

A Day of Atonement, Reconciliation and Mercy

Day of Atonement

Greg Gaetzman

September 30, 2017

Good afternoon everyone. To all of you that will read this happy Day of Atonement to you. As we assemble today to observe this fifth annual festival of God, namely the Day of Atonement, we all know the command from God on this day is to completely abstain from food and water. Atonement is a different festival compared to all of the other feasts of the Eternal. It is not a physical day of feasting of fine foods, but of fasting.

Turn with me please to Leviticus 23:27-28 and we'll see the command from God as to the holy days that He instructed the ancient Israelites to keep, by extension to His entire church.

Leviticus 23:27. *Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.*

28) *And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. (KJV)*

So, this fifth festival was filled with many symbolic rituals by the ancient Hebrews, which have deep meaning not only for them, but for the Christians of the New Testament church and ultimately for all of those in the world as God calls them according to His plan.

Before we look into this concept of making an atonement for you before the Eternal, we need to make sure that we understand something very important about the holy days of God. I have several neighbors who, from time to time, ask me about the Sabbath and about the holy days. They observe people coming to our house weekly for the Sabbath and for the annual holy days. They ask questions like: Did Jesus Christ fulfill all of those days? Weren't they Jewish days and have nothing to do with the New Testament church? As I've learned from a wise sage that taught me a long time ago, always let scripture speak for itself. With that being the case I ask them to look at Acts 27:9.

Acts 27:9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, (KJV)

Atonement is not specifically mentioned here, but in Strong's, the word "fast"; is number 3521, "nesteia" and it means *abstinence in a religious sense, specifically fasting for the Day of Atonement*. This verse is a reference to the Day of Atonement. It's more than just a benchmark of Paul's travels. It actually is referring to the Day of Atonement that was already past. Paul is sailing in the Mediterranean Sea in the fall of 58 AD, twenty-eight years after the death of Jesus Christ. Paul is still making reference to Gentile Christians about the fast, the Day of Atonement. If these days were merely Jewish

holidays or Jewish holy days and they were all fulfilled by Christ and not required to be kept by Christians, why would Paul make reference to them twenty-eight years after the death of Jesus Christ to Gentile people who did not have a Jewish background? They would know nothing about them unless Paul had originally taught them about these days.

In this situation Paul specifically makes reference to the fast, because he knew that they weren't Jewish holidays. They weren't just Jewish holy days. They were the feasts of the Eternal. If God wanted Paul to understand that the day was already fulfilled in Jesus Christ and it didn't need to be observed in the New Testament by new covenant Christians, Jesus had three years when He was educating Paul in Arabia (it talks about this in Galatians 1) to teach him that you don't need to teach these days anymore, because they've all been fulfilled. There's no indication of that.

Clearly the feasts of the Eternal are a Christian responsibility, a Christian opportunity and that's why we're here on this Day of Atonement, to observe a day, one of the feasts of the Eternal, a day which has significant influence in the making and causing of mankind to be at one with God. To be at one or atoned is the focal point of the entire concept of salvation.

This Day of Atonement is about three areas; atonement for sin, reconciliation back to God and the mercy of God extended to all of mankind starting initially with the church. Eventually it's going to be for all of mankind. We know the background of what took place with Adam and Eve and as a result of their sin they were exited out of the garden. Satan had deceived them with treachery and lies and absolute rebellion against God. Now we read in Genesis 3:22-24:

Genesis 3:22. *And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

23) Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24) So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (KJV)

Access to God's holy spirit and access to God individually was closed off from that point on to all of mankind with the exception of a few – the prophets and the New Testament Christians – for six thousand years. However, God did not deny mankind His help and His guidance. He gave them laws. He gave them statutes. He gave them judgments. He knew that they had to conduct their way of life so that they could live. The question was: Would they obey it?

Adam and Eve's sin and their subsequent banishment from the Garden of Eden were symbolic of man's severed relationship with God. Sin cuts man off from God. Turn to Isaiah 59:2.

Isaiah 59:2. *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (KJV)*

All mankind fell under this suppression and bondage of sin. Turn to Galatians 4:9.

