

The Dual Meaning of Atonement

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Our Father's Holy Days have dual meanings because they apply to Old Covenant Israel and they also apply to the New Covenant church. Old Covenant Israel was a physical nation with physical promises; as New Covenant Christians we are a spiritual church with spiritual and eternal promises. So, there is that duality with each of the Holy Days. Passover in the Old Covenant was a memorial of the slaying of the lambs and placing the blood over the doorposts and the sparing of the first born of the Israelites. But in the New Covenant we see and we memorialize the slaying of the Lamb of God—not the animal—but the very Lamb of God. We memorialize the fact that Christ's death spares us from eternal death. His blood spares us from eternal death. His resurrection makes Him the forerunner of our salvation; that's one of His titles, the Forerunner of our salvation.

For the Israelites, the Days of Unleavened Bread were a memorial of their leaving Egypt, which was a nation of captivity for them and a nation of sin for them. They had to leave in haste as we all know and there was no time for leavening. During those Days of Unleavened Bread was also the beginning of the spring harvest on wave sheaf Sunday. Then, the Days of Unleavened Bread for New Testament Christians is a message for us that we need to remain unleavened; we need to remain spiritually unleavened. We need to remain sin free. We have the advantage obviously that the Old Covenant Israelites did not have, through repentance and baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which allows us to continually repent and receive the forgiveness of our sins. We know that leavening is a type of sin. Also, we could consider that the Days of Unleavened Bread picture our walk through our spiritual life—a type of our walk of the Firstfruits spiritual journey.

Then, for Pentecost, in the Old Covenant, it was the completion of the spring harvest which began on wave sheaf Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread. For those of us in the New Covenant, we look back and see the power of the Holy Spirit coming on the church on Pentecost. We also see, by putting prophecy together, that this is the time of the resurrection of the Firstfruits to eternal life.

Then Trumpets, which is a transitional Holy Day, which we celebrated not long ago, transitions from events that have happened to those that will happen and we know it's a day of warning. Old Covenant Israel looked forward to being returned to their land—at last—Israel would have their land restored and they would be restored to their land. The Father would rule, the Messiah would come. For us, looking at it from a New Covenant perspective, we know the Father will come to rule, Christ will come, but a second time, to be King of kings and Lord of lords over the kings and lords of the earth. We know Satan will be bound and the Firstfruits will be there as spirit beings to assist at that time.

Now we come to today, the Day of Atonement. Let's go to Leviticus 23:26 and we are going to look at this today in that same dual way that we have the other previous Holy Days. This is why we are here today.

Leviticus 23:26 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
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.
29) For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. (KJV)*

Serious business today.

30) And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. (KJV)

Following the examples of the previous Holy Days, let's look at this Holy Day in the same two ways that we have looked at the other Holy Days; from an Old Covenant perspective and from a New Covenant perspective. The physical Old Covenant perspective and especially the spiritual New Covenant perspective. This leads to the title of the sermon:

The Dual Meaning of Atonement

We will just have three points. With the first point, we need to define our terms. So we need to ask the question:

1. What does the word Atonement mean?

The Hebrew word *Atonement* is Strong's—and you might want to remember this number; put in your mind or write it down—#3725 and that Hebrew word is *kippur*. It's from the root word, #3722, just three digits away. That's important—we will get back to that. But #3725 is only a plural word, it is not a singular word. So therefore, this really should be the Day of Atonements and we will see that as we go through.

The root word, Strong's #3722 is *kaphar* and it means, "to cover". Quoting from Strong's, it means, "to cover specifically with bitumen". Bitumen is a naturally occurring asphalt. It's interesting because that is going to come into play today. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament from Baker and Carpenter, says it is a verb meaning "to cover"—number one—"to forgive"—number two—or "to reconcile"—number three. We will see that all three meanings apply today. "To cover, to forgive and to reconcile".

We use the English word Atonement so I thought, where did that word come from? I'll quote from the New Oxford American Dictionary under Atonement and it gives the origins of these words.

Atonement first began to be used in the 16th century—in the 1500's—100 years prior to the translation of the King James version. So, it was a fairly new word at the time the King James was translated. Its definition means unity or reconciliation, especially between God and man; reconciliation between God and man and unity between God and man.

As I said, the word *atonement* is plural because, as we're going to see in the Old Covenant ceremony, there were many atonements that took place on this day. Also, because the Day of Atonement has the dual meanings which I mentioned earlier, depending on whether one is under the Old Covenant or one is under the New Covenant as we're going to see. So that's the basic meaning of the word *atonement*.

