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SABBATH SCHOOL Bible Lessons.

Studies in the Old Testament. THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson VII. August 19. Lev. 16: 1-14. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Without shedding of blood is no remission."—Heb. 9: 22.

1. After the death of the two sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, recorded in chap. 10.

2. Speak unto Aaron . . . that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil. Only on the Day of Atonement and in the manner prescribed in this chapter. He or the ordinary priests went every day into the Holy Place without the veil, to burn incense and to trim the golden lamp, and they might be tempted to look or go within the veil.

3. Thus shall Aaron come: that is, by means of the offerings and ceremonies which follow.

Teaching. We are to obey God's commands exactly, whether we understand all the reasons for them or not.

I. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. This was the annual fast day, the day of humiliation prescribed by the Levitical ritual, all the other annual public days being festive and joyous.

II. THE SCENE OF THE SERVICE was centered about the Holy of Holies, which was entered only on this occasion, and by the high priest alone. All the ceremonial took place here and in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and in its court.

III. THE PREPARATIONS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. (1) Preparations, according to Jewish tradition. Of so much sacredness was this solemnity regarded, that the people began their preparation for it seven days before, by removing the high priest from his own house to a chamber in the temple (after the temple was built), lest he should contract such a pollution from any of his family, as might incur a seven days' uncleanness, and thereby unfit him for performing his pontifical duties.

(2) **The Daily Morning Sacrifice** in the court of the tabernacle, by the high priest himself, in his glorious robes, instead of the ordinary priests; at the first streak of morning light. In conspicuous place he stood to give his benedictions, in full sight of the gathered people. And they all saw him in his splendor, the great breastplate glittering in the sun.

(3) **The Change of Vestments for the Peculiar Ceremonies of the Day.** When he had finished the morning sacrifice, he washed his hands and feet a second time at the laver. He then retired to a particular chamber of the temple, and proceeded to strip himself of his rich habiliments, to bathe himself in water a second time, and to put on his plain white linen vestments, the same dress as that worn by the common priest, except that he had the sacerdotal mitre on his head. Thus attired, he proceeded to the work of sacrifice.

Teachings. 1. The white linen dress of the high priest was intended to symbolize the purity and brightness which forms the characteristic of angels and saints, and above all, of the King of saints.

2. So Christ laid aside his royalty and glory that he had with the Father, and became like one of us, only perfectly sinless.

3. Only by the washing of regeneration, the continual and repeated purification of the soul, can we enter God's holy place.

(4) **Presentation of the Offering for his own Sins.** 3. With a young bullock for a sin offering: which had to be of the second year (see Ex. 29: 1), and which the high priest had to buy with his own money. It was to be his own property because the victim was to expiate his own sins, since he, like the meanest sinner, requires divine mercy and forgiveness, though, owing to his high office, he had to bring a more costly sacrifice.

4. And Aaron shall offer his bullock. The bullock stood between the porch and the altar, with its face toward the tabernacle, while the priest faced the east, that is, toward the worshipping people. He then laid both his hands upon the head of the bullock and confessed as follows: O Lord, I have sinned, done perversely, and transgressed before thee, I and my house. I beseech thee, O Lord, expiate the sins, perversities, and transgressions whereby I have sinned, done perversely and transgressed, I and my house, as it is written in the law of Moses, thy servant, saying (Lev. 16: 30). For in this day will I expiate you, to purge you from all your sins before the Lord, that ye may be clean.

(5) **Presentation of the Offerings for the People.** Close to the worshipping people, in the eastern part of the court.

6. And he shall take (select carefully) of the congregation: at the public expense. Two kids of the goats. Better, "two shaggy he goats." They were to be altogether alike in look, size, and value. The two together were really one sacrifice.

7. Present them . . . at the door of the tabernacle: wear the worshippers, on the east. Before the Lord. The two goats were presented with their faces to the west, where the Holy of Holies was, and where the Divine Majesty was especially revealed.