Galatians 4:9. *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (KJV)*

He is talking to the Galatians and He's asking them a question. After you've been called by God, why are you returning back to sinful behavior?

Without contact with God and a knowledge of God and His way of liberty from the pains of death and from the pain and suffering that comes as a result of disobeying God, mankind was cut off to suffer through the crucible of pain. Pain is a teacher. We know that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God from Romans 3:23. God knew this was going to happen and in His wisdom He accounted for all of it. Turn to Romans 3:23-24.

Romans 3:23. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (KJV)*

Again, we are already talking about this the aspect of this day, the mercy of God. The reconciliation of mankind back to the Father has been made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ's blood first of all for the church and then ultimately for all of mankind. Please turn to 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

2 Corinthians 5:18. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21) For he [God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (KJV)*

Initially reconciliation back to God started with the church. We know Jesus Christ passed over, made reconciliation to God the Father possible by the remission of sins and justification comes as a result of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We know God is the one that calls people. Turn to John 6:44.

John 6:44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (KJV)*

Turn to 1 John 1:7. I know these are scriptures that you are all very familiar with, but it's a good refresher.

1 John 1:7. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (KJV)*

The righteousness that we're pursuing is the righteousness that God the Father and Jesus Christ possess. Romans 3:24-25. We are just laying the foundation here.

Romans 3:24. *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (KJV)

We know that for the church, the penalty for the sins that we have committed prior to baptism and those sins that we commit, as long as we are under grace, has been paid by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, reconciliation eventually will go to all of mankind. It starts out initially with the church. Atonement foretells a time in the future for all who have ever lived, beginning with those that will be reconciled to God the Father. It will begin on the Day of Atonement after the trumpet plagues. I'll explain that later.

The reconciliation of the world begins to take place after the Feast of Trumpets when Christ will begin to bring judgment upon the world and it'll begin the process of reconciliation back to God, initially to those people that live through the great tribulation and go into the Millennium. This reconciliation back to God will then begin for that portion of mankind. The reconciliation for the greatest portion of mankind won't begin until the Great White Throne Judgment period of time. It is a plan that is set up and Passover plays a big part for the church in this reconciliation to God, but Atonement plays a big part for the rest of mankind in their reconciliation to God. So, Passover and Atonement are closely associated, because they're both dealing with reconciliation of people back to God based upon the time that He calls them and He begins to work with them.

So far we've discussed Atonement and reconciliation associated with this day. However, as I mentioned, the third aspect of this fifth festival of God is the mercy of God. We tend to gloss over that quickly as we're reading through Leviticus 16. Generally historically in sermons given on this Day of Atonement this chapter oftentimes makes reference to the two goats, the Azazel goat (the goat of departure), and the goat that is an offering for that of sin. We talk about annually and historically how the high priest went through all of the symbolic ceremonies on the Day of Atonement per the instructions of God for literally millennia. The Day of Atonement is filled with ritual

activities, more activities than any of the other holy days. Let's go to Leviticus 16:2-10. We're not going to spend a lot of time in that. We're just going to read some of these ceremonies.

Leviticus 16:2. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.*

3) *Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.*

4) *He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre [turban] shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.*

5) *And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.*

6) *And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.*

7) *And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

8) *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*

9) *And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.*

10) *But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat [Azazel], shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. (KJV)*

These are very specific instructions from God as to how this ceremony is to play out picturing a portion of God's plan in salvation for mankind. If we read verses 1 and 2 we find that there was kind of an arrogant attitude about the two sons who went in and offered before the Eternal and they died. God is very specific about the way He wants us to be living and He is very specific about this particular ceremony. Now turn to Colossians 2:16-17. Paul is talking to the brethren at Colossae. He says that the holy days are a shadow of things to come.

