

THE DAY OF THE COVERINGS

Brethren, we are assembled today as commanded by our Heavenly Father in Leviticus 23:27 to celebrate a very special day of the year. For the Jewish community, today marks the most holy day of the year. It is a commanded day of fasting known to us as the Day of Atonement.

Please turn with me to Leviticus 23 where we will read about this day and why we are here today fasting without food or drink.

Leviticus 23:02 – “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *Concerning the feasts of the LORD*, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, *even these are my feasts*. [*So these feast days are the feast of God Our Father*]. [*Skip*] **: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.

There are many misconceptions in the Christian churches of the world, in Judaism, and in the Churches of God concerning the meaning of this day. In my sermon this afternoon entitled “The Day of the Coverings,” I would like to explore the deep meaning of this day and some of the many misconceptions that people have of this Day of Atonement. And we’ll do that in 8 points.

The first point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

1) The Hebrew word “Kippurim” means coverings.

In many sermons that I have listened to in the Churches of God over the past 5 decades, I have heard that the word atonement meant reconciliation, at-one-ment, forgiveness, or unity. Although these descriptive nouns have a connotation that can be associated with the word “kippur,” these nouns are not the meaning of the word.

In Hebrew, the noun “kippurim” simply means “coverings”. The verb form of this noun is “kaphar” which means “to cover.”

There are many verb forms in Hebrew of each verb including the Qal form, the Nifal form, Hiphil form, the Hophal form, the Piel form, the Pual form, the Hithpael form, and the Qalpass form. Each form gives a different meaning to the verb as it is conjugated in a sentence. The Qal form is the normal regular form of the verb. The Piel form is an intensive or emphatic form of the Qal form of the verb. The Nifal form is a passive or reflexive form of the Qal form of the verb.

The verb “kaphar” in the Qal form simply means to coat something. Please turn with me to Genesis 6:14, and we will read a verse with the Qal form of this verb. In Genesis 6:14, Yehovah is giving Noah instructions concerning the ark.

Genesis 6:14 – “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.”

Genesis 6:14 (New International Version) – “So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.”

However, the verb “kaphar” in the piel form (the emphatic form) means to cover over completely. This verb form is connected with the laws of the sin offerings in Leviticus 4 and with the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

The mercy seat which was located on the top of the Ark of the Covenant represented the footstool of the throne of God Our Father. The words “Mercy Seat” do not exist in Hebrew. The Hebrew word for mercy seat is “kapporet” which is a derivation of the noun “kippur.” “Kapporet” therefore means lid or the seat of covering. Therefore, the phrase “mercy seat” is not a translation of the Hebrew term “kapporet” in the Masoretic text, but instead is the translation by William Tyndale (English scholar and translator who became a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation) of the German term *gnadenstuhl*, from the same narrative position in Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German; *gnadenstuhl* literally means 'seat of grace', in the sense of 'location of grace'.

All of these terms (kippur, kaphar, and kapporet) are derivations of each other. In Strong's Concordance, “kippur” is #3725, “kaphar” is #3722, and “kapporet” is #3727.

It is very important as we go forward to know that the word “kippurim” means coverings.

It is interesting and important to note that the word for “atonement” in verse 27 of Leviticus 23 in the Hebrew is plural and definite – “hakippurim.” The Jews refer to the day in the singular “Yom Kippur”, but the Hebrew actually is “יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים” (Yom haKippurim) or the Day of the Coverings, and hence, the title of my message today. In fact, the word “kippur” in the singular does not exist in the Bible. And in the sermon today, we will see that there are many specific atonements or coverings on this day.

יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים

Yom haKippurim

The Day of the Coverings

Therefore, the true name in Hebrew of the Day of Atonement is really the Day of the Coverings. This significance of this meaning will be discussed in the sermon.

The second point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

2) There is a difference between pardon and forgiveness.

An important aspect in the Day of Atonement is the difference between pardon and forgiveness.

According to Dictionary.com, the word pardon means “the release of an individual from any punishment due for the infraction of the law.”

According to Dictionary.com, the word forgiveness means “the conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.”

An example of the difference between these two words is given in the following example. Mr. Smith get very angry, and attacks and repeatedly hits Mr. Jones in the face. An example of pardon is the following: Mr. Jones pardons Mr. Smith by not filing assault and battery charges against Mr. Smith. Mr. Jones is still very bitter toward Mr. Smith and harbors resentment toward him.

However, an example of forgiveness is the following: Mr. Jones forgives Mr. Smith not only by not filing assault and battery charges against Mr. Smith but also by not harboring any ill will toward Mr. Smith. Mr. Jones makes an emotional decision not to hold anything against Mr. Smith. He wipes the slate clean.