8. And Aaron shall cast lots. In the urn were two lots, of the same shape, size, and material,—in the second temple they were of gold,—the one bearing the inscription "For Jehovah," the other, "For Azael" (scapegoat). The high priest shook the urn, thrust his two hands into it, drew the lot, laying "me on the head of each goat. The scapegoat was now pronounced "towards the people, and stood facing them, waiting there, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him.

THE SYMBOL. Assuredly a more marked type of Christ could not be conceived as he was brought forth by Pharaoh, and stood before the people, just as he was about to be led forth, bearing the iniquity of the people, 9, 10. And Aaron shall bring, etc. This is the announcement of what was to be fulfilled later, as we shall see.

(6) **The Sacrifice of the High Priest's Sin Offering.** The high priest now once more returned towards the sanctuary, and a second time laid his two hands on the bullock, which still stood between the porch and the altar, to confess over him not only, as before, his own and his household's sins, but also those of the priest-hood. Then the high priest killed the bullock, and caught up his blood in a vessel and gave it to an attendant. Advancing to the altar of burnt offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then ranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it, and entered the Holy Place. The curtain of the Holy of Holies

was pulled back, and the high priest stood alone in the awful gloom of the holiest of all, only lit by the red glow of the coals in the priest's censer. He now threw the incense on the coals, and waited till the smoke had filled the Most Holy Place, breathing benedictions, he prayed for the people. While the incense was offering in the Most Holy Place, the people withdrew from proximity to it, and worshipped in silence. At last the high priest emerged from the sanctuary, took the vessel of bullock's blood, and re-entering the Most Holy Place, sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy seat.

Teachings. 1. If sins are to be forgiven, they must first be confessed, confessed particularly, and not in general terms.

2. The best of people, those highest in Christian service, are imperfect and sinful, and need confession and forgiveness.

3. The officers and teachers of religion must first be cleansed, must first experience the blessings of atoning love, before they are fit to help save their fellow men.

(VII) **The Atonement for the Sins of the People.** Its First Aspect (vers. 9, 10, 16). The two scapegoats exhibit the two aspects of atonement, the one the divine side, the atonement making it possible for God to forgive sins without contradicting his own nature, as increasing sin by its easy forgiveness; the other side being the actual forgiveness of sin and its removal from the heart and nation.

9. The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell: the one which was to be slain as an atonement for the sins of the people was now (ver. 15) sacrificed to make atonement for the holy place (ver. 16) on account of the uncleanness of the priests and worshippers, and because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions.

This symbolized the Lamb of God, who made atonement for the sins of the world. (VIII) **The Scapegoat.** The Second Aspect of the Atonement, the taking away of Sin (ver. 10). The Scapegoat (Heb. Azazel). The word is regarded by many as a proper name for "the utterly banished demon," the prince of evil spirits; and the sin-laden goat was thus banished to the desolate regions of the prison of darkness. Others regard the word as meaning complete separation, and the sins represented by the scapegoat were completely removed—even "as far as the east is from the west."

The statement had been made, but the consciences of the people were not yet free from a sense of personal guilt and sin. Their own personal guilt and sin were now to be removed from them, and that in a symbolic rite, at one and the same time the most mysterious and the most significant of all. Will the other goat was being sacrificed, the scapegoat had been looking onward, confronting the people, waiting for the terrible load which it was to carry away "unto a land not inhabited." Laying both his hands on the head of this goat, the high priest now confessed and pleaded: "O Lord, thy people, the house of Israel, have transgressed: they have rebelled; they have sinned before thee. I beseech thee now absolve their transgressions, their rebellion, and their sin that they have sinned against thee, as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, that on this day he shall make atonement for you to cleanse you from all your sins, and ye shall be clean." And while the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of Jehovah, the high priest turned his face towards them as he uttered the last words, "Ye shall be clean!" After the confession had been made, over the head of the scapegoat, it was committed to the charge of some person or persons, previously chosen for the purpose, and carried away into the wilderness: where, as we should understand (ver. 22), it was set at liberty. The arrival of the goat in the wilderness was telegraphed by the waving of flags from station to station, till a few minutes after its occurrence it was known in the temple, and whispered from ear to ear that "the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited."