Colossians 2:16. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

17) *Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. (KJV)*

Every one of the holy days pictures something that either has come already or is yet to come. The verse that we oftentimes overlook in Leviticus 16 in sermons in the past of all of the symbolic ceremonies that the high priest is to go through is verse 2. Mercy plays a huge role in the atonement of people and the reconciliation of people back to God. Basically Exodus 25 through 27 is an explanation as to what the tabernacle in the wilderness looked like, how it was to be put together. As you come in from the east into

the temple area you have a courtyard where the sacrifices are offered. You have the altar of burnt offering. As you continue west you have the laver for washing. You then enter into the holy place inside of a tent where you have the altar of incense. You have the lampstand, the table of shewbread. As you continue moving west into this small area, you then have a huge curtain or veil and on the other side of that is the most holy place. In the most holy place is the ark with the mercy seat and the cherubim.

Several years ago on one of the trips that my wife and I took we had a chance to stop and see a replica of the temple built according to specifics given in these three chapters. It was just west of Minneapolis. It really was interesting. You could actually see the holy of holies. You could see the most holy place. You could see this entire courtyard. You could see the curtain or the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place. You could see the high priest with all of the garments that he was wearing, because they had a mannequin dressed up that way. Everything was built according to the dimensions given in scripture. If you are interested in looking at what it potentially looked like, just do a Google search and look for the Biblical Tabernacle Reproduction. It'll come up and show you where this display is around the country. It's a continually moving display. There might even be more of them. It really is interesting as you look at it. Now it's more than just words to me. It's something in my mind.

Turn please to Exodus 25:16-22.

Exodus 25:16. *And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.*

17) *And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.*

18) *And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.*

19) *And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.*

20) *And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. (KJV)*

Notice how many times it talks about the mercy seat.

21) *And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.*

22) *And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (KJV)*

Several things are apparent here with all of the splendor, all of the exact dimensions, all of the gold, all of the detail as to what it is to look like. One of them is that God has always wanted to be with His people. Notice verse 8.

8) And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. (KJV)

So, God's desire has always been to be with His people. Go to Exodus 40:38.

Exodus 40:38. *For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (KJV)*

For forty years God was in that tabernacle. They moved forty-two times in the forty years in the wilderness.

Numbers 9:22. *Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23) At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses. (KJV)*

Numbers 33 lists many of the times that they did move. Every time the cloud lifted and started moving they would pack up the Ark of the Covenant. They would pack up the tent. They would get everything ready to go and then they would begin to move.

God has always wanted to be with His people. Another thing that stands here is that God extended mercy to the people in spite of their sins, their doubting, and their rebellion for the entire forty years. That's a very important lesson that God, in addition to wanting to be with them, continued to show mercy to them. Yes, there were punishments and consequences, but He didn't leave them.

The Ark of the Covenant is and was symbolic of the throne of God in heaven. The entire tabernacle area was in the center of the twelve tribes' encampment. They could clearly see the cloud that hovered over it in the daytime and they could clearly see the fire that was above the tabernacle at night. The tabernacle was in the middle of the camp, so they could all see it. For forty years these people witnessed these miracles in the wilderness. They knew that this is where God lived. He was with them and they knew it because of the cloud and because of the fire. He would speak with the people from this location. He would give needed instructions from there. Again, let's go back to Exodus 25:22.

Exodus 25:22. *And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the*

ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (KJV)

So, the direction given to the Israelites, to Moses and to the high priest, always came from this location. The glory of God was there upon the mercy seat above the Ark of the Covenant.

On this festival of Atonement, the high priest walks into the area. He goes into the holy place, does what he needs to do and then he goes into the holy of holies. Once per year on the Day of Atonement this took place. Then the high priest would perform his duties. In Leviticus 16 you can read about the incense and the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat for himself and for the people and all of the other symbolic rituals that he went through. They had tremendous meaning for all of mankind, a lot of in-depth meaning, if you really look into it as to the intent of the holy days in our lives. It's a fascinating study.

The entire existence; sustenance, safety and guidance of the ancient Israelites was one hundred percent reliant upon the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat and the presence of God. They knew that they needed God if they were going to exist in the society around them. This Day of Atonement was a day for the sins of the people to be covered, a very important day for the people so that God would not leave them. When the high priest went in, if he didn't come out they knew they were in trouble. When he came out a second time after he had made offerings for the people and both the offerings for the high priest and for the people was accepted the people breathed a sigh of relief. If their sins had not been covered, if the high priest hadn't come out and God hadn't accepted those offerings, they knew that God's judgment and wrath would be upon them. They kind of waited with baited breath to make sure that the high priest would come out and this was on a yearly basis.