The second thing we would like to do:

2. Let's take a look at what happened in ancient Israel on this day.

We are going to look at it from a physical perspective—the Old Covenant perspective—what they actually did and what it meant to them, but also looking back from our perspective, a spiritual New Covenant perspective, we will look at this same day. Leviticus 16 tells us all about Atonement. As you know, Leviticus 16 is not in chronological order—it jumps back and forth—so you have to pay attention about the various sacrifices and who is doing what, when and in what time order. In verse 4 we see that Aaron, the high priest, washed himself and put on special garments—very, very special garments—that were used on this day alone. Then he made an atonement for himself and for his house. Let's start in verse 3.

Leviticus 16:3 *Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. (KJV)*

Now let's go to verse 11.

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 [so we have two atonements right here], 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 veil: (KJV)

This is the veil from the sanctuary into the Holy of Holies; the Holy of Holies being the last third of the sanctuary.

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: (KJV)

That physical cloud occurred, but it has meaning for us as we look back from a New Covenant perspective—we won't turn there—but in Revelation 5:8, it tells us the smoke from the incense represents the prayers of the saints, coming before the very throne of God.

14) And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; [because it was in the eastern part of the tabernacle] (KJV)

So every year, you can imagine, he takes the blood on his finger and sprinkles it upon the mercy seat. Over the decades and over the years, that mercy seat will have a buildup of blood on the lid of the seat.

14 continued) ... and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. (KJV)

So at least seven drops of blood, every Atonement, go on the mercy seat. The Hebrew word for *mercy seat*—here again there is a connection, we get back to these numbers—is Strong's #3727; it's only two digits away from *atonement*. This word is *kapporeth* and it means a "lid used only on the cover of the sacred arc". It's only two digits from the word *atonement* in Leviticus 16 and Leviticus 23—that's #3725, this is #3727.

Then, after Aaron accomplished that, he came out and cast lots for two goats; one to be sacrificed and then one to be set loose in the wilderness and wander forever during its life.

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.

7) And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. [Just outside the tabernacle]

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

As the King James renders it. It's the Hebrew word *azazel* and it literally means "goat of departure" because it was going to leave the camp—be taken out of the camp. Let's look at what the goat on which the LORD's lot fell. It was killed for a sin offering, as we're going to see, for the entire nation. Aaron enters into the Holy of Holies a second time to sprinkle its blood on the mercy seat, just as he did before in the previous part of the ceremony. Let's go to verse 9.

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

Then in verse 15.

15) Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people [not for himself, not for his family, this is one for the people], and bring his blood within the veil, [now he enters a second time into the Holy of Holies] 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: (KJV)

Seven times on the mercy seat, seven times on the ground before the mercy seat. From our New Covenant perspective, we understand that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. We understand that. In Hebrews 6:19 and 20 we see that. We have a different perspective because we're coming on the scene at the end of 6000 years of man's recorded history so we have a different vantage point, as we're going to see.

Hebrews 6:19 *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*
20) Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. (KJV)

We see that one of Christ's titles is High Priest and another is the Forerunner of our salvation. The High Priest then goes behind the veil on this day of Atonement. With that in mind, let's go to Hebrews 9:11 and read that. This gives us insight into the meaning of the Old Covenant ceremony from a New Covenant perspective.

Hebrews 9:11 *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)*

Referring to the second temple that was still standing when these words to the Hebrews were written.

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. (KJV)

This is totally different than what occurred under the Old Covenant. Only Christ bore our sins and He went with His blood to be received by His Father and He did so only once. From our New Covenant perspective, Aaron represents Jesus Christ. This is not a redo of the Passover, rather it's a ceremony that reminds us today that Christ died not only for us—the Firstfruits—but Christ died for all of those who are going to live over into the millennium, all those who suffered the horrible events that we know are going to occur on the day of Trumpets. This also symbolizes that Christ died, not only for the Firstfruits and those who lived over in the millennium, but He died as well for those who will be later resurrected during the millennium—the rest of mankind. We see that in the symbolism of this day.

Think about this though—we'll take an aside—if Aaron represents Jesus Christ, which he clearly does and Hebrews tells us that. Then Jesus Christ going before the throne of God with His own blood and if, as I used to believe, Christ was the God of the Old Testament and He resided in the Holy of Holies (which some still believe today), then on this day, Christ would be carrying His own blood to Himself; being on the throne of God. How does that work? Obviously, it doesn't work and we have thankfully come to realize that. In the past, in the old Worldwide days (and I'm not slamming Worldwide) we in many cases just didn't think our doctrines through. We didn't think them through to a logical conclusion. We didn't think through our own teachings. Overtime, Almighty God, as patient as He is, gradually reveals more and more as time goes on. The light bulb goes on and we say, "How come we didn't see that before?". Now back to Leviticus 16:16.

