is the most solemn of the year, yet it has undertones of joy: a joy in the spirituality of the day and in the confidence that G-d will accept repentance, forgive sins, and give a year of life, health and happiness. When the closing service climaxes in the resounding cries of "Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one" and a single blast of the shofar, followed by the proclamation, "Next year in Jerusalem." Then joy erupts in song and dance followed by the festive after-fast meal, making the evening after Yom Kippur, a joyful celebration of God's love and mercy.

Christian Perspective

Fasting is a biblical principle. Isaiah 58:6-9 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I." (NIV) Christians choosing to fast on Yom Kippur and seek God to make sure we are in right relationship with Him is spiritually reviving. Fasting is a holy endeavor.

Yom Kippur could be the feast that is the rehearsal for the second coming of the Lord and the Great White Throne judgment. Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:10-12; Revelations 20:11.

Jesus Christ is our great high priest who took His blood into the Holy of Holies in heaven for our redemption. Hebrews 9:11-12 "When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption." NIV He is also our scapegoat who took on our sin and became sin for us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." NKJV