Forgiveness involves an emotional response. Forgiveness is pardon with an emotional decision to do away with the infraction completely, not just physically but emotionally as well.

So, there is a significant difference between the covering of sin and the forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness is like vacuuming a hardwood floor in a room in your house and removing every particle of dirt and dust from the floor. The dirt and dust are completely removed and taken away and not ever brought back to the room. Pardoning or covering is like carefully sweeping every particle of dirt and dust from the floor and then sweeping all of the dirt and dust under the large rug in the middle of the room. After the rug is placed over the dirt, the room looks completely clean, just like as if it had been vacuumed. Yet the dirt and dust are still there; they’ve just been covered over out of sight.

This same analogy is true with God Our Father’s treatment of sin. Covered sins have not been forgiven but they have been pardoned. They have been covered over to be out of the sight of our Heavenly Father, and the penalty for committing the sin is not applied to the individual.

The third point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

3) There is no forgiveness without the blood of Jesus Christ.

Another critical point in understanding the Day of Atonement is understanding how and when mankind is forgiven of their sins.

Please turn with me to Hebrews 9:22. The shedding of blood is a requirement in the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:22 – “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

The word remission is not a common word in modern English, and many people do not know what it means. The Greek word for “remission” here is “ἄφεσις” (áfesis) which means complete forgiveness.

In verse 22, the first part of the verse is referring to the blood of animals. Almost all things are by the law purged or cleansed with the blood of animals.

However, the blood of animals does not take away or forgive sin. Please turn with me to Hebrews 10:04.

Hebrews 10:04 – “For *it* is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

Please turn with me to Hebrew 10:11 which further amplifies this fact.

Hebrews 10:11 – “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:”

Therefore, the sacrificing of animals and their shed blood never took away sins and never provided forgiveness. Forgiveness is not offered or accomplished by and through the shedding of the blood of animals.

But brethren, how is forgiveness given to us by God Our Father?

Please turn with me to Colossians 1, where we will read the key to this matter.

Colossians 1:12 – “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: **:13** – Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: **:14** – In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

Again, the word for forgiveness in verse 14 is “ἄφεσις” (áfesis) or complete forgiveness.

Please turn with me to Matthew 26. During the meal before His death on Passover, Jesus Christ instructed His disciples on the meaning of the wine.

Matthew 26:27 – “And he (Jesus) took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **:28** – For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Again, the word for remission in verse 28 is “ἄφεσις” (áfesis) meaning complete forgiveness.

Therefore, it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ that we have forgiveness by God Our Father. There is no other way. There is no other means. There is no other substitute.

So, the sin offerings in the Old Testament, the animal sacrifices performed, and all of the animal blood that was shed never forgave any sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has the power and the ability to have our sins forgiven by God Our Father.

The fourth point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

4) The sin offerings did not forgive sin.

Please turn with me to Leviticus 4 where we will read about the laws of the sin offerings. We read in Leviticus 4 that there were four different sin offering

procedures depending on whom the sin offering was for. There was a sin offering for the priests in verse 3, a sin offering for the whole congregation of Israel in verse 13, a sin offering for the ruler in verse 22, and a sin offering for a common regular person in Israel in verse 27.

In a sin offering, only the fat of the animal was offered and burned on the altar, not the whole animal.

Let's read in particular the law of the sin offerings for the whole congregation of Israel.

Leviticus 4:13 – “And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD *concerning things* which should not be done, and are guilty; **:14** – When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. **:15** – And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD. **:16** – And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation: **:17** – And the priest shall dip his finger *in some* of the blood, and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, *even* before the vail. **:18** – And he shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. **:19** – And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn *it* upon the altar. **:20** – And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. **:21** – And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it *is* a sin offering for the congregation.

The Hebrew verb for “make an atonement” in verse 20 is “kaphar” in the Piel form. Again, it is important to remember that the verb “kaphar” in the Piel form means to cover over completely.

Since we have read that the blood of bulls and goats cannot forgive sin, the sin offering covered the sins, but the sin offering did not result in the forgiveness of sins.

The fifth point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

5) The Day of Atonement is not a day of forgiveness.

Again, Kippur means “covering” not forgiveness. In Judaism, the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur is the most holy and special day of the year. And Judaism does celebrate Yom Kippur as a day of forgiveness. The Jews believe that Yehovah forgives them of all their sins on this day, and that Yehovah expects that they forgive others of their sins and offenses that others have committed against them. To the Jewish community, forgiveness is a main meaning of the Day of Atonement.