The rituals performed by the high priest and accepted by God on this day, and it was a very important day, determined that they would exist as a nation for another year. It is interesting how the Jews view the Feast of Trumpets and that period from then up until the Day of Atonement. They view it as a time of self-examination, as we view the time prior to the Passover as a period of self-examination. Then on the Day of Atonement is when their sins are atoned for just as on Passover we look at the concept of what Christ did for us. Our Passover, Jesus Christ, has covered our sins because of His death. The word Atonement itself to the Israelites meant *a covering or a purging, to make reconciliation, to cover over, to forgive, to be merciful or to cancel*. It's the Hebrew word Strong's number 3722 "kaphar". That's how they viewed Atonement, to do all of these things. It meant that they had another year of God's presence and His protection and His safety and His blessing. Go back to Leviticus 16 and put yourself in their shoes. Thousands of years ago, every year at this time of the year, their very survival was dependent upon God accepting the sacrifices of the high priest; a bullock for the high priest and a goat for the people. Notice Leviticus 16:11-17.

Leviticus 16:11. *And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself:*

12) And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: (KJV)

These are all symbolic rituals.

13) And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:

14) And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

15) Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

16) And he shall make an atonement for the holy place [in the holy of holies], because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17) And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. (KJV)

Again, if God accepted his sacrifice and he went back in and the sacrifice that he made for the people was accepted, they breathed a sigh of relief. God has accepted this atoning sacrifice for their sins. So, it was a very important day, a very powerful day. Remember they were still God's special people. Because the sacrifice had been accepted they all breathed this collective sigh of relief.

What do all of these symbolic rituals mean to the New Testament church Christians? Remember Paul said to the Colossians and by extension to the New Testament church in Colossians 2:16-17, referenced above, let no man judge you of a holy day which is a shadow of things to come. Clearly this day is to be kept and there are symbolic meanings in all of it. I don't fully understand why it's going to be reinstated in the Millennium, but in Ezekiel 40 through 48 it's very clear all of these sacrifices and all of these ceremonies are going to be reinstated again. It will be interesting to see why; a lot of speculation on that but until we actually see it it's only speculation.

Paul learned from Christ the true meaning of these ritual sacrifices and he taught them to the church. Turn please to Hebrews 9:1-7. Hebrews was written in the early 60s AD Based upon who you talk to it could be as early as 62 AD in the spring. Others say it's as late as 66 or 67 AD, shortly before Paul's death. The dating isn't as critical as what he said. These physical ceremonies on the Day of Atonement were still being

performed at the temple at the time Hebrews was written. The end of the sacrifices would come when the temple was destroyed in 70 AD shortly after the death of Paul. Just as a side note it is interesting to note that Solomon's temple was destroyed in 586 BC and the temple when Christ lived and went into was destroyed in 70 AD were both destroyed on the 9th of Av, which is in August. I just thought that was kind of interesting that they were both destroyed on the same day. Maybe someday we'll find out why God does things the way He does.

Hebrews 9:1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. (KJV)*

This whole temple was very physical.

2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly [in detail].

6) Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7) But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (KJV)

We have just read all of those details that Paul is referring to here back in Leviticus and all of the process he went through with the sprinkling of the blood, etc. Now Paul is explaining to the New Testament church the real meaning of these symbolic ceremonies. Continue in verses 8-10.

8) The Holy Ghost [spirit] this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9) Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10) Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. (KJV)

What Paul is saying in English here is that the fault of the Old covenant wasn't the law. The fault was with the people. The law of itself didn't convert the people. It wasn't in their heart to obey. That's what he is getting at here. That's what he is trying to teach the people here in Hebrews and by extension the other churches that he would visit and write to. It takes a changing of the heart is what Paul is trying to say. What he's saying is that it's the holy spirit in you that will change your heart, an everlasting High Priest making daily intercession to God the Father on our behalf before the mercy seat in

heaven. Now we have the holy spirit given to those that God calls, that repent and are baptized. Then we have Jesus Christ as the High Priest in heaven going to God the Father daily for us. This is what he is explaining to the people and it had to come as a great shock to them. Their entire life they had seen something completely different and now he's opening up their understanding as to the real meaning of the purpose of all of these symbolic ceremonies. We don't observe the Day of Atonement as did the ancient Israelites because we understand what the symbols and rituals picture. Continue in verses 11-15.