Teaching. 1. The sinfulness and guilt of the heart and life.

2. The fact that an atonement has been made is not enough; our sins must be borne away.

3. Jesus Christ our sacrifice has not only made atonement for our sins, but takes our sins away, removes our sinful nature, remedies our sinful life.

Moral Falsities.

The Treasury for June has these timely utterances:

"This is one great defect in the character of man in the present day. There is no quality of grit in it, nothing that will resist temptation with an unflinching front and come forth unscathed from the attack. If there is consistency at all it is the consistency of the milk and not that of the granite. It is caused by defective principle, by defective habits, and by an unduly desire to have the good will of all. Flakiness of moral character can be of no avail in the upbuilding of a religious life, is a worthless element in the effort to eradicate the evils of society, and can be of no aid in the extension of a stalwart Christianity. He who is to stand with it should not be intrusted with the care of himself, have no place among the teachers of humanity, and never be elected by his fellow-men to a position where firm resistance to temptation and a bold determination are required. The man who is morally fit may still be so vicariously over evil, either by consent or otherwise. How the world would be wiser as Tennyson describes when he writes: "Who never sold the truth to serve the hour, Or paltered with Eternal God for power."

The Origin of Pharaoh.

Dido, Queen of Tyre, about seven centuries before Christ, after her husband had been put to death by her brother, fled from that city and established a colony on the north coast of Africa, being welcomed by the natives for as much land as could be surrounded with a bull's hide, she cut the hide into narrow strips, tied them together and aimed the lead that could be surrounded with the hide thus made. She was allowed to have her way, and now, when one plays a sharp trick, he is said to "cut a dido."

During a battle between the Russians and Tartars a private soldier of the former cried out: "Captain, I've caught a Tartar." "Bring him along," said the officer. "He won't let me," was the response. Investigated and found that the captive had the captor by the arm and would not allow him to move. So "catching a Tartar" is applicable to one who has found an antagonist too powerful for him.

The infamous Catherine de Medici had her favorite palace, the Louvre, supplied

with automatic tubes in such a way that what was used aloud in one room was heard by her in any other. Therefore, matters which it was considered advisable to keep from her knowledge were discussed in whispers, because the "walls had ears." In ancient times the English were wont to cover their floors with rushes, and when visitors of distinction were expected fresh rushes were substituted for the old. The changes were not made if the visitors were ordinary people, who were regarded "not worth a rush." "not worth a straw."

Formerly, in London, when a small dealer bought bread of a baker, for every dozen loaves purchased he was given an extra loaf as his profit; from which circumstance "a baker's dozen" signifies thirteen.

Assigned to the phrase, but the above is the only one that is based on a sure foundation.

WANTED NOW.—It has been truly said that the great want of the age is men. Men of thought; men of action. Men who are not for sale. Men who are honest to the heart's core. Men who will condemn wrong in friends or foes—in themselves, as well as in others. Men whose consciences are as steady as the needle to the pole. Men who will stand for right even if the heavens totter and the earth reels. Men who can tell the truth and look the devil in the eye. Men who know their duty and do it. Men who can have courage without whistling for it, and joy without shouting to bring it. Men through whom the current of life runs still, and deep, and strong. Men who know their message and tell it. Men who know their duty and do it. Men who know their place and fill it. Men who mind their own business. Men who will not lie. Men who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor. When, in office, in the workshop, in the counting-room, in the bank, in every place of trust and responsibility, we can have such men as these, we shall have a Christian civilization—the highest and the best that the world ever saw."—The Worker.

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