Leviticus 16:16 *And he [referring to Aaron] shall make an atonement for the holy place [here's another atonement going on], 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. (KJV)*

Going to verse 18.

18) And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; (KJV)

The tabernacle is being atoned for and the altar is being atoned for.

*18 continued) ... and shall take of the blood of the bullock [in verse 3], and of the blood of the goat [verse 15], and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.
19) And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. (KJV)*

We see there are a lot of atonements going on in the ceremony of this very day. Now we come to the live goat—the Azazel—verse 10.

10) But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, 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)

The goat of departure going into the wilderness. Now verse 20.

*20) And when he [Aaron] hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar [so after all these atonements have taken place], he shall bring the live goat:
21) And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall*

send him away by the hand of a fit man [a suitable man, someone chosen for the purpose] into the wilderness:

22) And the goat shall bear ... (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *bear* is Strong's #5375, the word is *nasa* and it can mean "receive".

22 continued) ... upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. (KJV)

From a New Testament perspective, let's go to Revelation 20:1.

Revelation 20:1 *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years ... (KJV)

We see that the Azazel, going back and thinking about Leviticus 16, symbolically received all the sins of Israel. The Azazel was led into the wilderness, never to return and the Azazel died in the wilderness. We can only assume it was never allowed to return to the camp and when its days were over, it died in the wilderness. That makes sense in several different ways, again from a New Testament perspective. Revelation tells us that the devil is bound 1000 years and we see in John 8:44, why? Christ is speaking to the Jews—you can see that in verse 31—but in verse 44, He's talking to the Jews.

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (KJV)*

The first being to tell a lie. Now let's go to the same author, 1 John 3:8. John adds a bit more to this story and our understanding. This, of course can apply to us directly when we sin.

1 John 3:8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil [pretty serious]; for the devil sinneth from the beginning [he said it now a second time]. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (KJV)*

So, we see that Satan sinned long before humans were ever created. We know there is a spiritual principle that tells us, the wages of sin are death—Romans 6:23. That applies to both spirit beings as well as human beings. We know—that's a different subject—that Satan will ultimately be exterminated. After the ceremony of taking the goat away and it had left, Aaron went back into the Holy place. So let's go back to Leviticus 16:23. Not the Holy of Holies but the sanctuary.

Leviticus 16:23 *And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation [the outer two-thirds], and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: (KJV)*

These garments were used once a year and they were left in the outer part—the sanctuary—of the tabernacle.

24) And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments [the garments he had when he entered in], and come forth ... (KJV)

So, he removed the holy garments and washed himself and got dressed again and then went back outside to offer burnt offerings.

24 continued) ... and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. (KJV)

For himself was the ram in verse 3, for the people was the ram in verse 5. We can step back and take a deep breath and look at all the activity that went on, on the day of Atonement. Looking at that activity, we obviously see that there were many atonements that took place on that day. We also, if we look at the big picture of this day, cannot help but conclude one giant fact. That is the third and last point.

3. Atonement is about the reconciliation of mankind to the Father.

It happened in two different ways, depending on whether one was under the Old Covenant or whether one was under the New Covenant. It wasn't until Hebrews was written, or Christ walked this earth and explained it to the apostles that it was understood. But Hebrews 9 and 10, give us clarification of this concept of atonement being a reconciliation of not only the Old Covenant Israelites but the New Covenant Christians to their Father. Let's go to Hebrews 9:1. This offers great understanding and clarification. We don't know who the author of Hebrews is, it's not known for a certainty. Some people think Paul is, other scholars think it was other authors—we won't get into that.

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

Which we have just read about today.

2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first [it's talking about the first room of the tabernacle—the first two-thirds of the tabernacle], wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3) And after the second veil [the first veil was the veil into the tabernacle proper, now this one separates the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies], the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (KJV)

The second room of the tabernacle.

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 ... (KJV)

It's interesting, this rod didn't bud when Aaron had it but over time it started budding, without water, without soil and that was a miracle from God to show the people that this is something very sacred.

4 continued) ... and the tables of the covenant; [That were written by the finger of God.] (KJV)

Verse 5, I'll read out of the New Living Translation.

5) Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement [because that was where the blood was sprinkled by the high priest]. But we cannot explain these things in detail now. (NLT)

Because they were lost during the destruction of the first temple and Israel's captivity in Babylon. Verse 6, now back to the King James.