This Jewish belief has influenced Christian writers and scholars such as Mounce to include forgiveness as a meaning of “kaphar.”

The problem with that meaning is that there is no forgiveness without the blood of Jesus Christ, and the Jewish community has denied that Jesus Christ was the Son of God Our Father. Therefore, they deny that His blood is the only thing that can bring forgiveness from God Our Father.

We, as the firstfruits, believe that this forgiveness is made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus on Passover and by the acceptance by God Our Father of that sacrifice on the Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolized by the Wave Sheaf Offering.

Without a belief in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, the Jews look to the Day of Atonement, not Passover, as the day that represents forgiveness for them.

So, whereas forgiveness is associated by us with Passover, the Jews associate forgiveness with the Day of Atonement.

But again, with the knowledge and acceptance of the Messiah’s blood sacrifice that we have as firstfruit Christians, Yom Kippur is a day of coverings, not forgiveness.

However, in the future, for all of mankind, the Day of Atonement starts a process in which forgiveness will be offered and given by God Our Father to humanity through the blood of Jesus Christ as each individual becomes converted. We will discuss this concept more in depth later in the sermon.

Please turn with me again back to Leviticus 4, and we will reread some verses concerning the laws of the sin offering for the people.

Leviticus 4:19 – “And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn *it* upon the altar.
:20 – And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

The Hebrew verb in verse 20 for “shall be forgiven” is “salakh.” The Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon states that “salakh” means to forgive, to pardon, or to spare. Again, to Jews, the verb means to forgive because the Jews believe that the blood of bulls and goats can take away and forgive sins. But we know that that is just not the case. Therefore, “salakh” does not and cannot mean forgiveness in this verse; rather, that Hebrew verb must mean to pardon or to spare. And we have discussed previously, there is a difference between pardon and forgiveness.

Again, brethren, Yom Hakippurim (the Day of Atonement) is the Day of the Coverings, not a day of forgiveness.

The sixth point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

6) The Day of Atonement has a unique special ceremony.

Please turn with me to Leviticus 16. This whole chapter provides an in-depth insight into this unique special ceremony which was only done once a year – on the Day of Atonement.

This unique special ceremony is conducted by the high priest when he is dressed in special holy garments worn only on the Day of Atonement. When the high priest is dressed in these holy garments, he is picturing the future Messiah, which has huge implications, significance, and meaning for all of mankind. The special ceremony ends when the high priest takes off the holy garments. We will see what events take place when he is wearing the holy garments and what events take place after he has taken off the holy garments, and we will see that when these events take place has great importance in understanding the meaning of the day.

Leviticus 16:01 – “And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; **:02** – 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. **:03** – Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. **:04** – 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 shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. *[So here we notice that the high priest dresses in special holy garments that he only wears on the Day of Atonement.]* **:05** – 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. **:06** – And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. *[So, the high priest offers a bullock for a sin offering following the procedure listed in Leviticus 4 for the priests.]* **:07** – And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. **:08** – And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat *[Azazel meaning the goat of complete removal]*. **:09** – 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, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. **: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: **: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, 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. **:18** – And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, 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. **:20** – And when he hath made an end of reconciling [*“kaphar – to cover”*] the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: *[Note again that the blood of the goat was for the atonement of three things: the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar.]* **: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 into the wilderness: **:22** – And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. *[Just like verse 10 states, the live goat was for the atonement of all of Israel and the confession and transference of all the sins of Israel onto the Azazel goat pictured the covering of all of their sins from the sight of Yehovah. The Hebrew word for “wilderness” is “midbar” which means “uninhabited land”.]* **:23** – And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: *[We note here that the high priest takes off his holy garments which marks the end of that special ceremony. The high priest will now be in his regular clothes].* **:24** – And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. **:25** – And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. *[The high priest now offers the burnt offering and also the sin offerings of the goat and bullock. This sin offering is for the people. Again, verse 15 states that the goat of the sin offering was for the atonement of the people. This sin offering is a fulfillment of verse 15.]* **:26** – And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. **:27** – And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. *[This was done just as prescribed in Leviticus 4 for all sin offerings.]* **:28** – And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. **:29** – And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: **:30** – For on that day shall the priest make an atonement (*“kaphar – to cover”*) for you, to cleanse you, that ye

may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. **:31** – It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls [*this is why we are fasting today*], by a statute for ever. **:32** – And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: **:33** – And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. **:34** – And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.”

We read in verse 16, verse 18 and verse 20 that the blood of the goat for Yehovah atoned for and covered the holy place, the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar because of the sins and transgressions of the people.

