

YOM KIPPUR

© Please copy it right Prepared by Pastor Bob Hill

©

Date in Hebrew Calendar: 10th of Tishrei (September-October)

Scriptural references: Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:26-32; Hebrews 9:11-14, 22-24, 10:1-25.

Yom Kippur was the most solemn and important day in the Biblical calendar. Only once each year was any Israelite permitted to enter the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle or Temple and to approach the Lord where His Spirit resided above the Mercy Seat: the High Priest on the Day of Atonement.

The High Priest went through a complex set of sacrifices to atone for his own sins and the sins of all the people, and a goat was then led out to die outside the walls of the city-symbolically taking the sins of the people with it. The High Priest was then able to enter the Holy of Holies, sprinkling blood on the Ark of the Covenant. It was by no means certain that he would leave alive. A rope was tied around his legs so he could be pulled out if he should die.

If he lived, he would go outside, lift his hands and pronounce the Aaronic blessing on the people-the only time in the year anyone would invoke the tetragrammaton ("YHVH"), the usually unutterable name of God.

The blood of bulls and goats could not provide true and permanent forgiveness of sins, and so God's Son came to provide the ultimate sacrifice Himself. He was sentenced to death in the temple by the High Priest who said prophetically, that it was good that one man should die for the nation. He was led outside the walls to bear the sins of the people-all the people of the world.

When the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, and again by the Romans, there was no longer a Holy of Holies, a High Priest or a sacrificial system. The Jewish people had to find another means of atonement. Their solution was prayer and good deeds.

Today, the Day of Atonement is spent in the Synagogue, in repentance, fasting and prayer-asking to be written in the Book of Life for one more year.

In modern Israel, nothing moves on Yom Kippur. One can walk down the center of highways without fear of being hit by a car, because there are no cars. It is an awesome day. This day, or any day, is a good time to approach the Lord with the fear and awe He deserves, to repent of our sins and to thank Him for His Son's sacrifice that brings us into continual "at-one-ment" with our Maker and allows our names to be recorded forever in the Lamb's Book of Life.