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

Notice verse 7.

7) But into the second [meaning the Holy of Holies] went the high priest alone once every year [on this day], not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (KJV)

The Greek word for *errors* is very interesting, it's Strong's #51 and I'm quoting for Strong's now, "a thing ignored, a short coming". We know because Israel did not have the Holy Spirit of God, they did not have the advantages that we have today by having the Father and the Son living in us, as Christ said in John 14-16. Because Israel didn't have that advantage, they had many, many short comings, which Yehovah obviously "ignored" or "covered" for them.

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

There was not a way for the average Israelite to go into the Holy of Holies and have a personal relationship with their Father. Under the Old Covenant, what this is telling us is, the only way for humans to enter into a personal relationship with God Almighty wasn't made manifest then; it wasn't made apparent to them. *Made manifest* means "to

render apparent”—they didn’t get it, they didn’t see it, because obviously Christ had yet to come to live a perfect life, to die and to be resurrected. So, from an Old Covenant perspective as we see here in verse 8, the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet rendered apparent to them, back in those days.

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)

The Greek word for *reformation* is Strong’s #1357 and it means “to straighten thoroughly” or “to rectify”. It goes on to say, “especially the Messianic restoration”. In other words, Christ hadn’t come to restore all things. Christ hadn’t come to straighten everything out, from an Old Covenant perspective.

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; [referring to the second temple that was still standing.]

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. (KJV)

For those of us who have been baptized, received God’s Holy Spirit and have repented, obviously.

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: (KJV)

Only their sins, as we know, were covered then, they weren’t forgiven.

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? (KJV)

Living God being one of the titles of God Almighty. Verse 15, I’ll read out of the New King James.

15) And for this reason, He [referring to Christ] is the Mediator of the new covenant [Mediator being one of Christ’s titles], by means of death, for the redemption ... (NKJV)

The Greek word for *redemption* means, “ransom in full”. He paid the ransom in full for our sins, for the death penalty for our sins, by His blood.

15 continued) ... of the transgressions under the first covenant [these only covered until Christ], that those who are called [after Christ] may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (KJV)

Not just annually covered, but the promise of eternal inheritance. Verse 22.

22) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (KJV)

The Greek word for *remission* is Strong's #859, the word *aphesis* and it means “to pardon”, “to deliver” or “to forgive”. Without shedding of Christ’s blood, there is no pardon, there is no deliverance, there is no forgiveness. In the Old Covenant, they were covered, in the New Covenant, once we repent and are baptized and have our Father’s Spirit in us and we see a sin and recognize it and repent of it, we have pardon, we have deliverance, we have forgiveness. Going on to verse 23 out of the NIV.

23) It was necessary, then, for the copies [he’s talking about the physical copies] of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices ... (NIV)

The tabernacle was a very elaborate tent and was a physical copy of our Father’s throne in heaven. We know that the mercy seat is our Father’s footstool.

23 continued) ...but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24) [What is the better sacrifice?] 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: (KJV)

On our behalf, so that we could have our sins forgiven. In reality, the actual occurrence of this, occurred—we know, in reality—when Christ appeared before His Father on wave sheaf Sunday. Symbolically today, on Atonement, when the high priest goes behind the veil with the blood of Yehovah’s goat, we look forward to the fulfillment on this day in the future, when the blood of Christ is going to allow all mankind to have their sins forgiven. Those who live over into the millennium and those who are resurrected during the millennium. This just symbolically pictures that time. Going on in verse 25, because we have the rest of the Holy Days to come—the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

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

Christ doesn’t do that every year.

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. (KJV)

Verse 28, I'll read out of the NLT.

28) so also, Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people [to take them eternally away, once we repent and once His blood is applied]. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, [He doesn't have to come back and be our sacrifice] but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him. (NLT)

We can't wait for that day. Going on into chapter 10, as we know, there were no chapter breaks in the original text, I'll read this out of the New King James.

Hebrews 10:1 *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.*

2) For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3) But in those sacrifices [this is for Old Covenant Israelites] there is a reminder of sins every year. (NKJV)

In verse 4, we get to one of the keys.

4) For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (NKJV)

Going to verse 9.

9) then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." (NKJV)

His Father—how many times did He say that in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? He came to do His Father's will, not His own will.

9 continued) ... He takes away the first that He may establish the second. (NKJV)

The author of Hebrews says this.

10) By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11) And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (NKJV)

When this was written, the temple was still standing, daily sacrifices were offered and that was what he was referring to. There were priests, that when these words were written, they were standing every day, offering daily sacrifices and we are told those sacrifices can never take away sin.