11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (KJV)

So, we focus on Christ performing as our High Priest.

12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15) And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (KJV)

Just as Aaron interceded for the ancient Israelites, likewise Christ intercedes as our High Priest for us, not just once a year but continually. Turn please to 1 John 2:1-2.

1 John 2:1. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (KJV)

The word "propitiation" is the Greek word Strong's number 2435 and it means *an atoning victim*. He is the atoning victim for our sins. Our entire spiritual survival, as was the ancient Israelites, is dependent upon this daily intervention before the throne of God by Jesus Christ on our behalf. Turn to 1 Timothy 2:5.

1 Timothy 2:5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (KJV)*

So He is our High Priest in heaven. Turn now to Romans 8:33-34. You are always safe to hide behind scriptures. You can eliminate speculation on many issues.

Romans 8:33. *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

34) *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (KJV)*

These are all daily acts of mercy. That's why a big aspect of this Day of Atonement really is also about mercy. The events of Passover and Atonement are definitely connected; Passover for the church and Atonement for the remainder of mankind beginning at Atonement after the Feast of Trumpets and then carrying out all of the way through into the Millennium, as well as into the Great White Throne Judgment period of time. So, they are connected.

Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the fourteenth day of Nissan, Passover. After His resurrection, He ascended to the holy of holies, the mercy seat, the throne of God to be accepted as that perfect sacrifice for all of the people, just as the high priest offered the blood of a goat to be accepted on the Day of Atonement for the people before the holy of holies, the mercy seat, which was at that time the throne of God. Anciently, God accepted the sacrifice of Aaron, the high priest, for himself and for the people yearly. In like manner God has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind once for all. It doesn't have to be on a yearly basis.

Our responsibility is to serve the living God through obedience, through the Ten Commandments, terms of the new covenant, Matthew 5, 6 and 7, but actually all of the words of Jesus. We are responsible to be obedient to them. Overcoming our character flaws is our responsibility. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and God the Father is our responsibility. Repenting when we have a fault revealed to us. Even though Satan deceives, even though he tempts and confuses and instills a spirit of rebellion, we cannot put all of the blame on him. We still have free moral agency. We have responsibilities and accountability. Yes, he is the one that has deceived the whole world and he is responsible for the mess that we see ourselves in now, but we have free moral agency, just as the ancient Israelites had free moral agency. We have responsibilities that come along with reconciliation, atonement and mercy that are given to us by God. Turn to Deuteronomy 30:15-19.

Deuteronomy 30:15. *See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;*

16) *In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

17) *But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; (KJV)*

In other words this means give into the wave length of Satan.

18) *I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.*

19) *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: (KJV)*

Part of the responsibility that we have to receive this mercy from God is that we have to be obedient to this book. We can't say like Flip Wilson used to say, "The devil made me do it." We have responsibilities to reject. We know what this book says and the more we study it the more in depth we are going to understand what it does say. We have choices. We do have accountability for the way we live our life. We can't just blame Satan for everything.

Every year historically when the high priest emerged from behind the veil from the holy of holies, the people rested assured that they had another year ahead of them and that was their reward. Our reward, as we read earlier, is the promise of the inheritance of eternal life, because the High Priest sits at the throne of God before the mercy seat on our behalf daily. Please turn to Hebrews 9:23-28.

Hebrews 9:23. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

24) *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

25) *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;*

26) *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

27) *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

28) *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (KJV)*

Clearly the shed blood of Jesus Christ during the Passover is connected to the sacrifice of Atonement. The two really are synonymous, one for the church, the other one for the rest of humanity starting with the Day of Atonement.

