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“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. 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.”

— *Leviticus 23:27–28*

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is perhaps the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Yom Kippur is observed on the 10th of Tishri, which this year starts at sunset on Friday, September 13 as the new day begins on the Jewish calendar. All day on the 10th of Tishri, Jews will take off work and fast for this holy and most solemn day of repentance and reconciliation.

It was on this day—the only day—that the High Priest was able to enter the Holy of Holies, and then only after elaborate ceremonial washings, offerings, and associated rituals. This was also the day that two goats were selected, one for an offering and one as the “scapegoat.” As many aspects of the feasts were prophetic, the scapegoat is also Messianic. The ceremonial acts that were to be carried out by the High Priest on Yom Kippur are described in Leviticus 16 (see also Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 23:27–31, 25:9; Numbers 29:7–11). Since the loss of the Temple in 70 A.D., the God-centered observances of the Torah have tragically been replaced with a man-centered, good works system of appeasement through prayer, charity, and penitence.

Yom Kippur traditionally ends with one long note of the Shofar, a musical instrument usually made from a ram’s horn. The significance of the ram’s horn is traditionally rooted in Genesis 22. Here God commands Abraham *“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”* Abraham is called upon by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a test of his faith. After God halts the sacrifice at the last minute, Abraham spies a ram trapped by his horns in a nearby thicket and offers the animal instead as a sacrifice.

It is interesting to note that this is the first instance in which the word “love” appears in Scripture. God commands Abraham to sacrifice “thine only son Issac, whom thou lovest.” In this passage Issac is identified as Abraham’s *only* son, but what about Ishmael? If you examine this passage of scripture in detail it becomes clear that Abraham was acting out prophecy. This strange event was a foreshadowing of Christ’s death on the cross as a substitutionary offering for our sins. In fact, it may have even taken place at the very same spot where the “*only* begotten Son” of God was later crucified.

Woven throughout the Old Testament feasts is the foreshadowing of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. Those of us who have placed our trust in Jesus Christ are able to enter behind the veil and stand in the Holy of Holies. We have forgiveness because of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He is our scapegoat. His blood was sprinkled for our atonement, and because of him we are cleansed and made holy before God.

[Editor’s Note: This is the second installment of a three part series on the fall feasts of Israel. Next week’s article will cover Succoth: the Feast of Tabernacles.]

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- [The Feasts of Israel - DVD - Koinonia House Store](#)
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