We read in verse 20 that after the atonement of those three items, the high priest then brought forth the live Azazel goat. He then confessed and transferred all of the sins of Israel onto the head of the Azazel goat. This transference atoned or covered the sins of the people of Israel. The goat was not killed – no blood was shed. Instead, the Azazel goat was taken out of the camp and let go in the wilderness.

After this is done, then the high priest undresses and takes off the holy garments. The special ceremony ends. This is important. During this special ceremony, three atonement actions were taken: (1) the high priest atoned for himself with the blood of the bullock (otherwise he would have died when he entered the Holy of Holies); (2) the high priest atoned for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar with the blood of the goat for Yehovah; and (3) the high priest atoned for the people with the confession of the sins and the transference of the sins of the people onto the head of the live Azazel goat.

As we read in verse 25, after the high priest took off the holy garments and dressed in his regular priestly clothes, he simply performed a sin offering for the atonement of the people with the bullock and the goat for Yehovah. This regular sin offering does not have prophetic implications because the high priest was not wearing the holy garments.

In this unique ceremony on the Day of Atonement, with the high priest dressed in the holy garments picturing the Messiah, the atoning of the holy place, the tabernacle and the altar has a very special prophetic meaning.

Please turn with me to Matthew 24 where we will read Jesus' words concerning the holy place in the future.

Matthew 24:15 – “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) **:16** – Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: **:17**

– Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: **:18** – Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.”

So before the return of God Our Father and Jesus Christ to the earth, there will be an abomination of desolation which will occur in the holy place. So it appears from these words of Christ that there will be a holy place of some sort at the end of the age. And this holy place will become totally defiled and desecrated by the abomination of desolation, whatever that may be.

We know and understand that Jesus Christ is returning to the earth to reign over all mankind and that God Our Father is coming to be worshipped by all mankind. God Our Father will again dwell with His people. However, His dwelling place will have been defiled. The blood of the goat for Yehovah in this first part of the Day of Atonement ceremony pictures Christ entering the Holy of Holies to cleanse, purify and sanctify the Holy Place so that God Our Father can dwell there.

Please turn with me to Malachi 3. We read of a prophecy in Malachi 3 that may be fulfilled by the purification of the Holy Place by Jesus Christ. In this way, Jesus prepares the way of His Father, Yehovah.

Malachi 3:01 – “Behold, I (Yehovah) will send my messenger (Jesus Christ), and He shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord (Adonah), whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”

The second part of the ceremony, the atoning of the people through the confession of the sins and transference of the sins onto the head of the live Azazel goat, also has a very special prophetic meaning.

God Our Father will begin a direct relationship with all of mankind on a physical level, just like He did with Ancient Israel. But there is a problem. Please turn with me to Isaiah 59.

Isaiah 59:02 – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

The world’s sins separate the people from God Our Father. At this point in time, all of humanity which is alive at the return of God Our Father and Jesus Christ are unconverted and unrepentant. In order to begin a relationship with humanity, God Our Father must “cover” or “atone” or “kaphar” the sins of humanity to put them out of His sight. Again, sins are not forgiven without repentance and conversion. So, the sins of humanity are only covered by the Father at this point in time.

Therefore, the transference of all the sins of Israel onto the head of the Azazel goat foreshadowed the atonement or covering of all the sins of humanity by God Our Father so that He can begin a relationship on a physical level with His people and with all of humanity. Again, the nation of Israel was a forerunner of this type of relationship. Their relationship was only on a physical level based on obedience with blessings and cursings. Only a few, such as Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, had a spiritual relationship with God Our Father.

The seventh point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

7) The Day of Atonement starts the conversion process of mankind in the future.

Brethren, there is another relationship that God Our Father desires with all of humanity. It is a relationship that He desired with Israel but never had. This relationship is a deep spiritual relationship with a converted humanity.

Please turn with me to Jeremiah 31, where we will read about this conversion.

Jeremiah 31:33 – “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **:34** – And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is a description of conversion. The verb for “forgive” in verse 34 is again “salakh.” But with conversion and the acceptance of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, the verb now has the meaning of “forgiveness”. Please turn with me to Hebrews 10, where we will read a prophecy concerning this conversion process with humanity.

Hebrews 10:09 – “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. **:10** – By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. **:11** – And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: **:12** – But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; **:13** – From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. **:14** – For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. **:15** – Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, **:16** – This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; **:17** – And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. **:18** – Now where remission (“ἁφεσις” – complete forgiveness) of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

Hebrews 10 describes a new spiritual covenant relationship with humanity, based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And as Hebrews 9 tells us, just as the high priest went behind the veil once a year on the Day of Atonement, our Messiah, Jesus Christ, took His blood metaphorically behind the veil for us and all mankind on the Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, pictured by the Wave Sheaf Offering.