Jesus Christ is daily fulfilling the purpose of interceding on our behalf before the throne of God for the people that God calls at this time. Remember that when Christ died the veil was torn in two. In Matthew 27:50-51 it says:

Matthew 27:50. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

51) And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (KJV)

When He died, the separation between the holy place and the holy of holies, the veil was torn in two. The door, the path to the mercy seat, to the holy of holies, to the throne of God, was now made available to the church and to those that God would call and eventually to all of mankind as the plan plays out according to God's plan. Turn to Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews 4:14. *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

15) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (KJV)

When we go before God in prayer we are going in spirit into the very holy of holies in the third heaven to the throne of God where He resides, to the mercy seat upon the Ark of the Covenant and with Jesus Christ, our advocate and our High Priest. When that veil was torn in two, there was no longer a need for a Levitical priesthood and a high priest to represent us and that could only be once a year. We can go directly to the Father and we can talk to Him. We can ask for His help. We can ask for His guidance, His mercy and His encouragement. In this day and age it's turning into survival. With the way things are getting in the world, the hatred, the anger, the absolute abominations that are being passed as law in the land that we have to abide by, we need God's intervention on a daily basis and we have access. We can go to Him. I am going to refer three scriptures to you. I typed in the word "Abba" in my e-Sword. First is Mark 14:36.

Mark 14:36. *And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. (KJV)*

Even Jesus Christ cried out in His time of need just prior to His crucifixion and horrible death. In Romans 8:15, Paul is speaking to the Romans.

Romans 8:15. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (KJV)*

It's a term of endearment. In Galatians 4:6 it says:

Galatians 4:6. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (KJV)*

So, we have this access that we can go to the Father. We can ask Him for His help; ask Him to intervene into our life and to help us. Really we are sustained by God. As

society gets worse and worse we're going to need more and more of His sustenance and His protection and His blessings to protect us from what is happening.

Unlike the ancient Israelites who had to anxiously wait to see if their sacrifices that were offered by the high priest for himself and for the people would be accepted while he was in the holy of holies, our High Priest, Jesus Christ, has already been accepted and He is there at the side of God as our advocate beseeching God to hear our prayers, to act. He knows what it feels like to live on this earth. He knows what it feels like to have the pulls of the flesh, the influence of Satan, the discouraging aspects that take place in this society. He knows all of that and He has compassion and He speaks to God on our behalf, but we also speak to God. When we get discouraged, we need to remember that. We can go to God and He hears. We have already received the promise of eternal life and we await the fullness of that promise at the first resurrection. As I mentioned earlier, we have accountability and responsibilities, but we are under grace as long as we continue to stay in a repentant attitude. When we slip, when we fall, if we stay in a repentant attitude and attempt to make character changes when we find character flaws that are being pointed out to us, we are under grace. That grace will assure that our sins have been atoned for. We have been reconciled and we will receive the ultimate mercy of God in the first resurrection.

It will all begin for the rest of the world, this atonement, this reconciliation back to God, and this mercy from God, at the end of the seven trumpet and bowl plagues. The Day of Atonement will begin, whoever is left after all of that carnage going into the Millennium, for them, atonement, reconciliation and mercy. There won't be many people left in comparison to the seven billion plus people that live on the earth. This Day of Atonement, just as Christ began His ministry on a jubilee year, the thousand year Millennium will probably begin on a jubilee year, a year of release, a year of forgiveness, of cancelling of debt. What I mean by debt is the penalty that comes upon people. Then He will rule for a thousand years with mercy. We will assist Him, his bride, 144,000, in extending mercy to the people and helping to reconcile them back to God the Father. At the end of the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment period of time, this same process will then begin for possibly as many as a hundred billion people that could be resurrected and then they will begin their atonement, their reconciliation and the extension of mercy from God to them.

This fifth festival of God has world-shaking and world-changing meaning when it really comes to fruition. We should all be thankful for God's mercy that has already been extended to us, but we have our work cut out for us so that we do stay under mercy. This Day of Atonement is a powerful holy day for the world and also for us. I hope the rest of your Day of Atonement is a blessed one.