12) But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, [His Father] ... (NKJV)

Under the Old Covenant, ancient Israel had their sins covered, they were not forgiven. “Covered” being one of the meanings of the Hebrew word *kaphar* which is translated *atonement* in Leviticus 16. Because of what we just read in Hebrews 9:8—the Holy Spirit signifying that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. What we just read in Hebrews 10:4, it’s not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, those under the Old Covenant had their sins “covered”.

It’s interesting that the word “covered” that we talked about earlier and I mentioned we would come back to it, because it applied in the days of Noah. In Genesis 6:13 one of the words related to *atonement* has to do with “bitumen” which is a natural asphalt available in nature.

Genesis 6:13 *And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

14) Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *pitch* is Strong’s #3724—it’s the Hebrew word *kopher* and it means “a cover”. It’s from Strong’s #3722, which is the word *kaphar* which means “bitumen” and it’s the root word for *atonement*. So you can see how they are all coming together here. The fact is, the Ark was covered in and out with bitumen and that word has relevance to atonement. Just as the Ark was covered in and out, under the Old Covenant, they had their sins covered just as Moses put on that asphalt and covered the inside and outside of the Ark to make it water proof. The Israelites had their own sins covered in a similar way. All the words relate together to the same root word.

Under the New Covenant, for us the Firstfruits, the church of God, complete forgiveness is possible. First, we have to repent and then we have to be baptized and then receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Then we have to ask, when we do sin, that the blood of Jesus Christ would remove our sins and those sins are now completely forgiven—they are enterally removed. Not just covered, but eternally removed. Hebrews 10:9, we just read that in the New King James. I’ll read it again.

Hebrews 10:9 *then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.*

10) By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (NKJV)

Those under the New Covenant have had their sins completely and eternally forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. When you think about that, what a blessing and what

an honor, that people like us—the weak of the world—can have a sin against God Almighty eternally removed. Just gone, like it never occurred. Not covered or swept under the rug like in the Old Covenant. It was like sweeping it under the rug; we'll just hide it away and hope it doesn't stink too badly and that was how it was dealt with. For us, it was eternally removed. When a sin is eternally removed—what does the prophet Isaiah say, “our sins separate us from God”. If that sin is removed then there is no barrier between us and the Father. There is nothing there to separate us. That means we have the very word of *atonement*—reconciliation with the Father, at one with the Father. Ancient Israelites never had that. We, today, from our perspective, understand that after Christ came and lived a perfect life and died and was resurrected, we have the Holy Spirit living in us and we can have our sins removed forever. They are atoned forever and we can have oneness with God our Father and a personal relationship that the ancient Israelites never had. It was not part of God's plan. It was not to say that Noah and Moses and the patriarchs—yes, they had a personal relationship with God. Those were exceptions but we are talking about mankind in general. The ancient Israelites did not have that and we look forward to this day, beyond this day, when all the world will have a personal, intimate relationship with God. Why? Because their sins can be eternally removed and they can be at one with the Father.

Let's summarize now. The Father's Holy Days do indeed have dual meanings, as we have talked about. They apply to Old Covenant Israel as a physical nation with physical promises, but they also apply—and must apply—to New Covenant Christians, a spiritual church with spiritual promises. As we've seen, on this day of Atonement ancient Israel's sins were covered. They weren't removed or eternally taken away, they were just covered up until their time will come, down the road, thousands of years later. But for the New Covenant church of God—the Firstfruits—our sins are eternally forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. Then this enables a personal, close, intimate relationship with God our Father and His Son, which is the greatest of blessings a human being can have, when you think about it. Of all the blessings that could be given to a human being, God Almighty, the Creator of everything—the Most-High—says,

“I want a personal relationship with each one of you. This is how it's going to happen. It's up to you, but if you want it, it can happen.”

What a great blessing that we have been called to understand that. With our recent understanding of God and Christ in scripture and who the Father is and who Christ is and what their relationship is, then that makes a personal relationship with God the Father immensely more meaningful than ever before. Let's use this relationship with God our Father and Jesus Christ His Son, to be more like Them. That is the goal. The Father isn't going to allow someone He cannot recognize into the Kingdom. Someone who doesn't have the same values, the same character as He does. So, let's use this relationship that we can have with the Father and the Son to be more like Them and have eternal life that the Firstfruits are promised. This blows my mind—to have eternal life in the presence of God Almighty and the Son forever. No worries, no fears, no aches, no pains; eternal joy being at the foot of God the Father and His Son, eternally. Let's be thankful for what this day represents and what this day symbolizes.