With Christ’s sacrifice and the acceptance of that sacrifice by God Our Father, the Day of Atonement also pictures the opening of the opportunity to all of humanity to have a spiritual relationship with God Our Father.

Hebrews 10:09 states, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” The “first” is the covenant with humanity on a physical level based on obedience.

The “second” is the covenant with humanity on a spiritual level based on faith and grace.

The Greek present verb tense is very progressive and has a connotation of ongoing action. Therefore, the verb translated as “taketh” could be better translated as “is taking” as in an ongoing action.

The conversion process in the Millennium will be like the conversion process for the firstfruits. God Our Father will call everyone to Jesus Christ. He will cover their sins. Jesus Christ and the firstfruits will work with all of mankind during the Millennium to help in their conversion and in the transformation of their hearts toward God Our Father. Those who turn to the Father, accept His way, and accept Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins will receive the Holy Spirit which will help them along their journey to the Father’s spiritual Kingdom.

So, on a personal individual basis, one person at a time multiplied by billions of times, God Our Father is taking away the first relationship on a physical level, so that He may establish the second relationship on a spiritual level.

Again, this spiritual relationship is only made possible by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The eighth point in understanding the meaning of the Day of Atonement is:

8) We fast to grow closer to God Our Father.

Brethren, another command concerning the observance of this Holy Day that makes it unique among all of the festivals of our Heavenly Father is that we fast during the entirety of this day. It is interesting to note that no servile or customary work was allowed on any of the Holy Days. So, no customary work was to be performed on the First and Last Days of Unleavened Bread, on Pentecost, on the Feast of Trumpets, on the First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the 8th Day or Last Great Day. However, as we have read in Leviticus 23:28, the command was to do no work at all.

What is the purpose of fasting? Please turn with me to 1 Kings 21. Ahab had been a very wicked king. Elijah prophesied against Ahab telling Ahab the penalties for his continual disobedience to Yehovah.

1 Kings 21:27 – “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly (*meekly*). **:28** – And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **:29** – Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: *but* in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.”

This example shows how humbling oneself is greatly aided by fasting. Please turn with me to Isaiah 66:02.

Isaiah 66:02 – “For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite (humble) spirit, and trembleth at my word.

So God Our Father looks to those who humble themselves before Him.

Please turn with me to Psalm 51, and we will read that David saw the importance of a humble spirit in our relationship to God Our Father.

Psalm 51:17 – “The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

In order to have a relationship with God Our Father, we must humble ourselves before Him. Humanity will humble themselves before the Father in order to start a relationship with Him. Fasting is a way to achieve that required humbling from an unconverted world.

Brethren, the Day of Atonement has so much significance and deep meaning for humanity and for the future of mankind. We haven't even discussed the meaning and significance of the year of jubilee starting with a blowing of the trumpet on the Day of Atonement. But the meaning of the jubilee year is also consistent with the significance and meaning of the Day of Atonement. And there is still so much more to the meaning of this day.

Let's review our points:

- 1) The Hebrew word “kippurim” means coverings.
- 2) There is a difference between pardon and forgiveness.
- 3) There is no forgiveness without the blood of Jesus Christ.
- 4) The sin offerings did not forgive sin.
- 5) The Day of Atonement is not a day of forgiveness.
- 6) The Day of Atonement has a unique special ceremony.
- 7) The Day of Atonement starts the conversion process of mankind in the future.
- 8) We fast to grow closer to God Our Father.

Brethren, the Day of Atonement marks the great day in the future when Jesus will cleanse and purify and sanctify the Holy of Holies. It marks the great day when God Our Father will dwell in the Holy of Holies among His people. It marks the great day when all of mankind will be reconciled to God Our Father, first on a physical level as unconverted people with their sins being covered but not forgiven, and then second on a spiritual level upon their later conversion and receiving of the Holy Spirit as converted people with their sins being forgiven and washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And during the Millennium, as humanity is resurrected into a Garden of Eden type of environment without the presence and influence of Satan and his demons, and as they are shown the Father's way of life, the billions and billions of individuals who are resurrected will have the opportunity to grow from a physical-level relationship with

God Our Father (one without forgiveness and salvation) to a spiritual-level relationship with God Our Father (one which gives forgiveness and one which results in spiritual salvation and eternal life).

What a wonderful day, representing the reconciliation of mankind to God Our Father!
What a wonderful plan of salvation that God Our Father has for humanity. And what a wonderful future mankind has when God Our Father will at last dwell with them, and He shall be their God, and they shall be His people!

That, brethren, is the meaning of the Day of the Coverings.