

## Bite Size Bible Study

### Yom Kippur #136

By Pastor Lee

The conclusion of the Days of Awe (*Yamim Noraim*) is the fast day of Yom Kippur also known as The Day of Atonement. For these ten days an individual has been evaluating their words and deeds and judging their actions in respect to Gods instructions and teaching.

*Adonai said to Moshe "The tenth day of this seventh month is Yom-Kippur; you are to have a holy convocation, you are to deny yourselves, and you are to bring an offering made by fire to Adonai. You are not to do any kind of work on that day, because it is Yom-Kippur, to make atonement for you before Adonai your God.* Leviticus 23:26-28 CJB

This is the day, according to tradition, that God seals the Books of Life and Death for the coming year. The day is devoted to repentance for sins committed over the course of the previous year. *Yom Kippur* is considered by many Jews to be the holiest and most solemn day of the year. It is often called the 'day of repentance' as it inspires introspection, prayer and petitions for forgiveness so that Jews can enter the New Year with a clean slate.

This is one of Judaism's fasting holidays, which begins at sundown and ends after nightfall the following day. The end of the fast is often marked with a meal (breakfast); which is a time for family and friends to reconnect after an often intense day of prayer and petitions.

Yom Kippur is also a day on which the individuals are instructed to divorce themselves as completely as humanly possible from the mundane world in which they live, in order to devote themselves with all their heart and mind to their relationship with the God.

Fasting is the most widespread manifestation of this devotion, but other examples include: refraining from washing, sexual relations, and the wearing of leather (a sign of luxury in earlier times). It is traditional to dress in white on this day, symbolizing personal purity.

The overarching theme of Yom Kippur is repentance. During the holiday all thoughts are supposed to be centered on this theme. The day revolves around the theme of communal and individual repentance for sins committed during the past year, in order that both the community and the individual may be inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year.

Yom Kippur is also a day filled with images of love. God will care for us, gather us up, listen to us, love us.

For Yom Kippur ultimately is about two lessons, one of eternity and one of fidelity. The lesson of death is clear. We live as if we have forever. Day by day, time dribbles through our fingers. Yom Kippur seeks to make our own death real to us, so that we will, in the words of the tradition, "use each moment wisely." If we can believe – not intellectually but in our guts and in our souls – that we will die, perhaps we have a chance to really live.

*But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear — although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well — and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise. By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua. God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah (atonement) for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past; and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness.* Rom 3:21-26 CJB

Our righteousness, whether Jew or Gentile, comes from Jesus' righteousness; which was proven by his faithful life here on earth. He set the example. He didn't just consider His words and actions on one day of the year, but daily, minute by minute. If we are able to follow His example we will make Yom Kippur a way of life, not one day each year, but every minute of our lives.

Can we live and can we love? Can we become shalem (whole) and have shalom (peace)? Yom Kippur asks those questions because these are the questions that measure each soul (life). God's love is our hope; to feel it is our task.

May this year be a beginning of a life filled with gentle hearts and open eyes to the teachings of God and a hope for a bright eternal future for all.

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